

## DEPUTATION

To: **Executive Committee, Toronto City Council**  
DATE: **Tuesday, June 19, 2018**  
RE: **Creation of a Standing Committee on Housing, EX35.1**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH). The TAEH is a collective impact initiative made up of Community Partners focused on what it will take to end homelessness in Toronto.

We are here today to speak in support of and commend the Mayor's recommendation of the creation of a Standing Committee on Housing.

The Alliance strongly believes that housing is the solution to end homelessness. We are very encouraged by the recommendations outlined in the report, in particular, the conversion of the Affordable Housing Committee from a special committee to a standing committee responsible for all housing, shelter and accommodation matters. Having one central standing housing committee at City Hall to look at housing holistically and tackle the issue in a central and coordinated way is much needed.

A Standing Committee on Housing that has a mandate to monitor and make recommendations on housing and shelter in the city, demonstrates an understanding that it is one continuum of services from street outreach to affordable housing that is required. It also shows a commitment to make housing and accommodation a priority.

The Mayor's April 23rd announcement of the newly formed CreateTO, the city's new real estate super agency created to identify and purchase strategically important land for creating affordable housing, is also welcomed.

In the meantime, it is imperative that we ensure those affected by homelessness and poverty have immediate access to housing. The current state of homelessness is at a crisis level. We know that Toronto's shelters are near capacity (**91 percent – June 17**); that **8,635 people** are homeless on any given night; that over (**6,512 – June 17**) individuals and families are in shelters, with over **500 people** using respite sites (**May 30, 2018**).

Looking ahead, we believe that a Standing Committee on Housing will be beneficial in such areas as:

- Redefining what deeply affordable housing means and how to bridge the affordability gap.
- Exploring a range of housing and affordability issues.
- Enhancing the City's interdivisional work that's starting to take shape.
- Including diversion and prevention as part of the overall strategy.
- Addressing the continuum from shelter to housing.
- Developing and enhancing the role of portable housing benefits.

Having a Standing Committee on Housing also provides an opportunity for the Alliance to work together with the committee on reaching our goal of ZERO TO, which is our plan, our campaign and our mission to end chronic homelessness in our city. We acknowledge our role in working with the City to make affordable housing a reality and look forward to helping set Toronto up for success.

We believe the new Standing Committee will also be instrumental in helping to carry out the initiatives outlined in *Reaching Home*; the Federal Government's redesigned Homelessness Partnering Strategy, announced on June 11. With that in mind, we encourage the City to commit as soon as possible a certain percentage of the increased National Housing Strategy dollars to housing and supports for those currently experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

### **Conclusion**

We want to recognize the good work done by the Community Development and Recreation Committee, The Affordable Housing Committee and Tenant Issues Advisory Council in addressing all matters relating to housing, shelter and accommodation. That said, bringing all the City's housing responsibilities together under one committee along with a proposed new housing secretariat is a step in the right direction and will undoubtedly be more efficient and impactful.

The Alliance greatly favours the effort in creating a new committee focused on championing and overseeing the City's overall housing delivery system; one that sees emergency shelters and supportive housing as integral components along with mainstream affordable housing development. Our deputation has been reviewed by the Alliance's Community Partners and Individual Supporters and we stand together in advocating support for the motion for a new Standing Committee on Housing.

Thank you.

**For more information:**

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