

September 22, 2020

Dear Planning and Housing Committee:

In the spring of 2019 a group of stakeholders and housing experts came together as the External Advisory Committee (EAC) to the City's 10-year Housing Plan – HousingTO.

We all knew that housing was the city's hot button issue, either through our work with the Homeless community and the increasing numbers of individuals needing access to Emergency Shelter Services, through the overheating housing market that is changing the landscape of your city or through our own housing precariousness.

Over the ensuing months the HousingTO Plan took shape as did the increasing sense of urgency and anxiety associated with the complexity of the challenges and the growing gaps in our housing ecosystem.

What none of us saw coming was a Global Pandemic, a pandemic that has laid bare the housing inequities in our city and the need to take immediate action to close the gaps in Toronto's housing environment.

What you have before you is a timely and ambitious implementation plan, a platform to build a robust and unassailable response to the growing need for a sustainable approach to meet the needs of our city's most vulnerable residents while assuring social mobility and livability for all. We have, in this strategy an opportunity to create a new social compact designed around the concept and now legal framework of 'Housing as a Human Right'.

In the last six months, we, as a city, a society and as a world, have been pushed in directions we could never have imagined. Most of us have experienced this pressure from the comfort of our homes while others have felt the sting of homelessness in new more painful ways. The HousingTO Implementation Plan provides us with a unique opportunity to create new permanently affordable housing to mitigate the challenges of crises as they might arise, and to reinforce the status of Toronto as a diverse and accessible city for all. This is the opportunity for Toronto to tell the story of housing and housing outcomes in a new and evolving way; to engage our citizens in the conversation of housing as a human right.

This vital work is never done alone. We, as members of the Community Sector, continue to work side by side, in partnership with our city and its citizens to build a better and more vital community for all.

Sincerely,



David Reycraft  
Director, Housing Services, Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services  
Co-Chair, External Advisory Committee to HousingTO, 2020-2030