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**February 8, 2023**

REGION OF PEEL  
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**Right to Housing Peel Coalition**

Date: February 08, 2023  
Regional Chair Nando Iannicca  
Region of Peel  
10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A,  
Brampton, ON L6T 4B9

Dear Members of Peel Regional Council;

**Re: 2023 Housing Support Budget**

REFERRAL TO \_\_\_\_\_  
RECOMMENDED \_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTION REQUIRED \_\_\_\_\_  
RECEIPT RECOMMENDED  \_\_\_\_\_

We are representatives of the Right to Housing Peel, a coalition of organizations and individuals working to support the implementation of the right to housing in Peel Region. We are writing to you to comment on the Region's Housing Services Housing Support Budget for 2023.

Over the last year, the escalating cost of living, including in housing along with the loss of provincial emergency funding, has pushed a growing share of Peel residents to live in precarious conditions, often at the risk of being evicted, or worse. With a recession looming and ongoing rental increases, it is likely that the problems of housing instability and affordability will persist and worsen, disproportionately affecting some of our communities' lowest income households. Investing in housing and supports will remain a top priority this year.

We commend the Region and its Housing Services Department on its ongoing work to support its most vulnerable citizens through the administration of housing retention funds, wrap-around services, affordable housing developments, maintenance of existing affordable housing and the no turn-away policy from shelters.

We also understand the challenge the Region faces with serious underfunding from both the federal and provincial governments towards improving the system. The fact that only 30 percent of service needs are being met shows how dire the situation in Peel has become.

Several other commitments in the housing portfolio are also encouraging to see. For example,

- Funding for additional staff to help address the service demands within the system to meet the over 230% increase in service requests. This includes four dedicated staff to help carry out and manage Peel's Coordinated Access system and By Name list.
- Re-developing the Wilkinson Road adult men's shelter in Brampton to better meet the growing need for low-barrier, safe, emergency shelter for adult homeless men
- More support for shelter overflow facility management
- More developer incentives to increase rental supply

While we are happy to see funding enhancements in some areas, we do remain concerned about whether the increases will be sufficient to meet the needs of the Region's homeless population. For example, homelessness figures have grown over the last few years and are likely an undercount as we do not know who is living rough or experiencing hidden homelessness. Future measures should therefore be explored to provide further housing resources to people on the Region's Coordinated

Access by name list. A more robust approach should also ensure adequate provision of out of the cold/out of the heat facilities.

We understand that over time, shelters, community housing all require maintenance and upgrades, but the allocated funding in the 2023 budget does not seem geared towards getting people out of shelter and into housing. Understanding the lack of housing resources, in the future, we would like to see some of the allocation of funds go towards incentives for deeply affordable housing, or more funding towards housing retention.

Additionally, we would like the Region to consider the following for future budget submissions:

- Increase supportive housing initiatives, whether it through the provision of housing workers for wrap-around supports or investments in supportive housing development
- Support to non-profits to develop and implement education and training programs (including culturally sensitive programs) to teach adults and youth how to maintain housing
- Support to non-profits to assist purchase of land/homes to alleviate housing
- Provision of specific housing units and/or transitional homes designated for homeless youth up to age 30
- Provision of rental subsidies to organizations (despite ROP's existing pool)
- Provision of incentives to homeowners to create openness for creating spaces in their homes to alleviate youth homelessness
- More resources (housing and funds) allocated to people and youth on the Region's By Name list

We are also calling for the Region to set up an accountability mechanism because it helps create the conditions for the Region to systematically realize the right to housing for its residents. The need for such a mechanism remains critical in light of the looming economic headwinds that threaten the housing security of many Peel Residents. By extension, such disruptions risk access to affordable housing which the Region has committed to realizing for its residents through its 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

To strengthen future iterations of the Housing Services budget, we recommend the Region take a closer look at how its spending plans measure up against a rights-based approach to housing. In such a framework, investment decisions would consistently evaluate whether the maximum available resources are being made available, prioritizing those who need it the most. A more participatory approach to budgeting can also help.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sean Keddy



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on behalf of the Right to Housing Peel Coalition