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Dear Planning and Housing Committee members:

RE: PH13.5, Plan to Create Supportive Housing Opportunities

How exciting to see the Planning and Housing Committee presented with this plan to accelerate supportive housing development in Toronto. As the report says, shelters accommodate homeless people but they don't end homelessness. Supportive housing *does*, and at a fraction of the cost of emergency shelters.

I would particularly like to draw your attention to **Recommendation 6** to identify opportunities to improve co-ordination across City Divisions to expedite supportive housing development approvals on a priority basis. A recent study of supportive housing development efforts showed that for 478 supportive units proposed only 58 were under construction or approved. The remainder were thwarted by delays in the planning approvals stage. And in one of two developments that did proceed, costs increased by 30% during the 2.5 years it took to get the necessary approvals.

To achieve the goal of 600 new supportive housing units per year -- let alone 1800 -- we need all City Divisions working together in common cause. In this effort Toronto is lucky to welcome Abi Bond to lead the Housing Secretariat. Vancouver has been a leader in collaboration, creating 605 beautiful modular units for homeless people in 12 developments. The average time to go from site identification to occupancy: 5 months.

Turning a month into a week

Vancouver's achievement depended on firm leadership, starting with the Mayor and the City Manager. Under their direction, planning staff were assigned to the modular housing file, re-engineering the approvals protocol to turn processes that normally took a month into a week, and turn a week into a day.

Toronto could do the same, but it won't happen if it is left to busy Divisional leads to organize task teams as "one more thing" -- interesting but peripheral to their chief responsibilities. It will only happen if the City Manager is directed to lead the process and be accountable for its success.

I also recommend the City look to the development capacity of the former Toronto Community Housing Development Division, recently brought into the City. In the past decade TCHC has developed more affordable housing than all other private and

non-profit housing providers combined. Like Vancouver's Affordable Housing Agency (VAHA) his team could still be the driver -- not replacing other supportive housing providers, but using their development skills to create homes that are then managed by supportive housing partners.

At Wednesday's meeting I urge the committee to **double down on Recommendation 6**, recognizing it is the *essential* ingredient to meeting 5/6ths of the City's supportive housing targets starting in 2021:

- explicitly assigning the City Manager responsibility for not only "identifying opportunities" but for the collaboration's success
- reporting on time required for each step in the approvals process before the launch of Phase 2 of the supportive housing plan in 2021
- identifying the City's own in-house capacity to develop housing on behalf of supportive housing management partners in a model similar to Vancouver's Affordable Housing Agency.

Best wishes,

Joy
Connelly