

July 31, 2020

Mr. Saad Rafi and Dr. David Mowat
Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild (TORR)
4th Floor, East Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Re: Priorities for an equitable recovery – Joint submission from non-profit leaders to inform TORR final recommendations to City Council

Dear Mr. Rafi and Dr. Mowat,

As you know, there has been significant philosophical alignment across sectors and across the political spectrum around a vision for Toronto's rebuild and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. By now, you have no doubt heard over and over again that the recovery cannot simply be a return to "normal."

This pandemic has made it abundantly clear that residents who have been historically disadvantaged and/or systematically marginalized by multiple systems of oppression face significant barriers to equal access, opportunities, and resources. They have borne a disproportionate share of the pandemic's devastating impacts. Addressing Toronto's deep inequities across multiple dimensions will be key to our ability to recover and rebuild, and to survive the impacts of future pandemics and natural disasters. Moreover, it is clear that social infrastructure – including food security, affordable housing, transit, childcare, community safety programs and services, public health services, and decent work standards – are critical prerequisites to economic prosperity and resilience.

Business, government, non-profit, and community leaders have put forth very strong cases across multiple media channels and through various consultative tables to ensure that we "build back better," with solutions that:

- are built on a foundation of public investment instead of austerity,
- proactively address the multitude of deep inequities that are so prevalent in our city,
- maximize community benefits, job creation, and decent work conditions,
- increase climate resilience and accelerate Toronto's transition to a sustainable and low-carbon economy, and
- strengthen rather than weaken our social safety net.

In support of this collective vision, our submission **underscores the tangible and specific solutions put forward by leading organizations within Toronto's non-profit sector that should be considered in your final report to City Council. We strongly urge the TORR to ensure that its final report to City Council contains specific, measurable, and concrete actions.**

Prior to the pandemic, **a long list of extensive City strategies (see Appendix A)** were developed by teams of public service experts, in consultation with community partners and residents, to guide the City's decision-making about service delivery and achieving long-term goals of economic stability, social equity, environmental sustainability, and public health. However, in many cases the bulk of this work has remained on paper at the levels of goals and aspirations, while progress on implementation has been significantly delayed and often hampered by budgetary choices. Rather than starting from scratch, we need to **accelerate the implementation of existing City strategies** and build upon them.

It is imperative that all recommendations related to the recovery and rebuild process be intentionally designed to reduce the deep inequities that have become so prevalent in our city. Recommendations must be aligned with, and further strengthen existing strategies such as the Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Youth Equity Strategy, and Access to City Services for Undocumented Torontonians. It is also important to underscore the importance of working directly and in partnership with the Indigenous social service sector and Indigenous leaders to enable targeted funding and customized programs and support to serve Indigenous communities in Toronto. This includes upholding the Statement of Commitment, developing and funding the implementation of an Indigenous-led Toronto Poverty Reduction Action Plan, and prioritizing implementation of existing strategies listed in Appendix A.

The non-profit (or "public benefit") sector represents 8% of Toronto's GDP and is now being called upon to play an even greater role in strengthening the social infrastructure that is key to our city's ability to successfully recover and rebuild. Therefore, we must **safeguard the resilience of the non-profit sector because it plays a crucial role in protecting Toronto's economic health and resident well-being.**

Our sector is full of unsung heroes, with so many people risking their lives to continue serving vulnerable communities. There has been unprecedented collaboration and coordination between hundreds of agencies and funders, who have stepped up with innovative and rapid responses to all the new challenges caused by this pandemic. But there have also been problems in coordinating and ensuring populations facing barriers and exclusion are not left further behind. We need to work together to be better prepared for the coming second wave. This is our mutual challenge and obligation.

We remain ready and willing to continue to implement real solutions and to work collaboratively with government, business, and community leaders to build back a better city for **all** our residents.

Sincerely,

1. Carol Annett, President & CEO, **VHA Home HealthCare**
2. Angie Aranda, Manager, **Neighbourhood Arts Network**
3. Susan Bender, Manager, **Toronto Drop-In Network**
4. Alyssa Brierley, Executive Director and General Counsel, **Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation**
5. Chris Brillinger, Executive Director, **Family Service Toronto**
6. Marva Burnett, President, **ACORN Canada**
7. Mario Calla, Executive Director, **COSTI Immigrant Services**
8. John Campey, Executive Director, **Ralph Thornton Community Centre**
9. Kim Coulter, President & CEO, **JVS Toronto**
10. Linda Curley, Interim Executive Director, **Birchmount Bluffs Neighbourhood Centre**
11. Michelle Dagnino, Executive Director, **Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre**
12. David di Giovanni, Artistic Director, **Shakespeare in Action**
13. Abigail Doris, RECE, Executive Coordinator, **Toronto Community for Better Child Care**
14. Debbie Douglas, Executive Director, **OCASI-Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants**
15. Cynthia Dumont, Executive Director, **West Scarborough Neighbourhood Centre**
16. Herman Ellis, Acting Executive Director, **Scadding Court Community Centre**
17. Maureen Fair, Executive Director, **West Neighbourhood House**
18. Sharmini Fernando, Executive Director, **Syme Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre**
19. S. Raymund Guiste, LL.M, Executive Director, **Tropicana Community Services**
20. Anne Gloger, Principal, **East Scarborough Storefront & Centre for Connected Communities**
21. Kenn Hale, Director of Advocacy and Legal Services, **Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario**
22. Michal Hay, Executive Director, **Progress Toronto**
23. Janice Hayes, Executive Director, **YouthLink**
24. Rob Howarth, Executive Director, **Toronto Neighbourhood Centres**
25. Jane Kenny, Executive Director, **Rosalie Hall**
26. Lynda Kosowan, Executive Director, **Scarborough Women's Centre**
27. Steve Lurie, Executive Director, **Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto**
28. Emmay Mah, Executive Director, **Toronto Environmental Alliance**
29. Medhat Mahdy, President and Chief Executive Officer, **YMCA of Greater Toronto**
30. Michael Manu, Executive Director, **Toronto Youth Cabinet**
31. Deepa Mattoo, Executive Director, **Barbra Schlifer Clinic of Ontario**
32. Janet McCrimmon, CEO, **Strides Toronto**
33. Heather McDonald, CEO, **LOFT Community Services**
34. Heather McGregor, Chief Executive Officer, **YWCA Toronto**
35. Joanne McKiernan, Executive Director, **Volunteer Toronto**

36. Sean Meagher, Coordinator, **ConveneToronto**
37. Dr. Sudip Minhas, Executive Director, **Settlement Assistance and Family Support Services**
38. Kate Mulligan, Director of Policy and Communications, **Alliance for Healthier Communities**
39. Bruce Pitkin, Executive Director, **Art Starts**
40. Rosemary Powell, Executive Director, **Toronto Community Benefits Network**
41. Shireen Salti, Executive Director, **Canadian Arab Institute**
42. Brad Saunders, CEO, **Community Living Toronto**
43. Utcha Sawyers, Executive Director, **Boys & Girls Club of East Scarborough**
44. Devika Shah, Executive Director, **Social Planning Toronto**
45. Neethan Shan, Executive Director, **Urban Alliance on Race Relations**
46. Lee Soda, Executive Director, **Agincourt Community Services Association**
47. Paul M. Taylor, Executive Director, **FoodShare**
48. Agnes Thomas, Executive Director, **Catholic Crosscultural Services**
49. Sue Wilkinson, Executive Director, **Findhelp | 211 Central**
50. Moy Wong-Tam, Executive Director, **Centre for Immigrant & Community Services**

Theme: Economic Prosperity

Stimulate job creation and build critical infrastructure for economic health and resilience

Affordable Housing

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)
<p>Purchase land and support community ownership and rehabilitation through land trusts, cooperatives and non-profits (land value is removed from a segment of the low-income rental housing market, thereby stabilizing affordable housing in our City over the long term).</p> <p>Enable a "first right of refusal" in order to strategically redirect municipal land and properties to the creation of permanent affordable housing and community space.</p>
<p>Facilitate planning approvals for non-profit developments to reflect their distinct role in the housing process and their value to the public (by providing access to facilitated planning approvals and removing barriers/requirements designed to regulate for-profit developments).</p> <p>Award public land solely on the depth of affordability, the presence of supportive housing and access to social services, and the achievement of policy objectives. Avoid processes that sell land or award land based on financial compensation.</p>
<p>Sustain recent investments in new housing capacity (via hotel rental/TCH rapid housing, expansion of respite centres).</p> <p>Purchase suitable hotels (or take on long-term rentals) and partner with the non-profit sector to operate these sites, and provide supportive housing as an interim solution until purpose-built affordable rental housing is available in our city.</p>
<p>Regulate the housing market to prevent the return of ghost hotels and vacant units (which have diminished thanks to Airbnb vacancies).</p>
Long-Term Solutions (12–18 months)
<p>Make grants, low-cost loans, and loan guarantees available to non-profits for the acquisition of rooming houses, low-cost rental housing, and hotels and apartment buildings distressed by the economic downturn resulting from COVID-19.</p> <p>Create a revolving fund for the nimble acquisition of sites and create a small-sites acquisition program to address the gradual erosion of affordable supply.</p> <p>Require affordable housing receiving public funds and incentives to be affordable in perpetuity and use the assets and capital generated to reinvest in affordable homes and build the capacity to create new affordable housing.</p>

Create a dedicated fund to support the delivery of modular housing to be used by individuals experiencing homelessness, refugees, households on existing social housing waitlists, seniors, and those looking for workforce housing.

Implement an Inclusionary Zoning By-law.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities

Repeal Ontario Bill 184 and take eviction and forced rent payments off the table for rent not paid during the COVID-19 crisis.

Advocate for all levels of government to amend authorities and program guidelines to give the public sector the "right of first refusal" so it can compete with the capital market and purchase land and properties to create permanent affordable housing and community space.

Expedite the approval process and enhance the delivery of financially feasible projects. CMHC should: **increase the grant portion** of funding for permanently affordable non-profit projects, **increase flexibility** on program parameters, **streamline processes** and **rapidly accelerate decision-making** on projects already in the pipeline, and **allocate all uncommitted funding** within existing program envelopes to specific projects **within the next 6–9 months**.

Provide community-owned developments that create perpetually affordable units with:

- Coordinated and facilitated access to investment and capital – including funding from patient investors, CHMC, NHS funds, expanded federal programs, federal low-cost loans, and public sector loan guarantees – to offset their current under-capitalization relative to their long-term capacity and that of the private market.
- Grant funding for pre-development planning (including business planning) and due-diligence costs to offset their disadvantage relative to private developers that can remarket projects to private buyers when they are not taken up by the public sector.

Support a coordinated affordable housing network, including a pool of technical resources for non-profit development, with a specific mandate to seek and apply funds as outlined above.

Dedicate funding to support acquisitions and renovations/conversions within the non-profit and co-op sector to create new permanent, affordable, and supportive homes.

Immediately expand funding under the Federal Reaching Home program and the Ontario government's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) program, with funding provided based on community needs, to help cities and non-profit housing providers (including co-ops) and agencies. Flexible programming to facilitate a full range of services that reduce

and prevent homelessness, including support in the form of ongoing operating subsidies to non-profit housing organizations to cover added costs of maintaining housing for vulnerable people.

Dedicate funding to increase affordable rental and home ownership opportunities for Indigenous peoples, in order to counteract the high cost of constructing and purchasing homes in large urban centres. Partnerships between Indigenous organizations such as Friendship Centres and experienced non-profit service providers can help to expand this capacity.

Support affordable housing through inclusionary zoning in all areas (not just major transit station areas) to increase affordability and promote equity.

Provide municipal governments with adequate resources to support growth based upon the principle of “growth pays for growth.” The Province should also pause consideration of the new Community Benefits Authority regime during the COVID-19 emergency to allow for public consultation and Council consideration of the City's position in light of declining land values.

Integrate and expand community benefit expectations in publicly funded federal infrastructure projects, as Community Benefit Agreements are key to both building an inclusive economy and to the government's environmental, economic, and social policy objectives.

Ban commercial evictions in Ontario, especially in cases where the landlord has not applied to the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program.

Dedicate legal and administrative support for small businesses to avoid eviction.

Enhance rent banks in Toronto with federal and provincial funding to cities. While eviction freezes and the CERB have made it possible for many across Canada to keep up with rent payments to date, demand for rent bank services is expected to surge when eviction moratoriums and emergency income support programs phase out.

Extend the rent arrears eviction moratorium post-COVID. To prevent large-scale evictions, provinces- through their Landlord Tenant Boards (LTBs)- should mandate that renters in good standing pre-COVID not be evicted and/or that while the general moratorium is lifted, renters continue to be safeguarded from evictions for arrears accumulated during the COVID-19 pandemic period. For arrears that were incurred as a result of COVID-19, mediated repayment agreements between landlords and renters should also be mandated. This would alleviate potential future pressure on LTB caseloads and also ensure that people can remain housed while they look for employment or secure other forms of financial assistance.

Establish an Emergency Housing Benefit. To maximize its impact, it must be “stackable” with other supports, services, and/or benefits that an individual or family is eligible for, regardless of funding source or program limitations, so that the gap between rent in more expensive markets and a household's income can be closed.

Substantially increase Toronto's allocation under the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

program. Based on growing needs and high rental rates that have now been compounded by the COVID-19 crisis, Toronto will likely need a substantial increase in its COHB allocation in the upcoming months, especially if the crisis extends for much longer or if we experience a second wave. Through the 10-year HousingTO 2020-2030 Plan, the City of Toronto has requested a total of 31,000 COHBs over the next 10 years to help the large number of renter households that currently live in core housing need - this process needs to be accelerated.

Accelerate planned spending to improve existing housing conditions while immediately creating employment opportunities. The National Housing Strategy currently includes a target of retrofitting and preserving 300,000 social housing units, but the funding is back-end loaded. (Note: a significant proportion of low-income and formerly homeless individuals live in rooming house stock that is often in a poor state of repair. This spending would thus be a valuable target for retrofit funding, including initiatives to assist non-profit acquisition and operation of privately owned rooming house stock.)

Implement a program to support energy retrofits and the repair and rehabilitation of the existing affordable and market rental stock including renewal of purpose-built rental towers. The program should also prioritize: i) grants to landlords that provide deeply affordable rents and ii) low-interest loans for landlords of market rental units that commit to no rent increases beyond guideline increases.

Ramp up programs that fund home modifications for low-income seniors who are renters and homeowners to support aging in place and reduce ongoing demand for long-term care. Until recently, the federal government played an essential role in the delivery and funding of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), which had existed for more than 50 years. The program should be reintroduced with an added energy retrofit component to ensure adequate, safe housing for seniors.

Eliminate vacancy de-control by tying rent control to the unit instead of the tenant.

Technology

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)
Partner with funders, the private sector and other levels of government to facilitate a connected city. Ensure access to high-speed internet and technology and digital literacy support for low-income residents, including children for increased online learning and seniors who risk disconnection from increasingly virtual services.
Work with funders and other levels of government to ensure that the Kids @ Computers scholarship project reserve is funded long-term.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities
Advocate for a national strategy to ensure universal digital access including access to broadband, access to basic devices, and access to technical and digital literacy support when needed.

Planning

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)
Advance the Data for Equity Strategy to enhance the capacity to increase the collection, use and analysis of disaggregated socio-demographic data in the City and community sector.
Work with other levels of government, funders, non-profits, and academia to develop and implement a joint research and data agenda on the social, economic and health impacts of COVID-19.
Use intersectional race-based and sociodemographic disaggregated data to gain insight into vulnerability trends - who is most affected now and who is poised to become vulnerable? This insight must be proactively integrated into the City's economic and social planning across all relevant divisions, in addition to emergency response efforts.
Apply a climate lens (as committed to in Toronto's Climate Emergency Declaration) to recovery and rebuild proposals in order to ensure that all investments and policies advance an equitable transition to a zero-GHG city by 2040 or sooner.
Accelerate implementation of all existing City strategies/initiatives as outlined in Appendix A.

Revenue Tools

Long-Term Solutions (12-18 months)

Implement fair, progressive, imaginative, and equitable revenue tools within City powers (e.g. commercial parking tax, vehicle registration tax and stormwater levy) with protections for low-income people, and revisit the results from the 2016 City of Toronto Revenue Options Study in order to quickly identify and fast-track revenue tool implementation options.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities

A New Deal for Toronto that goes beyond relief funding and instead re-imagines the status of our city. This requires a new legal and financial relationship between the City and both the Provincial and Federal governments - one that recognizes our economic contribution to the country, alongside our shared responsibilities for supporting marginalized and vulnerable residents and that provides adequate funding for services with greater access to revenue tools.

Address the inexcusable trend of gross income inequity that has ballooned since the 1990's and generate increased operating revenues to respond to the pandemic by establishing progressive tax policies. To generate increased revenue from the top 10% of income earners and from corporate entities that have turned massive profits during this pandemic, instruments such as capital gains taxes, corporate digital services taxes, wealth taxes, dividend taxes must be deployed, as well as cracking down on tax loopholes and offshore tax havens.

Green Jobs

Long-Term Solutions (12-18 months)

Implement regulatory mechanisms and policy incentives to ensure building audits, energy labelling, and re-commissioning plans, which include deep retrofits that climate-proof buildings and meet Toronto Green Standards while improving building accessibility and ensuring tenants are protected from displacement (e.g. electric water and heating).

Accelerate the expansion of local jobs through a large-scale energy efficiency retrofit program focused on pre-1984 single-family and multi-residential buildings, as well as buildings in the institutional, commercial and industrial (ICI) sector. Financial, policy, and program support to accelerate building retrofits and increase job opportunities for equity-seeking groups should be provided, in part through easy-access loans and grants for energy efficiency measures (in partnership with federal and provincial governments and utility companies).

Invest in workforce development opportunities that prioritize equity seeking groups in training/working in fields of green technology/retrofits.

Rapidly scale and accelerate waste diversion infrastructure, services and policies by: increasing organics processing capacity; expanding waste diversion services and programs; restricting and banning single-use plastics that harm our environment; providing guidelines and tips on how to safely use reusable items (e.g. face masks, gloves, bags, take-out containers); and supporting community-based circular economy initiatives including 3Rs programs, community-scale composting projects, and resource exchange platforms.

Transportation & Mobility

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)

Increase bus service and commit to restoring 100% of pre-pandemic TTC service levels as soon as possible.

Fast-track 5 bus only lanes (as identified in TTC Board-approved report) in Fall 2020 (in addition to the already approved Eglinton East corridor), to improve service reliability as more riders return to the TTC. Bus lanes must be coupled with more frequent service, not less.

Establish separated, protected cycle tracks or multi-use paths adjacent to bus corridors. Ensure that bus rapid transit (BRT) can be delivered with cycling infrastructure as a pandemic response and recovery solution. TTC must ensure that inclusion of cycling infrastructure is not delayed until 2024, and that it is delivered in tandem with the creation of BRT lanes.

While the proposed bus-only lanes on Eglinton East will not include bike lanes at the time of installation in fall 2020, ensure that people are permitted to cycle in the BRT lanes if they so choose.

Lower fares for all as a pandemic response and move towards a fully subsidized transit system, starting with the full implementation of the Fair Pass program.

Abolish fare enforcement practices on TTC and redirect funding to making transit affordable and accessible.

Ensure that the TTC is fully accessible (elevator upgrades, Wheel-Trans buses).

Improve safety measures on transit vehicles, including clear guidelines for physical distancing measures on buses and a clear commitment from the TTC to oppose racism and oppression on the TTC.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities

Increased funding to public transit beyond the pandemic. In reference to Minister McKenna's mandate letter, the federal government must act on their promise of funding public transit permanently. This must be implemented as soon as possible because capital funding alone cannot keep transit affordable or functioning in the long term. Stable federal operating funding

is needed for local transit agencies to improve service and cap fares to boost ridership after the pandemic.

Tie CBAs and workforce development strategies to all transit investments.

Accelerate existing plans to bring rapid transit to Toronto's inner suburbs (e.g. Eglinton East LRT including Malvern).

Childcare

Long-Term Solutions (12-18 months)

Prioritize and expand the Licenced Child Care Strategy, which envisions a licensed child care system that can serve 50 per cent of children aged 0-4 by 2026. Pandemic-related child care closures have shown us how critical access to child care is to re-starting our economy.

Boldly invest in the expansion of non-profit child care centres and actively work towards a publicly funded, licensed, universal child care system that leaves not one child or family behind; place limits on commercial, for profit child care centres and dismantle the market-based child care system.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities

Advocate for the development and release of a comprehensive plan from the Government of Ontario to ensure child care access for families and the development of a National Child Care strategy.

Provide access to decent work opportunities and professional wages for Early Childhood Educators. Currently there is a significant pay gap between ECEs working in Toronto's municipality operated child care centres and those who work in other non-profit centres.

Labour Market & Income Support

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)
Include labour market forecasting as part of all planning applications, ensuring that local community organizations responsible for hiring equity seeking groups are provided with advance knowledge of development and associated jobs at the earliest possible opportunity.
Ensure processes that intentionally link planning with economic development and social development strategies to promote both inclusive planning and consultation processes, and a direct connection between planning economic growth and employment for equity seeking groups.
Invest in cross-divisional holistic workforce development strategies that include both place-based and sector-based strategies integrating CBAs, essential skills and employability training and employment wrap-around supports.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities
Permanent increase in minimum wage for low-wage workers in front-line roles that were deemed essential during this pandemic.
Decent work conditions that include paid sick leave, full-time hours and worker protections to ensure the safety of all workers and mitigate the transmission of COVID-19.
Close the gender wage gap.
Establish a Basic Income Guarantee to provide a sufficient income floor for anyone in need and that is suitable for covering basic expenses of living and working in Toronto.

Public Health

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)
Meaningfully include expertise and heed early warnings from the front line community and social and health services sectors on community planning tables. Include community leaders as trusted communicators on public health measures.
Support population health action on the social determinants of health through social prescribing: support and track referrals between healthcare, community and social services to address immediate social needs. Make social needs screening and sociodemographic data collection essential components of COVID-19 testing and response. Prioritize community and social supports as essential services in recovery and reopening frameworks.

Focus second wave preparations on primary care to leverage trusted relationships with marginalized communities.

Commit to accountability and performance measures on community health equity data and governance.

Medical Officer of Health to continue working with Transportation Services on the ActiveTO program, in particular to support vulnerable individuals and communities who have limited access to space for physical activity.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities

Work with the Public Health Agency of Canada, Public Health Ontario and Ministry of Health to support work being done on the establishment of a volunteer isolation/quarantine centre system as well as other methods to achieve effective isolation for individuals who are unable to safely and effectively isolate at home.

Advocate to reverse the trend of public health cuts that was underway prior to the pandemic.

Theme: Resident Safety & Wellbeing

Direct investment in residents most impacted by the pandemic to reduce inequity

Emergency Support

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)
Immediately implement public health directives in all shelter settings, including physical distancing requirements, screening, testing, cleaning, disinfection, and protective measures for staff.
Continued deferral of utility bills and property tax payments for those who can demonstrate a material reduction in income.
Additional financial support for vulnerable, low-income seniors to deal with increased expenses.
Develop a widespread public education campaign led by public health officials to ensure transmission prevention measures including clear instructions on the proper use of a mask and the necessity to use masks.
Provide affordable or free access to PPE for low-income households.
Give community agencies access to bigger spaces such as schools which can be used as locations to deliver programs/services to vulnerable populations.
Dedicate emergency funds for food banks and meal delivery programs.
Provide funding to enhance community hubs that are critical to neighbourhood resilience (e.g. coordinating ground-level responses to COVID19).
Strengthen community capacity in underserved and vulnerable neighbourhoods to prepare for, respond to, recover from and regroup after major shock events in ways that coordinate efforts and simultaneously resource, support and prioritize the work of grassroots groups.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities
Extend the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and provide continued financial support for individuals until they are able to get back to work, including people with precarious immigration status that are typically excluded from most government benefits.
Address barriers to accessing emergency income support and advocate for additional labour market planning and supports (including childcare for people who cannot work from home).

Provide an extension of the mortgage deferral period and plans for a gradual move towards full mortgage payments for those who have suffered a substantial decrease in income.

Community Safety

Long-Term Solutions (12-18 months)

Address the structural conditions of community violence by enhancing investment in city services that support the creation of affordable housing, child care, and community programs and spend less on police services. Right now, the breakdown of an average \$3,020 property tax bill is \$703.31 for the Police Service & Board and only \$149.94 on Shelter, Support & Housing.

Support community safety through: crisis intervention support teams that are police-free, community-led and trauma-informed emergency services for people experiencing mental health or psychiatric distress and other forms of crisis such as gender-based violence; street outreach services that support homeless and street involved people and connect them to appropriate services; shelters, drop-ins, and after school programming in low-income, Black, and Indigenous neighbourhoods; youth outreach, youth diversion and constructive interventions for youth in conflict with educational institutions and legal systems; restorative services, mental health services, and community-run health centres; harm reduction, including safe supply, safe injection/inhalation sites, and hiring harm reduction outreach workers; civilian conflict resolution services to replace policing of minor by-law infractions/noise complaints.

Green Space, Clean Air & Climate Resilience

Long-Term Solutions (12-18 months)

Protect and expand equitable access to green space in order to improve residents' physical and mental health, and build climate resilience by: protecting existing greenspace; creating additional parkland while prioritizing areas where more green space access is most needed; planting and better caring for trees on public and private lands; ramping up the pace of implementation of green roofs to cool our city; and investing in green infrastructure solutions in neighbourhoods facing the highest risk of flooding, extreme heat and other climate-related emergencies.

Maintain recent improvements in air quality and lower GHG emissions by building on ActiveTO car-free zones to pilot permanent car-free zones in 2021 with the goal of establishing a major zero emission area of the city (as per Toronto's Fossil Fuel Free Streets Pledge) by 2025.

Adopt and begin implementing the action plan recommendations within Toronto's First Resilience Strategy in order to mitigate the human health, economic and environmental impacts of future climate-related emergencies including extreme weather events like flooding, heat waves, and severe storms.

Food Security

Long-Term Solutions (12-18 months)

Advance implementation of Toronto's urban agriculture strategies including the GrowTO Urban Agriculture Action Plan and launch a city-wide program for small and large-scale food production by: increasing community gardens and public growing space for local food grown on public and private lands by 50% by summer 2025, with priority implementation in neighbourhoods with less access to fresh, affordable produce; increasing support for community-led initiatives that improve healthy food access and innovation in food production (e.g. farmer's markets, good food box programs, garden-sharing programs, aquaponics, and vertical or rooftop gardens); protecting, expanding and improving access to arable public land for farms (e.g. Black Creek Community Farm and Downsview Park); increasing support for teachers and organizations working on urban agriculture and food system education and programming with children and youth; and increasing support for Indigenous-led and Black-led agriculture and land/water stewardship programs.

Improve Toronto's food system resilience, local food security and community wellbeing, while decreasing environmental impact. Advance implementation of Toronto's Food Charter, commitment to the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and actions identified in Toronto's Food Systems Transformation and Food Strategy 2019 Update by launching a city-wide program to: reduce food waste in both residential and commercial settings and promote a circular food economy; promote the transition to a plant-based diet; strengthen the City's social and food procurement policies to ensure that food workers have safe working conditions, fair wages and access to workplace rights, and that all City divisions prioritize procurement from local, ethnic and diverse small-medium scale food suppliers.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities

Prioritize federal investment in cost-shared National School-Food Program (Canada is the only G7 country without one).

Civic Engagement

Long-Term Solutions (12-18 months)
<p>Conduct a 2-year review of formal governance structures and public engagement practices to put forward robust and impactful recommendations to City Council. This initiative must involve extensive resident consultation and be guided by a Community Advisory Body consisting of civil society organizations, residents serving as Community ambassadors, governance experts, and key City leadership from the City Manager’s Office, Social Development Finance & Administration and the City Clerk’s Office. Core components of this review should include: options for community-based governance with resident involvement; civic engagement practices (e.g. meeting logistics, use of civic technology) and analysis of electoral barriers and possible reforms and legal options, including changes to the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and other legislation and bylaws, in order to equip Canada’s largest city with powers it needs to serve its residents.</p>
<p>Invest in designing a Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy (2020-2030) that focuses on resourcing connected communities and includes intentional links between neighbourhood/grassroots efforts and City strategies and programs (such as the Tower Renewal Program, Seniors Strategy, Toronto Poverty Reduction Strategy, Toronto Food Strategy, Housing TO Action Plan, etc.).</p>

Theme: Non-Profit Sector Resilience

Protect and enhance capacity of non-profit sector to continue generating immense public benefits

Joint Planning

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)
Official recognition of the critical role of the nonprofit sector in generating economic health and resident wellbeing.
One conjoined table to plan and implement action on homelessness in the city rather than separate coordinating tables. Key elements involve data sharing – so the sector has full access to live data about how the system is performing.

Long-Term Solutions (12-18 months)
Build on the excellent Community Coordination Plan, developed in response to the pandemic, to expand from its current emergency response focus to engage with the non-profit sector more broadly: act as a ‘sounding board’ to explore urgent and/or emergent issues; engage in ad hoc detailed problem-solving and coordination as needed, and establish structures supported by local community-based agencies to facilitate resident engagement, participatory democracy and local planning.

Funding

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)
Ensure that Community Service Partnership agencies have sufficiently stable, adequate and flexible funding to remain resilient as this crisis ends and before the next one arrives.

Inter-Governmental Advocacy Priorities
Request the provincial and federal governments to establish sector stabilization funds, including the \$680 million provincial fund advocated for by the Ontario Nonprofit Network and the \$8 billion federal fund advocated for by Imagine Canada.
Re-establish funding coordination between levels of government and key partners, such as United Ways, to reduce administrative burden, align reporting requirements and better measure impact. The Province’s own efficiency study says that reporting requirements are too onerous and inefficient, and that streamlining would be preferable. Coordinating transfer payment agencies at the Provincial level, resuming the coordinated Municipal/Provincial/Charitable sector funding models like the CNSSP (Community Neighbourhood Social Support Program)

would also improve coordination and efficiency while reducing reporting loads.

Reporting should also better reflect what funding is designed to do. Reporting in population health and wellbeing outcomes, organizational sustainability, and innovation, may be better tests of performance than unit counts. It has also been demonstrated that when organizations are using the right, outcome-focused indicators, they are more reflective in understanding how communities are being impacted during a crisis and more adaptable in their response.

Sector Pandemic Preparedness

Short-Term Solutions (6 months)

Leverage the City's purchasing power and expertise to support the sector in accessing personal protective equipment (PPE) and other occupational health and safety materials to protect staff and clients.

Plan PPE distribution as systems of service, rather than services siloed by the source of their funding. It is unsafe, and untenable, to have our non-health funded community services vulnerable to a lack of PPE and safety directives, while our health-funded community services are benefitting from these resources and guidance.

Accelerate the For Public Benefit Framework commitment to develop policies and partnerships to facilitate not-for-profit access to decent affordable facilities and spaces.

Coordinate with government and funders to support non-profits in purchasing technology infrastructure to adequately support staff and clients remotely, including computers, phones, privacy and encrypted meeting software, and remote meeting technology. Leverage the City's purchasing power and expertise to support the sector in acquiring technology infrastructure to enable remote service access.

Appendix A: Accelerate Implementation of Existing City Strategies / Initiatives

Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism
Gender Equity Strategy (to be developed)
Poverty Reduction Strategy
Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy
Youth Equity Strategy
Toronto Newcomer Strategy
Access to City Services for Undocumented Torontonians
Seniors Strategy
Indigenous-led Poverty Reduction Action Plan
Indigenous Health Strategy
Aboriginal Employment Strategy
Aboriginal Education Strategy
City of Toronto Path to Reconciliation
Indigenous Overdose Strategy
HousingTO: 2020-2030 Action Plan
Tenants First
TransformTO
Resilience Strategy
Licensed Child Care Growth Strategy
Community Benefits Framework
Workforce Development Strategy
For Public Benefit Framework
Public Art Strategy
Human Service Integration
Social Procurement Program
Tower Renewal Program