

RE: EX25.16 - City of Toronto 2025-2029 Disability Inclusion Action Plan

22 July 2025

Dear Mayor Chow and Members of Toronto City Council,

I write to you as a Toronto Resident who has lived and serves as both the Executive Director of Disability Justice Network of Ontario and co-Chair of the national Accessible Housing Network. In all these capacities, I wish to use this opportunity to reflect on item EX25.16 - City of Toronto 2025-2029 Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

These remarks will be brief, as previous correspondence from us and our allies across disabled peoples' organizations in Toronto and beyond have been extensive about our continued concerns on housing, social assistance, and legislated poverty which impacts our communities.

In this plan, there is much promise—but for an 'action' plan, the goals are vague and could be met without substantive improvement to the lives of those in our communities who are most impacted by your decisions.

We implore you to not simply make this plan and let it sit on a shelf, but to actually engage grassroots communities of racialized and other marginalized disabled peoples throughout all areas of the city to actually *action* it. We know from this plan that you are aware of the chasm which exists between the cost for disabled people to thrive in this city versus where we are now. As such, there must be immediate action taken to ensure that our communities are supported—whether it is through an end to the push for Family of Services on the TTC or through actually implementing Accessibility Standards into the City's Affordable Housing Guidelines and many more actions yet to be done.

Further, we need the City to take an active role in wider support for disabled Torontonians at the Provincial and Federal advocacy level. Social Assistance is in crisis, lacking rent control hits our communities hardest, and weakly enforced accessibility legislation makes many promises given to our communities worth less than the paper they are printed on. The City of Toronto is one of the largest jurisdictions in the Province and Country and must be a leader on these fronts too. A plan without such commitment to action does not go far enough.

I would challenge you all to consider one final thought: as the AODA and national Accessibility Standards are so weak to enforce, is it time for a single, unified set of accessibility criteria and standards for the City to maintain that strive for better than the AODA or ASC? I believe that it is possible for Toronto to collect its varied, disparate standards and attempts to merely meet existing legislation of broader jurisdictions—and surpass all of it.

As in all things, this city can be a model other places look towards—if you have the vision and the will to make it happen with us.

With sincerest respect,



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