



January 18, 2021

Planning and Housing Committee PH20.2 – City Planning Division - Study Work Program Update

Dear Members of the Planning and Housing Committee.

We are writing on behalf of the Right to Housing in Toronto (R2HTO), a network of organizations and individuals working to support the implementation of the human right to housing by the City of Toronto.

As a reflection of the City Council / City Planning Division's (City Planning) direction and priorities for recovery and rebuilding during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, we are pleased to see that the proposed Work Study Plan commits to examining how proposed plans, policies and actions are responding to existing gaps and worsening inequalities experienced by many residents, neighborhoods and communities as a result of the pandemic.

We are also pleased to see City Planning acknowledge the need to strengthen partnerships and coordinate resources and action (key elements of a rights-based approach to housing policy) across the City's divisions to ensure City Planning works actively and effectively to address the range of city building challenges across Toronto. This includes securing the housing rights of residents of neighborhoods and communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.

As the City continues to develop the strategies and frameworks that will shape future planning processes, we are writing to urge the City to uphold their commitment to realizing the progressive realization of the right to housing and integrate a rights-based lens and approach directly into this strategy and framework, the 2021 and future Study Work Plans, and the City's planning process at large. Doing so requires the prioritizing and securing the housing rights of current and aspiring residents of neighborhoods undergoing development – particularly those from under-represented groups such as tenants, seniors and members of racialized, newcomers and indigenous communities during the planning and development process. It begins with embedding rights-based engagement and accountability throughout this process.

We acknowledge and commend the work undertaken by the City to prioritize a rights-based approach to their housing policy and the steps taken thus far to make good on their commitment to the progressive realization of the right to housing. We urge the City to ensure that a rights-based approach to housing include all aspects of housing policy; including all action that falls under the planning umbrella given the central role of the work done by City Planning in the larger conversation around securing housing rights. Doing so will enable the City to adequately address some of the most significant human rights challenges in the housing context, such as displacement of residents from their neighborhoods - far from employment, services, amenities, transit, and the precious support provided by their communities.

Thank you,

Right to Housing Toronto (R2HTO)