



July 5, 2022

ATTN: Planning and Housing Committee

RE: PH35.20 – Local Priority Rules for Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing and Centralizing Access for Affordable Rental Housing

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

WomanACT is a policy and planning body that works collaboratively to end violence against women through community mobilization, coordination, research, policy, and education. We have been doing this work for over 30 years.

We are pleased to see the City of Toronto moving forward with its Centralized Affordable Rental Housing Access System. Access to affordable housing in the private rental market is essential to supporting survivors of gender-based violence to find and maintain safe and stable tenancies.

We are writing today to ensure that women-led households and women experiencing violence are considered in the allocation of the City's affordable housing units. Under HousingTO, the City has committed to a minimum of 25% of new affordable and supportive homes being dedicated to women and girls. The allocation process for new affordable housing units is an important opportunity to make progress on this target.

While housing providers with referral agreements and priority populations will continue to be engaged in the new system, our research has found that survivors prefer to relocate to independent housing in the private rental market when leaving an abusive relationship. Meeting the 25% target for women and girls solely through housing projects with client mandates does not address the women-led households and survivors who are seeking affordable rental housing outside of the Violence Against Women or homelessness sectors.

We hope to see the affordable housing allocation methodology prioritize women and girls. To meet the diverse housing needs of survivors and women-led households, we must ensure that the 10,000 homes dedicated under HousingTO reflect a mix of housing types, including private rental housing.

Sincerely,

Harmy Mendoza

Executive Director, WomanACT