



Housing Opportunities Toronto Update

Comments Pages

You are invited to use the attached pages to respond to the questions posed in the eight theme sections. Your input will help ensure the updated plan reflects the housing needs of Toronto residents.

This *Housing Opportunities Toronto* Update Consultation Guide is available online at: toronto.ca/affordablehousing

You can submit your ideas by dropping them in the boxes marked "Submissions" at public meetings or by:

Email: HOTupdate@toronto.ca

Mail: HOT Update, Metro Hall, 55 John St., 6th Floor, Toronto, ON, M5V 3C6.
The deadline for submissions is January 15, 2016.

Thank you again for contributing to this important process.

1. Creating housing opportunities in all neighbourhoods

Focus areas:

- Ensuring affordable housing is welcome in all parts of Toronto
- Working to increase community acceptance of affordable housing developments

Discussion Questions

1. How can the Toronto Housing Charter be used to support new affordable housing across the city?

2. What should the City and community agencies do to enable or increase community support for affordable housing and emergency shelters?

Your Comments

What should the City and community agencies do to increase community support for affordable housing and emergency shelters?

A) We believe that raising awareness about the need, as well as the long-term value and success of affordable housing and shelters is key to increasing support for affordable housing. Public events and sessions on the need for affordable housing should bring together a range of speakers and panelists, from politicians at all levels of government, to advocates, to people with lived experiences who can shatter the fears and stereotypes about those who need affordable housing and who can speak to the need for affordable housing and how it impacted their lives in a positive way.

The following steps, when followed through methodically, will help in this endeavour:

i) The City should collaborate with and support community organizations that plan events on housing.

ii) The City should provide support and resources in ensuring that a wide range of residents are reached and that they attend these awareness-raising events on housing. It is vital that those who might oppose affordable housing attend the events where they hear about its need, its long-term value to all of us, and the particular importance of building integrated (as opposed to segregated) affordable housing.

ii) As part of its outreach and education program, the City and organizations advocating for affordable and inclusive housing must clearly identify and articulate the negative impact of isolation, segregation, and the lack of integrated affordable housing. If we can clearly articulate how the lack of affordable housing harms us all in the long-term, we will be better able to increase support for it. The City is the key source of information and resources in this endeavour, and must embrace this challenge.

-Residents' Associations, particularly those that are initiated in response to new development proposals or neighbourhood changes, should be used as a means of reaching residents

B) In addition, the City must educate and engage City Councillors, to ensure that they are aware of the importance of affordable housing. City Councillors must be advocates of affordable housing in their communities. They must participate in the campaign to educate and garner support for affordable housing, particularly in neighbourhoods with less supportive/ affordable housing and more development.

The key is to remember that City Council are leaders in this issue. Unless Councillors have the knowledge and courage to lead this important cause, the state of affordable housing in Toronto will continue to deteriorate, which, in turn, will lead to long-term costs to all members of society,

2. Help people who are homeless and vulnerable find and keep homes

Focus areas:

- Coordinating access to emergency shelter, housing and supports
- Partnering with private sector landlords to end homelessness
- Services that are responsive to the needs of specific populations

Discussion Questions:

1. How can the City better coordinate access to the supports that tenants of social, affordable and private market rental housing need to achieve greater housing stability?
2. How can the City work with private sector landlords to improve access to housing for people leaving homelessness?
3. How can the City ensure housing stability services are responsive to the needs of groups with specific needs, such as Aboriginal people, women fleeing domestic violence, seniors, youth, LGBTQ2S and people with disabilities?
4. What role should the provincial and federal governments play in expanding Toronto's Housing First approach to help more people leave the streets and shelters behind?

Your Comments

2. Collaboration with private sector landlords:

The City should implement and enforce by-laws that require a certain percentage of all private rentals be geared to low-rent housing.

These by-laws should apply to landlords who rent out more than 10 or so units. The legal parameters should ensure that landlords cannot evade their obligation by renting out fewer units under different business names. All loopholes should be closed.

Furthermore, concrete steps should be put into place so that developers who build condominium residences are required to either build or to contribute to the building of integrated affordable and supportive housing.

3. Assist families and individuals to afford rents

Focus areas:

- Improving existing programs and services to help people avoid eviction and prevent them from becoming homeless
- Improving access to affordable housing

Discussion Questions:

1. How can the City better help people at imminent risk of eviction stay in their homes and avoid becoming homeless?
2. As the City is transforming the social housing waiting list into a more responsive, choice-based system, what can be done to make it easier to access housing assistance?
3. What can the provincial and federal governments do to better assist families and individuals to afford rents?

Your Comments

1. Evictions-

Appropriate responses to imminent risk of evictions depend on the reasons for those potential evictions. The right kind of support will help people avoid a life-in-transition and homelessness. We believe that the best approaches are those that readily provide people with the right kind of support, so that they can be empowered to continue to live independently and pay their rents. This kind of support may be mental health support, affordable childcare, employment, or regular community support, so that the number of people who never face eviction is decreased.

3. Federal and provincial governments-

A cohesive housing plan that is enacted at the provincial and federal levels (with funding and implementation support) will ensure that housing needs are addressed. To be effective, these housing solutions must address not only housing, itself, but other related issues, such as education, employment, mental health, community support, and support for dependents.

The province must collaborate with municipalities by committing to a vision for the future that includes affordable and supportive housing, by providing the resources to build toward that future, and by implementing laws that support municipalities in building affordable housing, while, at the same time, requiring developers to contribute to that collaborative process of safe and decent homes for people of all income levels.

5. Revitalize neighbourhoods

Focus areas:

- Supporting the ongoing revitalization of neighbourhoods

Discussion Questions

1. What can the City of Toronto do to support more community revitalizations?
2. How can the City better encourage the federal and provincial governments to

participate in community revitalizations?

Your Comments

1. First, the City must ensure that community revitalizations ALWAYS include a decent and effective percentage of affordable and supportive housing, so that revitalizations do not lead to gentrification that pushes out lower-income earners.

Second, revitalizations should work toward integration of people of all backgrounds, including, people of all economic backgrounds.

Third, the City must require that revitalization plans include useful, accessible, and attractive community hubs, public and green spaces. Community hubs should be designed so that all residents do, in fact, come to and use those spaces as a gathering and sharing spot. In this way, residents will connect and get to know one another, and will assist each other when a member of the community needs a hand up.

6. Create new affordable rental homes

Focus areas:

- Creating more affordable rental housing

Discussion Questions

1. What other actions can the City take to facilitate the creation of at least 7,000 more affordable rental homes to achieve HOT's goal of 10,000 by 2020?
2. What can the private and non-profit sectors do in partnership with the City?
3. What could the federal and provincial governments do to assist the City in achieving its affordable housing HOT goal?

Your Comments

1. Creation of affordable rental homes and HOT goals:

A) The City must immediately incorporate changes to its zoning by-laws, so that ALL new developments incorporate affordable housing. This requirement should not be limited to high rises, but should apply to mid-rises and developments along the Avenues as well.

B) As the city runs out of spaces for more high rises, and as it builds LRTs along Eglinton, Finch, and Sheppard Avenues, the condo development boom will shift to mid-rises along those streets. It is vital that the City get ahead of those developments, and ensure that such new developments include a percentage (10% or more, depending on current need and calculations for future needs) of affordable housing for income earners in the middle and lower brackets.

Housing for lower income earners should reflect the diverse needs and the fact that some lower income earners can afford rent at 70% of market price while others need more reduced rents.

C) We emphasize, again, that such housing must be integrated, so that people of all backgrounds live together, and that lower-income earners are not segregated into one building or one area of the City.

D) It is not enough to rely on s. 37 money to build affordable housing. This dependency not only leads to insufficient and ad hoc results, but it prohibits planning, and vision. Building Toronto's future should be based on long-term, reliable, and coherent planning, funding, and support, not ad hoc and unpredictable s. 37 money. Furthermore, developers who benefit from our City's vibrancy must be ready to accept responsibility for increasing that vibrancy-- that includes homes for all people of Toronto.

E) The City should engage residents and communities, and raise awareness and garner support for increased, integrated affordable housing.

2. Private and non-profit sectors

As already mentioned on page 3 in discussion of topic 2 and above, the private sector must embrace its responsibility toward building communities and homes for people of all backgrounds and all levels. The City can advance this objective by implementing by-laws that require developers to include a certain percentage (10% or more) of affordable housing integrated into all of their developments.

3. The provincial government must enact laws that support municipalities in their quest to require that private developers build affordable housing.

The federal and provincial governments must commit significant funds and resources to building integrated supportive and affordable housing, such as Co-operatives. The provincial government must change laws so that adjudicative bodies, such as the Ontario Municipal Board, uphold and enforce the requirement that private developers include affordable housing in all new developments.

7. Help people buy and stay in their homes

Focus areas:

- Creating more affordable home ownership opportunities
- Increasing investment in health and safety repairs for aging/disabled

Homeowners

Discussion Questions

1. How can the City stimulate the creation of more affordable home ownership opportunities for new purchasers to achieve the HOT goal of 2,000 by 2020?
2. What role could the private and non-profit sectors play in achieving that goal?
3. What could the federal and provincial governments do to further assist the City in achieving the HOT goal?

Your Comments

1. Affordable home ownership-

The City must require that a certain percentage of all newly built homes, be they condominiums or freehold homes, be appropriate and affordable for people of various backgrounds. This requirement includes decently-sized units for families and multi-generational residents. The City will need to work on means of ensuring that such homes and units stay affordable should the original owner decide to sell the unit.

A similar approach to building affordable rental homes, as set out in our response to Section 6, above, will help ensure the co-operation of federal and provincial governments as well as the private sector. We must all embrace and advocate for inclusive societies, where private developers and businesses also have a duty to contribute and improve our communities. The city can provide incentives for such contribution, but that incentive must fit within our vision for the future and our values.