

April 29, 2020
Sent via email



CC20.6.1

Dear Mayor Tory and Toronto City Councillors,

We are writing to support and urge even further action on Item CC20.6 - *Implementing the Toronto Modular Housing Initiative as an Urgent Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic* - before you tomorrow.

The TAEH believes firmly that only housing will end homelessness. While we also support appropriate emergency responses in order to protect human health and rights, the current COVID-19 pandemic has only made it more clear that Toronto needs a significant amount and range of housing options to end homelessness and put thousands of people back on their paths to health, well-being, employment and community inclusion.

Modular housing is one such option. It can be built quickly for at least half the cost of other types of construction and is permanent housing that contributes to Toronto's commitment to add 18,000 units of new supportive housing by 2028.

Modern modular design creates a welcoming environment for people with individual contained homes for each person or family – their own bedroom, kitchen, bathroom and living space. These are the types of environments that keep people healthier and safe when public health emergencies occur, and will save lives as we continue to respond to COVID-19 through 2020.

Each building can also be custom designed to meet the needs of client support profiles, mix and the range and style of supports each building will provide. This includes both physical and program design that responds to providing safe and supportive homes for populations of the sizes proposed here. Considerations such as location of community and programming spaces throughout the building and creating a mix of tenants conducive to community building from the beginning.

While the TAEH clearly supports today's recommendations, we also urge bolder action. Housing TO's action plan already calls for a minimum of 1,000 modular housing units over the next 10 years, but **the time is now to create 1,000 units over the next 2 years**. The 110 units outlined in Phase 1 in CC20.6 can be the "pilot" through which we create the Toronto model we can then rapidly scale up over the following 18 months. TAEH is committed to continuing to work with the Housing Secretariat and everyone at the City to achieve this goal, including advocating to other orders of government for what is needed.

COVID-19 has laid bare just how poorly we have collectively responded to homelessness in Toronto – an emergency in itself as Council named it in late 2019. Stepping up now to declare a target of reaching the goal of 1,000 units by the spring of 2022 is true leadership. It takes best advantage of the current public and political will, of all orders of government, to address COVID-19's immediate threats and lessons. And it will avoid the suffering for all involved if we have to ask people to return to the crowded dorms of their old shelters after waiting the pandemic out in isolation hotel rooms or surviving the virus in hospitals or recovery sites.

Sincerely,

Kira Heineck, Executive Lead

Committed to Ending Homelessness
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