

PH11.5.9

From: Brian Davis
To: [Planning and Housing](#)
Subject: My comments for 2019.PH11.5 on December 10, 2019 Planning and Housing Committee
Date: December 9, 2019 7:52:11 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the December 10, 2019 Planning and Housing Committee meeting on item 2019.PH11.5, HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

Comments:

December 10, 2019

To: Planning and Housing Committee

RE: PH11.5, Housing TO, 2020-2030 Action Plan

From: Brian Davis, ED, Houselink Community Homes and Chair of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) Housing Development Working Group

My name is Brian Davis, Chair of the TAEH Housing Development Working Group. TAEH applauds the City for creating a comprehensive plan anchored within a housing rights framework. We share the City's vision that when homelessness does occur, that it always be rare, brief and non-recurring.

The TAEH Housing Development Working Group is a group of non-profit providers who are actively and collectively identifying resources, strategies and solutions to spur the acquisition, development and renovation of quality, rental housing stock accessible to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

As such, while the Housing TO plan speaks to many areas of affordable housing and for many diverse populations, our deputation zeroes in on the strategic actions that will create more deeply affordable rental stock, coupled with wrap around, flexible supports for those experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness.

We know we need to build rental stock if we're going to meet the target of 18,000, a minimum of 1,800 per year. Over the past decade, as we've relied largely on the for-profit rental sector, we have been losing units due to low vacancy rates, rampant discrimination and rent subsidy tools that are just not keeping pace with market increases. We do not expect over the 10 years of this plan, for this market dynamic to shift dramatically.

1. **We need capital.** The report recognizes the need for \$6.5 billion in capital costs over the next 10 years, however we are concerned that this target will be unachievable solely relying on other levels of government and the need here in Toronto. What can the City provide in

capital or additional housing allowances? How can the City contribute to the target of 18,000 using its own resources?

2. **We need land.** With land ever increasing in value, we are pleased with the intent to create a land bank to preserve public land for affordable housing development. In order to prioritize those with the most complex needs as noted in the plan, we will need the City to work closely with TAEH members to create long range plans to develop the dedicated housing stock designed to meet their needs, couple with wrap around supports –and unlock the potential in our existing assets and noted below.
3. **We believe we can achieve more with Housing Now.** Along the same vein, we strongly recommend that the current Housing Now program should be used as a stronger vehicle to contribute to the goal of 1,800 supportive housing units each year. We believe this could be achievable by leveraging more city and provincial subsidies, and prioritizing the use of these lands to only the non-profit sector as other municipalities in Canada have done. The for-profit sector does have a role but the non-profit sector will ensure all affordable units remain perpetually affordable, has missions aligned with the goals of this plan and the expertise in creating inclusive mixed income communities.
4. **A City Wide Approach.** We can't emphasize strongly enough the importance of a City wide approach in which every department, such as Create TO, MLS, planning, along with the Housing Secretariat are ensuring their programs and policies are contributing to the creation of supportive housing. When we analyzed the barriers we faced in building supportive housing over the past 5 years, the barriers were usually inside these and other departments. We trust that the new Housing Commissioner's role, coupled with the Housing Lead committee will have real teeth going forward to influence these other departments to ensure that they are all working together towards the common goal of creating deeply affordable supportive housing as a primary tool to address chronic homelessness.
5. **We agree that enhanced inter-governmental coordination will have to underpin the realization of this plan.** As operators and developers of affordable housing, we recognize the significant coordination which is required, given multiple funding streams. Going forward, we will expect staff within the City to help shepherd projects through planning and funding approvals. Programs like Open Door need to be better aligned to support non-profit development and access to other funding sources, and firm commitments need to be made to providers such as the waiving of development fees, to assist with long term planning.
6. **Enhance the City's work with the Non-profit Housing Sector.** TAEH, in partnership with a number of sector partners have been creating a Supportive Housing Growth plan which will be finalized in 2020. This will provide us a common understanding of the opportunities as well as gaps to meet the supportive housing needs in Toronto. Our vision for this plan is to strategically leverage our existing resources, and build our capacity to renew and expand our collective portfolio. In this regard, we believe this plan can go farther in recognizing the long standing role of the non-profit sector in addressing homelessness and creating inclusive communities. Applying any subsidies to build permanently affordable units that in tandem build equity for a non-profit provider will ensure these units are affordable for perpetuity. This is the best return on investment over the long term.

TAEH and our Development Working Group are fully committed to working with the City to harness our collective resources to support the realization of this plan over the next 10 years. We believe that by working differently together as providers and funders, taking a systems and collective impact approach, ensuring that other levels of government are active contributors, we'll be able to over-achieve on this plan. To this end we can then ensure that individuals in Toronto who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are provided with good quality housing with the supports that they require to maintain stable housing and enjoy an improved quality of life.

Brian Davis (Executive Director, Houselink Community Homes)

