



## **Executive Committee June 30, 2015**

### **Deputation by Toronto Drop In Network**

#### **Manager Elis Ziegler**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on Council's process for Toronto's poverty reduction strategy. TDIN represents 45 agencies and over 50 drop-ins across the City supporting some of our most vulnerable residents.

TO Prosperity, the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy, clearly illustrates poverty reduction is not solely a "social justice issue". Poverty costs everyone, confirmed by both the City's own consultation and most recently the parallel Commitment to Community Position Papers, not to mention the countless reports, research and consultations which came before.

This Council has shown significant leadership in moving Toronto toward equity and wellness for all residents, and the Poverty Reduction Strategy is another indicator of that leadership. The recommendations in item 7.2 of this agenda are simply stated but far-reaching, setting the tone in holding ourselves accountable for systemic responses to poverty reduction.

The issues of Housing Stability, Access to Services, Living Wages and Quality Jobs, Transportation, and Food Access have clearly articulated in the Strategy's Planning Matrix as a result of resident input. The focus of this deputation is on another goal: institutional change. In order effect permanent change, Council, City's Divisions and Agencies, and the community based agencies they fund, must work effectively in tandem with service participants. It is formalizing the link between City Divisions and subject matter experts which will make or break this Strategy.

Whether it's the Drop-in Sector, child care, employment or housing, the frequent cross-sectoral connections between agencies, city divisions and system planning tables highlight the need to ensure two things: that the existing subject matter experts are called on, and that all City Divisions are explicitly tasked with participation.

Subject matter experts include people with lived experience, city-driven and Community-based systems planning tables. The formal integration of these groups into poverty reduction strategy work plans will go far in to institutionalize action and change.

Some examples include:

1. **City Planning Tables:** Existing sector-based City planning tables are crucial parts of the solution. For example, SSHA's tables address homeless reduction, shelters, harm reduction, immigrants and refugees. Similar planning tables exist across City Divisions to call on to enact the Strategy's solutions.
2. **Community Based Organizations and Coalitions:** Social Planning Toronto, Commitment to Community and the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness and TDIN represent Toronto-wide cross sectoral coalitions
3. **Peer-driven Coalitions:** Fair Fare Coalition, TTC Riders, Working for Change, NIA's

The Strategy's vision is to address issues, create solutions and drive systemic change. All of us need to be held accountable to make that happen. I urge the Executive Committee and Council to ensure the direction to the City Manager includes:

1. Clear identification of intersecting City Divisions with inclusion of at least the following as explicit partners in the Strategy: SSHA, Public Health, TESS, Child Care, Enterprise Toronto, Parks and Recreation, Toronto Police Services, Municipal Licensing and Standards, TTC, Social Development and Finance.
2. Intensive integration of sector-based contribution, emphasizing service participants, into the work of City Divisions with clear timeframes and measurable outcomes
3. Incorporating Strategy implementation into the expectations of City-funded agencies.

The explicit and mandatory integration of City Divisions linked with sectoral collaboration, with a service participant focus will help make significant gains in homelessness, hunger, health and isolation. Your continued leadership to ensure all Toronto residents benefit from healthy wages, food and housing, and the transportation to access them will go far.