



AN AFFILIATED AGENCY UJA FEDERATION OF GREATER TORONTO

525 Lawrence Avenue W.

Toronto, ON M6A 3E1

Tel: 647-484-4446

Fax: 647-797-4577

E mail: kehilla@rogers.com

Web site: www.kehilla.ca

January 29, 2019

COMMUNICATION

CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF JANUARY 30TH 2019 “Housing Now” Initiative EX1.1

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of Council,

As the Executive Director of Kehilla Residential Programme, a non-profit provider and initiator of creative housing solutions and partnerships, I am writing to commend and support the Report and Recommendations in the City Managers Implementing the “Housing Now” Initiative which is before Council on January 30th. It is a well thought out plan which can achieve results and have impact.

The Recommendations in this report are so timely as we are experiencing extreme winter weather conditions felt most acutely by our City’s most vulnerable populations. While immediate shelter from freezing conditions is a top immediate priority, releasing 11 surplus zoned City sites for development with affordable housing targets is the start of a more permanent solution to that will provide stability for people with very low incomes who live in the city. The sites being released for housing are all located close to transit. Elsewhere, sites like these are being developed for market housing only. Access to TTC supports long term stability for tenants. I know transit is an additional cost burden, but at least the city is taking steps to make sure some of the nearby housing is affordable.

I also support the creation of a Housing Secretariat. Adding staff to co-ordinate and expedite delivery of affordable housing is a positive step so long as it does not contribute to a further layer of bureaucracy. The process of approvals needs to be shortened not lengthened with no disconnect between the various departments reviewing applications including the Housing and Planning Committee and City Council.

I applaud the Recommendation for a Non-Profit Capacity Fund to allow non -profits to participate in the Housing Now Initiative. Non-profits have expertise in supporting tenants with challenges to stay housed, skills that are critical to any solution-based discussion. These experienced providers have proven track records and partnerships with support service agencies and supportive housing providers. Kehilla, as one

example, has partnerships with the real estate community that help fund our private rent assistance program. The National Housing Strategy will roll out housing benefits later this year which can be attached to tenants referred to the developer built “affordable units” to support lower incomes.

To strengthen tenant support, I urge you to consider a mixed provider model when allocating the affordable units that will be developed by private developers. Using this model, a diverse range of tenants can be supported in their new homes Kehilla recently submitted a proposal to the Affordable Housing Office for one such redevelopment as a pilot case.

It’s important to be innovative and look for better build solutions – they can be borrowed from other Cities like the Vancouver model of constructing modular and moveable townhouse units on a parking lot beside its Art Gallery. How many serviced lots in existing communities can CreateTO identify that won’t be developed in the short term but could be transformed to temporary housing? This can help as we begin to catch up on building more permanent housing. I imagine that non-profits, developers and building supply companies would be willing to contribute their expertise to develop more of these cost effective and humane housing solutions whether for the homeless or refugee populations. I certainly am.

By approving the Recommendations of the “Housing Now” report it’s a positive start to the City addressing our affordable housing issue in a more cohesive and coordinated way.



Nancy Singer
Executive Director
Kehilla Residential Programme