



Senator Art Eggleton, Chair
Ed Clark, Member
Blake Hutcheson, Member
Janet Mason, Member
Muna Mohamed, Member
Brian F.C. Smith, Member
Phil Gillies, Secretary

365 Bloor Street East
15th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M4V 3L4

Mayor's Task Force on
Toronto Community Housing

Tel: 416-338-3301
Fax: 416-696-3718
toronto.ca

Thursday April 16, 2015

Mayor John Tory
Office of the Mayor
City Hall, 2nd floor
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON
M4H 2N2

Re: Preliminary Findings and Suggestions – Centralized Waiting List

Dear Mr. Mayor,

On behalf of the Mayor's Task Force on Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), I am writing to you with suggestions related to the Centralized Waiting List. We have been briefed on a staff report that is being brought forward to the Executive Committee meeting on April 22, 2015 seeking Council's approval of the return of the administration of the Centralized Waiting List for subsidized housing to the City as Service Manager. The Task Force would like to note our endorsement of this action.

Administration of the list has always been a legislated responsibility of the City of Toronto as Service Manager. The waiting list function was delegated by the City to TCHC through an agreement in 2002 and is being carried out by TCHC's wholly-owned subsidiary, Access Housing Connections Incorporated (AHC), more commonly known as *Housing Connections*.

Returning this function to the City will allow TCHC to devote greater attention and resources to their primary roles. Importantly, it will also greatly support the City's efforts to implement housing access system improvements currently under consideration or



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development. These system improvements have come out of a comprehensive review of the City's Centralized Waiting List and Housing Access system and include

- Implementing a choice-based system for the allocation of RGI units
- Integrating access to housing allowances and other housing benefits with access to RGI
- Integrating access to RGI and other housing benefits with other income-tested human services such as child care fee subsidies and Ontario Works

The Task Force heard from Peel Region officials about their successful efforts at Human Services Integration and considers this to be a worthy direction to better service the needs of those seeking access to one or more of these three programs with a single window access. It also heard of their use of other housing options such as rent supplements and housing allowances to provide more timely intervention rather than lengthy waiting periods. Several years on a waiting list to meet housing needs that are immediate limits the credibility of the system.

Service improvements from these initiatives will translate into more meaningful customer assistance leading to better housing outcomes and greater housing stability for City residents in need.

The challenges of Toronto's social housing waiting list are well known. The growing numbers of applicants on that list are often cited as a stark indicator of housing need in the City and the apparent inadequacy of social housing supply. But taken alone, these numbers are not a credible measure of housing need or the range of affordable housing options available to households in need. The City's efforts to transform the waiting list into a more proactive and responsive part of a coordinated housing access and benefit system will address this shortcoming and should be supported. The City can also use this transfer as a way to integrate the delivery of RGI with other forms of housing assistance as well as integrate it with other income-tested services.

Sincerely,



Senator Art Eggleton, Chair
Mayor's Task Force on Toronto Community Housing