

**Deputation to Planning and Housing Committee
From Human Rights Working Group
Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness
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Congratulations on the establishment of this new committee. My name is Paul Dowling and most of you know me from my work with the HomeComing Coalition. For more than 15 years that organization advocated for a human rights lens in the development of affordable housing. I am writing today as the chair of the newly established Human Rights Working Group of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, which was created to carry on the human rights advocacy work of HomeComing.

The Human Rights Working Group is very pleased to see the creation of a Council Committee which will bring the City's Planning and Housing work together in one place. We are optimistic that this will enable the City to ensure that the Planning process supports and furthers the City's affordable housing priorities.

The Working Group is looking forward to watching the work of the Committee and to encouraging you to address some of the ongoing Planning issues which are a barrier to the ability of all people to realize their right to housing and to live in decent and affordable housing in the neighbourhood of their choice.

Some examples of these planning issues are:

- Zoning by-laws which prohibit rooming houses in most parts of the City, including all of Scarborough, North York, East York, and York. They are permitted in the former City of Toronto and parts of South Etobicoke. For many low-income people, rooming houses are the only affordable housing option. Excluding this housing form from large parts of the City effectively excludes people from those communities who are on social assistance, who are newcomers to Canada or who live with disabilities.
- More than half of the land mass of the City (the so called "yellow belt") is zoned for only single and semi houses; no rooming houses, triplexes, low rise apartments, high rise apartments; this excludes many people.
- As recently as last year Planning staff continued to apply separation distances between group homes and residential care facilities long after they were removed from the by-law based on the human rights challenge by the Dream Team.
- And, of course, there is the opportunity to introduce Inclusionary Zoning to ensure that a significant portion of all new residential developments are truly affordable.

We are pleased to see the City's commitment to making surplus lands available for affordable housing; It is important that this precious resource be used well; the affordable housing that is developed on these lands needs to be truly affordable – based on incomes, not based on an unaffordable market.

We are pleased that the Planning & Housing Committee will have a role in the development of the new 10 year Housing Opportunities Toronto – Affordable Housing Action Plan. We hope to see a plan that will:

- affirm that Housing is a human right
- affirm and update Toronto's Housing Charter, and
- include realistic and achievable targets and a process for monitoring and reporting, with a commitment to adjust course as needed to ensure that the targets are met.

We are pleased to see this committee as a concrete statement of Council's commitment to addressing the affordable housing crisis in Toronto. We look forward to working with you to end homelessness in Toronto.

Paul Dowling, Chair
Human Rights Working Group
Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness