

TO: City of London Housing Service Review: Proposed Action Plan

From: London Poverty Research Centre at Kings, September 12, 2019

Based on the review of the critical housing issues in London addressed by KPMG, I read with great interest your proposals to address these issues. You offer some options to be considered and then suggest a preferred way to move forward. I agree that change is needed and changing structures and accountability might help. However, what is not identified are clear outcomes.

You state very clearly that you cannot re-organize the same resources and expect different outcomes. The housing crisis before us did not happen quickly. It has been growing for a number of years because different levels of government have not adequately funded the very real need. However, I applaud our city Council for wanting to address the need in our city. I also believe we need leadership and collaborative efforts from within city hall, and community partners with new ideas to help in finding new solutions to housing. This could be in design, in financing, in maintaining and repairing present stock. The city could benefit from reaching out to community leaders who have a proven track record and interest in finding new solutions to housing.

I chair a not-for-profit housing group and it takes three to four years to move through the many steps to get approvals. The approvals needed pass from one level of government to another and much of the same work needs to be redone. It is slow and inefficient and time consuming while we wait for something to happen.

The project we are building at 1045 Dundas St. will be more than 4 years to completion, and we owned the land before we were even accepted to work with HDC. If every project takes that much time, then the housing crisis will continue to grow and our effort will help a few but never come close to addressing the need. We, as a city, can make housing happen much quicker. I see promise in the National Housing Strategy, but to be effective it needs to be more responsive to the need.

Finally, housing is costly to build or to repair. No level of government has adequate funds to address the need. Calling the citizens to help us invest in housing, not just to create housing but to help us all take ownership of the community we could become. Finance is not my background, but I strongly believe with a little creative thinking "outside the box" and citizen participation we could find the money needed to create the housing London needs.

It is time to take some risks and think about housing not just as building, but as creating community we all helped to create.

I received a call from a man last week who is looking for accessible housing. He is in a wheel chair and receives ODSP. He is living in housing that he cannot afford. His son who is 19 lives with him to help him in his personal needs and gives him some money for rent. He was told that if this continues he will lose his ODSP. I called the housing access centre to see if they had any solutions that I might offer this man. The answer I

received was he could go a wait list but the wait time would be 8 to 10 years. Not only can we do better, we must do better.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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