

Ombudsman Toronto Housing Unit Status Report 2024

Date: July 17, 2024

To: City Council

From: Kwame Addo, Ombudsman

SUMMARY

Pursuant to section 170(2) of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006* (COTA), the purpose of this report is to provide City Council with a status report describing the activities of Ombudsman Toronto's Housing Unit since its creation in July 2023. In less than a year, the Housing Unit has been fully staffed, developed its infrastructure, launched two investigations, provided consultations to City staff, and met with more than 170 people through their engagement work. Notably, the Housing Unit has also developed a framework that uses the concept of housing as a human right to guide their investigations, the first of its kind for an Ombudsman organization in Canada.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ombudsman recommends that:

1. City Council receive the attached report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report has no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on December 17, 2019, City Council adopted the City's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, which provided for the appointment of a Housing Commissioner of Toronto to oversee the City's work in this area. The City Council decision document can be found at: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2019.PH11.5>.

In 2021, the City Manager hired external consultants with expertise in housing and accountability, Fiona Crean and the Maytree Foundation, to help develop options for this Housing Commissioner role. In their 2022 report, Crean and Maytree recommended that the City needed accountability "both within the public service and through external bodies such as a housing commissioner, auditor general, and ombuds with a central locus in a housing commissioner or equivalent" to ensure that the City advances the human right to housing. The report can be found at: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/90d5-Crean-and-Maytree-Report.pdf>.

At its meeting on July 19, 20, 21 and 22, 2022, at the recommendation of the City Manager, City Council requested that the office of the Ombudsman report back with recommendations on the resources and structure required for Ombudsman Toronto to focus on investigations and reports related to systemic housing and systemic hurdles in the City's housing planning and service delivery roles, including consideration of a dedicated Deputy Ombudsman (Housing). The City Council decision document can be found at: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.EX34.7>.

In early 2023, Ombudsman Toronto responded to Council, proposing the creation of a Housing Unit within my office. City Council agreed. The City Council decision document can be found at: <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.DM5.2>.

COMMENTS

This status report is provided for information to City Council.

CONTACT

Kwame Addo, Ombudsman, Tel: 416-392-7061, Email: kwame.addo@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE



Kwame Addo
Ombudsman

ATTACHMENT

Ombudsman Toronto Report: Housing Unit Status Update, July 17, 2024