

DEPUTATION



TO: Executive Committee, Toronto City Council

DATE: Wednesday, January 23, 2018

RE: Housing Now Initiative

Good morning, I'm here on behalf of the Toronto Shelter Network (TSN). Thank you for the opportunity to speak about the Housing Now Initiative today.

For those who are unfamiliar with the Toronto Shelter Network, we represent the majority of Toronto's shelters and respite providers, including organizations such as Fred Victor, Homes First, Dixon Hall, which also supports the operations of Out of the Cold, The Salvation Army, Sojourn House, Streethaven, Covenant House and many others. We support shelters to provide those experiencing homelessness with the highest quality of services and supports so that this important part of the housing continuum has the capacity to successfully transition people out of homelessness.

This past year, emergency shelter and respite providers have been working tirelessly to provide enough beds for all of those in need and to make sure that no one is turned away, particularly in these frigid winter days. By the spring of this year, an additional 1000 beds will have been added to our system.

This massive expansion of the shelter system cannot continue at this rate. The current shelter system is at capacity and expanding it further puts at risk our clients and our staff. More importantly, investing in one part of the housing continuum to this extent, while not addressing the fact that shelter providers have no housing options to offer their clients means that we will not make a dent in homelessness in this City.

Therefore, we need to begin to direct a substantial portion of the millions of dollars earmarked for increasing shelter beds towards other parts of our housing continuum. This includes investing in more transitional and supportive housing,

providing portable housing allowances and rent supplements and building new affordable housing and new deeply affordable housing. The Toronto Shelter Network fully understands that the only way to effectively end homelessness and save lives is through strategic and visionary measures.

The Toronto Shelter Network works in partnership with the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness and supports its ZERO TO plan. The Housing Now initiative will bring us closer to our shared goals and as such, we are here to support the City as you implement Housing Now and this important step towards developing deeply affordable housing options for people.

For more information:

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