

May 13, 2009

New Charter highlights 10-year affordable housing plan

The opportunity for every resident to obtain safe, secure affordable housing throughout Toronto would be recognized under a proposed new Toronto Housing Charter, a key component of the Housing Opportunities Toronto (HOT) Action Plan 2010-2020 introduced today by Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, Chair, Affordable Housing Committee.

The *Toronto Housing Charter – Opportunity for All* would be the first of its kind in Canada. The Charter is designed to guide City Council and staff in their efforts to assist those who often face challenges finding affordable housing, from newcomers and single parents to seniors and those with disabilities. It states that all residents have the right to equal treatment in housing without discrimination as provided by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

“One of the best ways of providing opportunity for all is to make sure people have access to affordable housing across Toronto,” said Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, Chair, Affordable Housing Committee. “In putting forward this plan, we are also supporting job creation, a greener city, healthy and productive residents and a better future for us all.”

HOT contains 67 recommended actions to be undertaken by the City of Toronto and the federal and provincial governments. It calls for new investment of \$484 million annually for the next 10 years to help 257,700 households struggling with high housing costs or inadequate accommodation. More than 60,000 jobs would be created or preserved over the next decade with the full implementation of HOT.

The actions proposed by HOT will assist a cross-section of Torontonians, from people living on the street to seniors struggling to maintain and repair their own homes. It serves as a roadmap to guide federal and provincial investments, as well as public and private sector actions. HOT recognizes the limits of the City's financial resources and calls on Toronto's federal and provincial partners to do their part.

“I want to congratulate Councillor Mammoliti for his leadership in bringing forward this important plan for consideration by Toronto City Council,” Mayor David Miller said. “I'm pleased that Council will have the opportunity to consider a plan that will help to address the housing needs of vulnerable Torontonians over the next 10 years.”

Over the next 10 years, many low-and-moderate income people will rely on existing rental units for housing. However, 60 per cent of those units will be at least 50 years old. For this reason, HOT focuses on upgrading existing private and social housing while proposing that Toronto create 1,000 new affordable rental homes annually. It builds on existing initiatives such as Toronto Community Housing's Real Estate Asset Investment Strategy, Mayor's Tower Renewal and the Multi-Residential Apartment Building Strategy.

A housing-first plan to end homelessness is a critical component of HOT. Housing first is based on the principle that the best way to end homelessness is to provide people with permanent housing and the supports they need to remain in their homes.

HOT also proposes a new bylaw that would extend existing City incentives, such as the waiving of development charges, to encourage more affordable rental homes mixed within market housing developments, as well as to increase homeownership opportunities.

HOT will be supported by *Good Homes-Good Neighbours*, a new guide for councillors that will provide tips and resources to foster affordable housing initiatives at the local level. It will be finalized following City Council's consideration of HOT.

The Action Plan is scheduled to be considered by the Affordable Housing Committee on May 20, Executive Committee on June 2 and City Council on July 6-7.

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. Toronto has won numerous awards for quality, innovation and efficiency in delivering public services. 2009 marks the 175th anniversary of Toronto's incorporation as a city. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents.

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