



DEPUTATION

To: Planning and Housing Committee
Date: Thursday, September 28, 2023
Re: PH6.1 - HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan – 2022-2023 Annual Progress Report

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak before you as the Housing Solutions Manager for the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH). TAEH is in support of the report presented by the Executive Director of the Housing Secretariat, and of the recommendations that City Council take urgent action to ramp up the efforts to deliver affordable and supportive housing to meet the targets of the HousingTO Plan.

We acknowledge the City's commitment to not only address the housing crisis in Toronto, but also to ensure that the solutions to this crisis accommodate the needs of those who are currently homeless, as well as those needing access to affordable housing. We recognise these solutions include maintaining the current stock, but most especially the building up of the affordable housing stock in the City. It is salutary that the City recognises that a portion of this new stock must be deeply affordable, supportive, and include a wide range of supports to meet the needs of tenants.

The City has a critical role in liaising with the Federal and Provincial governments regarding the allocation of adequate funding for its housing plans. We support and encourage the recommendation from the Housing Secretariat that the City of Toronto reiterate its request to both the Federal and Provincial governments together to support delivering on the commitments made in the Housing Charter and Housing Action Plan.

TAEH supports the City moving away from market rent determinants to income determinants regarding affordable housing, particularly noting the successful housing outcomes that are achieved through the Rent Geared to Income model. We support the recommendation that the Housing Secretariat be directed to creating eligibility rules regarding access to Affordable Rental Housing, and critically note that such rules should take into consideration the wide variability in the cost of living between neighbourhoods in Toronto and be tied to the City's definition of affordability of no more than 30% of before-tax income.


We recommend that income eligibility criteria be determined at a more granular level than a single, city-wide income band, and based on rent as a percentage of income threshold.

Since the federal government obtains data on the cost of living based on Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), TAEH is recommending that the City adopt CMAs as the basis for making these determinations, modifying the 30% threshold based on the market basket modifier (or equivalent) established for each CMA.

While we acknowledge the success of choice-based system configurations in centering the need and autonomy of individuals experiencing homelessness, we would recommend that the alignment process considers the barriers to access that digital processes present to some communities, and encourage the City to engage with community experts to adapt these processes in order to reduce barriers to system access.

We applaud formalising the relationship between the City and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto (CHFT) and look forward to working with CHFT and CHFT Development Society Inc. TAEH is in support of the expansion of opportunities for nonprofits, cooperatives, and other alternative housing models to be quickly and efficiently delivered to the City. We urge the City to ensure that enhanced investments into housing development through these levers include increased targets for the delivery of net new affordable and deeply affordable units.

Thank you,



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