

Deputation Re: Acquisition of 11 Brock

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Thank you for the opportunity to depute this morning.

My name is Paul Bruce and I am the Chief Executive Officer at Cota. Cota is a non-profit organization that supports people living with mental health and cognitive challenges across Toronto.

We provide a wide ranges of services people living with mental illness, substance use challenges, geriatric mental health conditions, acquired brain injuries, developmental disabilities and the experience of homelessness. These services include over 500 units of supportive housing. Collectively we support over 5,000 per annum.

Given the breadth of our services and the populations we support, we are actively engaged with a number groups that have a keen interest in ensuring that additional affordable and supportive housing opportunities are created for Toronto's most marginalized and vulnerable citizens. For example, we are members of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, the Toronto Mental Health and Addictions Supportive Housing Network, the Toronto Developmental Services Alliance, the Toronto Acquired Brain Injury Network and are supporters of the efforts of Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust.

Suffice it to say that each of these groups believes that access to housing is a fundamental human right and an essential foundation to health and wellness. Unfortunately, access to affordable housing in this City, at this time, for people living on modest means, has reached a crisis point. Market rents continue to escalate, vacancies hover at around 1% and neighbourhoods, like Parkdale,

continue to experience erosion of affordable housing options through gentrification. The factors contribute to the unfortunate displacement of residents from their communities and the ever increasing pressures on the City's emergency shelter system.

Collectively, there are tens of thousands of people on various waitlists for affordable and supportive housing in Toronto. For example, there are approximately 16,000 people on the waitlist for mental health and addictions supportive housing alone. If we are to address the desperate need for affordable and supportive housing in the next few years, we need to employ every possible strategy available, including the acquisition and development of sites such as 11 Brock.

As such, Cota would implore the City to proceed with this acquisition and the proposed plans to move quickly in releasing a competitive proposal call to select a non-profit proponent to work with the City and Create TO to design, build and operate this site under a long-term lease with the City.

Thank You.