

Discussion Guide

Fall 2020 / Winter 2021

Welcome to the City of Toronto's Housing Now Initiative

The City of Toronto's Housing Now Initiative will deliver new affordable rental housing and build mixed-income, mixed-use developments to support complete communities on City-owned land. The City's target is to approve 40,000 affordable rental homes over the next ten years.

In January 2019, City Council identified 11 sites to kick-off the program. Six additional sites were added by City Council in May 2020. The 17 Housing Now sites are estimated to create approximately 12,400 new residential units, including approximately 4,600 affordable rental units. Based on work done to date, those numbers will likely increase as more detailed planning work is undertaken on the development potential of each site. As well, the Housing Now Initiative leverages city-owned lands to support the development of complete communities. Depending on size and location, some sites may also include new daycares, expanded public parks, community space, employment opportunities, improved public spaces and new public streets.

This Discussion Guide explains why Housing Now is needed, how it works, progress to date and provides an overview of the locations, community benefits, public engagement, and timeline. More detailed information is also available for each site.

We're keen to hear from you! Community engagement is a core part of the Housing Now Initiative. Please review what's here and also check out createto.ca/housingnow for more information about upcoming sites and engagement events.

Why is the Initiative needed?

- 1. The cost of housing has increased significantly in Toronto and incomes have not kept pace.** Between 2006 and 2018, the price of housing grew by over 130% while median household income grew by only 30%. Research has shown that a renter would need to make \$27.74 per hour to be able to afford a one-bedroom rental in Toronto.¹
- 2. The lack of affordability in today's housing market is having a negative effect on many Toronto residents and the economic vitality of the city.** The City of Toronto recognizes that access to a full range of housing is fundamental to the health and well-being of all Torontonians, its communities and the local economy.²
- 3. New residential construction has been dominated by the development of condos, while rental housing development has lagged behind.** Between 2013 and 2018 about 80,000 new condo units were completed compared to 4,500 purpose-built rental units. In that same time period, 2% of new housing built or approved was affordable.³
- 4. Almost half of Toronto renter households spend more than 30% of their before-tax income on housing costs.**⁴ Housing is considered "affordable" if it costs less than 30% of a household's before-tax income.

¹ Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, July 2019

² Toronto Housing Charter Opportunity for All, July 2017

³ City of Toronto – Implementing the Housing Now Initiative, January 2019

⁴ City of Toronto – Inclusionary Zoning Assessment Report, September 2020

What's Inside: How it works | Map of sites | Results to date | Public engagement | Timeline | Contact info

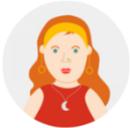
Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers)



Early Childhood Educator
Med. Annual Income:
\$35,997



Retired / Pensioner
Med. Annual Income:
\$38,400



Construction Labourer
Med. Annual Income:
\$39,000



Licensed Practical Nurse
Med. Annual Income:
\$51,675

Based on average asking rents in Toronto today, these people have to spend 37% - 83% of their income on housing.

How does it work?

The Housing Now Initiative leverages City-owned lands to stimulate the creation of new affordable rental, market rental, and ownership housing. Under the Initiative, public land is offered through long-term leases or at below-market rates that make it financially feasible for development partners to build the required affordable rental units.

Who can afford it?

On average, affordable rental units created through Housing Now rent for 80% of Toronto's average market rent; with some rents as low as 40% of the average market rent. **This means that rents will be affordable to households earning between \$21,000 and \$56,000 per year.** Examples of the types of Torontonians earning incomes in this range are shown here.

How will communities benefit?

Affordable housing is the primary focus of Housing Now. Other new site investments may include essential community infrastructure such as: new childcare facilities, new or expanded public parks, community space, improved public realm, new public streets, and social and economic benefits through workforce development and social procurement requirements.

Who can apply for an affordable rental unit?

Through an open, competitive process, the City will select a partner to manage the affordable rental units included in the Housing Now sites. **Information about the tenant application process will become available approximately one year before construction is completed at each site and will be available on the Housing Now website at createto.ca/housingnow.**

Is this social housing or Toronto Community Housing?

No, it isn't. Through the Housing Now Initiative, **the City is leveraging the value of public land and partnering with private and non-profit organizations to build and operate new rental housing affordable to households earning between \$21,000 to \$56,000 a year.** The units created through the Housing Now Initiative are not being financed, built, or managed by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. Toronto Community Housing plays a critical role in the City's housing efforts by providing and maintaining almost 60,000 deeply affordable homes to low- and moderate-income households, including where rent is geared to incomes earned by the residents.

Housing Now Sites



SNAPSHOT: City-building achieved on first four Housing Now sites



140 Merton St.



90 affordable rental units for seniors



Heritage Preservation



2,150 square metres of community space



Midblock connection and outdoor social spaces



777 Victoria Park Ave.



254 affordable rental units



62-space child care facility



425 square metres of community space



Midblock connections and outdoor social spaces (Transit Plaza)



50 Wilson Heights Blvd.



500 affordable rental units



62-space child care facility



1,700 square metres of community space



3,800 square metres of non-residential (commercial, and retail) space



3,049 square metre public park and an extension of the William R. Allen Road Pathway



New Public Street



705 Warden Ave.



250 affordable rental units



62-space child care facility



400 square metres of retail space



13,000 square metres of office space (TTC)



3,834 square metre public park and renaturalized area around Massey Creek



New Public Street

City of Toronto and CreateTO are responding to feedback

The Housing Now Initiative is moving quickly to help meet Toronto's urgent affordable housing needs. Many different sectors and interests have shared feedback about how new affordable housing should be delivered, and the City of Toronto is responding.

The June 2020 Annual Housing Now Update identifies the following priorities:

- ✓ Increase the number of affordable rental homes by providing incentives (e.g. exempting payment of certain charges and fees).
- ✓ Prioritize viable bids from non-profit organizations in the market offering process (including from Indigenous groups and communities, and co-operative housing providers).
- ✓ Increase the number of accessible homes and focus on incorporating universal design features on all future sites.
- ✓ Protect market renters through limits on market rent increases while ensuring well-maintained homes over 99 years.

Other program enhancements include supporting Indigenous affordable housing development and expanding partnerships to increase affordability.

HousingTO Action Plan and the housing spectrum

Housing Now is a key initiative within the City of Toronto’s HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan and contributes towards the City’s target of approving 40,000 affordable rental units, including 18,000 supportive housing units over the next ten years. The HousingTO Action Plan makes recommendations for action to address challenges identified across the housing spectrum, ranging from emergency shelter beds, safe and legal multi-tenant houses, and long-term care homes to market affordability challenges for first-time homebuyers. Housing Now addresses a subset of housing options within this spectrum (see image below).



Council-Adopted Housing Now Principles

The development of new housing through Toronto’s Housing Now Initiative is guided by the following principles:

1. Develop the properties to achieve the highest possible public benefits.
2. Optimize the development of market and affordable rental housing with a mix of unit types and sizes.
3. Create homes affordable for a diverse range of incomes, including deeply affordable homes.
4. Appropriately address and accommodate existing City uses and other operations on the 17 sites.
5. Retain public ownership of the properties, including prioritizing long-term land leases. Affordability will be secured for new affordable rental units for 99 years.
6. Engage City Councillors and local communities in the planning and developing of each property.
7. Support the participation of non-profit organizations in the Housing Now Initiative and encourage their involvement in the market offering process through a \$1-million fund approved by City Council.

Timeline

Housing Now is moving quickly to deliver housing within two – four years of site selection.

- Stage 1: Preliminary Design Concept
 - Vision
 - Design principles
 - Consultation
- Stage 2: Development Concepts
 - Final Development Concept
 - City-initiated rezoning
 - Consultation
 - Council Approval
- Stage 3: Market Offering
 - Procurement of development partner
 - Negotiation of legal agreements
- Stage 4: Delivery
 - Detailed design
 - Site Plan Application
 - Building Permits/Approvals
 - Construction
 - Occupancy

Want to know more? Want to get involved?

If you are interested in learning more about Housing Now and staying up to date, visit createto.ca/housingnow. This website provides more detail on each of the Housing Now sites, links to videos of previous meetings and summaries of feedback received, and offers opportunities to provide feedback online. If you (or someone you know) is interested in receiving information by mail, just let us know by contacting us at 416-907-8260 or emailing housingnow@toronto.ca.