



A Collective Impact Guide to Win Affordable Housing for Your Neighbourhood

March 31, 2024

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Acknowledgements

Land Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the land this work is being carried out on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit as well as the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

African Acknowledgement

We acknowledge all Treaty peoples – including those who came here as settlers – as migrants either in this generation or in generations past - and those of us who came here involuntarily, particularly those brought to these lands as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery. We pay tribute to those ancestors of African origin and descent.

Community Acknowledgement

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the many communities that have supported CP Planning's Roadmap for Redevelopment Plans to Confront Systemic Racism (Roadmap) work. Your invaluable insights, feedback, and unwavering support have been instrumental in our journey towards developing new affordable housing.

This endeavour is not just about buildings; it's about fostering communities, hope, and a future where everyone has access to affordable housing. The collaborative spirit and collective efforts have been the cornerstone of our progress.

In addition, we are in gratitude to Method Collective, our consultant in the development of this guide.



Danforth Walkshop,
Roadmap, 2023

Neighbourhoods and community anchor partners collaborated with to develop this guide

Neighbourhoods

- *Little Jamaica - East*
- *Little Jamaica - West*
- *Danforth-Main*
- *Etobicoke-Lakeshore*
- *Cooksville, Mississauga*
- *Mt. Dennis*
- *Landsdale/ Gibson*
- *Overbrook*
- *Rexdale*
- *Etobicoke-Lakeshore*
- *Downtown /Uptown Brampton*
- *Vanier*
- *Markham*
- *Jane and Finch*

Community Anchor Partners

- *Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization (OVCO)*
- *Bangladesh Centre & Community Services*
- *LAMP Community Services*
- *Indus Community Services, Roots Community Services*
- *Learning Enrichment Foundation*
- *Afro Caribbean Canadian Association*
- *Carlton University, Action Lab*

Methodology / Process for Developing this Guide

This guide presents an overview of the key stages residents and neighbourhoods move through in their journey to winning new affordable housing development in their communities. The guide is informed by on the ground real-world experience led by CP planning, Community Anchor Partners, and other community organizers across the Ontario municipalities with recent investments in local public transit (Toronto, Peel, York, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Ottawa). The guide encompasses the learnings from key discussions, decisions, interviews and outcomes from the Roadmap work.

Ethical considerations have guided the engagement process, including informed consent for data collection and use, respect for diverse perspectives and opinions, and fairness in decision-making. Any interviewees were informed about the purpose of data collection, their rights to privacy, and how their feedback would be used to inform this guide.

What is the Roadmap for Redevelopment Plans to Confront Systemic Racism project?

This guide is a direct deliverable of our Roadmap project. Incubated in 2021 and launched in 2022, CP the Roadmap is an action-oriented program designed to address the crucial gap in affordable housing development.



Toronto Resident Summit, 2023

Its aim is to empower and support racialized leaders through strategic planning, relationship-building, and mentorship. This Roadmap is a response to the challenges posed by the lack of congruence between infrastructure planning, urban planning and guidance from the National Housing Strategy to ensure all Canadians have adequate access to housing.

The Roadmap for Redevelopment Plans to Confront Systemic Racism is a pivotal and comprehensive response to the systemic economic exclusion of racialized people from equitable participation in the planning, development, and management of affordable housing. Through neighbourhood-focused community engagement the Roadmap focuses on addressing the creation of new and relevant affordable housing supply, establishing community land trusts, and building solutions to prevent displacement.

The core objective of the Roadmap is to increase affordable housing supply by increasing the economic inclusion of racialized people in the planning, development, construction and building vertically integrated solidarity between decision makers with resources and those impacted by a lack of affordable housing (in particular, those at risk of or experiencing displacement due to gentrification).

This includes empowering the average homeowner to build affordable housing that allows renters to not be displaced due

to multi-billion-dollar public investments in transit. In the solution, 17 Inclusive Neighborhood Planning Hubs are operated across the Ontario municipalities with recent investments in local public transit (Toronto, Peel, York, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, and Ottawa). This is a systemic solution to increase affordable housing supply and reduce the impacts of systemic racism.

The purpose of the Roadmap is to offer strategic planning, guidance, and a vertically integrated approach to promote long-term sustainability and growth of inclusive planning. This approach promotes a culture of respect, dignity, and equality, vital for addressing the housing crisis comprehensively and ethically.

About CP Planning

CP Planning is a non-profit urban planning organization practicing a human rights-based approach to urban planning. This means our planning processes and projects are fundamentally structured around the principles and standards of human rights. We do this by ensuring that every aspect of urban development prioritizes the needs, rights, and participation of community members, particularly the most marginalized populations.

Our comprehensive community planning services include strategic planning, facilitation, collaborative design, and research. We do this alongside capacity development and network weaving in support of

affordable housing development and inclusive economies.

Our mission is to align public, non-profit, and private sector organizations within the land use development industry to invest in solutions that uphold the economic, social, and cultural rights of marginalized people. We do this because we believe all people deserve dignity which includes access to good housing, good jobs, an adequate standard of living, and opportunities for cultural expression.

We envision a world with more joy, where people are affirmed through a sense of community and belonging.

What is a Human-rights Approach to planning?

A human-rights approach to planning integrates the principles of equality, dignity, and participation into urban development. It emphasizes inclusive decision-making and prioritizes marginalized groups, ensuring the housing development process respects and promotes the inherent rights of all community members.

Human Rights oriented planning is:

- Shaping understanding of existing contexts through acknowledgement of historic discrimination
- Prioritizing building the economic well-being and sustainability of marginalized peoples to have their needs met
- Building solidarity between socio-economic classes
- Orienting planning processes towards ensuring barriers are removed so marginalized people have fair and adequate access to good housing, good jobs, an adequate standard of living, and cultural expression

About this Guide

Background

Why create a guide about developing affordable housing?

Affordable housing is more than a necessity—it's a critical component of community health and well-being influencing a wide range of health outcomes. Stable, affordable housing ensures stability, security. It reduces poverty, boosts economic mobility, and contributes to a vibrant and cultured neighbourhoods.

Yet, Canada's lack of affordable housing crisis has reached unprecedented levels. It is the result of a complex interplay of factors that have evolved over decades, leading to a situation where the supply of housing is significantly below the demand for new homes for newly formed households or recent immigrants. This dynamic has resulted in an ever increasing proportion of the population lacking capacity to secure adequate and affordable housing.

It is noted that shortage disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, including seniors, low-income families, immigrants and Black and Indigenous communities. A lack of affordable housing disconnects people from essential

community and health resources, impacting access to steady jobs, educational success, and vibrant social life.

The housing crisis is characterized by several key issues, each exacerbating the others and contributing to a complex problem that has caused significant social and economic ramifications, including:

- Marginalized communities have been systematically excluded: They are not part of the policy making process, therefore decision-making rooms more often lack access to the information and experience necessary to effectively understand the issue or support effective solutions.
- Marginalized communities lacking skills and connections to generate solutions: The culture of land use planning continues to be very different from the culture of how communities working to reduce poverty engage, consult, and generate solutions. This difference is further exacerbated by the economic exclusion of racialized communities from decision-making rooms, resulting in these communities lacking the skills or necessary social capital to implement the solutions required to generate new affordable housing supply.

- Soaring housing prices outpacing income growth: Across many Canadian cities, housing prices have surged dramatically, outpacing income growth. This has put adequate housing out of reach for individuals, families and communities across the housing spectrum. This makes where supply has not kept pace with demand, exacerbating affordability issues.
- Affordable housing supply shortfall: The construction of new housing, especially new affordable housing units, has not kept pace with population growth and demand. Factors such as zoning regulations, building costs, and approval delays contribute to this shortfall. As a result, vacancy rates continue to be at record low, driving up purchase and rental prices in the private market. For example, according to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the rental market reached a new low of 1.5% in 2023, the lowest recorded rate since 1988, the year the began recording a national vacancy rate.

While these issues and their implications have been widely documented, little has been done to empower and support residents and neighbourhoods in taking action. Given this, CP Planning created this guide to demystify the development process, encouraging and empowering

residents and neighbourhoods to engage in planning practices to co-develop new housing solutions that are equitable, accessible, and sustainable.

How this guide can help you

This guide provides an overview for community members to facilitate, support, participate and build capacity for creating new affordable housing supply in their neighbourhoods. It leverages CP Planning's Roadmap framework, guided by the key principle of human-rights, ensuring that housing initiatives are not just about constructing buildings, but also about fostering inclusive communities where every individual's rights are respected. It includes information and access to tools of urban planning and process, empowering individuals and communities with the knowledge to navigate complex urban planning processes, and encourages local engagement and collaboration, leading to more effective and community-focused housing solutions.

The information in this guide is an action-oriented program designed to address the crucial gap in affordable housing development. This guide provides a framework for centering the needs and priorities of neighbourhoods in development efforts.

This includes how to:

- engage community and create momentum
- bring stakeholders together and to broker relationships
- identify resources and key assets
- leverage the knowledge, skills, wisdom, power of community to effect progress.

Beyond this Guide

This guide is the beginning of a journey and conversation for you and your community to create transformative change in your neighbourhood. It aims to guide the process with support from other resources and groups. It offers you exposure to what is possible, what is needed and a connection to a network of people and organizations like you motivated to create more new affordable housing in Canada.

You do not have to do this alone, and CP Planning would love to support in any way we can. Please connect with us. Check out our resources. Provide feedback. The more connected we are, the stronger the network and a greater chance of change.

Introduction to the Key Stages

For residents to support the development of new affordable

housing in their neighborhood this guide provides a framework of 5 key stages to foster dialogue and collective impact. Each stage is crucial, laying the foundation for a successful community organizing effort that brings together diverse voices in a unified quest for change. The 5 key stages that guide the process, include:

- Stage 1: Create Awareness
- Stage 2: Talk and Educate
- Stage 3: Structure, Meetings and Sub-Committees
- Stage 4. Neighbourhood Assets and Resource Mobilization
- Stage 5: Cross-Sectoral Partnerships and Investment



This following section of the guide provides a overview description of each stage and key strategies to help push the work forward.

Please note: The following are important considerations when reading through the stages and carrying out this work:

- Maintain detailed records of meetings, decisions, and progress to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the group's efforts. Documentation supports accountability, helps onboard new members, and provides a historical account of the group's journey.
- The key stages are all fundamental areas that need to be worked on throughout the process.
- The stages may not always be linear. The journey through this process will often involve revisiting earlier stages and/or encountering unexpected shifts, reflecting the dynamic and adaptable nature of this work.
- Timelines may vary at each stage. As many systemically excluded communities have often been over-consulted, trust-building takes time.
- Ensure that the focus of the work is on building new affordable housing.
- Work moves at the speed of trust. The efficiency and pace of work depend fundamentally on the level of trust among team members, stakeholders, and/or partners.
- Identify and celebrate quick wins to build momentum and support for the project. Recognition provides immediate and tangible evidence of progress, which boosts morale and motivates individuals and teams to continue their efforts.
- Engage politicians early and often. Keep them abreast
- Value the capacity of diverse stakeholders (in terms of demographics, sector, expertise) can bring to enhance capacity to achieve objectives
- Be strategic and always think a few steps ahead of each action. This approach ensures that every action is purposeful and aligned with your broader objectives.

Key Stages: Objectives, Activities and Tactics

Stage 1: Create Awareness

To lay the groundwork for new affordable housing in your neighbourhood, it's crucial to start by understanding the specific challenges and opportunities present.

The objectives of this stage are to:

- identify key stakeholders that work in and around housing to gauge their involvement and interest in new affordable housing initiatives
- outreach to and engage neighbourhood residents
- determine effective communication strategies and shared values for ongoing collaboration, ensuring everyone's voice is heard and contributing to the project's success

Core Activities and Tactics

- Understand and document what are the issues in your neighbourhood. This could be gathered through news articles, relevant published research and/or community surveys.
- Identify who are the key players working in and around housing

and understand if any of them are working on any affordable housing projects and/or how they are tracking those projects. This may include:

- Urban planners
 - Policy makers
 - Politicians
 - Social service organizations
 - Community leaders
 - Housing developers
- Outreach and engagement with other neighbourhood residents. Connect and invite other community members interested in wanting to develop new affordable housing to join a formal or informal group by collecting contact information. Some recruitment strategies may include:
 - Handing out flyers
 - Asking local community centres to share and/or post information on community boards
 - Posting on social media and in social media groups
 - Asking local businesses to share the information with the customers
 - Setup your first few meetings and invite interested participants to collectively determine the most appropriate way to engage community members.

- Set clear expectations for engagement: This should also include coming up with a structure that will support ongoing touch posts through this process. By establishing these guidelines, you ensure that every member knows what is expected of them, leading to more effective collaboration and progress. This also means understanding and including what would be important for meetings. Key things to consider:
 - What are our shared values?
 - How will we communicate (email, WhatsApp, etc)
 - How often will you meet?
 - How will we set meeting agendas?
 - How will we capture meeting notes?
 - How will decisions be made?
 - How can we create a space where participants can meaningfully contribute and participate?

Stage 2: Talk, Understand and Educate

Once you have raised awareness of the key facts and stakeholders, you will begin to lay the groundwork for collective impact through ongoing dialogue and information sharing, setting a solid foundation for united efforts, creating and formalizing an Affordable Housing Working Group.

The objectives of stage two are to:

- Build and deepen relationships to establish trust and foster a collaborative environment.
- Assess and utilize the community's existing capabilities in areas such as engaging politicians, financial management, and planning to support the work and housing initiatives.
- Conduct surveys, host informational sessions, and create forums for feedback and collaboration to engage the community and gather insights on housing needs.
- Establish an Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG) comprising interested residents and non-profit leaders to create momentum, build trust, and prioritize housing issues and needs.
- Engage with other organizations and groups, like CP Planning, to learn from their experiences and incorporate their support into the community's affordable housing efforts.

Core Activities and Tactics:

- Launch your AHWG and share the launch more broadly with your community, such as posting on social media, sharing with an email list, etc.
- Recruit members and volunteers (ongoing as needed): To develop a strong and effective community

group, it is important to recruit members and volunteers who are passionate and committed to the group's goals and objectives. Create a public call for opportunities for people of all ages to get involved. This may include invitations to join future AHWG meetings, to implement actions emergent from meetings, to provide feedback, to help with building community awareness, etc.

- Create space to build relationships with AHWG members. Get to know each other and why you care about the work.
- Establish clear goals of what the AHWG is trying to accomplish. This might involve conducting research, engaging with stakeholders, and developing a plan of action that outlines specific goals, timelines, and metrics for success. AHWG goals that may emerge include, but are not limited to:
 - Developing strategies and policies to increase the availability of affordable housing in your neighbourhood.
 - Identifying and addressing barriers that prevent people from accessing affordable housing, such as renovictions, forced evictions, housing supply, etc.
 - Engaging with local stakeholders and community members to ensure that affordable housing solutions

are tailored to their needs and priorities.

- Identify the housing priorities in the neighbourhood. This may include conducting research and analysis to better understand the affordable housing market and the needs of different populations. For example, this may begin with understanding barriers that prevent people from accessing affordable housing, such as renovictions, forced evictions, housing supply, etc.
- Leveraging partnerships and resources from government, non-profit organizations, and the private sector to increase the impact of affordable housing initiatives.
- Educating the public and policymakers on the importance of affordable housing and the benefits it can bring to communities and individuals.
- Identify and training and support needed: Identifying any training and support that is needed is essential for helping community group members develop the skills and knowledge they need to be effective leaders and partnership builders. This information can be collected in discussions, and in surveys.
- Engage in outreach and communication: Building strong relationships with local residents and stakeholders

is critical to the success of a community group. This means engaging in outreach and communication efforts, such as hosting community events, developing newsletters or social media channels, and creating opportunities for people to provide feedback and share ideas.

- Monitor and evaluate progress: To ensure that the community group is making progress towards its goals and objectives, it is important to monitor and evaluate its activities and outcomes on an ongoing basis. This might involve tracking metrics, conducting surveys or focus groups, and soliciting feedback from stakeholders
- Create internal feedback loops so the AHWG is always learning about what is working well and what is not working well in terms of form and function. New teams take time to form and in order for a team to move forward it's important to adjust as needed. Forming, storming, norming, and performing is a framework of phases teams go through to become more effective.

Stage 3: Regular Meetings, Structure and Sub-Committees

Once the AHWG has identified the goals it wants to achieve, it's essential to transition from foundational planning to developing an actionable strategy. This shift is facilitated by the implementation of a well-considered strategy and action plan, which are regularly revisited and refined through consistent engagements and the creation of sub-committees to hyper-focus on key housing issues.

The objectives of this stage are to:

- Develop and refine the goals and action plan to achieve those goals
- Establish 3 key sub-groups to tackle specific strategies:
 - Anti-Displacement Solutions (ADS) Sub-group
 - Community Land Trust (CLT) Sub-group
 - Property Owner Engagement (POE) Sub-group
- Identifying key individuals responsible for advancing each objective within the action plan
- Initiatie strategic actions and initiatives and maintain ongoing communication about progress.

Core Activities and Tactics

- Prioritize goals that you want to achieve so you know what to focus on first.
 - Develop an action plan, which outlines how you will achieve identified goals. Strategies and actions that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). In this process, identify the resources required to achieve each of the objectives, and use this to inform the associated actions.
 - Create a timeline for when actions will be carried out. The timeline of the strategy and action plan is something that should be revisited and updated as needed to account for any changes in direction and to ensure you are progressing towards your stated goals.
 - Identify leads for advancing objectives per the collaboratively prepared action plan
 - Create AHWG sub-groups. Your team may decide to create all 3 sub-groups at once, or to prioritize which sub-group is more urgently needed. to create first and use that to help inform how the other two groups will be created.
- The sub-groups include:
 - Anti-Displacement Solutions (ADS) Sub-group -- This group is focused on identifying, developing, and implementing strategies to prevent or mitigate displacement in your neighbourhood.
 - Community Land Trust (CLT) Sub-group -- This group is focused on securing and purchasing land for community use, creating sustainable housing solutions, and stewarding land in a way that serves community interests and needs.
 - Property Owner Engagement (POE) Sub-group -- This group is focused on building partnerships, negotiating agreements, and encouraging owners to participate in programs that preserve or enhance housing affordability within the community.

Stage 4. Neighbourhood Assets and Resource Mobilization

In Stage 4 there is a concerted effort on broadening the coalition by engaging institutional partners, other key non-profit groups such as Business Improvement Areas, as well as local city Councillors and local media. This stage is characterized by a deliberate effort to secure buy-in from key players who can significantly amplify the impact of the initiative. It involves not just outreach but fostering meaningful collaborations with entities that have the resources, influence, and expertise to drive substantial progress.

The objectives of this stage are to:

- Broaden the coalition of support for new affordable housing in your neighbourhood
- Enhance publicity and awareness
- Strengthen political engagement

Core Activities and Tactics:

- Actively work to include more neighbourhood based groups - institutional partners, key not-for-profit groups, Business Improvement Areas, and other relevant organizations into the coalition, expanding its reach and influence. Ensure they are not only engaged but also committed to the initiative, facilitating

meaningful collaborations.

- Intensify outreach to politicians across all levels of government to secure their support and advocacy for the initiative. While politicians should already be aware of your work, ensuring that they are engaged and communicated with at this stage is imperative.
- Create press releases for local media with AHWG wins: Identify and gather key media contacts and share ongoing updates on the progress of the work being carried out. Utilize local media to publicize the initiative's successes and ongoing efforts, thereby increasing public interest and engagement. The more publicity an initiative can get the more it can drive interest and engagement.

Stage 5: Cross-sectoral Partnerships and Investment

Stage 5 of developing new affordable housing focuses on fostering cross-sectoral partnerships and investment, a crucial and essential stage in the holistic approach to new affordable housing development. This stage emphasizes engagement of key sectors with high influence and economic power to mobilize resources towards building new affordable housing. This helps

to harness the both the financial and intellectual capital as well as good necessary to make affordable housing more accessible and sustainable

The objectives of Stage 5 are:

- Create messaging and campaigns that empowers and encourages support and investment for affordable housing projects.
- Establish and strengthen partnerships with key sectors possessing high influence and economic power
- Encourage and facilitate the integration of affordable housing initiatives into the internal strategies of key stakeholders, ensuring their commitment and contribution towards sustainable housing solutions.

investment into affordable housing.

- Encourage and facilitate the integration of affordable housing investment initiatives into the strategies of cross-sectoral partners, ensuring their internal policies evolve to support these efforts. This includes significant contributions of resources, whether in the form of staff involvement or financial investment.

Note: these stages are currently being refined as information is collected through practice with community. Therefore, at this time only limited information will be included till findings are more holistic and conclusive.

Core Activities and Tactics:

- Create messaging that empowers, excites and incentivizes broader stakeholder collaboration
- Identify stakeholders of high influence and economic power to engage. For example this could include, pension funds , credit unions and other stakeholders within the broader financial sector. By promoting collaborations across multiple sectors, more resources can be leveraged to drive substantial

Conclusion

The stages outlined in this guide provide a framework for action to develop new affordable housing in your neighbourhood. From raising awareness and educating communities to fostering cross-sectoral partnerships, each step is crucial in building a future where affordable housing is accessible to all. The framework laid out in this guide is not just about creating physical structures; it's about nurturing communities where everyone has the opportunity to contribute, participate and live in dignified and affordable housing. It's about challenging and changing the systemic barriers that have historically excluded many from these decision-making processes.

The strengths of this endeavour lies in the collective will and commitment of all stakeholders involved. It is important to recognize that the journey towards developing new affordable housing in any neighbourhood is a continuous and collaborative effort.

As CP Planning continues to support and guide these efforts, we encourage you to connect, collaborate, and contribute to

this essential vision of housing as a human right and mission to create neighbourhoods that are not only physically accessible but also welcoming and supportive, embodying the values of equality, dignity, and community for everyone.

