

November 25, 2017

Josephine Archbold
Clerk, Executive Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

email: exc@toronto.ca

Re Item 29.12

Dear Executive Committee Members

St. Stephen's Community House fully supports the full implementation in 2018 of TO Prosperity, Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

St. Stephen's Community House is a multi-service, non-profit charity and United Way Anchor agency that has been serving Toronto neighbourhoods since 1962. Our services enhance the lives of more than 27,000 people each year, with a focus on the most vulnerable people in our community – children and young families, at-risk youth, newcomers to Canada, isolated seniors, people who are unemployed, and people who are homeless.

We work with people in our programs who experience deep poverty. Our Corner Drop-In sees over 200 people a day, people in crisis who have nowhere to turn. Many of the people in our Drop-in are living with mental health and psychiatric illnesses as well as addictions. We have seen an increasing number of seniors in our drop-in as they simply cannot afford to buy enough food. We are very concerned that Toronto is now the economic inequality capital of Canada.

Many of our program participants languish on city waiting lists. Some have been on the affordable housing waiting list for years. 62,000 children and adults are on waitlists for recreation program spaces, and 12,000 families with children wait for subsidized childcare.

We are concerned about the economic and social costs of poverty. People need quality and timely healthcare as emergency rooms are not the appropriate place for people to go. People need safe, affordable housing, accessible and affordable transit, quality, affordable childcare, recreation programs and more.

Our organization joins with others to ask that today you do the following:

1. **Approve the 2018 Work Plan for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.** This plan will help 1,400 more households access affordable housing, create 1,000 more child case spaces (half with subsidies), 36,000 low-income people access reduced TTC fares, 13,000 more children access school food programs, 3,500 children access free swim classes, 2,300 children access subsidized after school programs, and help 3,000 seniors access free dental care.
2. **Strengthen the Poverty Reduction Strategy by:**
 - a. Setting clear progress targets and timelines for all recommendations in the strategy.
 - b. Include in the 2018 work plan a commitment to permanently fund the Strategy
 - c. Complete the formation of the Accountability Structure for the Strategy in 2018.

St. Stephen's Community House is optimistic that together we can solve Toronto's poverty crisis and we look forward to engaging with you in this important work.

Sincerely,



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