



DEPUTATION

To: Planning and Housing Committee
Date: Thursday, September 26, 2024
Re: PH15.5 – 2023-2024 Annual Progress Update Report – HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan and Housing Action Plan (2022-2026).

The Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) is a community-based collective impact initiative committed to ending homelessness in Toronto. Our network includes non-profit organisations that support those living with homelessness and those who are housed and who must spend a disproportionate amount of income on housing, as well as affordable and supportive housing developers, property managers, and landlords.

TAEH supports the recommendations of the Executive Director of the Housing Secretariat as set out in the Report for Action (the “Report”) for this agenda item.

Further, TAEH commends the Housing Secretariat for the 2023-2024 Annual Progress Update Report, and in general with the design showing both the metrics of the annual achievements in achieving the goals set out in the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan and Housing Action Plan (2022-2026) alongside examples of projects that illustrate the various programs the Housing Secretariat manages in relation to those goals.

TAEH believes that there is, nonetheless, room for improvement in the presentation and scope of future annual reports in order to make it easier to assess annual results in the context of the overall targets set by the Housing Action Plans (“the HAPs”), and to show the modifications to future annual targets that may be needed in order to keep the HAPs on track and to achieve all of the goals of those Plans.

Firstly, TAEH notes that whenever the annual report sets out the number of housing units approved, under construction, or built, the numbers for supportive housing are subsumed within the affordable housing numbers. Currently, only rent-controlled, RGI, and affordable rental numbers are given separately. The Report does refer to supportive housing goals, but only in relation to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Likewise, we note that the goal of constructing 300 supportive homes in 2024 in relation to the homeless is only a fraction of the annual number needing to be built to achieve the target of the Supportive Housing Growth Plan, a copy of which is attached to this deputation.

Also of note is that affordable housing numbers do not separate out ‘deeply affordable’ numbers, which are the actual, real affordable housing units – the current definition of affordable housing really tracks average cost rental housing (Average Market Rent (AMR) or housing costs in relation to the 50th or 60th income percentile). This, we submit, is reflected in the City itself using the term ‘deeply affordable’ to refer to *actual* affordable rents (recently 40% of AMR). TAEH believes tracking these numbers is also important.

The Progress by Numbers data presentation only shows 2023 numbers in relation to 2022 numbers. TAEH believes that this information is insufficient to assess progress under the plan. The report needs to show, preferably in chart form, the actual total progress to date under the HAPs compared to projected cumulative annual numbers. This should also include ‘adjusted numbers’ required over the remaining term for the HAPs’ goals to be realised.

TAEH also submits that the dual use of the term ‘rent-controlled homes’ for both rent-controlled homes and the aggregate of rent-controlled homes, affordable rental homes and RGI homes is confusing. Using a different descriptor for the aggregate would result in greater clarity when discussing these types of housing.

Likewise, while (rent-controlled) development approvals are of interest, TAEH believes that a more useful metric to assess progress under the HAPs is the number of units in projects that do begin construction in any given year, and thus TAEH recommends providing, in the alternative, the number of (rent-controlled) units in projects newly under construction.

Since, as the annual report notes, 18 units of affordable housing are lost for each new unit built, TAEH believes that the current imbalance in funding between retention and construction means that the affordable housing stock in Toronto will inevitably continue to decrease. Since the cost of retention is lower per unit than for construction, for any given funding level, more units can be retained than can be built. As such, TAEH recommends that the City reconsider the relative allocation of housing funds and prioritise retention over construction: the current trend of decreasing net affordable unit loss by 5% per annum, with no net gain in affordable housing units, is a losing proposition.

TAEH also recommends reassessing the utility of financially assisting currently housed individuals to purchase affordable homes through the Affordable Homeownership Assistance Program, when there is still such a dearth of affordable rental units, and homelessness is a chronic crisis in Toronto.

Finally, TAEH reiterates its previous observation that the City has a critical role in liaising with the Federal and Provincial governments regarding the allocation of adequate funding for its housing plans, especially in relation to the building of affordable and supportive

housing. 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 set out in the 2024 Federal and Ontario Budgets, along with those set out in Toronto's Housing Action Plans.

Thank you,



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APPENDIX

Toronto Supportive Housing Growth Plan.



TSHGPlan+Brochure.
pdf