



October 20, 2020

To: Planning and Housing Committee

RE: **PH17.3**, Taking Action to Increase Affordable and Supportive Housing Opportunities, and **PH17.9** Development Pipeline

From: Brian Davis, Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH)

My name is Brian Davis, the Executive Director of Houselink Community Homes and on the steering committee of TAEH. As you may know TAEH has many provider members who are intent on expanding the quantity and quality of rental housing stock, and necessary supports, to those exiting persistent homelessness.

TAEH has long argued that funding should be directed at supportive housing rather than shelter and shelter beds should only be used for short time stays; and one positive outcome from COVID-19 is that the business case to target funding at creating supportive housing is far more compelling than it once was as noted on page 5 of the report- both in capital and operating costs. We agree with the City that investing in housing today is going to pay off in reducing costs in other areas. It's also simply the right thing to do to restore a person's dignity and give them a platform to build from.

We commend the staff for being proactive in preparing to use the federal Rapid Housing Initiative funds, including converting appropriate shelter sites over to housing. The report also notes ongoing work with the non-profit sector to assess our sites. Recently we submitted an inventory of potential development opportunities totaling \$850 million in new development and potentially developing 2,500 units of affordable housing in the next 24 months. This submission is the result of the work accomplished by the TAEH's *Supportive Housing Growth Plan* initiative in which 39 providers have had their properties analyzed for re-investment and expansion potential. In addition, the submission identified sites that could be acquired, as well as sites that could be developed on lands combining owned sites and acquired adjacent properties. Overall 310 own properties owned by non-profits have been assessed.

To address the homelessness issue in Toronto as the scale needed, we must continue to develop a large pipeline of projects and make the best use of our existing stock coupled with federal, provincial and municipal tools. We are certainly not there yet, especially when one looks in comparison, at the other report "Development Pipeline 2020 (Report 17.9) before the committee today. One cannot help be struck by the paradox of a city that is creating so much housing, and so little of it being affordable. Ideally, future Development Pipeline Reports will include the number of units being built that are affordable and then take this a step further – to have a proportional target of 10% of all housing units being built be affordable. This would fit with the All of City approach outlined in the 10 Year Housing TO plan.

We are very encouraged by the intent and actions of the Housing Secretariat to work more closely with the non-profit sector in creating both short term and term solutions. The recent example this summer of the Housing Secretariat collaborating with TAEH to secure the program funding for the first two

modular supportive housing sites is a model of collaboration to continue to build upon as we all work together to address homelessness during this crisis.

Recently the province announced \$176 million for addictions and mental health funding, and some of that funding is dedicated to the creation of supportive housing through rent supplements that are well matched to the cost of renting a decent unit in Toronto. These rent supplements are \$1,200 per month, so coupling that with ODSP shelter allowance actually gets much closer to being able to rent an apartment. (On rentals.ca, the average rent for a 1 bedroom in October was \$1,967 per month.) The more we develop inter-governmental solutions that also span across agency boundaries, the bigger the impact we will have together in combating homelessness.

We urge this committee and Council to approve the recommendations in this report and we are committed to continuing to collaborate with our sector partners and the Housing Secretariat staff to optimize the best use of our resources.