



**Canadian Union of  
Public Employees**

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Units  
- Service Units

*City of Toronto*  
- Full-Time  
- Long-Term Care Homes  
& Services Part-Time  
- Recreation Workers  
Part-Time  
- Unit B Part-Time

*Toronto Community  
Housing Corporation*

**SERVING OUR  
MEMBERS  
SINCE  
1942**

# EX9.6.1

## DELIVERED BY EMAIL AND REGULAR MAIL

October 19, 2015

Mayor John Tory, Chair  
and Members of the Executive Committee  
City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of the Executive Committee:

**Re: EX9.6: George Street Revitalization - Recommended Scope and Approach**

I am writing to you on behalf of CUPE Local 79 members, especially those who work in the City's shelters and hostels. Our position has always been that more resources, more staff and more facilities are needed to meet the urgent needs of our homeless population.

According to a City report earlier this year, Toronto needs up to 15 new homeless shelters, including some in the city's inner suburbs, to address overcrowding, disrepair and displacement, as downtown buildings are sold for redevelopment. The City's shelter system functions close to 100% occupancy night after night and people needing a safe, warm place to sleep sometimes have to be turned away when capacity is reached. Permanent housing and mental health supports for this vulnerable population must continue to be the City's goal.

I would now like to comment on this report from City staff regarding the George Street Revitalization. Some of Toronto's most at risk population will be directly affected by this plan, and particular attention must be paid to those who need specialized treatment and support. This includes a specific aged male population in Seaton House.

According to this report: *Seaton House currently provides over 600 shelter beds for men. The George Street Revitalization will accommodate the return of approximately 200 Seaton House clients once construction is complete, which means 400 men must be permanently relocated.*

During both the transition phase and the permanent outcome, these specific homeless populations need the community support services, as well as social networks, that are only available in the downtown core. These services and networks include the drop-ins, food banks, meal programs, medical services, and

hospitals. It is so important for people who cannot afford to take transit everywhere that these resources are within walking distance. Any proposal that would uproot this population away from these much-needed supports would appear cruel. The City must ensure that these homeless men will continue to have full access to these services, through the transition period, and permanently.

SSHA management consistently throughout the planning process for the George Street Revitalization made a commitment that no Local 79 staff would be displaced as part of the process. Whether nursing, client service workers, counselors, food service and cleaning staff, all are an integral part of the care and the well-being of homeless people in Toronto. It is Local 79's hope that the City will always be mindful of this vulnerable population and include them in the Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy.

At this time of year, with the accompanying colder temperatures, I would also like to hear reassurances from the City that this revitalization will not reduce its capacity to provide emergency beds during extreme cold weather conditions.

In conclusion, Local 79 urges the City to keep complete and careful control of the existing shelter system and any enhancements. As demonstrated by the award-winning models of the City-operated shelters, the City has the expertise and the experience to operate all shelters directly.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Maguire', written in a cursive style.

Tim Maguire  
President

Cc: City Council