

Housing Now Initiative – Annual Progress Update and Launch of Phase Three Sites

Date: October 14, 2021

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Executive Director, Housing Secretariat

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The Housing Now Initiative was approved by City Council in January 2019 to activate City-owned lands to stimulate the development of affordable rental housing within transit-oriented, mixed-income, mixed-use, complete communities. This signature program is a key component of the City's HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan and is central to enabling the City to meet its target of approving 40,000 new affordable rental homes, including 18,000 supportive homes, by 2030. Of the overall 40,000 new affordable rental homes, the City has committed to delivering 10,000 using its own land and financial incentives.

In 2019, as part of phase one of the Housing Now Initiative, 11 properties were approved by City Council to create an estimated 10,000 new homes, including 3,700 affordable rental homes ("Phase One"). In May, 2020, City Council approved six additional sites to be added to the initiative as part of phase two, with the potential to create up to 1,700 additional homes, including up to 620 affordable rental homes ("Phase Two").

The total 17 sites across Phases One and Two are currently in various stages of development. Seven sites have progressed through the re-zoning process, three of which have development partners selected with construction estimated to begin by early-to-mid-2022. Additionally, through the planning approval process, the original residential unit targets were exceeded and the program is now on track to create an estimated 13,479 new homes, including 3,037 ownership homes and 10,142 purpose-built rental homes, of which 5,005 will be affordable. The new affordable rental homes to be created under this program will provide much-needed affordable housing options to address a wide range of housing needs and incomes.

This report provides Council with an update on the Housing Now Initiative including progress to-date on advancing the 17 sites. It also recommends Council approval to expand the program to add four additional sites as part of the third phase of the program ("Phase Three"). The Phase Three sites (outlined in Attachment 1) are

estimated to yield between 1,150 and 1,400 new homes, including between 450 and 600 affordable rental homes. To support delivery of the Phase Three sites plus the additional units achieved in Phases One and Two, this report also recommends Council's approval of an estimated \$90.61 million in Open Door Program incentives.

In addition to the Phase Three sites, this report recommends Council approval to create a pipeline of five sites which, subject to satisfactory feasibility assessments, can be added to future phases of the Housing Now Initiative. The creation of a pipeline of sites will enable staff to undertake early due diligence work, including identify risks and mitigation strategies, to ensure that sites can more rapidly move through planning approval and development stages. Creating a pipeline of sites will also enable the City to take advantage of any future federal and provincial funding opportunities, should they become available, to support the development of new housing.

The Housing Now Initiative is an example of Toronto's leadership approach to city-building and its commitment to increasing the supply of new homes for current and future residents. Across the growing portfolio of City-owned sites, a significant number of affordable rental, market rental and ownership homes will be developed within complete communities. To-date, the City has dedicated over \$1.3 billion in land value, financial incentives, and staffing resources to expedite the planning approvals and development processes. These investments have made it possible for the City to achieve over 50% of its ten-year 10,000 affordable homes approval target in less than three years. However, support from the federal and provincial governments through increased investments and new policy tools is critical to delivering the Housing Now Initiative and the City's overall HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan. Participation and investments from the non-profit and private sectors are also essential for success.

Increased investments in affordable and supportive housing will support the objectives of all orders of governments to provide a range of housing to address the needs of current and future residents, plus create livable communities where stable, secure and high quality homes provide people with the opportunity to thrive. Investments in housing also support the social, economic and environmental health and resilience of communities, cities and our country as a whole.

The Housing Now Initiative is being implemented as a major corporate initiative and this report was developed with input and support from staff in the Housing Secretariat, City Manager's Office, City Planning, CreateTO, Corporate Real Estate Management, Legal Services, Financial Planning, Corporate Finance, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration and Concept 2 Keys.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Housing Secretariat recommends that:

Land Considerations

1. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management to review, on an expedited basis, the four

sites identified in Attachment 1 (the "Phase Three Sites") to this report, including any prior terms of transfer that have been approved by City Council, and authorize the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management to determine, in consultation with the City Manager, whether such terms should be amended in order to achieve the objectives of the Housing Now Initiative.

2. City Council authorize the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, where it is determined such action is appropriate to achieve the objectives of the Housing Now Initiative, to declare all or portions of each of the Phase Three Sites surplus, and to amend any prior declaration(s) of surplus, subject to the retention of those areas and interests as have been determined critical to the operational requirements of a division or agency.

3. City Council amend the existing delegated approvals and signing authorities in Item 2017.EX27.12, City-Wide Real Estate - Delegated Authorities Framework and Transition Plan, adopted by City Council on October 2, 3 and 4, 2017, to authorize the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer to approve any lease, transfer and other property transactions involving these Phase Three Sites for the purpose of achieving the City's affordable housing objectives notwithstanding that the related compensation may exceed \$5 Million Dollars, and City Council authorize the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer to treat the estimated value of the rental savings that will be realized by tenants of the affordable housing units as compensation received by the City when assessing whether a proposed transaction reflects market value, provided that the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat and the Board of CreateTO or the Board of Directors of the related CreateTO corporate entity concur with the proposed transaction terms.

4. City Council waive the restrictions of Section 2.4(a) of the shareholder direction of Build Toronto Inc., controlled by the Board of CreateTO, solely for transactions relating to the Phase Three Sites on terms and conditions satisfactory to the City Manager and in a form approved by the City Solicitor, and allow for donations or similar contributions to any charity or charitable organization, or to a non-profit organization for the purpose of facilitating the provision of affordable housing units at the Phase Three Sites where determined appropriate by the CreateTO Board of Directors, in consultation with the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat.

5. City Council authorize the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services to approve the transfer of title to any of the Phase Three Sites, or a portion thereof to corporate entities controlled by the Board of CreateTO at nominal consideration where permitted by law, and where the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat and the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO have agreed upon the terms of transfer that will be reflected in a Transfer Agreement between the City and the corporate entity controlled by the CreateTO Board.

6. Council direct the Board of Directors of Toronto Community Housing Corporation, when requested by the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services and the Executive

Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, to transfer a portion of lands located at 1080 Eastern Avenue and currently owned by Toronto Community Housing Corporation, to the City of Toronto at nominal cost to be included as part of the Housing Now site at 1631 Queen Street East, which it will thereafter form part of.

Planning Process

7. City Council request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to:
 - a. provide key planning principles and guidelines for each of the Phase Three Sites to be included as part of the public market offering process; and
 - b. expeditiously advance Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments and plans of subdivision required to prepare the properties for marketing and ensure a range of housing opportunities within each of the Phase Three Sites;
8. City Council request the Chief Operating Officer, Development, to support the Housing Now Initiative through the Concept 2 Keys (C2K) program by continuing to expedite the review process for Site Plan Control applications submitted by the selected developers of each site.

Affordable Housing Program

9. City Council approve an overall development target across the Phase Three Sites including a minimum of one-third affordable rental units (with average rents not to exceed 80 percent of annual Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation average market rent, a minimum of one-third market rental housing, and a maximum of one-third ownership homes.
10. City Council request the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, to explore opportunities and partnerships with other orders of governments and non-profit organizations to exceed the one-third affordable rental housing target on each of the Phase Three Sites.
11. City Council exempt the up to 600 affordable rental homes anticipated to be developed throughout the Phase Three Sites, commencing from first occupancy of each site, from taxation for municipal and school purposes for the term of the municipal housing project facility agreement, with the property tax exemption having an estimated net present value of approximately \$19,736,198 over 99 years.
12. City Council exempt the 485 additional affordable rental homes (in addition to the 4,520 affordable homes already approved) anticipated to be developed on the Phases One and Two Sites from taxation for municipal and school purposes for the term of the municipal housing project facility agreement, with the property tax exemption having an estimated net present value of approximately \$15,953,427 over 99 years.
13. City Council authorize the Controller to cancel or refund any taxes paid for the affordable rental homes developed on Phase One, Two and Three Sites, after the

effective date of the exemption for taxation for municipal and school purposes set out in the applicable municipal housing project facility agreement.

14. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to offer the Open Door incentives for affordable rental housing, for up to 600 affordable rental homes, for the term of affordability, and to exempt the affordable rental housing, including any applicable ancillary and related amenity space on the Phase Three Sites, from the payment of development charges and provide a waiver of all planning and building permit fees and parkland dedication fees.

15. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to offer the Open Door incentives for affordable rental housing, for 485 additional affordable rental homes (in addition to the 4,520 affordable homes already approved) anticipated to be developed on the Phases One and Two Sites for the term of affordability, and to exempt the affordable rental housing, including any applicable ancillary and related amenity space, from the payment of development charges and provide a waiver of all planning and building permit fees and parkland dedication fees.

16. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to negotiate and enter into, on behalf of the City, municipal housing project facility agreements (the City's Contribution Agreement) with the developers chosen for each of the Phase Three Sites, on terms and conditions satisfactory to the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat and in a form approved by the City Solicitor.

17. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat or her designate to execute, on behalf of the City, any security or financing documents required by the developers of the Phase Three Sites to secure construction and conventional financing and subsequent refinancing, including any postponement, confirmation of status, discharge or consent documents where and when required during the term of the municipal housing project facility agreement, as required by normal business practices, and provided that such documents do not give rise to financial obligations on the part of the City that have not been previously approved by City Council.

18. City Council authorize the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, in consultation with the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services, to provide any consent necessary to transfer or encumber the Phase Three Sites or the affordable rental housing portion thereof, and to negotiate and enter into any agreements or other documents required to effect any future transfer or assignment of any of the Phase Three Sites or the affordable rental housing portion thereof, and the associated legal agreements with the City to another legal entity, on terms and conditions satisfactory to them and in a form approved by the City Solicitor.

Funding and Budget Considerations

19. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services and the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to compensate CreateTO for the costs related to the provision by CreateTO of services directly related to implementing the Housing Now Initiative including: preparing the properties for marketing including undertaking necessary environmental studies and remediation; market analyses;

planning and other consultant studies; legal costs; overhead and administration costs; relocation costs; costs of on-site City programming requirements; costs of required on- or off-site infrastructure upgrades or improvements; subsidizing projects that many not be financially feasible, etc., with payment to be made on a cost-recovery basis from the Capital Revolving Reserve Fund for Affordable Housing (XR1058).

20. City Council direct the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, to include the estimated cost of delivering the Housing Now Initiative as part of the Housing Secretariat's 10-Year Capital Plan for consideration by Council as part of the 2022 budget process.

21. City Council direct the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, to request funding to complete due diligence/feasibility work related to the five sites identified as potential future Housing Now Initiative sites in Attachment 2, as part of the Housing Secretariat's 10-Year Capital Plan for consideration by Council as part of the 2022 budget process.

Market Offering Process

22. City Council direct the utilization of the Phase Three Sites, identified in Attachment 1 to this report, for the Housing Now Initiative through a market offering process with a priority of retaining public ownership through long-term land leases.

23. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services, and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer to approve the business case and market offering process for each Phase Three Site provided that the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat and the CreateTO Board of Directors or the Board of Directors of the relevant CreateTO corporate entity, concur with the proposed business case and market offering process.

24. City Council direct the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, in consultation with the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to administer the market offering process for the Phase Three Sites and utilize its existing pre-qualified Broker roster to expedite marketing, where required, and to negotiate the leases, purchase agreements and other contracts with the successful development partners, other than the municipal housing project facility agreements in Recommendation 16 above, and subject to the approvals required in Recommendation 23 above.

25. City Council direct the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, to administer the market offering process for sites designated exclusively for non-profit and Indigenous participation, and to negotiate the leases, purchase agreements and other contracts with the successful non-profit and Indigenous development proponents.

26. City Council request the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to work with the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, the Deputy City Manager, Corporate Services, and the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer in overseeing the market offering process related to the Phase Three Sites including the selection of preferred proponents, and

the co-ordination of government funding and financing incentives to ensure that the affordable housing projects are financially viable.

27. Council request the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat and the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO to encourage the involvement and participation of non-profit, co-operative and Indigenous housing organizations in the market offering process for the Phase Three Sites, and to provide greater consideration to submissions that exceed the affordable rental and market rental housing delivery targets and increase supportive housing opportunities.

28. City Council request the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat and the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, in consultation with the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, to incorporate, in the market offering process for all Housing Now sites, including the Phase Three Sites, measurable community benefits opportunities, such as social procurement and apprenticeship, training, and/or other hiring opportunities for people from equity-deserving communities.

29. City Council request the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer, CreateTO, to ensure that all future Housing Now Initiative sites, including the proposed Phase Three sites, achieve the Toronto Green Standard Version 4 Tier 2 energy performance level with the exception of sites that are currently in, or have completed the market offering process including: 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard; 705 Warden Avenue; 777 Victoria Park Avenue; 140 Merton Street; 2444 Eglinton Avenue East; and Bloor-Kipling (Block One).

Other Considerations

30. City Council re-iterate its request that the Federal Government and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC):

- a. approve a portfolio approach to the funding and financing of all sites in the Housing Now Initiative including the new Phase Three Sites;
- b. develop a streamlined and expedited approach to underwriting Housing Now Initiative sites, including through the Rental Construction Financing Initiative;
- c. allocate grant funding for eligible Housing Now projects based on the growing need to increase the supply of permanent affordable housing options for residents, and reflective of the high cost of construction in Toronto; and,
- d. identify and dedicate surplus lands in Toronto for increasing the supply of affordable and supportive housing.

31. City Council re-iterate its request to the Province of Ontario to support the creation of affordable and supportive housing opportunities as part of the Housing Now Initiative by providing operating funding (for both rent supplements to deepen affordability and to provide support services), and to identify and dedicate surplus lands within Toronto for new affordable homes, including supportive housing.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report is based on the best available data at this time. The total number of affordable homes achieved for each site and the financial impact will be determined based on the results of the market offering process, selection of successful proponents, and the planning review and approval process.

Similar to the process established for Phases One and Two sites, staff will prepare a business case for each of the Phase Three sites to determine the funding and financing required to make the Housing Now projects financially viable. At that stage, development cost schedules will be detailed, land value contribution will be determined, and additional funding and financing needs along with capital and operating requirements of each of the Phase Three sites will be identified.

City Investments

It is estimated that through implementation of Phases One, Two and Three of the Housing Now Initiative, the City will be dedicating over \$1.3 billion in land value, Open Door Program financial incentives, and staffing resources to expedite the planning approvals and development processes.

Land Value

Land value contribution will be determined in the business case process and will depend on various factors, such as transaction structure (lease vs. land sale), rental to ownership ratio (which might vary per site), market rents and land values at the time of offering, and costs of any additional city building needs that may be funded by land value. It is expected that other city building priorities identified on the Phase Three Sites by City divisions and agencies will be reviewed and approved through the City's budget process.

Open Door Program Incentives for Affordable Rental Units

The City's Open Door Program financial incentives for Housing Now sites include relief from development charges, building permit fees, planning application fees and parkland dedication fees as well as an exemption from property taxes for the 99-year affordability period.

Through Items [EX1.1](#), [PH14.3](#), [CC21.3](#), City Council has approved approximately \$343.35 million in Open Door Program incentives to-date to support the creation of 4,520 affordable rental homes in Phases One and Two. As the previously forecasted affordable rental unit yield has been exceeded through the planning approvals process, and is now estimated to be 5,005, this report recommends Open Door incentives for an additional 485 affordable rental homes valued at approximately \$40.5 million.

Additionally, this report recommends that City Council authorize a further \$50.1 million in Open Door Program incentives to activate the Phase Three Sites as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Additional Door Incentives Proposed for Phase Three Sites

Phase	Net New Affordable Rental Homes	Estimated Affordability Period (Years)	Estimated Development Charges*	Estimated Planning Fees and Charges**	Estimated Net Present Value of Property Taxes†	Estimated Total Value of Incentives
One & Two (additional homes)	485	99	\$21,342,425	\$3,205,148	\$15,953,427	\$40,501,000
Three	600	99	\$26,403,000	\$3,965,131	\$19,736,198	\$50,104,329
Total	1085	99	\$47,745,425	\$7,170,279	\$35,689,625	\$90,605,329

**Includes estimated 2021 building permit fees of \$965,094, 2021 planning fees of \$780,185, and parkland dedication fees of \$5,425,000.

†Calculated using 2021 property tax rates.

Property Tax Breakdown

Table 2: Property Tax Breakdown for 1,085 Additional Affordable Rental Homes

Property Tax	Annual	NPV: 99 Years
City	\$ 835,587	\$ 26,360,157
Education	\$ 283,287	\$ 8,936,815
City Building	\$ 12,447	\$ 392,653
Total:	\$ \$1,131,321	\$ 35,689,625

The total estimated Open Door Program contribution of \$433.95 million for Phases One, Two and Three is not a direct capital payment as it represents the forgiveness of City levies and charges and is thus foregone revenue to the City. Any impact on divisional services will be considered through annual budget processes.

Program Delivery and Administration Costs

Requests for funding to continue implementation of Housing Now will be made as part of the Housing Secretariat's rolling 10-Year Capital Plan and presented to Council for consideration annually through the budget process.

This includes costs directly related to implementing programs including but not limited to: preparing the properties for marketing as well as undertaking necessary environmental studies and remediation; market studies and analyses; planning and other consultant studies; legal costs; relocation and temporary lease costs; costs of required on-or off-site infrastructure upgrades or improvements; and subsidizing projects that require additional contributions to be financially feasible.

In addition to the above, there are currently approximately 25 full time equivalent staff working on the Housing Now Initiative within CreateTO and City divisions. As new sites are added to the pipeline, additional resources will be required both during the pre-development stages and the post-construction oversight/monitoring stages.

Any additional resource implications related to expanding the Housing Now Initiative, including additional staffing costs, will be identified and presented for consideration by Council as part of the 2022 Budget Process.

Accommodating Other City-building Objectives

Relocation expenses related to existing tenants or City divisions and agencies, including costs of providing new accommodation, and costs associated with achieving other city-building objectives such as creating new community service facilities, will be identified in the business case for each site. These expenses will be addressed in future years' capital and operating budget cycles by impacted divisions and agencies.

Federal Investments

The National Housing Strategy Co-Investment Fund and the Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCFI), administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), are essential to support the delivery of the Housing Now Initiative. Subject to Council approval of this report, staff will engage with CMHC staff to advise them of the expansion of the Housing Now Initiative to add the Phase Three Sites. Staff will also work with federal officials, CMHC and the selected proponents to secure funding and financing to support the delivery of the rental housing (affordable and market rental) at the Phase Three Sites.

Provincial Investments

Operating funding from the Province of Ontario is necessary to create new supportive housing opportunities through the Housing Now Initiative and other City programs. This includes funding for rent supplements needed to help deepen affordability for low-and-moderate-income households, as well as funding to deliver a range of wraparound social and health supports onsite which are necessary to help vulnerable and marginalized residents successfully exit (or prevent their entry into) homelessness.

The Chief Financial Officer has been provided with the financial impacts associated with this report.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan envisions a city in which all residents have equal opportunity to develop to their full potential. The HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan is also centred on a human rights-based approach to housing. This approach recognizes that housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of a person and to building healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

The Housing Now Initiative is a key program under the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan aimed at creating new affordable rental housing within mixed-income, transit rich, complete communities. Creating new affordable housing through the Housing Now Initiative will increase the opportunity for structurally vulnerable and marginalized individuals, including Indigenous Peoples, Black and other racialized people, seniors,

women, and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community to access safe, healthy and adequate homes. More housing opportunities for essential workers and families will also be created through the Housing Now Initiative.

Safe, secure, affordable housing is an important social determinant of health. It improves the social and economic status of individuals, families and communities. Good quality, affordable housing is also the cornerstone of vibrant, healthy neighbourhoods and supports the environmental and economic health of the city, region and country as a whole.

DECISION HISTORY

On September 30, 2020, City Council adopted with amendments "Improving Outcomes for Toronto Residents through Implementation of HousingTO 2020-2030" which provided a detailed Implementation Plan for the actions in the HousingTO Action Plan. The Housing Now Initiative is a key program supporting delivery of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH16.5>

On June 29, 2020, City Council adopted with amendments "Housing Now Initiative – Annual Progress Report" which outlined early successes in the Housing Now Initiative, updated on progress on the 11 sites under Phase One. Program enhancements were recommended in response including providing rent protection for market renters, expanding partnerships to increase affordability, enhancing accessibility requirements, supporting Indigenous communities, and enhancing participation of the community housing sector.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH14.3>

On May 28, 2020, City Council adopted "Creating New Affordable Housing Opportunities through Phase Two of the Housing Now Initiative" which introduced six new sites for development into new affordable and market rental housing. This report also outlined the delivery framework for the Housing Now initiative, and the affordable housing targets expected on the sites.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC21.3>

On December 17 and 18, 2019, City Council, adopted with amendments, "HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan" as the framework to address Toronto's housing and homelessness challenges by 2030. This Plan includes a number of actions and targets to address critical needs across the housing spectrum including emergency shelters and transitional housing, social and supportive housing, market and affordable rental housing and homeownership. The City Council Decision can be found here:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH11.5>

On January 30 and 31, 2019, City Council adopted EX 1.1 "Implementing the "Housing Now" Initiative". This report provided recommendations on the organizational structure and processes to deliver the Housing Now Initiative, the proposed affordable housing program and the overall financial implications of the program.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX1.1>

On December 13, 2018, City Council adopted CC1.3 "Housing Now", which approved the activation of 11 City-owned sites for the development of affordable housing as part of creating mixed-income, mixed-use and transit-oriented communities.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.CC1.3>

COMMENTS

HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan

In December 2019, City Council adopted the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan ("HousingTO Plan") which provides a blueprint for action across the full housing spectrum in Toronto. The Plan established a target of approving 40,000 new affordable rental homes, including 18,000 supportive homes, by 2030.

The Housing Now Initiative is a key City program that supports delivery of the HousingTO Plan through activating City-owned sites. Through this program, the City will deliver an estimated 10,000 new affordable rental and supportive homes within mixed-income, mixed-use, complete communities.

Overview of the Housing Now Initiative

The Housing Now Initiative is an innovative approach to delivering a range of housing for a range of needs within mixed-income, mixed-use, livable communities. Through the Housing Now Initiative, the City will utilize its own land, financial incentives and staffing resources to expedite the delivery of 10,000 new affordable rental homes, representing on average 33% of the new residential homes to be created through the program.

Alongside the affordable housing, these developments will also contribute other community assets, such as child care facilities, space for community agencies, local parks and open spaces that will be added to neighbourhoods across the city. In addition, locating the affordable housing near higher-order transit services is expected to greatly reduce travel times and costs for low-and moderate income households, and provide greater access to employment, educational opportunities and services.

Program Achievements To-date

1) Securing Developer Partners and Moving Towards Construction

Development partners have been selected for the Housing Now Initiative sites located at 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard, 705 Warden Avenue and 777 Victoria Park Avenue. Two of the developers were recently publicly announced and the third will be announced shortly, as outlined below:

- 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard. – this site has been awarded to Tridel Builders Inc. and Greenwin Holdings Inc.;
- 705 Warden Avenue – this site has been awarded to Greenwin Holdings Inc. and KingSett Affordable Housing LLP.; and
- 777 Victoria Park Avenue – the selected development partners will be announced shortly.

Across these three Phase One sites, the developer partners will build almost 2,600 new homes, including more than 2,100 rental homes of which over 1,000 will be affordable rental homes. Construction on these sites are expected to begin as early as the second quarter of 2022.

In addition to providing much-needed affordable and supportive housing opportunities within mixed-income developments, these projects will also deliver a wide range of city-building benefits across the three sites including:

- a new 3,049-square-metre park at 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard;
- a 3,834-square-metre expansion to the Warden Hilltop Park, nearly doubling the greenspace in the area at 705 Warden Avenue;
- three new 62-space childcare facilities, including one on each site totalling 186 net new child care spaces across the city;
- new community use spaces on the sites at 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard and Victoria Park Avenue totaling approximately 1,345 square metres;
- new retail spaces at each site;
- office space at 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard;
- the re-naturalization of land adjacent to Taylor Massey Creek on the Warden site; and
- improvements to the public realm in all three communities.

2) Community Benefits Framework

The City's Community Benefits Framework aims to maximize the use of City of Toronto levers such as procurement, real estate transactions, and financial incentives for specific sectors, to create inclusive social and economic development opportunities.

Through negotiations with the developers selected for the 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard, 777 Victoria Park Avenue and 705 Warden Avenue sites, significant community benefits will be secured including new job training and employment opportunities for people from equity-deserving groups plus commitments for social procurement.

3) Exceeding Unit Targets

In 2021, the City and CreateTO continued to undertake detailed due diligence, business case review and planning framework amendments in support of Housing Now sites and Council's direction to optimize the use of City-owned land for the delivery of new affordable housing. Through a review of heights and densities and the planning process, the sites that have advanced to statutory public meeting and recommended

zoning by-laws have achieved unit yield targets above initial estimates that were presented to Council outlined below.

Table 3: Sites that have achieved additional affordable rental units through re-zoning

	Initial Estimates (EX1.1, CC21.3)		2021 Approvals*	
	Residential Unit Yield	Affordable Rental Units	Residential Unit Yield	Affordable Rental Units
Bloor-Kipling (Blocks 1 & 5)	1,000 (approx.)	333	1,229	409
405 Sherbourne Street	180	60-90	267	89-133
150 Queens Wharf Road	200	66-100	282	94-141

*150 Queens Wharf Road Statutory Meeting and Proposed Zoning By-law amendment was considered at October 18, 2021 Planning and Housing Committee and has yet to be approved by Council.

4) An Expedited Planning Process that Manages Multiple, Concurrent Reviews

Formalizing an expedited planning approvals process has been critical to the success of Housing Now Initiative. This internal review process enables progress on multiple Housing Now Sites advancing concurrently through community consultation, design review and City-initiated Zoning By-law Amendments. Since the 2020 Housing Now Annual Progress Update, City Planning has worked closely with CreateTO and the commenting Divisions to structure a review process that facilitates a full statutory process in six months from formal first submission. This process is consistent with the Organizational Structure developed for the Housing Now Initiative. In advance of each submission, City Planning and the commenting divisions and agencies work closely with CreateTO and the team of consultants to ensure that all technical requirements and analysis are provided to minimize the requirements for resubmissions and to meet the expedited project timelines. Attachment 3 "Housing Now Unit Tracker" is a graphic showing where each site is in the planning approvals and development process.

5) Parking, Mobility, and Project Viability

Travel Demand Management (TDM) is a core feature of Housing Now proposals. TDM is the application of design strategies and policies to incentivize modal split away from personal vehicles. As Housing Now sites are transit-oriented, often at the intersection of multiple transit lines, City Planning and Transportation Services have worked with CreateTO to develop parking strategies that justify the reduction of vehicular parking on-site, to reduce single occupancy vehicle use, and provide options for residents to find alternative ways to travel to and from the area. The outcome has been a progressive approach to the requirement for below-grade parking, resulting in a significant reduction to project costs, while aligning with the City-wide Review of Parking Requirements for

New Developments and the performance measures of the Toronto Green Standard Tier 2 Version 3.

CreateTO has also established a draft Housing Now specific Travel Demand Management Framework that will apply to all Housing Now sites, and which supports reduced parking rates and alternative mobility options.

6) Housing that Contributes to a Beautiful City

City Planning with CreateTO have reinforced the commitment and requirements for design excellence on Housing Now sites. A Design Brief, prepared for each site, is a set of site-specific performance standards that establish the site plan elements, materiality and landscape treatments that should be included in a future proponent's submission for Site Plan Approval. Since the 2020 Housing Now Annual Update Report, final re-zoning reports now include recommendations that formalize the role of the Design Brief and include the Design Brief in the set of development requirements to be included in the Project Agreement with the future developer. Elevating the expectation for high quality design at the re-zoning stages provides increased clarity on the City's design expectations at Site Plan, and should streamline the design process for developer partners.

Since the 2020 Housing Now Annual Update Report, nine Housing Now projects have been presented to the City's Design Review Panel. Each visit has been timed to fit within expedited timelines and the broader community consultation process. In September 2021, the Block Context Plans for the Housing Now sites at Bloor-Kipling and Bloor-Islington received the Award of Excellence - Visions and Master Plans Award at the Toronto Urban Design Awards.

7) Engagement with Local Councillors and Communities

Community engagement has continued on Housing Now sites during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Following the direction of the City's Medical Officer of Health and Provincial requirements, all engagement has been held online. City staff and CreateTO developed new engagement tools to ensure that there could be genuine opportunities for feedback and discussion in the absence of in-person consultation. For each site, this includes the following:

- Creation of a 'site reel', a short video orienting people to the location, acknowledging that both local and city-wide audiences are interested in development concepts supporting the Housing Now Initiative;
- Meeting notices mailed to households provided a postage-paid option to enable households to request hard-copy meeting materials to eliminate electronic barriers to participation and information on the project;
- Enhanced project information available online and by mail that included an information sheet on the development concept, a general Housing Now information sheet, and written summaries of all Community Consultation Meetings; and
- Posting of recordings of the online Community Consultation Meetings for viewing by the public.

Since the 2020 Housing Now Annual Update Report, this process has been undertaken for nine sites as outlined below.

Phase One	Phase Two
Bloor-Kipling	405 Sherbourne Street
770 Don Mills Road	1631 Queen Street East
805 Don Mills Road	150 Queens Wharf Road
Bloor-Islington	158 Borough Drive
	2444 Eglinton Avenue East

8) Building a Development Program from the Ground Up

In less than three years, the Housing Now Initiative has set a standard for a city-wide comprehensive development program. Since the launch of the Initiative, Housing Now has developed an organizational structure, a cross-divisional team comprised of a diverse range of disciplines, and a process to advance development approvals and real estate negotiations on complex sites across the city's different geographies. These foundational pieces are supporting the continued growth and acceleration of Housing Now program delivery.

Lessons Learned and Continuous Improvement

1) Project Coordination and Delivery Framework

In May 2020, Council received report CC21.3, "Creating New Affordable Housing Opportunities through Phase Two of the Housing Now Initiative" which outlined the organizational structure and delivery framework for the Housing Now initiative, outlining the roles of the Housing Secretariat, CreateTO, City Planning, Legal Services, Corporate Real Estate Management, and Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration. This framework has largely been a success and have created opportunities for staff to collaborate across Divisions and highlight further lessons learned.

One such opportunity relates to initiating due diligence and engagement with technical commenting Divisions, such as Toronto Water and Engineering and Construction Services, at an earlier stage in project development. Acquiring technical review staff comments earlier in the project review phase increases awareness of public infrastructure implications of projects and reduces cost and timeline changes that may emerge later in the process. Similarly, earlier review and comment from City Agencies and external partners such as Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), Metrolinx, and Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), will support stronger project delivery. Sites that are immediately adjacent to these stakeholders, or where the Housing Now parcel has to accommodate stakeholders' infrastructure, would benefit from clearer

establishment of obligations at the beginning of the process as opposed to having to address comments through the design/circulation process. In particular, having to accommodate TTC infrastructure as a part of Plan of Subdivision requires a level of coordination that is intensive and would benefit from early, continuous engagement.

2) Municipal Infrastructure

Success in expediting planning approvals requires a pre-assessment of servicing and municipal infrastructure. Technical review of planning applications must meet both the City and Provincial standards, particularly related to limiting new flows to combined sewer systems. In some areas of the city with older municipal infrastructure, the downstream analysis is complex and acceptance of functional servicing analysis requires extensive investigation. Other areas of the city, which may have newer sewers, wet weather flow monitoring is required due to issues such as basement flooding, or the capacity of sewers feeding the trunk. In either instance, investigation and monitoring may not work within expedited processes. As such, activities such as flow monitoring should be initiated in a pre-development phase.

3) Delivering Complete Communities

Housing Now projects aim to deliver purpose-built affordable and market rental housing while also contributing to complete communities, through the delivery of community facilities such as new non-profit child care centres, non-profit community space, parkland, public realm enhancements, or heritage preservation. Where Section 37 funds have been identified and collected by the City for these complete community elements, City Planning has worked closely with Councillors' offices to allocate funds to the Housing Now projects. For example, at Bloor-Kipling, over \$1.4 million has been allocated for parkland improvements, and at 150 Queens Wharf Road, over \$2.2 million has been allocated for a new EarlyON Child and Family Centre.

While the Housing Secretariat and CreateTO recognize the direction to deliver complete communities through this Initiative, each of these elements add additional costs and risks to successful delivery of projects.

As the Housing Now Initiative progresses, staff will need to continue to balance these city-building objectives with the core function of the program which is to deliver new affordable rental housing.

4) Public Messaging on Affordable Housing

The Housing Secretariat, City Planning and CreateTO will continue to strengthen the level of public understanding about different forms of affordable and supportive housing, the benefits they provide to the city, and their contribution to communities. Staff have found that levels of public understanding about housing varies significantly, and these differing levels of understanding and acceptance have had an impact on the quality of consultation on the Housing Now development proposal itself.

Consultations will continue to articulate the importance of delivering a range of new tenures and affordability levels across the housing continuum – from shelters to market

ownership housing – and deliver positive, evidence-based key messages about the positive impacts all types of housing have on the city.

Housing Now Initiative Program Enhancements

1) Concept to Keys (C2K) Support to Expedite Site Plan Control Application Reviews

Housing Now sites are advanced by dedicated City Planning staff that support the sites through community consultation, design review and City-initiated Zoning By-law Amendments. This ensures that sites are de-risked and ready for the market offering process.

To continue with the expedited approach, this reports recommends that the C2K team support the Housing Now Initiative by continuing to accelerate Site Plan Control applications submitted by the selected developers of each site.

The C2K program was developed in 2020 in response to the City's End-to-End Review of the Development Application Review Process, and recognizing that development will play a vital role in supporting Toronto's economic recovery post-pandemic.

To-date, the C2K team and the Housing Secretariat have developed a prioritization tool to identify and evaluate high-priority affordable housing applications based on: the number of affordable homes; length and depth of affordability; the number of affordable homes that will be allocated to priority populations; and projects with government investment in the form of land or approved capital or operating funding

As Housing Now sites meet the above criteria, getting the projects into the C2K priority application stream once developers have been chosen will help ensure that projects continue to be prioritized for City review/approval all the way to construction.

2) Accessibility

Currently, 15% of the market homes and 20% of the affordable homes to be delivered through the Housing Now Initiative are required to be accessible. These homes are considered to be accessible if they meet CMHC's accessibility guidelines under the National Co-Investment Fund. In June 2020, through Item [PH14.3](#), City Council directed the Housing Secretariat to form a working group composed of organizations that serve or represent persons with disabilities, the development industry, and City staff. The directed mandate of this group was to explore the options and feasibility of increasing the percentage of accessible homes to be delivered through Housing Now.

The working group has since been established with current membership representing all of the groups recommended by City Council, including:

- The Accessible Housing Network
- The Centre for Independent Living
- Toronto Senior's Forum
- Citizens With Disabilities – Ontario

- Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians Toronto
- Older Women's Network
- R-Path
- BILD
- RESCON
- City Planning
- Toronto Buildings
- CreateTO

As part of its mandate to review current accessibility targets under Housing Now and recommend changes, if required, the working group will assist in:

- Supporting the identification and analysis of additional stakeholders to be engaged;
- Identifying relevant or emerging best practices;
- Assessing available data relating to accessible housing, identify gaps and recommend improvements to data management; and
- Identifying opportunities to improve communication and outreach for accessible housing opportunities.

This work will be undertaken with consideration of various types of disabilities (including physical, sensory, developmental, learning and mental health challenges), as well as intersectionality with other identities such as Indigenous, Black, 2SLGBTQ+, women, etc. It will also consider future population needs, with particular attention to the projected growth of Toronto's seniors population over the next decade.

Staff will report back to the Planning and Housing Committee with findings and recommendations resulting from this review by the third quarter of 2022.

3) Future Change to the Definition of Affordable Housing

Toronto's Official Plan and Municipal Housing Facility By-law currently define affordable housing as housing where the total monthly shelter cost (including heat and hydro) is at or below Toronto's average market rent (AMR) by unit type as determined annually by CMHC. Through adoption of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, City Council directed that staff review options for developing a revised definition of affordable housing based on 30 per cent of household gross income, consistent with the federal definition.

The primary intent of this change is for City policies and programs to better respond to the needs of low-and-moderate-income households by establishing definitions of affordable housing that are aligned with household incomes versus market changes. Currently, rents for affordable housing units created through Housing Now will range from 40% to 100% of Toronto's AMR, with project average rents of 80% AMR. These new affordable homes will address a wide range of incomes and housing needs.

The Housing Now Initiative will likely still be able to achieve an 80% AMR average across a project by targeting more two- and three-bedroom units at or close to 100% AMR. Deeper levels of affordability can also be achieved through additional federal and

provincial funding, as well as the layering of housing benefits received by eligible households.

Through future reports to the Council, staff will update the affordability targets following Council consideration of the new definition at its November 2021 meeting, and seek approval for any proposed changes to the program to mitigate potential impacts.

4) Alignment with Proposed Inclusionary Zoning Policy

At the October 28, 2021 meeting of the Planning and Housing Committee, staff will recommend the adoption of Inclusionary Zoning Official Plan policies, Zoning By-law amendments and Implementation Guidelines. The recommended Inclusionary Zoning policy and zoning framework will enable the City to require that a percentage of affordable housing units be provided in new developments alongside the development of market housing.

Through implementation of the proposed Inclusionary Zoning policy, staff will ensure that affordable housing units secured through Inclusionary Zoning align with the administration of other affordable housing units secured through programs like Housing Now. This will ensure consistency in the ongoing administration of affordable housing, as well as ensure households in need of affordable housing are able to access all affordable housing units, including affordable rental units secured through Inclusionary Zoning, through a one-window housing portal.

5) Energy Efficiency

All future Housing Now Initiative sites must follow the version of the Toronto Green Standard in effect at the time of the launch of the re-zoning planning process for each site. The proposed Phase Three sites must demonstrate that they will achieve the current Toronto Green Standard Version 4 Tier 2 energy performance level.

For clarity, projects that are currently in or have already gone through the market offering process will be *exempt* from adhering to the Toronto Green Standard Version 4 Tier 2 energy performance level. This includes the following sites:

- 50 Wilson Heights Boulevard
- 705 Warden Avenue
- 777 Victoria Park Avenue
- 140 Merton Street
- 2444 Eglinton Avenue East
- Bloor/Kipling (Block One)

6) Strengthening Indigenous and Non-profit Housing Partnerships

Indigenous Housing Partners

Through Item [CC21.3](#), Council directed staff to consider the dedication of Housing Now Initiative sites for Indigenous housing projects, including the ownership of land to reflect the City's commitment to truth, reconciliation and justice with Indigenous Peoples.

Council also directed staff to support building capacity amongst Indigenous organizations and to examine existing leases where land or building ownership might be able to be transferred to Indigenous organizations.

Over the past year, staff in CreateTO, City Planning and the Housing Secretariat have worked to advance the development of the Housing Now site at 1631 Queen Street East to enable the City to deliver a number of important city-building elements. Through the re-zoning process, and engagement with Indigenous organizations, 16,000 square feet of space will be allocated for publicly accessible open space, in the closed right-of-way, which has been named Kishigo Lane. The design process for this space is being led by an Indigenous design practice and through landscape, will celebrate Indigenous world views and history. While further engagement with Indigenous groups is planned over the upcoming months, it is anticipated that this site will be offered solely to Indigenous organizations to develop and operate. Additional Housing Now sites will also be considered for Indigenous-specific offerings based on ongoing discussions and collaboration with Indigenous partners. Future planning and delivery of Indigenous housing projects will be co-designed by Indigenous housing partners and City staff, consistent with Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination.

In addition to the above, through Item [PH26.6](#), Council recently approved entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Miziwe Biik Development Corporation (MBDC) to support the creation of 5,200 new affordable rental and supportive homes for Indigenous residents across the city. Housing Now is one of many City programs that will be used to help meet this shared objective.

Non-Profit and Co-operative Housing Partners

One of the Guiding Principles of the Housing Now Initiative is to support participation of the non-profit, including co-operative housing sector, and help build capacity in the sector. This will be achieved through a number of ways including:

- A number of sites will be offered only to non-profit organizations to develop and operate the properties over the 99 year term.
- In addition to having specific sites designated, non-profit organizations are eligible to bid on all Housing Now Initiative sites (i.e. this includes non-designated sites which are also offered to private sector proponents).
- All private sector developers are required to have some form of partnership with non-profit organizations. This may be in the form of development, operating or referral partnerships.

Market Offering Process

The Housing Secretariat will lead the offering process to select non-profit (including co-operative housing) and Indigenous housing organizations for sites designated specifically for non-profit and Indigenous-specific housing development. The offering process will include an evaluation framework to assess each proposal based on a range of criteria such as qualifications of the proponents including development and operating experience; financial capacity to develop the sites; proposed operating model, including

partnerships; affordability; built-form considerations including proposed levels of accessibility and energy efficiency; and long-term financial viability.

Each proposal will also be evaluated to ensure the highest value is achieved with a focus on financial sustainability, affordability; and other social and city-building outcomes.

7) Other Targets:

- **Mix of tenure:** Similar to prior phases of Housing Now, this report proposes a minimum of two-thirds of all homes created in the Phase Three sites be purpose-built rentals, with at least 50% of the rental homes being affordable housing. Priority will continue to be given to submissions that exceed these targets.
- **Affordability:** As mentioned above, the current program affordability target is average rents across all affordable units on each site at 80% of AMR as determined by CMHC annually, with no individual unit rented above 100% AMR. A minimum of 10% of affordable units must also be rented at 40% AMR. This affordability target will be amended through the 2022 annual report to better align with the new proposed definition of affordable housing.
- **Unit mix and sizes:** The current target is approximately 35% of units to be 1-bedroom units; approximately 55% to be 2-bedroom units; and approximately 10% to be 3+ bedroom units. However, the actual unit types will be determined on a site-by-site basis, based on population targets as determined by the Housing Secretariat in consultation with CreateTO and City Planning. Unit sizes will be in accordance with the Affordable Housing Design Guidelines and the City Council adopted Growing Up Guidelines for market units.
- **Supportive housing:** The HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan aims to approve 18,000 new supportive homes by 2030. The unit mix noted above may be changed, at the discretion of the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat, on an individual site where it is determined that supportive housing can be delivered and federal or provincial operating funding is available. Staff will work to secure new supportive housing opportunities where possible.
- **Phasing and prioritizing delivery of affordable housing:** The affordable housing component of any one development is to be prioritized in the development schedule and the affordable homes are to be spread throughout the development to create new integrated communities, where appropriate.

Housing Now Initiative Phase 3 Sites

This report recommends Council approval for four (4) new sites to be added to Phase Three of the Housing Now Initiative. The proposed Phase Three sites are listed below and further details are outlined in Attachment 1.

- 40 Bushby Drive

- 2700 Eglinton Avenue West
- 4040 Lawrence Avenue East
- East Bayfront (also known as Block R6)

These sites are estimated to add between 1,150 and 1,400 net new homes, including between 450 to 600 affordable rental homes. The total number of affordable homes will be determined based on the results of the market offering process, selection of successful proponents, and the Planning review and approval process.

Additionally, the previous Council directions and commitments related to East Bayfront (Block R6), including the terms and conditions of the 2010 Land Development Agreement (LDA) between Hines and the City as outlined in Item [EX36.28](#), will be maintained/preserved despite Block R6 being added to the Housing Now Initiative. The main benefit to adding this site to the Housing Now Initiative is to expedite planning approvals and ultimately construction and occupancy of the new affordable rental homes.

Establishing a Future Pipeline of Housing Now Sites

This report recommends Council approval to add the five (5) sites listed below to the Housing Now Initiative pipeline as potential future phase sites.

- Block 7 – Christie's Secondary Plan
- Parkdale Hub
- Allen District (Downsview)
- 101 Coxwell Avenue
- 5151 Yonge Street

As these sites have not yet undergone full pre-development feasibility analyses, staff are recommending Council's approval to include a request in the 2022 budget submission for funding to complete due diligence work including financial, technical and legal reviews of each site to determine feasibility to add to the Housing Now Initiative.

An important part of this process includes the identification of other city-building requirements for each site, in addition to affordable housing, to create inclusive, livable communities.

Staff will report to Council on the result of this due diligence work as part of future annual program update reports.

Conclusion

Similar to most large urban centres across Canada, the growing demand for purpose-built affordable rental housing options in Toronto continues to outstrip the current supply. This lack of supply is due to various factors including decades of underinvestment in housing from all orders of government, continued population growth

and a resilient real estate market which has resulted in increasingly unaffordable market rental and ownership housing.

In the absence of federal and provincial housing programs that fully fund the development and operation of a range of affordable housing, including deeply affordable rent-geared-to-income and supportive housing, the City is taking steps to optimize its limited resources and identify partnerships to increase the supply of much-needed affordable rental homes. Implementation of the Housing Now Initiative is one such step.

Through the Housing Now Initiative, a range of housing options for low-and-moderate-income households will be created within mixed-income, mixed-use, complete communities. This includes housing options for essential workers, many of whom have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and are critical to supporting the economic recovery and sustained economic growth of our city.

With City Council's approval of the recommendations in this report, four new sites will be added to Phase Three of the Housing Now Initiative, bringing the total number of sites in the program to 21. Five additional sites, which are in the early due diligence/feasibility assessment stages, will also be added to the program pipeline as future phase sites, signifying Council's continued commitment to increasing the supply of affordable homes for residents while creating complete communities near transit where people can live, work and thrive.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Housing Now Phase Three Sites
Attachment 2: Housing Now Future Phase Pipeline Sites
Attachment 3: Housing Now Unit Tracker