

Community Housing Fair Access Policies

Consultation Meeting

March 6, 2024

**Let us acknowledge that Queen's is
situated on traditional Anishinaabe and
Haudenosaunee territory.**

**We are grateful to be able to live, learn
and play on these lands.**

Open Consultation Format and Agenda

- Introductions
- Presentation
 - Graduate Housing Context at Queen's
 - Review of Fair Access Policies – rationale for changes
 - Community Housing budget, and rent increase rationale
- Submitted Questions
- Questions/Comments compiled by QCHRA
- Open Q and A if needed

Graduate Student Housing at Queen's

- Queen's has approximately 4,000 graduate students and 1,800 professional, second-degree students (Medicine, Law)
- Queen's owns 393 rental units (one, two or three bedrooms per unit), between An Clachan (AC), and John Orr Tower (JOT) - housing for less than 7% of the university's graduate student population
- Under the fair access policy changes, AC and JOT units will be available only to graduate and professional students
- The university also owns approximately 65 properties in the University District (100 units), which will be exclusively rented to undergraduate students in future
- These changes aim to maximize access to university-owned housing at affordable below-market rent to the greatest number of students

Rationale for Fair Access Policy Changes

- Limited supply of off-campus university-owned housing
- Low tenant turnover in JOT and AC, & non-equitable practices, have contributed to steadily fewer available units each year, and increasing difficulty for students to access spaces
 - Historically, 25 - 30% of units (+/- 100-125 units) would turnover; this has dropped to less than 10% (< 40) per year over the past 4 years
 - 28% of current tenants have lived at AC/JOT for 4+ years; some for 7-8+ years
 - Longer tenancies for a few students has resulted in less access for others
- Currently AC & JOT are among the lowest rents in the City of Kingston, approx. **50% below market rent**
 - These drastically lower rents have contributed to inappropriate practices by some tenants (e.g. subletting for personal profit)
 - Low rents reduce university's ability to make significant timely capital improvements and invest to increase housing supply



"I have been trying to get a space in An Clachan for my family since 2022"

Fair Access Policies - Overview

- Four broad categories:
 - Revised Allocation process (lottery)
 - Improved Access (ease of termination by tenants, limiting assignments, increasing turnover through renewal limits)
 - Eligibility changes (student status, access to PDFs, maximizing occupancy)
 - Rent increases
- Student feedback has been positive regarding many of the changes
- Concerns expressed to date have been primarily related to rent increase and renewal limits

Revised Allocation Process - Lottery for available AC and JOT units

- Applies only to vacant units - not to current tenant renewals
- Annual May multi-day application period (for Sept leases) - promoted in advance
- Improved access for students applying internationally, who have limited internet access, and who simply require more time to complete an application (e.g. students with dependents or accommodations needs)
- Improved fairness - all applicants have an equivalent chance of securing a unit
- Consideration for 2025-26: potential for “weighted” lottery process to prioritize equity-deserving student communities
- Consultation underway with Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO) to develop approach
 - For 2024-25, with support from the HREO, we will be collecting applicant demographic and other data to inform options
 - Current tenant survey planned for summer

Improved Access - Early Lease Termination and Elimination of Lease Assignments

Students who wish to end their lease early can easily do so

- Simple approval from Community Housing
- No need for tenants to find another student to “assign” remainder of the lease
 - reduces financial pressure of potentially paying for a unit students no longer need
 - Addresses concerns that “you need to know someone” and incidences of “selling” a lease assignment
- Increased turnover enables Community Housing to refresh and repair more units on an ongoing basis
- Vacated units will be offered equitably to student(s) through an open process, rather than at the discretion of the current tenant
- Sublets will continue, upon approval from Community Housing, when a student-tenant is temporarily away within the lease period, and will be returning to reoccupy the unit

Improved Access - Lease Renewal Limits

Lease renewals tied to standard program duration

- The value in accessing housing, provided by the university, should be shared among as many students as possible over the course of their academic careers
- To maximize housing access for more students, limit the number of lease renewals provided to any one individual student
- Number of lease renewals aligned with typical/posted program length (e.g. 4-year undergraduate degree, 2-year Masters, or PhD)
- Eligible tenants who might otherwise be impacted by the new lease renewal limits will be offered/granted a final renewal for 2024-25.

“Community Housing's Fair Access Policies are a crucial step towards fostering equality and opportunity for all students.

This fair approach ensures that housing is accessible to all students, providing a level playing field for those who are just starting their academic journey.”

– Javad, current PhD student

Eligibility Changes – Student Status, PDF access

To access Queen’s Community Housing

- a student must be an **active, registered** student **in good standing** with the University, *and*
 - be enrolled in an **on-campus** undergraduate or graduate program; and
 - maintain **full-time** status
- Exceptions would apply for students studying part-time due to academic accommodations.
- A small number of units will be allocated to Post Doctoral Fellows for a maximum one-year lease, with no renewals

“QUIC regularly supports many international students frustrated by the challenges of accessing An Clachan and John Orr Tower. We are pleased to see Community Housing taking these steps towards broader housing access for more students.”

- Sultan Almajil, Director, Queen’s University International Centre (QUIC)

Eligibility Changes - Maximizing Occupancy

To house as many students as possible

- The number of students or individuals living in a property or apartment must at least match the number of bedrooms in the unit
- Students with families will continue to be able to access multi-bedroom units
 - Students with spouses (and no dependents) would to eligible for a 1-bedroom apartment
 - Students with dependents would be eligible for a 2+ bedroom
 - Two students would qualify for a 2-bedroom (no details are required with respect to relationship status)



Community Housing Rent

- Community Housing receives no funding from the university; all operating and capital costs must be covered by rents
- The university is exempt from following the provincially-mandated annual rent % increase
- However, annual rent increases have been limited to provincially-mandated amount despite the exemption; rents increased annually at the same rate as the guideline, *even with tenant turnover*
- Due to increasing operational and capital expenses, rents will be increasing by more than the provincial annual guideline amount, beginning in 2024
- **Rents will continue to remain well below market rates**, as the university remains committed to offering quality and affordable housing for students.
 - Rents effective September 2024 were provided earlier than in past years (December rather than February), to maximize notice to current tenants, and increase the time available to confirm intent to renew
- New leases will be issued in March

2024-25 Community Housing Rents

An Clachan

# of Bedrooms	Furnished	Utilities	2023 Rent	Rent (Effective Sept 2024)
1	No	All Utilities Included	\$826.00	\$913.00
1	Yes	All Utilities Included	\$980.00	\$1,083.00
2	No	All Utilities Included	\$940.00	\$1,039.00
2	Yes	All Utilities Included	\$1,114.00	\$1,231.00
3	No	All Utilities Included	\$1,069.00	\$1,181.00

John Orr Tower

# of Bedrooms	Furnished	Utilities	2023 Rent	Rent (Effective Sept 2024)
1	No	All Utilities Included	\$837.00	\$925.00
1	Yes	All Utilities Included	\$1,011.00	\$1,117.00

City of Kingston Average Rents

**1 Bedroom -
\$1,877+Utilities**

**2 Bedroom -
\$2,325+Utilities**

Source: Rentals.ca National Rent Report Feb 2024

**1 Bedroom -
\$1,331+Utilities**

**2 Bedroom -
\$1,608+Utilities**

Source: CMHC Rental Market Report 2023

Community Housing Budget Highlights

- Significant annual cost increases, recently at a (much) faster rate than revenue growth
- 2023-24 (current fiscal year):
 - Forecasted operating deficit of \$57K
 - Revenue of approx. \$6.6M
 - operating expenses of \$5.2M and capital reserve contribution of \$1.5M
- 2024-25:
 - If 2024-25 rent increase was limited to provincial guideline (2.5%), in-year operating deficit would grow to \$155K, and compound in future years
 - Planned 2024-25 rent increase will result in forecasted in-year operating surplus of \$30K
- Average annual capital spending has been \$1.3M over the past three years (maintenance/improvements)
 - Allows for a capital contribution increase of \$100K more than 2023-24, and growth in the capital reserve in future years
 - Increased revenue will directly support capital costs, and support our ability to increase housing supply for students

Community Housing - Increasing costs – 2024-25 and beyond

Insurance	10%
Utilities	8%
Repairs and Maintenance	5%
Contracted Services	3%
Salaries and Benefits	2%

- Insurance: Hard-market conditions driving higher premiums
- Utilities: Carbon tax increase of 26% for 2023-24, and another 23% increase in 2024-25
- Repairs and Maintenance (and Capital)
 - Renewal of John Orr Tower electrical system
 - Water main repairs at An Clachan, new community room, accessibility
- Contracted services: Annual winter maintenance cost is ~\$700K; current contract expires April 2024, and will go to RFP
- Salaries and benefits: 22% of total expenditures; annual increases based on collective agreements for unionized staff (USW and CUPE both expire in 2024)

Expanding Queen's-owned Graduate Student Housing

The university is in the **early planning stages** for a **significant redevelopment** of An Clachan

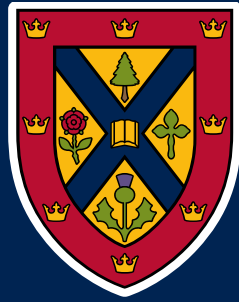
- Complex is 50+ years old
- Preliminary study has confirmed potential for **quadrupling the number of units**
- Estimated 900+ **additional graduate students could be accommodated** at the site (increase from current 269 units to about 1200)
- Recent release of public tender for a consultant to advise on potential private partnership for funding and construction
- It will be several years before any construction could begin



Feedback and Questions

Email us anytime!

community.housing@queensu.ca



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