

Housing and Affordability Task Force Recommendations



A Message from the Task Force

Calgary stands at the precipice of a housing affordability crisis. There is welcome news that our population is growing and becoming increasingly diverse as we welcome people from across Canada and around the world to our great city. If we don't act now, with bold solutions and action, Calgary will no longer be the vibrant, affordable, and world class city that has it consistently ranked as one of the best places to live in the world.

Eight months ago, the Housing and Affordability Task Force was assembled with a challenge to be bold, and to recommend concrete actions that would improve our housing affordability and set our housing sector up to respond to some of the challenges it will face in the next decade. The members of the Task Force have met that challenge head on, and the recommendations and actions presented in this report are a result of extensive research, discussion, and consultation with key experts from across the housing continuum.

The recommendations and actions of the Task Force recognize the complexity of Calgary's housing affordability challenges and propose transformative actions that are critical to address issues such as land availability, development costs, regulatory barriers, and funding constraints. They also emphasize the importance of engaging with, empowering, and improving living conditions for those most affected by the affordability crisis such as low-income individuals, Indigenous people living in Calgary, and Equity-Deserving populations.

We believe that these recommendations can increase and diversity the supply of housing, especially affordable housing, strengthen the housing sector so partners collaborate to create greater impact together, and improve living conditions for people in rental housing. We are pleased to recommend them to Calgary City Council for approval.

Most of our recommendations are the starting point, not the end. Many will need thoughtful consideration by Administration, and engagement with Calgarians to implement. All will have a significant impact for Calgary if they are implemented.

Please Note: Throughout this report, we have tried to identify the financial impact and the expected timeline to begin implementation. The guideline below shows our estimate of this analysis.

The following guideline was used:

\$: Can be implemented with existing resources.

\$\$: Will require some resources to implement.

\$\$\$: Will require significant resources to implement.

Now: begin within one year of endorsement.

Next: begin within two years of endorsement.

Later: begin within three years of endorsement.

Members of the Task Force:

Swati Dhingra	Teresa Goldstein
Allison Gritner	Jim Gordon
Patricia Jones	Maya Kambeitz
Gerrad Oishi	Minori Olguin
Morgan Parker	Kevin Webb

In addition, the Task Force had membership from the following members of City of Calgary Administration

Jeff Chase	Director, Partnerships
Debra Hamilton	Director, Community Planning
Melanie Hulsker	Director, Community Strategies
Josh White	Director, City and Regional Planning
Tim Ward	Manager, Housing Solutions and Chair



Actions that have alignment with the other housing affordability reports (Affordable Housing for Urban Indigenous and Housing Accelerator Fund Action Plan) are denoted through this symbol.



As required, actions which require further consideration and deliberation, will be brought forward through committee to Council. These actions are denoted through this symbol.

An Overview

Outcome 1: Increase and diversify the supply of housing. Boost development by 1,000 more market homes beyond what is normally built in a year, and at least 3,000 non-market affordable homes a year.

Recommendation 1: Make it easier to build housing across the city.

Recommendation 2: Make more land available to build more housing across the city.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the supply of affordable housing meets the needs of Indigenous people living in Calgary and Equity-Deserving populations.

Outcome 2: Strengthen the housing sector to support partner collaboration and foster a greater impact than if they were to act alone.

Recommendation 4: Convene the housing sector to facilitate greater collaboration.

Recommendation 5: Increase the investment to support housing providers.

Outcome 3: Improve living conditions for people in rental housing.

Recommendation 6: Ensure more individuals have a safe place to call home.

The Problem: Calgary does not have an adequate or diverse enough supply of housing. At minimum, 15,000 new affordable homes are needed, and that number is expected to increase. In addition, affordable housing does not exist within all communities in Calgary. The City needs to remove barriers or create incentives for development of all types of housing across the housing continuum.



Recommendation 1: Make it easier to build housing across the city.

Actions:	Financial Impact	Timeline
a. Include policy in the Municipal Development Plan immediately that every Local Area Plan should enable a minimum of 15% of the total housing units to be non-market Affordable Housing (as defined by The City) to provide equal distribution across the city. ★	\$	Now
b. Rescind the Single Detached Special Policy Area in the Guide to Local Area Planning, immediately. ★	\$	Now
c. Enable diverse housing types by incorporating the full spectrum of Neighbourhood Urban Form categories in each Local Area Plan. ★	\$	Next
d. Prepare the necessary bylaws to immediately: ★		
I. Make the base residential district Residential-Grade Oriented (R-CG) with guidance for single, semi-detached, row and townhouses into a single land use district.	\$	Now
II. Enable secondary suites and backyard suites on one parcel of land.	\$	Now
e. In the new Land Use Bylaw: ★		
I. Remove minimum parking requirements in all residential districts.	\$	Next
II. Make dwelling units in all multi-residential land use districts Permitted Use to enable simplified approvals processes.	\$	Next
f. Complete City-initiated land use redesignations by Q2 2024 to: 🔄 ★		
I. Implement R-CG as the base residential district across Calgary.	\$\$	Next
II. Implement Housing-Ground Oriented (H-GO) in residential areas within proximity to transit, main streets and other corridors.	\$\$	Next
g. Create incentives for more affordable non-market and market units: 🔄 ★		
I. Establish an incentive program of at least \$10,000 per unit for secondary suites, to produce at least 400 net new secondary suites each year.	\$\$\$	Next
II. Amend city-wide, local area and land use regulation to exempt non-market affordable housing from multi-residential and mixed-use density calculations, in particular non-market units with three or more bedrooms to accommodate large or multi-generational family units.	\$	Next
h. Advocate to the Government of Alberta for legislative change to the Municipal Government Act to allow affordable housing to be defined in a manner that exempts it from certain planning process requirements such as public hearing, which increases certainty and reduces timelines for developers and providers.	\$	Now
i. Develop and implement a new program by Q4 2024 to facilitate a private/public partnership where The City would provide City-owned land to the private sector and others to build affordable housing. Housing would be managed by qualified partners to operate and maintain for no less than 40 years. ★	\$\$	Next
j. Support co-op housing, co-housing and other alternative housing forms that create cooperative living options to be included in the City of Calgary's existing programs to support non-market housing. ★	\$	Now

The Problem: Housing providers say that the biggest barriers to building more supply is access to, and the cost of, land. Maintaining and increasing land for non-market and affordable market housing is a fundamental step in creating housing affordability. The City can incentivize more housing development by changing processes and prioritizing the use of land.



Recommendation 2: Make more land available to build more housing across the city.

Actions:

	<i>Financial Impact</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
a. Dispose of City-owned lands as soon as possible within Transit Oriented Development sites suitable for housing, including non-market housing. 🔄★	\$\$\$	Next
b. Allocate \$100M per year to the Housing Land Fund to acquire land or, provide existing City land for the creation of non-market housing. This could be funded through a combination of sources including the mill rate, a percentage of redevelopment levies, or other financial tools. ★	\$\$\$	Now
c. Identify City-Owned parcels of land that collectively can be made shovel ready for Affordable Housing (minimum target of 1,000 units). Business Units may need to rationalize future use of said lands that are not needed, in whole or in part, for their intended primary use.	\$\$	Now
d. Develop a program and framework to provide opportunities for land leasing to non-profit housing providers or land trusts, in addition to the Non-Market Housing Land Disposition Policy. ★	\$\$	Now
e. Collaborate with the Joint Use Coordinating Committee and the school boards, to review all Joint Use and surplus school sites to determine if land is available for housing. 🔄	\$	Now
f. Allocate \$50M in funding for residential uses to the Downtown Calgary Development Incentive Program as bridge funding until such time as additional funding is provided by the federal and provincial governments to make up the balance of the program requirements. 🔄★	\$\$\$	Now
g. Implement an ongoing pre-qualifying process for providers accessing City-owned land through the Non-Market Housing Land Disposition Policy program. This will eliminate duplication of time and effort with each round of land disposition, creating a more equitable process for providers.	\$	Now

The Problem: Indigenous people living in Calgary and Equity-Deserving populations are over-represented when it comes to homelessness and the need for deep subsidy housing. Expert advice and programs to meet the specific and intersecting needs of people are needed to achieve better housing outcomes.



Recommendation 3: Ensure that the supply of affordable housing meets the needs of Indigenous people living in Calgary and Equity-Deserving populations.

Actions:

	<i>Financial Impact</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
a. In line with provider capacity, increase the amount of land provided to Indigenous housing providers through the Non-Market Housing Land Disposition Policy. 	\$	<i>Next</i>
b. Utilize the Housing Land Fund to provide land to Indigenous housing providers at nominal value.	\$\$	<i>Next</i>
c. Allocate \$10M per year in capital funding to organizations prioritizing specific housing needs to build housing for Indigenous and Equity-Deserving populations. ★	\$\$\$	<i>Next</i>
d. Continue to support the development of an urban Indigenous Community Land Trust through in-kind investment.	\$	<i>Now</i>
e. Ensure that the Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy refresh has actions to address the housing needs of and reduce the barriers to housing for Indigenous people and Equity-Deserving populations.	\$	<i>Now</i>

The Problem: Addressing housing need is complex and is further exacerbated by stigma, racism, and discrimination. Working collaboratively with partners on a variety of topics will strengthen the sector and deliver improved outcomes for all Calgarians.



Recommendation 4: Convene the housing sector to facilitate greater collaboration.

Actions:

	<i>Financial Impact</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
a. Create a program that connects developers and non-profit housing providers to develop partnerships when building new affordable homes, including for residents requiring deep subsidy.	\$	<i>Next</i>
b. Convene a group of partners from the housing sector to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Collaborate and develop clear priorities for an <u>advocacy</u> plan for Calgary to improve housing that includes supports for organizations, non-profit employees, and those in need of housing. ii. Create an awareness campaign that <u>reduces stigma</u> for affordable housing, permanent supportive housing, and homelessness. iii. <u>Identify innovative collaboration</u> opportunities, that are based on the housing needs in Calgary, to ensure those with the highest need have housing. 	\$	Now
c. Update and fund the One Window proposal that facilitates all participating housing and service partners through one intake process for individuals to access. ★	\$\$\$	<i>Next</i>

The Problem: Non-profit housing providers are challenged to operate and maintain affordable housing programs due to record inflation and increasing costs. The City has opportunities to reduce pressure on Non-profit housing providers and support the housing sector to work together to address the housing need in Calgary.



Recommendation 5: Increase the investment to support housing providers.

Actions:

	<i>Financial Impact</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
a. Advocate to:		
i. The Provincial Government to dedicate a portion of the Municipal Reserve for the purpose of establishing land banks in all new communities for Affordable Housing. (Example: 1/5 of the overall 10% dedication).	\$	<i>Now</i>
ii. The Provincial and Federal Governments to allocate 1% of Provincial and Federal tax revenues to municipalities as funding specifically for the creation and maintenance of Affordable Housing.	\$	<i>Now</i>
b. Enact a municipal bylaw under s. 364 of the Municipal Government Act to exempt properties held by non-profit organizations providing non-market housing from the municipal portion of property tax. ★	\$\$\$	<i>Next</i>
c. Advocate to the Province to exempt properties held by non-profit organizations that are providing non-market housing from the provincial portion of property tax.	\$	<i>Next</i>
d. Amend the terms of the Housing Incentive Program to create a separate funding stream dedicated to organizations prioritizing housing needs for specific populations. ★	\$	<i>Now</i>

The Problem: Renters who experience adverse living conditions, which may cause risks to their health and safety, shouldn't also experience barriers to resolution or even risk the loss of their housing. All orders of government have a role to support Calgarians in overcoming these challenges, including improving legislation and awareness on rights and responsibilities.



Recommendation 6: Ensure more individuals have a safe place to call home.

Actions:

	<i>Financial Impact</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
a. Support tenants and governments to address inadequate housing conditions by developing and delivering a program that creates awareness of tenant's rights through a similar program to The City of Edmonton's 'Supports for Tenants' service.	\$\$	Next
b. Advocate to the Province to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Increase number of Public Health inspectors available to inspect properties allowing for inspections to be completed within 1 week. ii. Revise the Residential Tenancies Act to protect tenants from unfounded evictions if a complaint is made to Alberta Health Services or any other public serving agency. iii. Provide financial supports for alternative temporary accommodations, for tenants unable to find or afford alternative accommodations, while rental properties are being repaired from unsafe or inadequate conditions. iv. Review and enhance the <i>Minimum Health and Housing Standards</i> to ensure that tenants are protected from substandard housing, review and adjust the standard occupancy rates to accommodate culturally appropriate housing. v. Investigate and resolve non-contractual or legal complaints of discrimination, mistreatment, or substandard housing, through the creation of a Housing Ombudsperson that can serve all landlords operating and residents living-in rental housing in Calgary. 	\$	Next
c. To support residents in rental housing experiencing higher than normal increases in rent, investigate rent control models used in other jurisdictions, and provide the Government of Alberta with a summary of the findings.	\$	Next
d. Support existing programming and partner at collaborative funding tables to strategically plan, evaluate, and invest to improve services for those in affordable housing and homelessness. Specific programs could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Partner and invest seed funding (\$600K) in existing community programs that support individuals in housing need to access funding for first/last rent obligations. ii. Provide seed funding for community programs that can prevent Calgarians from becoming unhoused such as landlords' mediation, or support for rental arrears.★ 	\$	Now
	\$\$	Next

Next Steps

The recommendations and actions presented within this document are aimed to address Calgary's housing and affordability challenges immediately and to prepare for the challenges of the future. Bold action is required for Calgary.

We recommend implementation of the recommendations to be embedded in the existing work of the Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy, Planning Policy updates (Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, and others), and The City's response to homelessness and The City's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy. Embedding the recommendations into existing programs, conversations leverages the work currently being done and the engagement with key partners.

As this report highlighted a preliminary analysis of resourcing and timelines, the implementation of the recommendations must be further refined by City Administration in terms of resource, timeline and public engagement requirements.

The recommendations and actions are being released in advance of being formally presented and deliberated at a regular meeting of Council on 2023 June 6, to provide sufficient time for them to be contemplated and discussed by Calgarians.