

The City of Toronto and CreateTO are proposing to amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law for 1631 Queen Street East to permit a new mixed-income, mixed-use development providing affordable and market rental housing, an expansion of the Coxwell Early Learning & Child Care Centre, Indigenous placekeeping at Kishigo Lane and potential community or retail space along Queen Street East.

The final recommendation on the built form will be presented at the Planning and Housing Committee with a recommended Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Amendment.



Questions and Answers

The development of the Housing Now site at 1631 Queen Street East will enable the City to deliver a number of important city-building benefits that will enhance the existing community. This includes:

- Approximately 279 rental units; of which 33% to 50% (93-140) will be affordable rental homes

What community benefits are included in this proposal?

In addition to an estimated 93-140 affordable rental homes, this proposal would include a number of additional benefits to the community:

- Approximately 10,000 square feet child care centre (replacing the existing 4,000 square feet child care centre)
- Approximately 16,000 square feet publicly accessible open space along Kishigo Lane that celebrates Indigenous world views, families and history
- Approximately 7,500 square feet community space or retail space
- Enhanced public realm and streetscape along Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue
- A high degree of environmental sustainability by meeting Toronto's Green Standard V3 Tier 2, including a minimum 25% decrease in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions
- Providing family-oriented housing by meeting the City's Growing Up Guidelines for market rental units¹
- Going above the minimum requirements for accessible residential units and universal barrier-free common areas



How is the City determining the height and density for the Housing Now project at Queen and Coxwell?

The City's criteria for evaluating any zoning changes on a Housing Now project is the same as any other development proposal in the City. Like any proposed planning change in the City of Toronto, the proposal has to be evaluated by the City Planning division against the Official Plan and supporting guidelines, and provincial legislation and policies.

The goal of this proposal is to meet the objectives of the Queen Street East Urban Design Guidelines along the Queen Street frontage. An important part of these Design Guidelines is for building facades to be well articulated and have a building height of six storeys on any Queen Street East frontage.

Based on community feedback, the development concept has been revised to ensure the components of the building along Queen Street East are six storeys and in keeping with the goals and objectives of the Design Guidelines. While the proposal for this site is for one building, the taller portions of the building will be pushed away from Queen Street, fronting on Eastern Avenue. The building is designed so that shadows on local streets and sidewalks are minimized. There is only one main entrance proposed for all residents of the building, which is located on the Eastern Avenue frontage of the building. The building will have an Eastern Avenue address.

Why is a portion of the site at 1080 Eastern Avenue included?

A portion of the property at 1080 Eastern Avenue (part of the adjacent TCHC property) is included to provide a new north-south driveway that connects to Eastern Avenue. This space is required to provide access to the internalized garbage and loading spaces for the new building. The width of the new driveway connecting to Eastern Avenue is dictated by the turning movements of garbage and waste vehicles that will be required to service the building. In addition, the width of this driveway allows the pickup and drop off spaces to be located internal to the site, so community members can safely drop their children off at the child care centre away from street traffic.

Does this proposal set a precedent for future developments?

Within the Urban Design Guideline boundaries, the 1631 Queen Street East site is unique due to its size, lot depth and context. The site provides frontages onto two major streets (Queen Street East and Eastern Avenue) and is not located adjacent to low rise residential neighbourhoods. Heights that are appropriate here would not be supportable on other sites within the boundaries of the Queen Street East Urban Design Guidelines.

Given the uncommon nature of the site, an opportunity exists for the Eastern Avenue-facing portion of the site to support buildings taller than six storeys, which will allow for more affordable housing and public benefits, while also adhering to the principles and objectives of the Urban Design Guidelines by maintaining the character of Queen Street East that those guidelines describe. As this is one of the only sites in the entire Queen Street East Design Guidelines study area that has these characteristics the City does not see the proposal setting a precedent for the area, or for how the Urban Design Guidelines get implemented.

Why did the City choose this site for a Housing Now project?

This site was one of the six sites included in Phase Two of the Housing Now Initiative, adopted by City Council in May 2020. Each of these sites were selected because they are close to transit as well as commercial and employment areas, and support the creation of mixed use and mixed income, complete communities.

Why is the City Investing in affordable housing?

The lack of available affordable housing across Toronto has a negative effect on many residents and on the social and economic vitality of our city.

The Housing Now Initiative is a key component of the City's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan and is essential for the City to achieve its target of approving 40,000 new affordable rental and supportive homes by 2030.²

Increasing the supply of permanent affordable rental housing is of particular significance at this time due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted that access to a safe, secure and affordable home is essential to a person's health and well-being, and the overall well-being of our society. Increasing housing opportunities for residents will also make a profound contribution towards our socio-economic recovery from the pandemic.

Project Timeline





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 are Housing Now projects funded?

The cost of constructing and maintaining affordable housing requires government funding and support to be successful. The Housing Now initiative uses the value of City-owned land and other financial incentives to help meet the costs of building new affordable homes and other community benefits within mixed-use, mixed-income, complete communities.

Housing Now sites are re-zoned by the City of Toronto and then developed in partnership with non-profit and private organizations, and supported by funding and financing programs offered by other levels of government. Development partners are selected through an open competition, also referred to as 'the market offering'. The developer partner funds the construction and operation of the building with support from City land and financial incentives. Including market price rental units in these projects, plus federal funding and financing programs under the National Housing Strategy, helps pay for the affordable rental homes. City Council approved \$322 million in financial incentives through the Open Door Program to support the 17 Phase One and Phase Two Housing Now sites.

Who is this housing affordable for?

The affordable rental apartments created through Housing Now will be rented for an average of 80% of average market rent (AMR). Some will be rented for as low as 40% of AMR. This means that households earning up to \$68,000 per year will be able to afford to live in these homes. Some examples of these household salary occupations include:

- Early childhood educator with a median annual income of \$35,990
- Retired/Pensioner with a median income of \$38,400
- Construction Labourer with a median income of \$39,000
- Licensed Practical Nurse with a median income of \$51,675

Why are market rents essential to the overall funding of Housing Now projects?

The model of leveraging City-owned land and partnering with a developer to create both market rate and affordable homes is fundamental to the design and success of the Housing Now program. Housing Now is one component of the City's 10-year HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, which is working to assist more than 341,000 people, with a focus on creating permanent housing solutions. This includes a target of 40,000 new affordable rental home approvals across the city.

¹ For more information on the Growing Up Guidelines please visit

<https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/growing-up-planning-for-children-in-new-vertical-communities/>

² For more information about the City's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, please visit toronto.ca/housing.