

Unlocking Publicly Owned Lands

Results from Mayor's Summit on Affordable Housing

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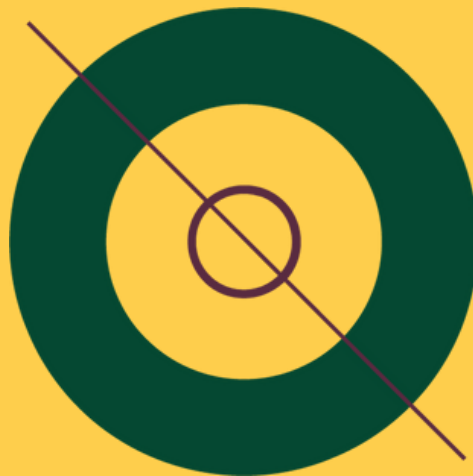


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Introduction

Canada is in the midst of a housing crisis that has challenged all orders of government to build more housing that is more affordable, faster. There is now broad political and community support for bold action to shake up the status quo to deliver on housing development goals.

To meet the urgency of the moment, Toronto City Council approved an ambitious affordable housing plan to build 65,000 rent-controlled homes by 2030. Key to achieving this plan is accelerating the process of building on city-owned land.

A space of immediate opportunity is 52 City owned housing-ready sites that have been identified as being appropriate for new housing development. It is estimated that on these sites alone, construction of 16,000-17,000 rent-controlled homes could be started within 36 months¹.

These priority sites are just the tip of the iceberg of the vast portfolio of publicly owned sites held by City organizations such as the Toronto Parking Authority, Fire Services, Toronto Public Library, Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Toronto Community Housing, and the Toronto Transit Commission that could be redeveloped to improve the delivery of public services and provide much needed housing. While there are examples of innovative projects that the City has initiated to intensify publicly owned land, historically the City has not been able to develop its own sites at a pace or scale required to meet the new housing targets.

Current macroeconomic conditions only make the challenge of accelerating development on publicly owned land greater. Development costs and interest rates are way up. Market demand for housing has slowed with the high prices. Developers are pausing pre-construction projects and stalling or scaling back those already underway. As a result, at least for the time being, there is less value in publicly owned land and the role of additional permitted density as tools to make projects financially viable and fund affordable housing units. Further exacerbating the challenge of redeveloping publicly owned lands are a lack of capacity in the affordable rental housing sector, labour shortages, and the need to rebuild the muscle to carry out meaningful public-private-non profit partnerships that advance the public interest.

Against this backdrop, the City is also exploring what it could mean to get back into the housing development sector as a significant 'public developer' on publicly owned lands. While no specifics have yet been released, this could take on a variety of approaches, from bundling multiple sites into a single procurement to achieve greater scale, to directly managing construction contractors on housing projects, to entering into joint venture agreements with developers or non-profits to develop large publicly owned sites.

Of course, with added roles and responsibilities in a development project comes added risk, and the City must carefully weigh the trade-offs of taking on a greater direct role in development. The City must also navigate the inherent tensions between the interests of for-profit private sector developers and construction companies with expertise in the development process, non-profits with exceptional skill in client services but often little experience building at scale, banks and investors desire for risk adjusted returns, and diverse community hopes, fears and aspirations. Moving up the value chain and leveraging the power of collaboration between sectors and with other orders of government could give the city greater control over project timing and stretch public resources to realize projects that may otherwise stall or struggle to achieve affordability. It could also enable the city to provide real-time feedback to other orders of government to help inform urgent improvements in program delivery, especially to support the not-for-profit sector in its efforts to deliver affordable housing.

Despite all these potential challenges, there is still reason to be optimistic. There is now broad public support to make dramatic progress around housing starts and the building of affordable housing, the current mayor was elected with a mandate to take bold action, and stakeholders across Canadian industry and civil society are showing an increasing openness to explore new approaches to meet this crisis of our times. Our challenge is to meet this broad public consensus about the importance of action with viable and scalable strategies for accelerated development of affordable housing in the coming years.

Why this Solutions Lab

With the clear context of the housing affordability crisis, Monumental, in partnership with the University of Toronto's School of Cities, the Mayor's Office and the City of Toronto, hosted the Toronto Affordable Housing Solutions Lab, made possible by funding from CMHC. The Solutions Lab was not a roundtable or a consultation, but instead an immersive, creative, collaborative day. Most importantly, it provided a meeting place for cross-sectoral stakeholders to have necessary, complex, and even sometimes difficult conversations to move this ambitious housing goal forward.

The day was structured as a facilitated, intensive charette that brought together 50 participants from different sectors, including the Mayor, the development and construction industry, financial services, staff and senior leadership from municipal departments and provincial ministries, non-profit housing organizations, academics and other key partners. The focus was singular – to identify tangible strategies and approaches to accelerate the development of affordable housing on publicly owned land, with a particular emphasis on speed, affordability, and innovation. The day was focused on 32 sites from the original staff identified list of 52, focusing on sites that currently don't have financing or a development partner identified. The ethos of the charette was not to reach consensus but rather to create a space where participants could co-create solutions by bringing varied perspectives to the

problem. Through quick sprints of activity, focused on cycles of creation, feedback and rapid refinement, the charrette model provided a venue for new and innovative ideas to arise from unexpected collaborators.

The process included:

- 1.** Broad pre-consultations with city leadership, staff and broader private and non-profit sector partners to ensure the problem frame was specific and focused;
- 2.** The development of a contextual research document to outline existing responses to the challenges underpinning the problem frame,
- 3.** The main solutions lab event on April 24th in which participants were broken up into six multi-disciplinary tables to prototype a specific solution that the city could either implement itself or realistically achieve by collaborating with external partners to unlock housing on publicly owned land. In other words, the goal was to prototype solutions that are within the control of the City.
- 4.** A daylong follow-up workshop with key City staff to ground truth the proposed prototype ideas developed by the participants within the context of the City's existing mandate and operations.

Each participant in the Solutions Lab was asked to think about creative ways their organizations could operate differently to reach a shared goal. The day embodied the tensions of the moment, where the root causes and solutions to a housing crisis that has built up over years are now being debated through varied sectoral, ideological and political lenses. After a full day of intensive prototyping, the proposed solutions put forward by the six tables of multi-sectoral participants concentrated around innovative approaches to development finance, partnerships, and bureaucratic efficiency.

City's Core Principles

Through our pre-discussions with City staff and review of public documents, we identified a set of principles that are key to any contemporary City land redevelopment project. At the top of the list were three core principles:

- 1. *Move with urgency:*** Plans and strategies must enable construction to begin within 2 years.
- 2. *Support affordability:*** Communities created need to have a mix of rent-geared-to-income, affordable and rent-controlled market units, trying to maximize affordable units.
- 3. *Retain public ownership:*** The sites would need to remain City-owned, with flexibility on ownership and operations of buildings.

Additionally, a set of secondary principles were identified to guide the development of City owned land:

- Finance not exclusively provided by government
- Cross-sectoral partnerships encouraged
- Community engagement key part of process
- Developments should increase the capacity of non-profit and cooperative sectors to participate in housing development

These core and secondary City principles set the parameters for the participants to come up with innovative solutions to speed up the development of City owned lands. They also impose tensions and constraints. For instance, a requirement to retain public ownership can create benefits in terms of long-term public control for affordability but limits the amount of up-front revenue that can be generated compared to selling the land outright. Likewise, moving with urgency to develop as much housing as quickly as possible could pose challenges for project staging and add risks in terms of market absorption and unit occupancy depending on the price point.

With tensions such as these in mind, Solution Lab participants were encouraged to come up with prototype solutions that fit within but stretch and reinterpret the city's core principles for redeveloping city owned land.

Innovations Emerging from the Solutions Lab

Throughout the Solutions Lab event, participants worked across three intensive "sprints" (1 - 1.5 hours each) to explore areas of opportunity, detail out their idea including partnerships required to bring it to life, as well as core assumptions within their concept. Finally, they had to design a presentation-ready concept to share back with their fellow participants, city leadership, and the Mayor.

The prototypes / solutions identified by the Solution Lab participants fell into three thematic categories:

- **Speed:** speeding up project approvals and delivery,
- **Innovative Financing:** approaches to make more projects financially viable and increase affordability, and
- **New Public Partnerships:** approaches to collaborate across sectors while retaining public ownership.

1. Loan guarantees for Non-Profits

Theme: Innovative Financing

Description

This concept proposes that philanthropic foundations and other mission driven investors create a pooled fund or central platform to provide loan guarantees to affordable housing projects on City owned lands. Loan guarantees are a way that philanthropic organizations can support non-profit developers to take on larger loans and on better terms for affordable housing projects, while the foundation recoups a small return for providing this insurance-type product.

Potential Benefit

- Enables philanthropic foundations and other mission driven investors to put their balance sheets to work to support affordable housing by facilitating borrowing on more advantageous terms.
- These impact investors can keep their money in their existing investments to generate their normal returns while making a commitment to cover loan repayment shortfalls of the borrower.
- In the event that a loan guarantee actually gets called to cover a charitable-borrower's unrepayable debts, the foundation could potentially write off this expenditure as a philanthropic contribution that counts towards their required annual disbursement quota which in Canada is 5% on holdings that exceed \$1 million.

Potential Challenges

- Given the financial risk involved for the impact investors, the provision of guarantees requires stringent risk management and approval processes.
- It is likely that loan guarantees will be provided on relatively small size loans, in a context where affordable housing projects require very large amounts of borrowing. This means ideally this guarantee program could support pre-development borrowing more easily than construction loans.
- An organization (i.e. an external partner or a team within the City bureaucracy) will be required to identify the opportunities, vet the loans, and structure the guarantees.

Example

In the United States, the [Community Investment Guarantee Pool](#) created a unique platform to enable foundations to pool their funds and find opportunities to provide loan guarantees to non-profits, including affordable housing providers. To date, some of the largest American public and private foundations are part of the Community Investment Guarantee Pool. Loans guarantees to this point appear to be fairly small, in the \$500,000-\$4 million range. This could be effective in supporting pre-development borrowing for affordable housing, rather than the much larger construction loans that are required for bigger projects.

2. One window government funding portal

Theme: Speed, Innovative Financing

Description

Create a 'single window' at the City of Toronto that aligns housing funding decisions across various programs and orders of government. The proposed solution responds to the sequencing, time and complexity that market and non-profit developers experience when applying to multiple government programs to fund affordable housing, which typically takes place after the project is approved by the City. The aim is to streamline and speed up the allocation of public funding to the highest priority City owned redevelopment sites. Development partners (private/non-profit) for building affordable housing on the sites would be able to work directly with the 'one-window' team, who would do the work back-end of aggregating and coordinating funding opportunities across multiple orders of government.

Benefits

- Enables the City to accelerate shovel ready projects by coordinating municipal investments with provincial and federal programs where the funding has been assigned to the municipality to allocate (e.g. federal housing accelerator fund; provincial housing infrastructure funding)
- Create an evidence-based process to target resources to the highest priority projects that are in the best position to be under construction quickly and at the lowest cost per square foot (land serviced, approvals in place, any other necessary financing arranged, etc.)
- Builds on the City's experience working closely with non-profits to accelerate affordable housing applications, and the newly established Development & Growth Services Area that centralizes the roles and functions involved in the housing review process.

Potential Challenges

- Care will be needed to ensure that in the race to prioritize speed of housing starts, there is geographic equity of projects being funded right across the city, and that attention is paid to the cost per square foot.
- A one window approach to allocating housing funding will need to coordinate decision making across multiple City divisions and with city council.
- Developers building on publicly owned land will likely still need to apply for other government funding outside of the money that the City has the discretion to allocate through the single window, potentially creating further steps.
- There is government relations and inter-government advocacy work required by the City in order to work with funders from other levels of government, to ensure their housing funding can be aggregated and streamlined in a process such as this.

Examples

- The [City of Calgary](#) has created a 'one window' website that details and provides links to all the programs that are available to fund affordable housing in the City.
- The [BC Builds](#) program was launched in 2024 within the provincial BC Housing agency, in order to speed up the development of middle income rental housing on government, community, First Nations and non-profit owned lands. The program is set up to coordinate the identification of sites across the province, accelerate the development timelines on the proposed sites, and provide low-interest financing and grants to First Nations and non-profits where at least 20% of the housing units are below market rates. In total, \$2 billion in provincial financing has been allocated to BC Builds, and the initial investment is intended so that the completed buildings do not require ongoing operating subsidies.

3. Creation of a pooled equity fund

Theme: Innovative Financing

Description

This solution proposes that the City establish a pooled equity fund that can be deployed to invest in and unlock the creation of affordable housing across the City. By investing on preferential terms from the fund, the City can buy down affordability in housing projects and maintain it over the long-run as an equity owner in the development.

Benefits

- The City has an equity stake in the projects and can maintain the long-term affordability of the developments
- The City can be intentional about spreading their investments across the City to ensure the redevelopment of publicly owned land is being equally distributed.

Challenges

- The key challenge is where the upfront capital will come from to create the pooled equity fund, given the City's weak current financial position.
 - One option is that the City could sell a number of existing properties in order to capitalize the fund in a process known as 'asset recycling', though this is likely to be controversial.

Examples

- The City of Toronto has created [Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition program](#) to protect existing rental buildings by creating a fund to support their purchase by non-profits and Indigenous housing providers. The funding is allocated through an annual open call for proposals. Organizations are pre-qualified to proceed with acquisitions.
- In budget 2024, the federal government created the \$500 million [public lands acquisition fund](#) which may be used to purchase land from other orders of government, with the proceeds used to fund the development of housing projects. They also created the \$1.5 billion [Canada Rental Protection Fund](#) to acquire affordable housing units in collaboration with other governments, non-profits and the private sector.

4. Innovative ground-leasing

Theme: New Public Partnerships, Innovative Financing

Description

An innovative ground lease prototype was proposed where the City would sell up to 49% of the ground lease value to an institutional investor, and use the funds generated as equity to purchase affordability in the rental housing development. In this model, the City would maintain a majority ownership of the site and control over key objectives for the project, outside institutional capital could be accessed that otherwise would not flow into housing projects, while a private investor or non-profit could receive the rights to develop and operate the building on the property during a designated period (up to 99 years).

Benefits

- The City could generate some up-front capital from their land portfolio while maintaining long-term control of the underlying asset.
- If this ground lease model was carried out at the portfolio rather than the individual project level, [the scale and long-term deal might be attractive to institutional investors like pension funds](#). Canadian pension funds are some of the largest and most sophisticated institutional investors in real estate and infrastructure in the world, but attracting their direct investment in Canadian social purpose real estate and infrastructure has been illusive. This ground lease model could create an opportunity for these funds to earn a long-term stable return to meet their pension obligations while contributing to the wellbeing of the communities in which their members live.

Challenges

- Ground leases will not generate as much up-front funds to invest in the affordable housing portion of the building as selling the land outright (though it will maintain greater public control).
- Investment in maintenance of the property can diminish, and tensions can arise, as the lease end date nears.
- Clear governance protocols will be required to avoid disputes between the majority and minority owner of the land about how renewals will be handled at the end of the lease period.
- Canadian pension funds are generally not set up as a large pool of impact capital looking to be tapped to meet local social objectives. While pension funds may have impact goals, they are ultimately driven by a fiduciary responsibility to generate sufficient risk adjusted returns to meet their pension promise to members. Pension funds typically seek between 6.5%-8% or higher returns on their real estate investments, depending on the risk and their role in the project.

Canadian pension funds have been significant indirect investors through intermediaries in the Canadian housing sector; some of the firms that pension funds invest in are among the most aggressive users of above guideline rent increases.

Examples

Land leases have been a key element of the approach that Singapore has used to deliver widespread affordable home ownership. The Singapore Housing and Development Board has developed over 1 million housing units since the 1960s, many of which use 99-year land leases aimed at minimizing speculative price increases. The price appreciation of the units is curtailed as the lease period progresses, with the land reverting back to the government following the lease period. As of 2021-2022, 80% of Singaporeans live in HDB developed housing.

5. Bundling sites, and taking a portfolio approach

Theme: Speed, Innovative Financing

Description

A concept was put forward to bundle the redevelopment of multiple city-owned sites into a single procurement. This differs from the current approach where city-owned land is put out to tender for redevelopment on a site-by-site basis.

Benefits

- Taking this type of portfolio approach would enable the winning proponent to speed up development of numerous sites by creating long-term partnerships and benefit from replicable building systems.
- Creating larger deals through a portfolio approach could enable city owned sites to tap into institutional capital such as pension funds, who look to make large equity investments in long-term assets.
- Encourage non-profits to collaborate on larger projects
- Time and staff resources for procurement and contract management could potentially be reduced by shifting from tendering each site separately to a bundled approach with a single development partner.

Challenges

- Bundling increases the impact of an underperforming partner.
- Bundling could reduce competition as only the largest industry players will be able to compete for bigger, more complex projects.
- It is possible that once a bundle of projects is awarded through an RFP, the winning developer may stage the site developments based on their capacity, or prioritize the most profitable or simplest projects, resulting in a slower buildout of all the sites.

Examples

- In Ireland, the national government has led initiatives to tendered multiple bundles of sites in a single procurement, in order to deliver affordable housing projects at scale. The bundles range from 6 to 17 sites, with a goal of constructing over 3,000 homes. Alongside the national government as the lead procurement and finance authority, projects also include a lead local authority.
- The Government of Canada is updating the Apartment Construction Loan Program to permit a portfolio approach so builders can move on multiple sites at once. Non-profits, co-ops and land trusts have bundled sites together to achieve economies of scale in new development and housing operations.

6. A new development process inspired by Infrastructure development

Theme: New Public Partnerships, Innovative Financing , Speed

Description

This concept re-envision the housing development process along the lines of infrastructure delivery, with the City taking on a more active role in creating early concept designs for publicly owned sites, managing the zoning approval and permitting, public consultation, and organizing public or philanthropic funding towards any affordable housing contributions. The private or non-profit development partners would be brought on through competitions to take on some combination of detailed design, construction, private financing, operations and maintenance of the projects in a bundled contract. The City is already moving in this direction with the proposed public developer model which is being applied on five housing ready sites.

Benefits

- The City takes on the role of a proactive public developer – it can add predictability and speed to redevelopment of City owned land by identifying development concepts that meet the public interest, moving the project through the regulatory process, and coordinating any government funding.
- The private and non-profit sectors take on the responsibilities and risks for tasks such as detailed design and construction, construction financing, occupancy, and long-term operations and maintenance of the building.
- Following recent trends in the infrastructure sector, collaborative procurement models could be followed so that once a preferred partner is selected competitively, they work closely with the City land owner and other stakeholders to refine the concept and deliver the project.

Challenges

- The City must have the capacity and processes in place to be more actively involved as a public developer at scale across a large number of City owned sites, to ensure projects are effectively delivered.
- The City takes on greater risk along with more developer responsibilities for project planning, concept design, consultation, approvals and financing.

Examples

In Ireland, the national government is using a housing as infrastructure-type approach to contract with the private sector to design, build, finance, operate and maintain bundles of social housing sites. Dublin City Council is the lead local authority for a bundle of 6 social housing sites through an arrangement where the private sector will design, build, finance, operate and maintain the newly constructed homes. The private sector concessionaire will be paid a fixed amount by government over a 25-year period, after which the units will revert to public ownership. The government will collect rents from the buildings.

7. More intentionality around the concept of Shovel-ready

Theme: Speed

Description

This solution proposed that the City create a publicly available, evidence based priority list of projects on City owned land that are the closest to being shovel ready, and then aggressively project managing the redevelopment of the sites that are the nearest to being able to begin construction. Shovel readiness is highly contextual in terms of factors such as servicing for the proposed scale of development, market demand, local opposition or support, interest from potential development partners, fit with funding programs and investor interest, etc. A tiered approach based on likely time, complexity and amount of investment needed could be used to add specificity to how close to City site is to construction. The City could engage community leaders and industry experts to create the criteria and assist in the determination of sites that are truly shovel ready.

Benefits

- Speed up project development by creating a transparent, evidence-based approach to prioritize resources to projects that meet the most conditions to be started quickly.
- Ensure that there is geographic equity across the City in the sites that are being deemed the highest level of shovel ready and prioritized with resources to reach construction.

Challenges

- The closeness of a shovel ready project is not static and can evolve over time. Circumstances may shift in local housing markets, developer interest, and funding programs and political support.
- Identifying shovel readiness is both a technical process and requires political input.

Examples

In November, 2023, the City of Toronto released a [priority list of 52 shovel ready City owned sites](#), organized into three tiers based on how quickly construction could be started. There is an opportunity to update the list, give increasing levels of detail to what truly means 'shovel ready', add additional City owned sites across the real estate portfolio, and map the locations.

8. Project Management for all affordable sites

Theme: Speed

Description

A variety of solutions were identified to accelerate and increase the predictability of approvals of city owned land redevelopments.

- City staff identified the merits of a ‘project management approach’ that is currently being used to accelerate affordable housing approvals on city owned sites and could potentially be expanded. In this approach, a single staff member is responsible for overseeing a proposal through the entire application process, maintaining line of site and streamlining the communication with the applicant.
- Another proposed solution is to create template compliant designs and development documents to streamline the process and move away from project-by-project approvals. As part of this proposal, it was suggested that artificial intelligence tools could be leveraged to vet initial proposals for compliance in the context of the City’s limited resources and staffing.
- Participants also mentioned the need for further leveraging of automated systems, including integration of AI, into the approvals process to help streamline, rationalize and reduce the person hours required to generate approvals.

Benefits

- A project management approach can accelerate and increase the predictability of approvals.
- Template documents can reduce the cost of producing the documents and submitting redevelopment applications, and make the process more accessible to a wider range of organizations.

Challenges

- The City will need to allocate sufficient resources to be able to project manage a large number of redevelopments on City owned sites.
- Template compliant designs and development documents may not capture the most innovative and complicated projects on City owned land, such as creative mixed use developments that mix public, private and non-profit uses in the same building.
- There are significant start-up costs, risks and potential hurdles to integrating new technologies into business processes. Information technology transformations have a poor record of cost overruns and not meeting expectations around the world.

Examples

- Infrastructure Ontario has used template project agreement documents on its portfolio of infrastructure developments carried out with the private sector to lower legal costs and accelerate the time it took to move a project through procurement. From a common base document, project agreements can be revised to meet the needs of a specific project or to respond to lessons learned over time.
- [Vancouver is in the process of streamlining its development permit application process](#) to speed it up, lower cost, reduce staff time, and increase the predictability. [As of 2024, the City removed 78 engineering conditions from the permitting process](#). And sprinkler system repair permits, for instance, went from being evaluated individually to being auto-approved as long as they are designed by an industry professional to standards. Since the sprinkler permit process change was made in the winter of 2024, 93% percent of sprinkler permits qualified for the auto-approval, and were issued within 24 hours.

9. Enabling and accelerating the capacity of the Non-Profit Sector

Theme: New Public Partnerships

Description

A solution was proposed to create pathways to enable non-profit organizations with the tools and techniques to develop their own housing projects and scale their participation in the affordable housing sector on publicly owned lands. This included capacity building to support organizations looking to learn how to undertake developments, resources to help accelerate and scale successful non-profit developers, transparency in identifying pilot sites that could be awarded through an RFP, and support with partnership formation and matchmaking. There are many non-profits with deep commitments to serving their communities with long-term affordable housing and experience operating buildings with wrap around support services.

Benefits


- Tap into the [\\$1.5 billion in the 2024 federal budget](#) to non-profit housing acquisitions and development.
- It could unleash a generation of local non-profit developers building up their own communities.
- Create an ecosystem of organizations for government and the private sector to partner with when developing projects with an affordable housing component.

Challenges


- Enabling non-profits to successfully build and operate affordable housing is about more than sector capacity but requires long-term, stable funding programs which have been elusive.
- New mechanisms are required to secure loans to non-profit housing providers if the sector is going to be able to grow as a major housing provider.
- There is a risk that governments remain the implicit risk holder of last resort for non-profit affordable housing providers given the importance of the public service provided. This creates risk and puts potential financial pressure on cash-strapped governments.

Examples

- Based primarily on investments in the 1960s and 1970s there are currently over [165 co-operatives](#) providing long-term affordable housing in Toronto. This demonstrates how non-market organizations can provide significant housing at scale with sufficient resources and support.
- Non-profit housing providers such as Woodgreen and Indwell are demonstrating the potential for non-profit organizations to leverage multi-sectoral funding and partnerships to scale the provision of deeply affordable and supportive housing.



Our challenge is to meet this broad public consensus about the importance of action with viable and scalable strategies for accelerated development of affordable housing in the coming years.



What to do next

The prototypes / solutions proposed in the Solution Lab are a snapshot of innovative ideas generated through a facilitated, creative process. While innovative, none of the concepts are easy or their merits assured, or they would have been done already. Each one needs careful consideration and refinement, as in one way or another they would require transformation from business as usual – for the City, other orders of government, developers, investors, foundations, non-profits and communities. As to next steps:

- The City should prioritize examining solutions that are completely within its control, particularly speeding up and increasing the predictability of the permitting process, being more intentional in identifying shovel ready sites, and creating a single window to allocate public funding across programs to merited affordable housing projects. The impact of the single window approach would be amplified if carried out in collaboration with all orders of government to stack funds from multiple programs at once.
- The City should study the merits of bundling a number of City owned sites into a single procurement and pilot the approach on an initial package if the business case is positive.
- The City should proactively engage institutional investors and impact investors to gauge interest in new financial arrangements to develop affordable housing such as the selling of a share of City land leases, and the creation of an affordable housing loan guarantee facility. Innovations to increase access to capital and change affordable housing procurement models are likely to take time and will depend on organizations seeing financial merits in these proposals in the current challenging real estate market.
- To expand non-profit participation in affordable housing development, the City in partnership with other orders of government should explore partnering with academic institutions and foundations to scale training and capacity building, design and pro-forma technical assistance programs, and partnership matchmaking.
- The City should continue its leadership on its own and with municipal partners nationally in calling for sustained, long-term provincial and federal government funding for affordable housing. While access to City owned land can unlock public value, government funding remains critical to enable the provision of affordable and deeply affordable housing units at scale.

Taken together, what is clear from the Solution Lab is that the status quo of developing affordable housing on City owned lands is no longer seen as sufficient – because the scale of the problem is so large, and the slow pace of change represents a gapping missed opportunity. Fortunately, there are passionate participants across the housing sector that are intent on charting a new path to make the system better.

Endnote

1. It should be noted that there are another 40 sites that could be added to this pipeline following further due diligence. As well, there are 31 City-supported non-for-profit owned sites that can deliver almost 2,000 affordable rental homes with the support of all orders of government.



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