

DEPUTATION

To: Executive Committee
Date: Tuesday December 10, 2024
Re: EX19.1 Strengthening the City of Toronto's Housing Development Capacity to Deliver Housing Faster.

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 experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity, as well as nonprofit affordable and supportive housing developers, property managers, and landlords.

TAEH supports the recommendations of the Deputy City Manager, Development and Growth Services, as set out in the Report for Action for this agenda item. TAEH especially supports the creation of the new Housing Development Office as a new Department-level entity within Development and Growth Services. In relation to the new office, TAEH has the following observations:

Role and Function of the Housing Development Office.

TAEH has supported the City's decision to engage in City-led affordable housing projects as a component of its Housing Action Plans. A key takeaway from the decision to become a Public Developer is the need to monitor the effectiveness of the five pilot projects, apply lessons learned to expand City-led development and integrate these projects and other supportive and (deeply) affordable housing developments into a unified programme that ensures a steady stream of new projects moving forward, aligned the capacity of the nonprofit housing sector to deliver.

TAEH sees the creation of the Housing Development Office as a natural next step in this process and encourages the City to both prioritise its rapid operationalisation and staffing within a similar timeframe to the appointment of its leader by Q2 2025.

Timing of the transfer of RFP rollouts to the Housing Development Office.

TAEH recognises that the roll-out of RFPs for the City's affordable and supportive housing projects are often shaped by their unique circumstances. However, the transition in responsibility for such offerings from the Housing Secretariat to the Housing Development Office should prioritize an efficient delivery process. TAEH suggests that, based on the number and frequency of such RFPs – bunching together, or spread out over time – the timing of the transfer of responsibility should not be tied to an arbitrary calendar but rather be determined by the RFP rollout sequence itself.

Strategically sequenced projects and an RFP Calendar.

TAEH recognises that efficient development of new supportive and (deeply) affordable housing by the nonprofit housing sector requires collaboration among interested organisations. To this end TAEH encourages improved communication across the subsector wide, to better coordinate responses to RFPs for housing projects in the non-Indigenous, non-co-operative nonprofit housing subsector, reducing unnecessary competition on individual RFPs.

Inefficiencies and lost costs (in both time and money) result from multiple organisations competing sequentially on RFPs. Greater transparency on planned project rollouts and target demographics/services tied to projects, is essential to make the long-term RFP response process both more orderly and less time consuming (for both nonprofit organisations and City RFP reviews) as organisations make informed decisions on participation.

TAEH believes that such transparency is best achieved by the new Housing Development Office releasing a regularly updated calendar of future RFPs with sufficient information on timelines, size and target demographics/services, and recommends that such a calendar be created and maintained by the Office.

Sector-wide co-design of the Housing Development Office.

TAEH believes the City will benefit from collaborating with interested parties, such as TAEH and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto, of the nonprofit housing sector, when defining the functions of the Office and how it can work with the sector in relation to City-supported housing sites. We believe such collaboration will ensure that the monitoring activities of projects are effective; that the strategic sequence of projects in the housing project pipeline will best align with sectoral capacity; that the goal of establishing and maintaining a consistent delivery framework with common methodologies will be best achieved; and that transitions in control between the City and its housing delivery partners within projects will be smooth and effective. TAEH and its members are eager and willing to contribute to the success of the new Housing Development Office.

Thank you,



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