



Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
Fédération de l'habitation coopérative du Canada

June 13, 2024

Nancy Martins
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
Sent by email: phc@toronto.ca

Re: PH13.9 - Community Housing Sector Modernization and Growth Strategy

Dear members of the Planning and Housing Committee,

The Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada (CHF Canada) would like to express our support for item **PH13.9 - Community Housing Sector Modernization and Growth Strategy**, which will be considered at the Planning and Housing Committee meeting on June 13, 2024. Please see our specific comments below.

New Regulatory and Funding Framework

As a sector, our primary focus is on expanding the number of co-operative homes, enabling more Canadians and Torontonians to experience the advantages of co-op housing membership. These benefits include the security, community, and affordability that co-ops offer. We firmly believe that increasing the supply of co-op housing is a significant step towards resolving Toronto's housing crisis. Equally important is the preservation and enhancement of existing co-op homes. Many co-ops in Toronto will be reaching the end of their mortgage within the next seven years, and new service agreements will be negotiated with service managers. We are optimistic that these new agreements will ensure the ongoing affordability of co-op homes by preserving long-term Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) subsidies. We envision these agreements to facilitate high asset management standards and stimulate more capital repairs, renovations, sustainability upgrades, expansions, mergers of co-ops and acquisitions of affordable housing.

Alongside our regional partner, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto (CHFT), we look forward to continued engagement with the City of Toronto through the end-of-mortgage process.

Considerations for a New Lease Policy Framework with Community Housing Providers

Co-operative homes that sit on leased land from the City of Toronto require long-term stability in order to preserve affordable housing. Given the housing affordability and supply crisis, it is imperative that this housing is protected. We are pleased to see that the City of Toronto is proposing to renew and/or enter into new agreements with co-operative housing providers – specifically Beech Hall Housing Co-operative and Alexandra Park Co-operative. We're hopeful that these leases will provide long term



stability (49 years) needed for this co-op to flourish and continue to provide affordable, non-market housing.

Enhancements to the Multi-Unit Residential Acquisitions Program (MURA)

For every new affordable unit built in Toronto, it is estimated that 15 existing private affordable units are lost.

Improvements to the MURA program are welcome. Increasing the market share of co-operative and non-profit housing through acquisition will protect affordability and security of tenure for renters immediately and for the long-term. Research shows that to address the housing crisis, Canada needs to, at a minimum, double the supply of community and co-operative housing.

Expanding eligibility to allow co-ops to participate in the MURA programs adds additional flexibility and strengthens partnerships with the City of Toronto. The additional waivers of fees and permits for co-ops improve the feasibility of acquisitions.

Our partners at the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto (CHFT) have a proven track record of acquisition and associated co-op conversion, and we look forward to seeing how these enhancements to MURA could further enable the co-op housing sector to keep existing affordable housing in the community.

Expediting the Development Review and Permitting Process

Co-op housing fosters strong, affordable communities that offer security of tenure and member ownership. Given Toronto's housing affordability and supply crisis, it's crucial that more community housing – including co-operative housing – is built, and without delay. That's why we are pleased to see that the City continues to commit to streamlining the development and permitting review and approvals process. Specifically, we support the idea of creating a Community Housing priority stream to expedite approvals for community housing projects – including co-operative homes.

Strengthening the Capacity of Community Housing Providers

CHF Canada is pleased to see that the City of Toronto is committed to strengthening the capacity of community housing providers, including co-operative housing. CHF Canada members are often at the forefront of solutions to our country's housing supply and affordability crisis. In other parts of Ontario and the country, members are exploring or actively engaged in mergers (Sault Ste Marie, Nova Scotia) and acquisitions (British Columbia). This, too, can be happening in Toronto with added capacity, commitment and resources from the City for community housing providers.



Intergovernmental Considerations

We support calls to the Government of Ontario to enhance funding commitments to sector support agencies such as the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto to provide consulting services and support to Community Housing Providers to successfully transition to a new operating framework with the City of Toronto.

The preservation of existing community housing stock – including co-operative homes – as well as the growth of new community housing, requires an all of government approach.

For over 50 years, the co-op housing sector has worked with all orders of government and communities across the country to build and maintain vibrant, affordable non-profit housing co-operatives.

Sincerely,

Amina Dibe
Senior Manager, Government Relations
Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada