

Intergovernmental Action to Address Housing and Homelessness Issues

Date: January 29, 2020

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

On December 17, 2019, City Council adopted with amendments, report *PH11.5 - HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan* and requested the City Manager to engage other orders of government to establish an Intergovernmental Working Group with a mandate to develop a joint action plan and secure increased investments to expedite efforts to address housing challenges and homelessness in Toronto.

City Council also requested the City Manager to report to the Planning and Housing Committee on February 12, 2020 with an update on the progress of discussions from the Intergovernmental Working Group.

This report responds to Council's requests and provides an update of actions taken to-date to leverage intergovernmental partnerships to advance the targets in the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan aimed at improving the housing outcomes for residents in the city.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services recommends that the Planning and Housing Committee:

1. Receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Creating new affordable housing and preserving the City's existing housing stock will increase the opportunity for lower-income and vulnerable individuals and families, as well as those from equity-seeking groups to access safe, healthy and adequate homes. Access to good quality, safe, affordable housing is also an important determinant of health and also improves the social and economic status of an individual. Good quality, affordable housing is also the cornerstone of vibrant, healthy neighbourhoods and supports the environmental and economic health of the city, region and country as a whole.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting of December 17, 2019, City Council adopted, with amendments, report PH11.5 – *HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan* and its recommended actions as a strategic framework to guide the City's efforts on housing and homelessness needs over the next 10 years. Through this report, Council also requested staff to meet with federal and provincial representatives to develop an immediate six-month action plan to expedite the City's initiatives to address housing challenges and homelessness and report to the Planning and Housing Committee on February 12, 2020 with a progress update. The full recommendations can be found at: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH11.5>

COMMENTS

Local and Regional Housing Pressures

As a growing and prosperous city, Toronto is facing unprecedented housing pressures including a lack of affordable housing options for low and moderate income residents, including marginalized residents in need of appropriate housing with supportive services.

Residents of Toronto are also facing unprecedented personal and economic challenges due to the shortage of affordable housing, low vacancy rates, and reduced quality of life as a result of the homelessness and insecure housing.

Furthermore, regional housing pressures including the growth in rental and ownership costs are outstripping the ability of residents to afford shelter costs. As a result, the hot Toronto region housing market has become a barrier to continued economic growth and the prosperity of the region.

HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan

In December 2019, City Council adopted the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan as a blueprint to assist some 341,000 households in the city. While this Plan recommends

approval of 40,000 new affordable rental homes by 2030, and focuses on shifting the focus away from emergency shelters to permanent housing solutions, immediate relief is needed to help residents who are homeless, struggling to maintain their existing homes or those looking to access a home that is affordable.

The HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan also acknowledged that while all orders of government have taken action to address the city and region's housing challenges, much more needs to be done immediately. With significant population growth spurred by increased migration to the Toronto region and growing income inequality resulting in increased incidents of homelessness and housing insecurity, all orders of government must work together to strategically align resources to tackle the housing and homelessness crisis effectively.

This strategic alignment includes immediate action to address homelessness and a longer-term focus on increasing permanent affordable housing solutions, including supportive housing, to improve housing stability, health and economic outcomes for residents. \$14.9 billion in support from the federal and provincial governments is crucial over the next 10 years to create an additional 20,000 new affordable rental and supportive housing units and providing housing benefits and supports to assist a total of 50,000 households.

Intergovernmental Collaboration and Progress To-date

Since December 2019, preliminary meetings have taken place with provincial and federal officials to brief them on the City's new HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan.

Additionally, on December 19, 2019, the portable Canada-Ontario-Housing Benefit was announced. The Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit builds on the Canada-Ontario Bilateral Agreement under the National Housing Strategy which will provide more than \$5.75 billion to protect, renew and expand social and community housing, and support housing repairs, construction, and affordability. While Toronto was recently advised of its allocation of roughly \$17.4 million over two years, City staff are still in discussions with the province to better understand this program which will roll out on April 1, 2020.

Specific to establishing an Intergovernmental Working Group, the City Manager has sent a letter to officials at to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing inviting both governments to establish a table that can advance housing priorities in Toronto. The City will propose that the terms of reference be determined by the group and focused on the need for urgent action to address growing homelessness and housing issues in the City be a first priority.

Action Plan and Next Steps

Toronto City Council has recognized that homelessness in Toronto is an ongoing critical and emergency issue requiring the Provincial and Federal governments to commit on an expedited basis to build on the initiatives the city has taken to date.

Should the City's request be accepted, the City will propose a first Intergovernmental Working Group meeting be scheduled in the coming weeks. Priority actions for this table include:

- Identifying the unaddressed low-income housing support gaps, including those of mental health and addictions, economic insecurity, long-term health issues and any challenge that may contribute to homelessness in Toronto;
- Identifying and recommending programs, supports, and services that can be provided on an expedited basis by the appropriate levels of government respective to their jurisdictions but in collaboration with each other to prevent homelessness upstream and provide the current population with accessible options for dignified, stable, secure and supportive housing; and,
- Reporting on rapid re-housing and other coordinated approaches to quickly move people out of shelters and into permanent housing whenever possible and track performance indicators to demonstrate the effectiveness of this response and incorporate what is learned into next steps.

Staff will engage with senior officials from the federal and provincial governments over the upcoming months and as requested by City Council, will report to the Planning and Housing Committee in June 2020 on progress achieved to date.

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SIGNATURE

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