

October 19, 2020

Deputy Mayor Ana Bailao
Chair, Planning and Housing Committee
City of Toronto

Via email to : phc@toronto.ca

Madam Chair and Members

Re: 2020.PH17.4, Creating New Supportive Housing Opportunities
in Parkdale

I am writing on behalf of United Way Greater Toronto (UWGT) in support of this motion before you. Your adoption of this motion will help propel further momentum on the Social Medicine Initiative(SMI), which UWGT is a signatory of, along with the University Health Network (UHN) and the City of Toronto. UWGT community partners like PARC and St Stephen's Community House (The Neighbourhood Group) are key players as well. While SMI was conceived and signed before COVID-19 outbreak, its mission and purpose have been amplified by the pandemic. The time has come to double down on a proactive approach in reducing the development of new health issues before they arise by trying to addressing root social causes and needs to such unignorable issues as homelessness.

UWGT has heard consistently and clearly from front-line funded agencies in communities across the GTA: without safe, secure housing, people too often remain trapped in a cycle of poverty. COVID-19 has revealed the inequity that exists in our region– home to great prosperity, and yet a place where too many struggle to find shelter. By coming together across sectors — health, community services, shelter providers and housing providers – and bringing forward voices from the community, we can take an integrated approach to provide real solutions to homelessness. This vision not only aligns with the *TO Prosperity Poverty Reduction Strategy* that was adopted by the City council; it also helps

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move the needle on recommendations of the recent COVID-19 Housing and Homelessness Recovery Response Plan and the Interim Shelter Recovery Strategy that was announced recently through your leadership, in partnership with the City of Toronto Shelter Support and Housing Administration, UWGT and Maytree Foundation.

The Social Medicine Initiative is also a unique innovation that mobilizes government, private and community resources to complement new purpose-built social housing units with wrap around supports for residents and embed equity and inclusion into community building. It is just the kind of cure our city and our region will need to build back better from this pandemic.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



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