



DEPUTATION

To: Economic and Community Development Committee.
Date: May 4, 2025.
Re: EC28.4 – 2027 Shelter Infrastructure Plan.

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.

As part of our mission, TAEH works directly with the City of Toronto in its mandates surrounding homelessness and maintaining and growing affordable housing stock in the city, including engagement on client support services and funding. This includes TAEH co-chairing the Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service Planning Forum with both Toronto Shelter & Support Services and the Housing Secretariat. The TAEH also serves as the non-Indigenous Community Advisory Board on housing and homelessness for the City of Toronto. This means that we convene and coordinate the diverse range of homelessness service and housing providers in order to strategically inform City planning and policy on issues related to homelessness.

TAEH applauds the progress Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS) has accomplished in its implementation of the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS). Since its approval, TSSS has secured 11 of the planned 20 new sites, which will contain a total of 1,057 new spaces. Considering the new space target for the 20 shelter HSCIS is 1,600 spaces, TSSS is well on its way to achieving its goal.

In TAEH's deputation to this committee on October 24, 2023, in relation to the approval of the HSCIS, we noted: "*We must recognize that it is the responsibility of the whole of Toronto to ensure that there are safe and adequate shelter spaces across the city.*" It is salutary that the implementation of HSCIS has taken this principle to heart, notwithstanding the difficulties encountered in doing so in some communities previously without shelters.

In this regard, TAEH fully supports the decision of City Council in July 2025, "to establish a cross-divisional leadership team responsible for working with local Councillors and communities to develop neighbourhood-specific plans for each [shelter location in order to take] a responsive approach to integrating and welcoming new shelter services into

communities.” However, in doing so TAEH reiterates the need to balance the interests of the communities with those of shelter users. Doing so will mean that shelter users will feel safer and more secure when using these shelters. TAEH reminds the committee that shelter users have an equal stake in these processes, consistent with the goals of the *City Housing Charter* as they apply to homeless residents:

Regardless of whether they rent or own a home, *or are homeless*, all residents have *an equal stake and voice* in Toronto’s future *and to effective participation* in decisions and policies affecting their communities and their housing. (Emphasis added).

TAEH emphasised the need to maximise the use of City land in the development of new shelters and that critical supports be integrated into the design of the new shelters in its deputation to this committee on January 11, 2024, regarding the HSCIS real estate strategy: *“It is critical that City-owned real estate be maximized, and that the shelter system be housing-focused and include a range of supports and services ... These critical supports must be integrated into the operational design of all shelters to enhance dignity and safety, and to meet the diverse needs of all Torontonians experiencing homelessness.”*

In this light, TAEH acknowledges that TSSS has aligned HSCIS with the City’s equity and inclusion strategies, particularly regarding Indigenous and Black-mandated organisations. TAEH fully endorses expanding the Expression of Interest process to include other specific demographically disadvantaged groups such as families fleeing GBV/IPV, youth, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals. Likewise, recognising that many newly homeless are seniors, shelters for senior women and men, using the model of the Scarborough Villages Shelter as a template. TAEH is gratified that these new shelters are designed to be easily retrofitted into permanent supportive and deeply affordable housing as the homelessness crisis is resolved, a design goal previously advocated for by TAEH.

TAEH notes that over the past six months there have been 12 days when the shelter system has not reached capacity, and that the number of people housed from shelters and encampments by TSSS rose by 10% in 2025 as TSSS moved more homeless more quickly into housing using funding programs such as COHB. However, TAEH believes that only the construction of sufficient supportive and deeply affordable community housing will solve the homelessness crisis. TAEH welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with TSSS in further advancing the goals of TSSS in general, and HSCIS in particular, as we collectively work towards making homelessness in Toronto rare, brief, and non-recurring.

Thank you.

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