



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Housing Opportunities Toronto – Affordable Housing Framework 2008 - 2018

<b>Date:</b>	October 30, 2007
<b>To:</b>	Affordable Housing Committee
<b>From:</b>	Sue, Corke, Deputy City Manager
<b>Wards:</b>	City-wide
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2007\Cluster A\AHO\Housing Opportunities Toronto – Affordable Housing Framework 2008-2018

#### **SUMMARY**

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The City of Toronto has released for public review and engagement **Housing Opportunities Toronto – An Affordable Housing Framework 2008 – 2018**.

This report sets out the highlights of Housing Opportunities Toronto and the public consultation process to be undertaken over the next four to six months. Upon the completion of the consultation, further research and intergovernmental discussion, city officials will draft a long-term Affordable Housing Plan for consideration by the Affordable Housing Committee and Council in 2008.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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That this report be received for information.

##### **Financial Impact**

There are no direct financial implications from this report. Resources to conduct the consultation process are provided within the Affordable Housing Office.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

On July 19-21 and 26, 2005, Council adopted a report establishing the Affordable Housing Office and a recommendation to prepare the City's first Municipal Housing Statement. In April 2006 Deputy City Manager Sue Corke reported on the work program and approach for undertaking this work.

The release of *Housing Opportunities Toronto – An Affordable Housing Framework 2008 – 2018* is a major step forward in creating a long-term affordable housing plan for Toronto.

## **ISSUE BACKGROUND**

Having sufficient affordable housing for its residents is essential to the well-being of all Torontonians. This was recognized by City Council when it adopted the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force in January 1999 and again when Council adopted the new Official Plan in 2004. The City of Toronto also delivers a range of housing programs and services, often in partnership with other orders of government and community stakeholders.

Toronto is at a crossroads. The need for affordable housing is growing while real estate prices continue to put pressure on the availability of housing people can afford. Existing private rental and social housing stock is aging and in need of major repairs. One study suggests that 20% of the city's population needs an average of \$4,000 more annually to find and keep decent housing. Toronto Social Housing Connections reports 50,000 families and individuals actively ready to move into affordable homes.

Meanwhile federal government funding for key affordable housing and homeless initiatives will come to an end within the next 15 months, including the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program. The federal government also continues to withdraw funding to maintain existing social housing.

While the provincial Liberal party did promise during the recent election to develop a housing strategy and anti-poverty strategies, there were no specific funding commitments made to support these initiatives. At the same time, the City of Toronto continues to pay the downloaded costs of social housing without the capacity to finance this and it lacks the resources to address current and future housing needs.

In releasing ***Housing Opportunities Toronto – An Affordable Housing Framework 2008-2018*** the City is taking a bold first step to planning its housing future. The Framework is the result of research, the "Tale of Three Cities" forum held in June 2007 and the collaboration of officials from the Affordable Housing Office; City Planning; Social Development, Finance and Administration; Shelter, Support and Housing Administration; and Toronto Community Housing.

## COMMENTS

### Highlights:

Housing Opportunities Toronto includes 71 actions as the focus of public consultations and discussion with the public, other orders of government and Toronto stakeholders.

Highlights of the Framework include the following:

1. Demonstrates “the Power of Affordable Housing” to positively affect Toronto’s economic and social well-being as well as the health and quality of life of residents
2. Proposes actions to assist some 200,000 households.
3. Positions the City to lead the effort by planning and facilitating action and engaging the private sector, non-profits, co-operatives and other orders of government
4. Calls for innovation in “unlocking” existing social housing assets
5. Supports the City’s call to remove over \$200 million annually in provincially-downloaded social housing costs from the municipal tax base
6. Proposes the reinvestment of federal social housing savings
7. Calls for new affordable housing investments equal to \$469 million annually
7. Recommends a 10-year intergovernmental plan on affordable housing and action in eight key areas
8. Engages the public and all stakeholders in a public consultation

### Consultation Process:

With the public release of Housing Opportunities Toronto the consultation process has already begun. The public can access the report on the city’s web site at [www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing](http://www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing). Limited hard copies of the report are also available. A dedicated e-mail address **HOT@toronto.ca** has been established to receive public feedback. A bookmark is being distributed to the public to create an awareness of the consultation and encourage their involvement.

Over the next several months, consultation meetings throughout the city will be announced. City Councillors are also being encouraged to discuss the Framework with their constituents. The Chair of the Affordable Housing Committee and officials will provide ongoing progress reports to the committee.

In addition to reaching key stakeholders and the public, special outreach will take place with the disabled and mental health communities, immigrants, seniors, youth, key workers and aboriginal people.

There will be ongoing discussions with both federal and provincial governments since each has an essential role in the provision of affordable housing in Toronto.

The key questions being asked as part of the consultation are:

1. Has the Framework set the right goals and targets?
2. What should Toronto's affordable housing priorities be for the next 10 years?
3. Are there ideas, innovations, programs or policies from other places we should consider?
4. What role can you play in providing affordable housing?

On the completion of consultations in 2008, the Affordable Housing Office will coordinate through a Toronto Steering Committee of senior officials the development of Toronto's Affordable Housing Plan. The current schedule calls for the Affordable Housing Committee and City Council to consider the Plan later in 2008.

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Sue Corke,  
Deputy City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS**

“Housing Opportunities Toronto – Affordable Housing Framework 2008 – 2018” is available at [www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing](http://www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing)