

June 3, 2025

Letter from the Chair, Housing Rights Advisory Committee

As the Chair of HRAC, I would like to provide an update on recommendations adopted by City Council, stemming from investigations conducted by the Ombudsman Toronto Housing Unit, which identify the Housing Rights Advisory Committee.

The following recommendations have been adopted by City Council and have implications for our work as we move forward through our term:

CC28.2 - Identifying and Addressing Pressures in the Refugee and Emergency Shelter System

Recommendation 6: City Council direct the General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services to develop a framework to analyze any new shelter eligibility changes for alignment with the Toronto Housing Charter before these new changes are implemented and request the Housing Rights Advisory Committee to review the framework and its operation in alignment with progressively realising the right to housing.

Recommendation 8: City Council direct that senior executives at the City, including the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services and the General Manager, Toronto Shelter and Support Services to invite the Chair, Housing Rights Advisory Committee and the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to a meeting to discuss the City's obligations flowing from its commitment to progressively realize housing as a human right by June 30, 2025, and include updates from that discussion as part of the Council-directed reporting to Executive Committee on Item 2024.EC17.1 in the third quarter of 2025.

Recommendation 9: City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services, to organize a dedicated training session for the Senior leaders on the Encampment Steering Committee and within Toronto Shelter and Support Services on the City's obligations flowing from its commitment to progressively realize housing as a human right by October 1, 2025, delivered by the Chair, Housing Rights Advisory Committee and others (as needed) to help facilitate the session.

CC30.3 – Ombudsman Toronto Report: An Investigation into the City's Response to a Vital Services Outage in a Multi-Tenant Home

Recommendation 27: The City Manager should provide a status update to the Executive Committee on the implementation of all these recommendations by November 1, 2025, and quarterly thereafter; additionally, the City Manager report to the Housing Rights Advisory Committee within a year.

Secondly, as a matter of administrative business, I'm pleased to share that City Council has adopted the several key amendments to HRAC's Terms of Reference to enable Working Groups to engage with City Officials, other City employees and external parties to provide or receive advice on matters related to HRAC's mandate.

Working Groups play an essential role in increasing HRAC's capacity to fulfill two key components of our mandate:

- a) to provide advice to City Council: a) on policies, programs and actions that the City can implement to advance its commitment to furthering the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing in Toronto based on housing and human rights expertise, lived experiences of housing precarity, discrimination and homelessness, and academic research and learnings from other jurisdictions;
- b) to support the City's engagement with Indigenous, Black and other equity-deserving communities, including those with living/lived experiences and using an intersectional equity approach, in order to help identify systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing and maintaining adequate housing, and to recommend actions to remove such barriers.

Included in this update are draft Working Group Guidelines for your review and adoption. The Working Group Guidelines, in alignment with amendments in Section C6(i) of our Terms of Reference, provide an overview of the matters Working Groups will address, member composition, and the anticipated frequency of meetings.

Submitted by Elizabeth McIsaac, Committee Chair, June 3, 2025.