

May 19, 2009

The Affordable Housing Committee
Committee Room 1, City Hall
Toronto, Ontario

RE: Housing Opportunities Toronto, An Affordable Housing Action Plan, 2010-2020

We want to congratulate the Affordable Housing Committee for the development of a comprehensive 10 year affordable housing strategy designed to meet the affordable housing needs of Toronto residents. Eight strategic themes with associated Actions designed to assist 257,700 households is an ambitious and achievable plan that is to be commended.

We strongly support the Plan's Toronto Housing Charter-Opportunity for All, which states that "All residents should have a safe, secure, affordable and well maintained home from which to realize their full potential." In the words from Action Plan, "... a full range of housing options should be available across Toronto, in every ward and every neighbourhood – from accessible apartments for seniors, to large homes for multi-generational families, to opportunities for individuals whose needs are best served by sharing their homes. As the new Toronto Housing Charter notes: "All residents have the right to equal treatment in housing without discrimination as provided by the Ontario Human Rights Code..." It is imperative for a vibrant City like Toronto to eliminate the Not in My Backyard response to affordable, supportive and transitional housing in order to create effective housing opportunities for all Torontonians. Housing is a basic human right. Safe, affordable housing is a social determinant of health for a healthy Toronto.

We encourage the City's commitment of creating 1,000 new affordable rental homes per year for the next ten years. We congratulate the City on the incentives that they provide to help to ensure affordability, stability and security for future residents. Affordable, supportive and transitional housing would not be possible without these City incentives. New, effectively built, affordable rental properties require funding that is ongoing and dependable. We encourage the City in its request to federal and provincial governments to provide stable, long-term, ongoing affordable housing funding. This initiative can only improve the economy as individuals and families who become housed will be more able to contribute to the economy and their communities while enjoying a better quality of life. We encourage the City in their requests to the Provincial government for new, annual and co-ordinated rent supplements for those who earn low wages or receive social assistance to provide affordable rents for those most vulnerable in our society. Homelessness and its associated problems only ends with permanent housing and affordable housing with appropriate supports for all vulnerable people has been shown to be very cost effective.

We congratulate the Committee that the Action Plan is complementary to other City initiatives, including the Official Plan, Climate Change Strategy, and Transit City. We believe the Action Plan will encourage business investment and help to stimulate the economy while creating opportunity through housing for all residents.

Sincerely,

Tim Need
