

November 17, 2020

Executive Committee
Attn: Cathrine Regan, Administrator
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Via Email to: exc@toronto.ca

Dear Mayor Tory and members of the Executive Committee

Re: EX18.6 Data for Equity Strategy: Supporting Equitable Services,
Equity Priorities, Performance Measurement and Accountability

On behalf of United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT), we are writing to express support for the Data for Equity Strategy. The Data for Equity Strategy is critically important for addressing inequality in our City. The issues that this strategy would help to address are neither new nor unknown: Toronto region, despite being the national economic engine, is also the income inequality capital of Canada where factors like postal code, race and gender, amongst others, can determine access to programs, supports and opportunity.

As far back as 2004, the UWGT report, *Poverty by Postal Code*, identified the growing concentration of low-income households outside of the downtown core and into the inner suburbs across Toronto. Our *Vertical Poverty* report in 2011 shed light on rising poverty and socio-economic isolation for residents in Toronto's high-rise rental towers. And, more recently, United Way's *The Opportunity Equation* reports have highlighted how the number of low-income neighbourhoods have dramatically increased throughout Peel, Toronto and York Region while middle income neighbourhoods are disappearing. The impact of being poor, racialized and living in a low-income neighbourhood is compounded by a lack of amenities, supports and services that make it difficult for residents to get ahead and break the cycle of poverty. This concentrated poverty creates hardships for individuals and families but also has ramifications for the economic and social vitality of the region.

Such fault lines have been deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Evidence shows that some of the same neighbourhoods identified 16 years ago in *Poverty by Postal Code* are the ones most adversely impacted by this pandemic. The City's own data, as well as the *Fall Out Report* by the Toronto Foundation have documented the troubling inequities that threaten to tear our city apart. As an example, a report released today by Social Planning Toronto and York University shows deep social, spatial and racial divides in rental housing in Toronto, with 45% of racialized individuals in tenant households living in overcrowded housing – almost three times the rate of White individuals

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN
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in tenant households – conditions that put Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities at greater risk for COVID-19.

It is important to note that much progress has been made over the years. UWGT continues to collaborate with City staff as well as community and corporate partners to bring supports and opportunity to residents through several strategies, including, but not limited to: Building Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (BSNS), Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (TSNS), *TO Prosperity*, Inclusive Local Economic Opportunity (ILEO) Table and the Youth Equity Strategy.

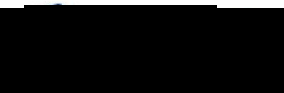
The Data for Equity Strategy will help bring a renewed and more focused energy to all our collective work. It would also propel momentum towards a pandemic recovery that helps Toronto build back better by addressing historical and deep-rooted systemic inequities and discrimination that exist in our city as identified in the research above. The strategy will help UWGT partner with the City of Toronto and other institutions to:

- invest scarce resources with greater intention of transformative change on the people and places most impacted by poverty, racial injustice and the COVID-19 pandemic;
- connect with and listen to people who are living this reality, often in silence; and therefore
- establish a bold new normal where evidence based in socio-demographic data collection and experiences drive decision making.

The implementation of the Data for Equity Strategy is complex and requires resources from the City as well as commitment from community partners. It will not always be easy, but we remain committed to figuring it out together. As an organization, a funder and an employer, UWGT remains committed to strengthening our workplace culture and our connections with and impact in communities most impacted by poverty and systemic discrimination; whether they are Black, Indigenous, women, newcomers, LGBTQ2S+ or precarious workers, amongst others.

That is why we are so pleased to see UWGT named as a partner for one of the Phase One pilots of this strategy. We hope to fuel this new journey towards a stronger, more vibrant and united city with your leadership at Council.

Sincerely,



Ruth Crammond
Vice President, Community Investment & Development