

October 19, 2015

His Worship Mayor John Tory,
Members of Toronto City Council Executive Committee

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of Toronto City Council Executive Committee,

I am writing today to ask Executive Committee to adopt the recommendations in the TO Prosperity: Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy as a crucial step in dealing holistically with the challenges of poverty in our community. Anglicans across Toronto have long been actively involved in serving those living in poverty through advocacy efforts, meal programs, Out of the Cold shelters, and other initiatives. I write as the Archbishop of the Anglican Diocese of Toronto, representing some 100,000 self-identified Anglicans in the city. We welcome a clear strategy from the city to help address some of the systemic causes which make these programs necessary. With this poverty reduction strategy, the City of Toronto has a real chance to coordinate concrete efforts towards reducing poverty and lift many of our citizens out of poverty. It deserves the support of the Executive Committee, and of Council.

As the TO Prosperity strategy makes clear, reducing poverty in our city requires a multi-pronged approach that identifies key priority areas and commits to policy and regulatory changes over the near term, medium term, and the long term. City staff have identified several significant proposals which can be implemented by City Council over the next three years and would have a measurable impact in improving the situation of our neighbours living in poverty. A commitment to funding these initiatives, and a clear timeline for implementation of these proposals is key to making this strategy successful. I look forward to firm support of this strategy so that we can move forward together to improve the lives of Torontonians living in poverty.

TO Prosperity is the result of extensive consultation by Deputy Mayor Pam McConnell, city staff, and communities and stakeholders throughout the city to identify core needs and to hear Torontonians' visions of what the future could hold for us all. Certainly, there are areas where we might wish to see stronger proposals or increased funding – around the area of increased emergency homeless shelter beds, for example, or a clearer proposal for low-income transit access – however the strategy as a whole offers a hopeful vision for what is possible in our city if we commit to working together. For our part, Anglicans remain committed to serving our neighbours and to working with the city to insure that the opportunity to thrive is available to all. It is work that we will have to undertake together, along with people with lived experience of poverty, non-profit and social service organizations, and businesses, but it is work that we are prepared to commit to over the long term. I hope that Executive Committee and Council share this commitment and will pass the TO Prosperity strategy so that we can all move forward together in building a more equitable city.

Yours faithfully,



The Most Rev. Colin R. Johnson
Archbishop of Toronto
Metropolitan of Ontario