

February 20, 2026

Letter from the Chair, Housing Rights Advisory Committee

I am pleased to share that our Supporting Unhoused Rights Holders Working Group and Improving Access to Housing Working Group have had the opportunity to convene and consult with staff on items related to their respective key priorities. As an update, the Maintaining Housing Working Group Chair, Annie Hodgins will be providing her update at the next HRAC meeting as the Working Group will be convening following today's meeting.

I would like to highlight a few developments since our last meeting on November 19, 2025, which impact the City's capacity to provide critical supports and services for people experiencing housing precarity and homelessness.

Response to Proposed Regulations under the Province's Bill 6

First, I wanted to share that the Province has recently released new and concerning regulations under Bill 6, the *Restricting Public Consumption of Illegal Substances Act, 2025*. If passed, a TTC Special Constable could have certain policing powers, including the authority to arrest or charge people who are believed to be consuming a controlled substance in public transit.

To be clear, this proposed regulation effectively criminalizes addiction and homelessness. It is contrary to the TTC's own [Community Safety, Security, and Well-being Plan](#), which requires TTC Special Constables not only to perform enforcement duties, but also to provide overdose prevention, community engagement, and mental health support services for people in transit. This approach begins with the individual person who is in distress and seeks to provide the appropriate supports and resources. As a committee concerned with the protection of people's right to housing and human rights more broadly, we strongly encourage City Council and the TTC to maintain this approach.

Using the Maximum Available Resources Across All Levels of Government

Next, I wanted to share that in alignment with a motion moved through [HS8.2](#), I wrote and submitted a [letter](#) on January 27, 2025 to The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance, and The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, to express the Committee's concerns regarding the cut to the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) and the resulting impact for people experiencing homelessness. The letter highlighted that the COHB has become the leading pathway out of homelessness, helping thousands of people experiencing homelessness find rental housing, and noted that without additional funding, municipalities like the City of Toronto will have limited ability to support people moving from homelessness into permanent housing. To date, I have not received a response.

At our last HRAC meeting, this Committee submitted a letter to the City's Executive Committee, which included recommendations to increase supports for people in greatest housing need through the City's 2026 Budget.

The City has since passed its 2026 Budget. While I am pleased to see an increase in funding for the Multi-Unit Rental Acquisition Program (MURA) of \$47 million over the next 10 years, there have been no increases to most of the programs and plans referenced in our letter, including: the Winter Services Plan, the Rent Bank, and the Eviction Prevention in the Community (EPIC)

program. There has been a moderate increase for legal services offered under the Toronto Tenant Support Program (TTSP), but not nearly enough to meet demand.

I recognize that the City is in a challenging fiscal environment, exacerbated by recent program cuts, and systemic underfunding from the Provincial and Federal governments.

At the same time, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario estimates that nearly [85,000 people](#) experienced homelessness in Ontario in 2025.

The City's limited financial ability to meet the current demand for adequate shelter space, rental subsidies, and eviction prevention supports contributes immensely to the City's homelessness crisis. While it is critical that other orders of government with the fiscal capacity invest in programs to meet the current need for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, in order for the City of Toronto to meet its own obligations to progressively realize the right to adequate housing, it should consider doing a human rights analysis of its budget to ensure that the maximum available resources are in fact being directed to realizing the right to housing for everyone in this city.

Submitted by Elizabeth McIsaac, Chair, Housing Rights Advisory Committee, February 20, 2026.