

For immediate release

Toronto City Summit Alliance launches *Make Housing Happen* Affordable Housing Coalition says it's time to work together

TORONTO, November 12, 2003 – The Toronto City Summit Alliance (TCSA) today launched a broad corporate and community-based Affordable Housing Coalition to work with all three levels of government to make affordable housing in Toronto a priority.

The Coalition's ***Make Housing Happen*** campaign will focus attention on the affordable housing recommendations contained in the TCSA's action plan *Enough Talk*, which was endorsed by more than 200 prominent corporate and community leaders in a letter to the Prime Minister and Premier this summer. The Coalition is asking to meet with federal and provincial ministers and Toronto's incoming Mayor David Miller to discuss how it can lend corporate and community support for the recommendations.

The Affordable Housing Coalition is co-chaired by TCSA Steering Committee members the Hon. David Crombie, CEO, Canadian Urban Institute and Ed Sorbara, Principal, The Sorbara Group. The coalition includes representatives of social agencies, private sector builders and rental housing owners, major financial institutions and supportive care agencies across the Toronto Region.

"There are well known solutions to our unacceptable lack of truly affordable housing," Mr. Crombie said today at the Coalition's launch at a Toronto Community Housing property in downtown Toronto. "What we need now is the political will. I believe there's a new mood and the time is right."

Despite increased vacancies and some softening of rental rates, the affordability of rental housing is a problem for many families, seniors and new residents to the city. Approximately 266,000 households in the Toronto region pay more than 30 per cent of their income on rent.

The Coalition's goals are to:

- Encourage rapid action on high-impact housing initiatives that can be implemented quickly by the new provincial government
- Implement the TCSA Affordable Housing Work Group's recommendations, which include:
 1. Providing rent supplements for 10,000 households on the waiting list
 2. Adjusting the shelter component of social assistance to reflect real local housing costs in the Toronto region
 3. Creating 4,000 new rental units a year for 10 years
 4. Creating 5,000 supportive housing units
 5. Bringing 45,000 older social housing units to a good state of repair

- Provide advice in shaping housing policies and programs
- Work together to encourage and support private, non-profit and other stakeholders who are willing to put solutions in place
- Build on success by using the gains from new housing programs to support other housing initiatives over the long term

“We recognise this agenda can be achieved only through the joint efforts of all levels of government and the corporate and community sectors,” said Mr. Sorbara. “We’re here to make that happen.”

A new brochure accompanies the campaign that outlines the Coalition’s affordable housing agenda. It encourages citizens and groups to *make housing happen* by contributing their ideas. Following meetings with each level of government, the Coalition co-chairs will call a meeting of all members to develop the next steps in implementing the agenda.

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