



TO: **Planning and Housing Committee**

DATE: Thursday, May 20, 2021

RE: **Modular Housing Initiative: Phase Two Sites at 175 Cummer Avenue – Ward 18, 20 Bracebridge Avenue – Ward 19, and 7 Glamorgan Avenue – Ward 21 (Items PH23.3 – PH23.5)**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on behalf of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH). As you know, the TAEH is a network of partners reaching across the city, all united in the vision of ending homelessness. We also serve as your non-Indigenous Community Advisory Board, and co-chair the Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service Planning Forum with SSHA.

We are here today to underscore our support for the Phase Two modular housing sites identified in Items 23.3 (**175 Cummer Avenue – Ward 18**), 23.4 (**20 Bracebridge Avenue – Ward 19**), and 23.5 (**7 Glamorgan Avenue – Ward 21**). And to strongly encourage the Committee to approve the recommendations in the staff reports for each.

Toronto's City's Modular Housing Initiative is a critical tool in meeting the range of housing options needed in Toronto to end homelessness. The Initiative is also essential to meeting Council's own approved targets of building a minimum of 18,000 new supportive homes before 2030 and meeting the goal of 3000 new permanent homes in the September 2020 2-year housing action plan. In other words, you, we, will not reach these targets without moving forward on these three new supportive housing opportunities.

As we first noted in March of this year, the City has already successfully opened the first 2 buildings, creating 110 permanent new homes for people who were previously homeless. Both buildings are operated by a partnership of two proven non-profit community and supportive housing providers and have opened and continue to operate smoothly. This is an unprecedented success.

Of course, not everyone is immediately welcoming of including housing for people previously homeless in their neighbourhood. There are many reasons for this, but experience has shown – here in Toronto and in many other places – that adding new homes like these do not result in the outcomes some first fear. The TAEH website has a collection of [resources on why supportive housing works](#) – it is only one of many available.

It also is worth restating today that there is homelessness in every neighbourhood in Toronto. If you do not see it is because people are trying to survive in unsafe and “out of sight” places like ravines, cars, or are couch-surfing. And anyone can become homeless – even people who are currently secure in their housing, jobs, and families. We have seen this repeatedly. We also know that if people can find support and services in their own communities, they are much more likely, and quickly, to turn things around

and return to housing. This means that we need more affordable and supportive housing in every ward, in every neighbourhood, in Toronto.

This is also why we urge you to approve the recommendations in today's reports to request the Minister's Zoning Order from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This was requested and received in Phase One and Minister Clark was pleased to grant it, noting in his public remarks the value of the Modular Housing Initiative to Toronto and to our collective efforts to address homelessness.

CONCLUSION

It is important to locate today's deliberations in the broader context of this Committee's and Council's commitments to delivering more housing for people experiencing homelessness in Housing TO and other initiatives. This includes meeting your targets regarding supportive housing noted above, as well as the 1000 modular housing units over 2 years committed to as a subset of them.

We and many others noted the almost unanimous and impassioned response to the Phase One of this initiative during the April 2020 committee and Council cycle. We were proud of our City representatives and had the chance to be so again with the first approvals of Phase 2 sites in March this year.

As more people are becoming or at risk of becoming homeless in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, now is not the time to stop championing the housing and support solutions that make, and can continue to make, a real difference in people's lives and keep us on track to living in a Toronto where homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

Thank you,
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