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Toronto City Council
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West
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RE : EX3.1 - Housing Action Plan 2022-2026 - Priorities and Work Plan

Toronto City Council,

Our volunteers at **HousingNowTO.com** welcome the arrival of the “Housing Action Plan” and the identified priorities for the 2022-2026 term of Council. As outlined, this new action plan incorporates many of the municipal institutional & intergovernmental issues that our group has identified since 2018 which have often had negative impacts on the City's ability to deliver new units of affordable-rental housing at the pace of new unit delivery that is required during our on-going housing crisis.

We encourage Toronto City Council to amend the current "2023 Housing Action Plan" – with the goal of exceeding the provincial housing target of creating 285,000 new homes within the City of Toronto over the next 10 years, and adding an explicit target ensuring that at least **57,000** (20%) of those new homes are created within the affordable and workforce housing rental bands.

Our volunteers would like to highlight these items identified in the staff report that will be the biggest opportunities to create large volumes of new affordable rental housing at speed and at scale in Toronto over the next 10-years :

- Housing Now sites
- As-of-Right Zoning for Major Transit Station Areas
- Facilitating Apartment Infill
- Quayside
- Villiers Island
- Portlands
- Downsview

Work Plan Deliverable	2023	2024	2025-2026	Housing Potential	Division Lead
Housing Now Program Updates	Q2			High (subject to provincial and federal investment)	Housing Secretariat

Given the limited capacity and staffing issues that are regularly reported by our Chief Planner, we would encourage Council to focus limited staff resources and attention onto work plan items that are identified in Attachment 1 : [Housing Action Plan 2023-2026 Work Plan](#) as having a “Housing Potential” of **HIGH**.

Increasing Permissions for Housing and Addressing Exclusionary Zoning					
Work Plan Deliverable	2023	2024	2025-2026	Housing Potential	Division Lead
As-of-right zoning for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs)	*Timing subject to Minister approval of MTSA			High	City Planning
Facilitating apartment infill <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim report Final recommendations report 		Q2 Q4		Medium	City Planning

Our volunteers fully support the inclusion of the Downsview area in the workplan as an area identified as having **HIGH** “Housing Potential” – as most of the area is owned by the Canadian Federal Government and a large, multi-billion dollar public sector pension-fund. However, we are very concerned that the “Housing Potential” for Villiers Island and Quayside which are managed by Waterfront Toronto are only tagged as **MEDIUM**. These are prime land locations that the City owns within a short transit trip to our City central business district. Staff must be instructed to do more than **MEDIUM** Housing on those sites.

Major Growth Areas					
Work Plan Deliverable	2023	2024	2025-2026	Housing Potential	Division Lead
Update Downsview Study Draft Secondary Plan and draft Community Development Plan priorities	Q2			High	City Planning
Villiers Island Precinct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable housing update Update on the density optimization strategy Phasing strategy and Business and Implementation Plan for Phase 1 Planning updates for Villiers Island 	Q1 Q3 Q4	Q1		Medium ?	City Planning and Housing Secretariat
Quayside <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on delivery plan for affordable housing 	Q4				City Planning and Housing Secretariat

We are also concerned that your Housing Now sites are also only tagged as having **MEDIUM** potential.

3. Leveraging Public Land to Increase the Supply of Housing					
Work Plan Deliverable	2023	2024	2025-2026	Housing Potential	Division Lead
Housing Now Sites					
Rezoning application for Bloor/Kipling Block 1 site	Q2			Medium ?	City Planning
Rezoning application for 1631 Queen Street East	Q3				City Planning
Rezoning application for Parkdale Hub	Q3				City Planning
Rezoning application for 1250 Eglinton Avenue West	Q4				City Planning
Rezoning application for 40 Bushby Drive		Q1			City Planning
Rezoning application for 251 Esther Shiner Boulevard		Q1			City Planning
Rezoning application for Bloor-Islington	Q4				City Planning
Working with Post-Secondary Institutions					
Post-Secondary Housing Strategy	Q4			Low	Housing Secretariat
Working with School Boards					
Strategy to Encourage Creation of Housing on School Board Land	Q4			Low	Housing Secretariat

As always, our open data and civic-tech volunteers are happy to answer any questions that councillors or city staff may have on affordable-housing development best practices – and how Toronto can make most effective decisions in order to alleviate Toronto’s rental-housing affordability crisis.

Yours,



Mark J. Richardson

Technical Lead – HousingNowTO.com

APPENDIX - Highlights from U of T - "Perspective on the Rental Housing Roundtable" (More Neighbours)

The Two Housing Crises Toronto Must Confront

"...one in which rising rents have made it increasingly unaffordable for middle income earners to live in the city; and a second crisis of a lack of deeply affordable and supportive housing for those people with low incomes..."

From "Perspective on the Rental Housing Roundtable" report
- Matti Siemiatycki & Karen Chapple, University of Toronto



The Scale of The Crisis

"...at current prevailing construction rates, building 40,000 affordable homes in Toronto would cost at least \$19.4 billion in capital costs alone."

From "Perspective on the Rental Housing Roundtable" report
- Matti Siemiatycki & Karen Chapple, University of Toronto



Skyrocketing Costs Threaten New Rentals

"Housing construction costs have skyrocketed, rising by 25% in the past year alone in Toronto, fueled by labour and material shortages – and higher interest rates that have risen to 4.5% pose a particular threat to the financial viability of purpose built rental projects."

From "Perspective on the Rental Housing Roundtable" report
- Matti Siemiatycki & Karen Chapple, University of Toronto



Time is Money When It Comes to Housing

"Altus estimates that in Greater Toronto a 6 month delay in the approval process adds between \$16,000 to \$20,000 to the cost of a high rise unit, which must be factored into the rent."

From "Perspective on the Rental Housing Roundtable" report
- Matti Siemiatycki & Karen Chapple, University of Toronto



Overcoming Inflation Requires Tough Choices

"If affordable rental housing projects facing inflationary pressures are to proceed, there are two paths forward: cut costs or raise additional revenues. Neither of these are easy or palatable options."

From **"Perspective on the Rental Housing Roundtable"** report
- Matti Siemiatycki & Karen Chapple, University of Toronto



Developing Public Land Unlocks Affordability

"Land already in public hands presents an unparalleled opportunity for affordable rental construction, making affordability more viable."

From **"Perspective on the Rental Housing Roundtable"** report
- Matti Siemiatycki & Karen Chapple, University of Toronto



Ending This Crisis Will Require Serious Funding

"It will not be possible to alleviate the rental affordability crisis for Toronto's households of moderate means and below without significant funding."

From **"Perspective on the Rental Housing Roundtable"** report
- Matti Siemiatycki & Karen Chapple, University of Toronto

