



# An Affordable Housing Framework

2008 - 2018

For Public Review and Engagement



## **We want to hear from you.**

*For information about consultations check our website at:  
[toronto.ca/affordablehousing](http://toronto.ca/affordablehousing)  
or call Kim Robinson at 416-397-4169.*

*To comment on the Affordable Housing Framework, e-mail us at:  
[HOT@toronto.ca](mailto:HOT@toronto.ca) or mail your comments to:*

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## Message from the Mayor and Chair

*Housing Opportunities Toronto 2008-2018* represents an important step forward in the continuous evolution of Toronto as a city of prosperity and opportunity.

Affordable housing is essential to everyone who lives in or wishes to make Toronto their home. Significant progress has been made in creating new housing opportunities over the past decade. Yet there is still much to be done.

This consultation framework proposes themes, priorities and actions to guide the creation of new affordable housing and the preservation of existing stock for the next decade. It is intended to encourage discussion and debate leading to the development of a comprehensive and innovative affordable housing plan for Toronto that will come before City Council early in 2008.

*Housing Opportunities Toronto* sets out what the City of Toronto can do to provide leadership in planning and preparing for the future. However, it also acknowledges the limits of our financial resources to take action.

*Housing Opportunities Toronto* demonstrates that great things have happened and can happen when we work in partnership with others. It acknowledges the vital contribution of the federal and provincial governments to fuelling action on affordable housing and the need for their ongoing and enhanced engagement. It also outlines the important role to be played by the private, co-operative, charitable and non-profit sectors.

The City's staff will soon announce details of the consultations that will flow from this framework. We encourage you to read *Housing Opportunities Toronto* and add your voice to the discussion.

Help us make this great city an even better place in which to live, work and play.

Signed

Mayor David Miller

Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti  
Chair, Affordable Housing Committee

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## HIGHLIGHTS

1. Sets out the case in “The Power of Affordable Housing” for action to assist some 200,000 Toronto households from 2008 to 2018.
2. Proposes the City lead the effort by planning and facilitating action and engaging the private sector, non-profits, co-operatives and other orders of government.
3. Calls for innovation in “unlocking” existing social housing assets.
4. Supports the City’s call to remove \$213 million annually in provincially-downloaded social housing costs from the municipal tax base.
5. Proposes the reinvestment in social housing of \$62 million in annual federal social housing savings by 2018.
6. Calls for new investments equal to \$469 million annually.
7. Recommends a 10-year intergovernmental plan on affordable housing and action in eight key areas.
8. Engages the public and all stakeholders in a public consultation over the next number of months resulting in a comprehensive plan in 2008.

# INTRODUCTION

It's simple. A great city succeeds by ensuring its residents have good homes.

And Toronto has a reputation as a city that provides the opportunity for all to succeed – from newcomers to long-time residents.

The City's success has been fuelled by the creation of more than one million homes throughout a diverse mix of streets, blocks and neighbourhoods.

Toronto's continued success as a healthy, safe and productive place to live depends on meeting the diverse housing needs of all of its residents. That is why investment in new and existing affordable housing is essential.

Affordable housing is a powerful contributor to the health of Toronto's economy, environment, neighbourhoods and residents.

The *Housing Opportunities Toronto* Action Framework offers a range of options and priorities to encourage debate. It is a call for action now and over the next 10 years on affordable housing. To succeed, Toronto must assist some 200,000 households who either do not have a home, cannot afford where they live, live in substandard conditions, cannot afford to buy or may lose their home. In general, these are households with incomes of up to \$36,000 ( single ) to \$61,000 (family of five) but some have incomes as low as \$14,000.

According to TD Economics, there's a \$4,000 "shelter gap" separating these households from safe, secure and affordable housing. In other words, the bottom 20 per cent of the income range need an average of \$4,000 more annually to find and keep decent housing.

**Toronto households in the bottom 20% of income fall \$4,000 short of suitable affordable housing** - TD Economics

This stark statistic underlines the pressing need for action. Otherwise some of the 200,000 households — students, seniors, young couples, disabled persons, Aboriginal Peoples, newcomers and people newly out of work, among others — will continue to live in housing poverty. As the City grows, there will be fewer and fewer housing opportunities for residents.

## Ingredients for Success

The people of Toronto through their governments have contributed to the creation of affordable housing for many years.

The legacy of our accomplishments is something which *Housing Opportunities Toronto* seeks to nurture and build upon.

It is about what the City of Toronto can do itself, what is needed from other orders of government and what is needed from the public and from the private sector.

The City can deploy some tools to encourage the creation of affordable housing within the limits of its powers and financial resources. They include such things as planning, facilitation, innovation, partnerships, advocacy and the strategic use of municipal resources such as municipal land and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation.

However, significant and real progress ultimately requires ongoing and sustained action by the provincial and federal governments.

As the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) notes, the federal and provincial governments are enjoying a steady decline in funding costs for social housing as long-term subsidy agreements (some dating back to the 1950s) begin to expire. In its August 2007 report, *Where's the Money Gone? – An Analysis of Declining Government Housing Expenditures*, the CHRA calls on both levels of government to reinvest some of those savings in maintaining and building affordable housing and to ensure the continued affordability of existing developments.

The Province has made some new investments in affordable housing since 2002.

But the Ontario government must address the “double deficit” shouldered by Toronto and other municipalities. The “double deficit” is the burden on Toronto’s property tax covering over \$200 million annually in downloaded social housing costs, while the City lacks sustainable funding to address its housing needs.

Since 1946, federal investment has been in addressing homelessness and creating new housing opportunities in Toronto and across Canada. From the 1950’s to the 1990’s significant investments were made to provide housing for people with low and moderate incomes. The City receives about \$175 million in federal social housing funding annually, yet these important initiatives are frozen, and will completely expire by 2033. Over the next 10 years, federal support is expected to decline by \$62 million in Toronto. Now is the time for Ottawa to signal that these funds will continue to be available to invest in the existing stock of social housing.

It is clear that action on affordable housing also requires public participation, including private sector, non-profit, co-operative and charitable organizations.

An ongoing partnership between governments and communities is the recipe for success.

## The Way Forward

Toronto is at a crossroads. It has been eight years since the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force and five years since the new City of Toronto adopted its first Official Plan. While much has been done, there is much more to do.

It is no exaggeration to say an affordable housing crisis looms in Toronto. The need is growing while rising real estate prices continue to put pressure on the availability of affordable housing. Existing private rental and social housing is aging and in need of major repairs. But the City lacks the financial resources to respond.

Of greater concern is the fact that there is no blueprint for the future. While a "housing first" approach is the solution to the central issue facing low- and middle-income households, there is no national strategy to implement that solution.

*Housing Opportunities Toronto* will be the foundation of the City's affordable housing blueprint. It is intended to encourage the provincial and federal governments to prepare their own 10-year plans.

*Housing Opportunities Toronto* is being released to provoke and generate public comment. We encourage you to participate in the range of consultations that will follow in the coming months. Check [www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing](http://www.toronto.ca/affordablehousing) for details.

The goal is to blend the Framework and the results of further research and consultations into a bold and comprehensive Affordable Housing Plan to be reviewed by City Council in 2008.

Among the questions to be considered to help formulate the final plan:

1. Has the Framework set the right goals and targets?
2. What should Toronto's affordable housing priorities be for the next 10 years?
3. Are there ideas, innovations, programs or policies from other places that should be considered?
4. What role can you or your organization play in providing affordable housing?



*“One of the first initiatives I undertook when I became mayor was to chair a summit on affordable housing. I believed then — as I do today — that affordable housing is the bedrock on which our city’s economic and social health is anchored.*

*“I believed then — as I do today — that we must do more to provide the opportunity for all Torontonians to live in safe, secure and nurturing homes.”*

— Mayor David Miller, June 28, 2007

*Housing Opportunities Toronto* is based on the principle that affordable housing is a powerful positive contributor to Toronto’s economy, to its environmental efforts, to the goal of community wellness and, not least, to the health of its residents.

## Powering Economic Prosperity

Toronto and its big-city counterparts are the drivers of the Canadian economy. The country’s 27 major urban areas combined generate almost two-thirds of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal accounted for nearly 50 per cent of Canada’s job creation between 2002 and 2005.

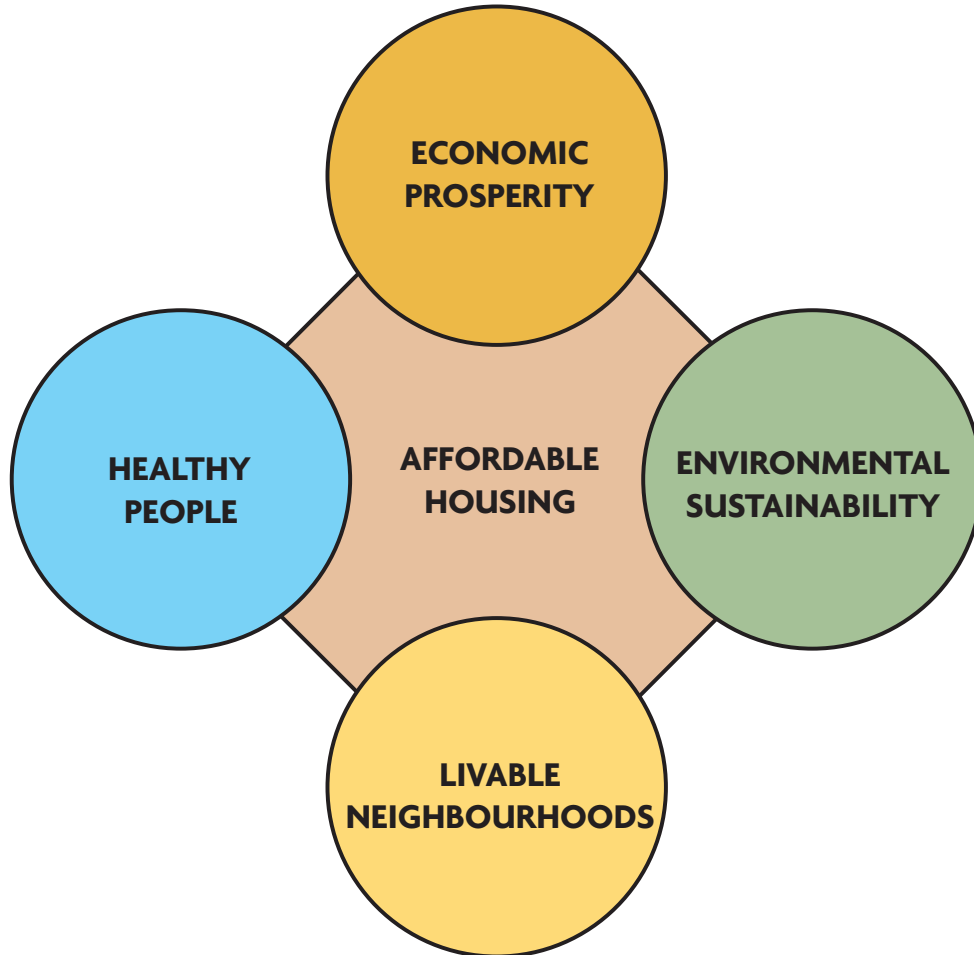
As Canada’s largest city, Toronto stands at the head of the class. Its GDP is larger than that of Ireland as well as those of 29 U.S. states.

Many factors contribute to Toronto’s economic success — the talent and ability of its residents, location, transportation links and private sector and government investment. Affordable housing is a critical factor in this equation, enabling key workers to live in the city.

“A strong and balanced housing market is crucial to a region’s economic success and a necessary precondition for business growth. The lack of affordable housing can be a serious impediment to attracting and keeping a highly mobile labour force,” as the FCM notes.

TD Economics says “... working to find solutions to the problem of affordable housing is also smart economic policy. An inadequate supply of housing can be a major impediment to business investment and growth, and can influence immigrants’ choices of where to locate.”

# The Power of Affordable Housing



Affordable housing helps Toronto attract and hold on to the broad range of workers essential to economic growth. These are the people who produce and consume goods and services and whose creativity enhances the city's economic and cultural life.

“Affordable housing is one of the major factors in creating an attractive, livable and competitive city. Along with other infrastructure components, it determines whether or not businesses locate or expand their operations here and influences the willingness of employees and their families to move to or remain in the City... Toronto must be able to house people who provide essential services. Those people most affected by Toronto's affordable housing crisis are lower income earners who provide important services,” says the Toronto Board of Trade.

A good supply of affordable housing also contributes to Toronto's prosperity by making the City more attractive to investors, tourists and immigrants. Access to affordable home ownership assists people in wealth generation and builds strong and stable neighbourhoods.

## Powering a Greener City

Affordable housing can make cities cleaner and greener. Toronto's recently released environmental framework, *Change Is In the Air*, notes that fossil fuels are responsible for most of the greenhouse gases and smog-related pollution that kill and sicken our residents.

Vehicles burning fuel are one of the main sources of greenhouse gases and pollutants. In order to work and play, too many people are driving too often. And too many buildings are not energy efficient.

Without an adequate supply and distribution of affordable housing, young families, immigrants and key workers are forced to live further away from where they work, leading to more air pollution and a reduction in green spaces as they are gobbled up by housing developments.

The power of affordable housing on the environment can also be exercised when it comes to addressing the need for \$300 million in repairs and upgrades to the social housing stock operated by Toronto Community Housing Corporation. The heating and cooling of buildings is another major source of greenhouse gases and pollutants. Investing in repairs and environmental upgrades for public, not-for-profit and co-operative social housing — the concrete towers across the city — will reduce energy consumption and save money, which helps to keep such housing affordable.

## Powering Livable Neighbourhoods

Toronto is a city of 44 wards but, more important, it contains many distinct neighbourhoods. For more than 50 years, affordable housing has proven to be an asset in these neighbourhoods. It's important that this legacy continues so that a range of housing options is available and welcome throughout the city. New, modern, well-designed housing that replaces run-down or derelict buildings helps a neighbourhood thrive. Making affordable housing available puts homeless and poorly housed people on the road to a better future and helps to encourage families with children to stay in the city.

As the Official Plan says: "A full range of housing, in terms of form, tenure and affordability across the City and within neighbourhoods, will be provided and maintained to meet the current and future needs of residents. A full range of housing includes: ownership and rental housing, affordable and mid-range rental and ownership housing, social housing, shared and/or congregate-living housing arrangements, supportive housing, emergency and transitional housing for homeless people and at-risk groups, housing that meets the needs of people with physical disabilities and housing that makes more efficient use of the existing housing stock."

Rather than confine affordable housing to certain parts of the city, it needs to become part of the social fabric. Neighbourhoods with mixed incomes help to moderate the negative aspects of concentrated poverty. Research has shown that concentrating a low-income population results in poorer health and education outcomes.

Through rebuilding and redesigning, these communities will emerge with improved transit access, community space, recreation services and education and training opportunities. They will be safer and greener. Residents will have the space to grow and prosper in security and comfort. They will not be confined by economics to low-income clusters. Such a transformation is occurring at Regent Park.

Cities prosper when they make the effort to build strong diverse communities. On the other hand, crumbling infrastructure, excluded residents, rising poverty, homelessness and neighbourhoods showing decline may all undermine a city's livability and, therefore, its prosperity.

## Powering Healthy People

Having a decent place to live is a powerful contributor to mental and physical health. An investment in affordable housing is an investment in health promotion and illness prevention. It's far more cost efficient than investing in hospitals, nurses and doctors.

People have fewer health problems when they have adequate housing. They are able to devote more of their income to adequately feed and clothe themselves and their family. There is less exposure to harmful environmental conditions such as inadequate ventilation or toxic substances.

According to an August 2007 study released by the U.S. Center for Housing Policy and Enterprise Community Partnerships, families living in affordable housing are healthier because they have more money to spend on food and health care. For example, in families receiving some form of housing support, children were half as likely to suffer from iron deficiencies.

As well, a safe and stable home allows adults to work and children to learn. The latter is of critical importance if we are to succeed in breaking the cycle of poverty. Children need the opportunity to succeed and housing insecurity is a barrier to success.

The October 2007 report, *Lost in the Shuffle*, found that at least 3,500 children are living in Toronto shelters at any one time. These children face significant challenges to doing well in class including: the disruption of changing schools; the stress related to living in shelters; stigmatization and bullying; and witnessing domestic violence, says the report by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre.

It is not just physical health that flourishes. The mental and emotional health of properly housed people also benefits. Relief from the monthly stress of coming up with the rent allows people to focus on succeeding and enjoying other aspects of life.

*"I had started to lose hope, believing I would never get our family on its feet. Now, with the encouragement of the staff of Evangel Hall, I have a new hope for the future."*

Khatija fled from her house with her two small children when the abuse became too much. She was sharing a tiny apartment with her mother when she heard about the affordable housing offered at Evangel Hall. She now has a two-bedroom apartment for her family, is volunteering at the drop-in centre associated with Evangel Hall and has gone back to school for her high school equivalency. Her eight-year-old son again dreams of being a firefighter.

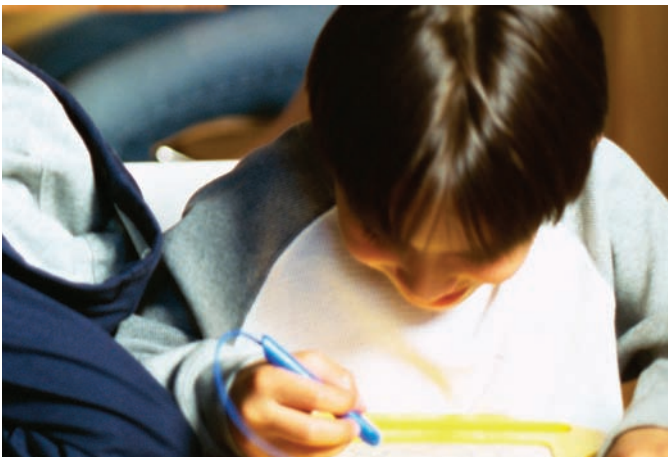
Affordable housing makes an even more dramatic contribution to people living on the street. A July 2007 survey of people who were housed under Toronto's successful Streets to Homes program bears this out. Streets to Homes focused on helping homeless people move from the street into housing with supports.

The newfound stability of safe and secure housing had very positive effects. Research shows people housed through Streets to Homes are very happy or mostly satisfied with their housing and have a much more positive view of the future. Their health, mental health, sleep, diet and personal safety all improve, and stress decreases. Almost half have reduced or stopped drinking. Almost three-quarters have decreased or stopped using drugs. There is also a decreased use of emergency health services such as emergency rooms and hospitals, and an increased use of more appropriate health care such as family doctors.

Putting "housing first" is the best strategy for a healthy community.

*"I was sitting on a grate one day and Betty (the outreach worker working with Streets to Homes) said she could get me into housing and on social assistance. I eventually agreed. I've been in this apartment for more than eight months. Housing is one of the most important elements in my success. I'm moving toward a healthier, cleaner life."*

For 10 years James had been living on the streets in the Regent Park area. Through ongoing support, James has stopped using crack and is focusing on stabilizing his health and addictions.



# STRATEGIC THEMES

In addressing the varied living conditions of more than 200,000 Toronto households, *Housing Opportunities Toronto* is organized around themes linked to people.

No one is to be left behind — from people living on the streets, to people in social housing needing repair, to people trying to buy their first home.

The intent is to include persons from all walks of life and backgrounds — singles, families, seniors, single parents, young professionals, newcomers, Aboriginal Peoples, artists, low-income earners, mental health consumers and disabled people.

The remaining chapters of *Housing Opportunities Toronto*, setting out accomplishments, challenges, goals and proposed actions are organized under six specific themes and two supporting themes that deal with broader issues.

<b>Affordable Housing Strategic Themes</b>	
<b>Programs and Supports</b>	<b>Homes &amp; Neighbourhoods</b>
Help homeless and vulnerable people find and keep homes	Preserve and fix rental housing and keep it affordable
Assist people to afford rents	Create and renew mixed, inclusive, sustainable neighbourhoods
Help people buy and stay in their own homes	Create new affordable housing
<b>Supporting Themes</b>	
Create housing opportunities in all neighbourhoods	
Work together with all governments and the non-profit and private sectors	

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In managing provincial and federal investments, the City of Toronto has built up both expertise and momentum to produce cost-effective affordable housing and provide critical support services. It is ready to continue that good work with its partners but requires greater flexibility in making those investments.

By introducing several new programs, the federal and provincial governments have begun to return to their traditional key funding roles — a much-needed and welcome development. Without such support many thousands would be without homes.

Similarly, the non-profit and private sectors have contributed their talent in raising funds, proposing projects and implementing solutions.

## Some Success Stories

- 1,300 persons have gone from living rough to living with a roof over their heads since 2005 under the “Streets to Homes” initiative
- More than 5,000 people and families move to housing from shelters annually
- 5,500 households will move into the revitalized mixed-income communities of Don Mount Court and Regent Park
- 10,500 people will have new homes through the approval of 4,200 affordable and transitional units since 2000
- More than \$550 million invested in repair and refurbishment of Toronto Community Housing Corporation homes since 2002
- Investment in a range of housing allowance/rent supplements, including the successful Tent City pilot program
- Approval of the City’s Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion By-law in 2007
- Approval of Toronto’s Official Plan setting out affordable housing definitions, requirements and opportunities in 2007
- Creation of the Affordable Housing Office and Affordable Housing Committee to lead the City’s efforts to address affordable housing needs.

These and other accomplishments have been due to renewed commitments from all orders of government to provide more funding for affordable housing. This must continue.

## Funding Partnerships

Some key funding investments in Toronto since 1999:

- \$123 million in federal support from the National Homeless Initiative
- \$172 million federal/provincial capital funding to create new rental housing
- \$25 million in seed funding from the City of Toronto's Capital Revolving Fund for Affordable Housing and the Mayor's Homelessness Initiative Fund to support new housing and other initiatives
- \$52 million in federal support from the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program to renovate and rehabilitate rental and ownership housing; and to fund second suites, hostel repairs and Energuide improvements
- Provision of 16 surplus government sites to create 2,040 new homes.





## THE CHALLENGES

There are significant challenges to overcome for Toronto to continue to benefit from the power of affordable housing.

These challenges are expressed most tellingly by these facts:

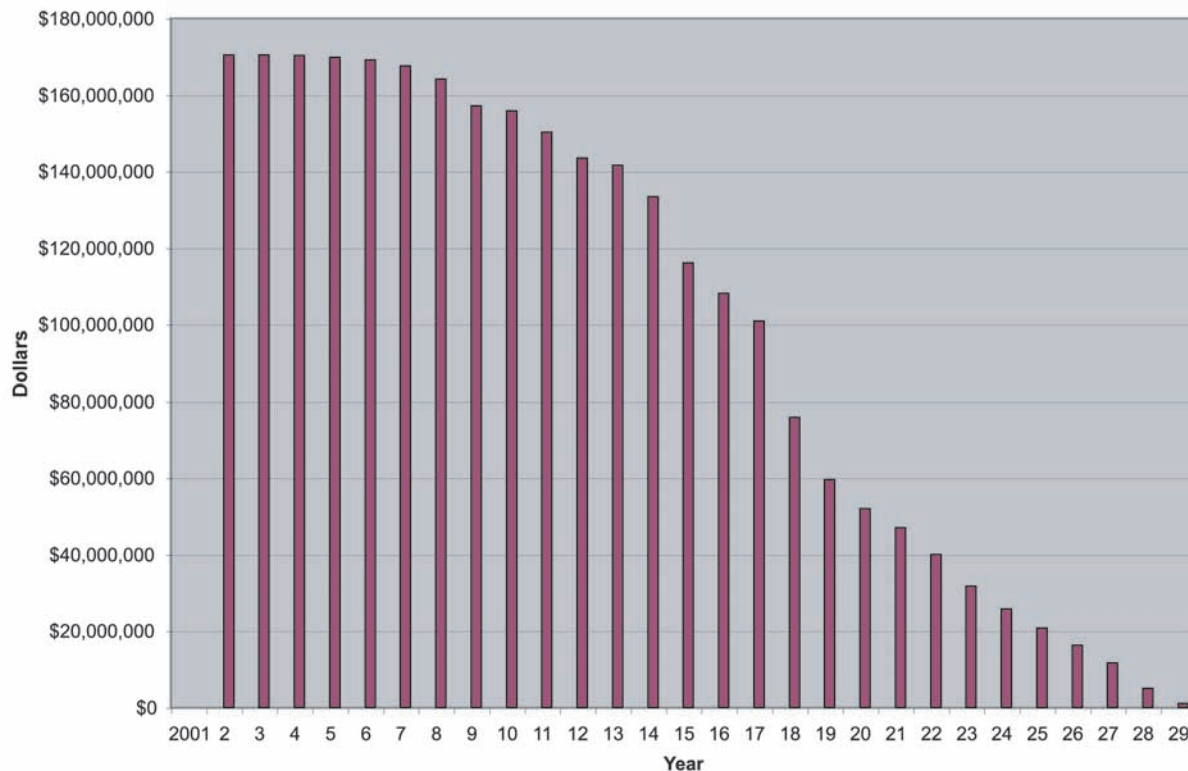
- An average \$4,000 annual gap between the cost of appropriate housing and what households in the bottom 20 per cent of income range can afford to pay
- More than 200,000 households in core housing need, with more than 100,000 paying more than 50 per cent in rent
- 3,900 families and individuals sleeping in emergency shelters on any given night
- More than 800 persons living outside
- 50,000 households on the “active” waiting list for social housing with many families waiting five to 10 years
- Thousands of families and individuals living in poorly maintained social and private rental housing
- Average home price of \$352,000 prevents many would-be homebuyers
- 20,000 new, low- and moderate-income households added to the city’s population over the next 10 years.

## When it comes to resources to get the job done there are also substantial challenges.

They include:

- The City of Toronto’s limited financial resources raised through property taxes
- The “double deficit” of Toronto paying for provincially downloaded social housing costs of more than \$200 million, while lacking sustainable affordable housing funding
- The withdrawal of annual federal funding to maintain existing social housing — \$62 million by 2018 and rising to \$170 million by 2029
- Restrictive federal/provincial regulations governing current housing and homeless funding
- The expiry of the federal/provincial Affordable Housing Program in 2009 — eliminating funding for new housing
- The expiry of the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy in March 2009 — withdrawing \$17 million annually from support to homeless and vulnerable residents
- The expiry of the federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program in March 2009 — withdrawing \$6.5 million.

**Withdrawal of Federal Social Housing Funding in Toronto 2001-2029**



## PROPOSED TARGETS

*Housing Opportunities Toronto* proposes the ambitious goal of assisting some 200,000 Toronto households with a range of housing opportunities over the next 10 years.

### Targets to Meet Needs

Targets play an essential role in focusing the action to be undertaken by governments, the non-profit and private sectors and the public, and to measure results.

Targets are aligned along the six strategic themes outlined on page 10. They are:

1. 13,000 households helped to find and keep homes
2. 60,000 households assisted in affording rent
3. 115,000 households in private and social housing have their homes repaired and maintained
4. 10,000 households living in newly built rental homes
5. 11,000 households with replacement homes in renewed neighbourhoods and the creation of new communities
6. 10,000 households helped to purchase a first home.

## Housing Opportunities Toronto Investments

To achieve the goals and targets will require a renewed and enriched commitment from the three orders of government as well as the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Federal, provincial and municipal governments need to address the affordable housing infrastructure backlog that has developed over the past 15-20 years and invest for the future. The private sector must make a greater commitment and non-profits must bring renewed vigour.

An across-the-board effort is essential because the full annual cost of *Housing Opportunities Toronto* is estimated at \$469 million.

It is important to note that there are a number of ways that the cost of implementation can be moderated.

They include:

- Cost-savings in other government programs generated by the “housing first” approach, e.g., immigration settlement, mental health, correctional programs and emergency services
- Re-investment of expiring federal social housing funding in the social housing portfolio
- New housing investments will provide economic spin-offs through job creation, building materials and consumer product purchases and new government taxes
- Many of the repair and new housing infrastructure investments are more appropriately financed over 15 to 20 years, thereby reducing the annualized program cost
- Provincial and federal government-issued financing can reduce overall cost of delivering affordable housing investments.

## PROPOSED INVESTMENTS

Theme	Potential Initiatives	Estimated Households Assisted over 10 years	Estimated Annual Investment
Help homeless and vulnerable people find and keep homes	Preserve existing single room buildings, hostel to homes initiative, supports to “Streets to Homes” tenants, create new supportive housing, eviction prevention and housing help	13,000	\$46 million
Assist people to afford rents	Expanded rent supplement and housing allowance initiatives	60,000	\$120 million
Preserve and fix rental housing and keep it affordable	TCHC repair backlog, increase non-profit and co-op reserves, repair and energy retrofit private rental housing	115,000	\$89 million
Create and renew mixed, inclusive, sustainable neighbourhoods	TCHC asset regeneration, mixed communities in downtown waterfront, non-profit and co-op intensification, redevelop some shelter sites	10,000	\$100 million
Create new rental housing	Continue and expand current affordable housing program	11,000	\$110 million
Help people to buy and stay in their own homes	Down payment and rehabilitation assistance and price and re-sale controls related to planning approvals	10,000	\$4 million
<b>Total</b>		209,000*	\$469 million

\* Total reflects 10,000 households which will receive help in more than one category but which are only counted once.

## PROPOSED ACTIONS

People are at the centre of Toronto's affordable housing crisis — singles, families, seniors, single parents, young people, newcomers, Aboriginal Peoples, low-income earners, mental health consumers and disabled people.

*Housing Opportunities Toronto's* proposed actions are intended to cover the full continuum of housing need and open up the full range of housing choices.

The City of Toronto is taking the lead in planning for its affordable housing needs over the next 10 years. The proposed actions set out the number of households to be assisted and some of the key actions needed from Toronto, from other orders of government and from stakeholders.

### **1. Provide Supports to Help 13,000 Homeless and Vulnerable Individuals and Families Find and Keep Homes – \$46 million**

#### *Toronto Actions:*

- a. Expand the made-in-Toronto “housing-first” approach to help people living on the street or in shelters find permanent affordable housing
- b. Co-ordinate and provide supports and housing to ensure homeless and vulnerable people are able to keep their homes
- c. Redevelop certain emergency shelter sites as new affordable housing while continuing to meet emergency shelter needs
- d. Conduct the City's second Street Needs Assessment in spring 2009 to help guide future affordable housing strategies.

#### *Actions by Others:*

- e. Province to establish a “housing first” approach in the delivery of funding and services to vulnerable and homeless people including the reinvestment of system savings from other areas such as health, corrections and emergency services
- f. Province to provide funding flexibility in the use of shelter funding
- g. Federal government to extend and expand the new Homelessness Partnering Strategy and make it a permanent national initiative.

## **2. Assist 60,000 Families and Individuals to Afford Rents – \$120 million**

### *Toronto Actions:*

- a. Keep tenants housed through eviction prevention and education
- b. Transform the social housing waiting list into a proactive social housing access system.

### *Actions by Others:*

- c. Province to partner with private sector landlords to increase access to, and rates of, the recently announced Delivering Opportunities for Ontario Renters housing allowance program
- d. Province to commit to a new, long-term program to deliver rent-geared-to-income subsidies in new and existing rental housing
- e. Province to increase and adjust annually social assistance rates to reflect Toronto's higher cost of living.

## **3. Preserve and Fix Rental Housing and Keep it Affordable for 115,000 Households – \$89 million**

### *Toronto Actions:*

- a. Preserve affordable rental housing using the Official Plan and regulations such as demolition and condominium controls (2007 Rental Demolition and Conversion Bylaw)
- b. Leverage the value in social housing in order to reinvest in repairs and regeneration
- c. Strengthen more than 240 non-profit and co-operative housing providers to make them an even more effective partner in delivering and maintaining social housing communities
- d. Support the Toronto Community Housing Corporation in strategic asset management, including selective sale of property to generate capital for new affordable housing and repairs to existing stock, while protecting tenants
- e. Develop partnerships with private high-rise owners to prompt the repair and environmental retrofit of apartments to help ensure ongoing rental affordability.

### *Actions by Others:*

- f. Province to resume paying for downloaded social housing, thereby relieving the City's property tax base
- g. Federal government to immediately commit to reinvesting social housing savings arising from the expiration of current agreements back into social housing

- h. Federal government to make permanent and increase funding of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program and extending it to private highrise rental buildings.

#### **4. Create and Renew Mixed, Inclusive, Sustainable Neighbourhoods for 10,000 Households – \$100 million**

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Accelerate planning and support for the redevelopment and revitalization of social housing to ensure quality affordable homes, community and other services are incorporated into the fabric of neighbourhoods, particularly the 13 priority neighbourhoods
- b. Implement inclusionary housing policies, to require some affordable housing to be included in private development
- c. Develop new, innovative means of funding where affordable housing catalyzes mixed developments, e.g., tax increment financing.

*Actions by Others:*

- d. Federal and provincial governments to contribute capital and operating funding for City-identified neighbourhood revitalization projects, including joint projects such as the Toronto Waterfront
- e. Province to establish guidelines for tax increment financing for major affordable housing developments in mixed redevelopment communities
- f. Province to give Toronto conditional zoning powers related to affordable housing.

#### **5. Create New Affordable Rental Housing for 11,000 Households – \$110 million**

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Identify and bank City land and other properties and buildings for affordable housing
- b. Promote and facilitate new affordable residential buildings in growth areas identified in the Official Plan, including designated avenues and centres
- c. Replenish “seed” funding by boosting the Capital Revolving Fund for Affordable Housing
- d. Set criteria for new affordable housing developments that provide a specific number of rent-geared-to-income units which are highly affordable.



*Actions by Others:*

- e. Federal and provincial governments to renew, enhance and improve the existing Canada/Ontario Affordable Housing Program to enable targets to be met.

## **6. Help 10,000 Households Buy and Maintain Ownership – \$4 million**

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Partnering with private sector and non-profit proponents to assist lower-income people to buy their first homes
- b. Provide enhanced tax deferrals/rebates and other support to help lower-income homeowners purchase and stay in their homes
- c. Review Official Plan policies to better enable affordable home ownership.

*Actions by Others:*

- d. Federal and provincial financial assistance to help low-income residents in revitalized social housing communities become homeowners.

## **7. Create Housing Opportunities in All Neighbourhoods**

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Promote *Housing Opportunities Toronto* by engaging the public in consultations and through ongoing education
- b. Seek opportunities and partnerships where affordable housing can be created and welcomed in all neighbourhoods.

*Actions by Others:*

- c. Community, business and institutional partners to come forward with proposals and implementation plans.

## 8. Work Together with All Governments and the Non-Profit and Private Sectors

### *Toronto Actions:*

- a. Finalize the 10-year Affordable Housing Plan to guide government and community actions
- b. Create a multi-party Affordable Housing Action Group to assist in implementing the plan
- c. Draft a Federal-Provincial-City Agreement on homelessness and affordable housing to focus investment, strategies and outcomes over 10 years
- d. Identify opportunities for creative partnerships with the business sector, the community and the labour movement to meet the affordable housing needs of “key workers,” such as those in the hospitality and service industries and the arts community
- e. Pursue creative partnerships with other organizations to incorporate affordable housing in other city building initiatives, such as new libraries, child care and recreation centres, and the re-development of TTC stations
- f. Work with federal and provincial governments to identify savings on health care, prisons, emergency services and other programs from the creation of affordable housing.

### *Actions by Others:*

- g. Federal commitment to create a National Housing Strategy with predictable, long-term funding for affordable housing
- h. Provincial commitment to create a similar affordable housing strategy
- i. Federal and provincial commitment to work with Toronto to allow more flexibility in the use of funding.

**NOTE:** The appendix to *Housing Opportunities Toronto* provides more detailed supporting recommendations to meet targets and assist specific groups and housing stock issues.

The imperative is clear — greater action on affordable housing is essential — starting in 2008 and continuing for the next 10 years.

The City of Toronto must maintain its leadership to help make housing happen — by delivering much-needed services, by participating in partnerships and by planning for the future.

That is why this framework has outlined specific areas of action for the City to promote and lead. But these actions cannot occur in a vacuum.

Progressive, properly resourced and long-term federal and provincial programs are essential. The City of Toronto has wisely invested federal and provincial resources over the past 10 years in a range of housing and homeless solutions.

These investments have paid real dividends by helping many individuals and families escape homelessness and housing poverty. During the next 10 years we must build and expand these efforts.

The time has also come to better harness the creativity, innovation and resources of the private sector. And not just developers and builders. Every industry that depends on a skilled workforce needs to help ensure its employees can afford to live in Toronto.

Support to non-profit, co-operative and charitable organizations must also be extended and enhanced. It is these community-based groups which help ensure everyone has the opportunity to find affordable housing.

*Housing Opportunities Toronto* seeks to engage everyone in the conversation and consultation. The goal is new and renewed commitments to take concrete action on affordable housing.

This will be a continuation of the consultations that started with the public forum, *The Tale of Three Cities*, held at Toronto City Hall in June 2007.

In 2008, City staff will prepare a final Affordable Housing Plan, which will emerge from the public feedback from this framework and the engagement of federal and provincial governments. The Plan will be forwarded to Toronto City Council.

This appendix contains proposed actions not contained in the main section of *Housing Opportunities Toronto*. These are supplementary actions intended to support the key recommendations.

### 1. HELP PEOPLE FIND AND KEEP HOMES

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Develop an “assisted living” housing strategy to help seniors live independently in social and rental housing
- b. Identify future supportive/alternative housing needs for people with mental health and daily living challenges.

*Actions by Others:*

- c. Increase Federal RRAP (Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program) or similar Federal-Provincial funding for repairs and adaptations to help seniors remain in their homes
- d. Expand Provincial mental health supportive housing options.

### 2. ASSIST PEOPLE TO AFFORD TORONTO RENTS

*Actions by Others:*

- a. The Provincial and Federal governments to increase minimum wages, social assistance benefit rates, access to Employment Insurance, child benefit programs, benefits to working poor people, and related actions
- b. All orders of government to support social enterprise, skills training and “community economic development” to create jobs for social housing tenants and homeless people.

### 3. PRESERVE AND FIX RENTAL HOUSING AND KEEP IT AFFORDABLE

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Strengthen regulations to keep existing private rental stock in place and in good repair

- b. Support appropriate non-profit acquisition and renovation of private apartment buildings and residential single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotels to provide sustainable affordable homes
- c. Help homeowners make safe and legal second suites through education, promotion and incentives
- d. Add to the supply of housing available to single persons by encouraging and permitting an increase in legal rooming houses and other forms of housing
- e. Help preserve existing rooming house opportunities for singles by providing training and other supports to landlords/operators to assist them to improve and maintain the stock.

*Actions by Others*

- f. Increase the funding available to social housing providers to undertake repairs and upgrades by increasing the Provincially-mandated cap on geared-to-income rent scale for social assistance recipients
- g. Facilitate the redevelopment and refinancing of social housing by amending federal and provincial regulations which limit innovation in leveraging the use of social housing assets
- h. Support the upgrading, safety and repair of rooming houses through the Federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program.

#### **4. CREATE AND RENEW MIXED, INCLUSIVE, SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS**

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Establish a 10-year social housing revitalization plan, including requirements for future phases of revitalization in Regent Park and other communities.

*Actions by Others:*

- b. Improve the ongoing affordability of social and rental housing by securing new sources of revenue and innovative financing to achieve higher environmental and energy standards.

#### **5. CREATE NEW RENTAL HOUSING**

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Secure new opportunities for rental housing by implementing the Official Plan's existing Large Sites policy (which provides for 20 per cent affordable housing as a priority on sites of five hectares or more)

- b. Explore measures to enable non-profits, co-operative groups and private firms to acquire a greater range of units for affordable housing, including condominium units
- c. Create an updated plan for City contributions to affordable housing development (e.g., capital, land, tax exemptions, and other exemptions and incentives)
- d. Explore the allocation of new and existing revenue sources to affordable housing through the *City of Toronto Act*, Section 37 contributions and development charges
- e. Work with financial institutions, including pension funds, to develop options for lower-cost mortgages.

## **6. HELP PEOPLE BUY AND STAY IN THEIR OWN HOMES**

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Develop a strategy to create more family-sized housing in the city.

*Actions by Others:*

- b. Increase Federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program funding for repairs and adaptations by lower-income homeowners to help seniors remain in their homes.

## **7. CREATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES IN ALL NEIGHBOURHOODS**

*Toronto Actions:*

- a. Support, through education and partnerships, community stakeholders working on affordable housing initiatives.

## APPENDIX 2 – Affordable Rent and Maximum Price Limits: 2006

This chart shows the maximum rent or ownership price for affordable housing as established by Toronto's Official Plan. Rents and prices at or below these amounts are considered affordable.

UNIT TYPE	RENTS	OWNERSHIP PRICES *
Bachelor Apartment	\$726	\$109,800
1-Bedroom Apartment	\$889	\$134,500
2-Bedroom Apartment	\$1,060	\$160,300
3-Bedroom Apartment	\$1,265	\$191,300
2-Bedroom Townhouse	\$1,065	\$161,100
3-Bedroom (or more) Townhouse	\$1,271	\$193,700

\* The affordable ownership price uses a 10 per cent down payment, interest rates for a five-year term, a 25-year amortization for the mortgage, and property taxes included in housing costs such that the monthly payment is no more than the average market rent as reported by CMHC in the previous year.



## Households in Core Housing Need

A household is in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and it would have to spend 30 per cent or more of total pre-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that meets all three standards.

- **Adequate dwellings** are those reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs
- **Affordable dwellings** cost less than 30 per cent of total pre-tax household income
- **Suitable dwellings** have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.

A household is not in core housing need if its housing meets all of the adequacy, suitability and affordability standards

OR

If its housing does not meet one or more of these standards, but it has sufficient income to obtain alternative local housing that meets all three standards.

*For example, a person earning \$36,000 or less and renting a one-bedroom apartment would be in “core housing need” if one of the three standards listed above was not being met and the person would have to spend more than 30 per cent of income to pay the median rent of local accommodation that did meet the standards.*

The following chart shows the minimum income levels that trigger the core housing need definition for various accommodations.

2007 Core Need Income Threshold for Toronto	
One Bedroom	\$36,000 minimum income
Two Bedroom	\$42,000 minimum income
Three Bedroom	\$50,500 minimum income
Four Bedroom	\$61,000 minimum income



## APPENDIX 4 – Suggested Further Reading

- Where's the Money Gone? An Analysis of Declining Government Spending — Report by the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, 2007
- Lost in the Shuffle – Report by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto and the Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre, 2007
- The Blueprint to End Homelessness in Toronto — The Wellesley Institute, 2006
- Cities: Partners in National Prosperity — Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Big City Mayors' Caucus, 2005
- Affordable Housing in Canada: In Search of a New Paradigm — TD Economics, 2003
- Taking Responsibility for Homelessness, An Action Plan for Toronto – Report of the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force, 1999.







**We want to hear from you.**

*For information about consultations check our website at:  
[toronto.ca/affordablehousing](http://toronto.ca/affordablehousing)  
or call Kim Robinson at 416-397-4169.*

*To comment on the Affordable Housing Framework, e-mail us at:  
[HOT@toronto.ca](mailto:HOT@toronto.ca) or mail your comments to:*

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