



Proceedings Document

REGIONAL HOUSING FORUM

On December 9th, the Toronto City Summit Alliance became known as the Greater Toronto Civic Action Alliance (CivicAction for short!)

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1. PURPOSE

The Regional Housing Forum constitutes an integral part of the process informing the CivicAction's* upcoming Summit of regional leaders in February 2011. The goal of the Forum was to explore opportunities for action that could be taken by all levels and sizes of private, public and community sector organizations through consideration of a regional approach to housing. The Forum was organized and presented in partnership with the CivicAction, the City of Toronto and the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association.

*** On December 9th, the became known as the Greater Toronto Civic Action Alliance (CivicAction for short!)**

2. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The CivicAction, City of Toronto and the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association would like to thank Building Industry and Land Development for providing the venue for this event. We would also like to thank all who attended for their input into this important process.

2.1 CivicAction

John Tory, Chair

Tiffany Blair, Policy Intern (School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Toronto)

Michelynn Laflèche, Program Director, Toronto Summit 2011

Jaclyn Sopik, Volunteer

2.2 Speakers

Stephen DuPuis, Building Industry and Land Development

Sean Gadon, Affordable Housing Office, City of Toronto

Mitzie Hunter, Toronto Community Housing & Co-Chair, CivicAction Neighbourhoods and Affordable Housing Working Group

Sharad Kerur, Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association

Gillian Mason, United Way of Greater Toronto & Co-Chair, CivicAction Neighbourhoods and Affordable Housing Working Group

2.3 Facilitators

Drew Goursky, Region of Peel

Mitzie Hunter, Toronto Community Housing & Co-Chair, CivicAction Neighbourhoods and Affordable Housing Working Group

Michelynn Laflèche, CivicAction

Gillian Mason, United Way of Greater Toronto & Co-Chair, CivicAction Neighbourhoods and Affordable Housing Working Group

2.4 Note-takers

Tiffany Blair, CivicAction

Lyndsay Poaps, City of Toronto

Rebecca Ramsey, City of Toronto

Jaclyn Sopik, CivicAction

3. ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

41 participants from the following organizations took part in the Forum on November 24, 2010.

- Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario
- Building Industry and Land Development
- Canadian Association of Re-energized Persons
- Centre For Independent Living in Toronto
- Christian Resource Centre
- City of Toronto
- Durham Region
- Greater Toronto Area Apartment Association
- Halton Region
- Home Ownership Alternatives
- HomeComing
- Housing Connections
- Ismaili Muslim Council for Ontario
- J.E. Black & Company Ltd.
- Martinway Contracting Ltd.
- Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
- Peel Region
- Shelter, Support and Housing, City of Toronto
- Social Housing Services Corporation
- Social Planning Toronto
- TAS DesignBuild
- Thorncliffe Park
- CivicAction
- Toronto Community Housing
- United Way Toronto
- Verdiroc
- Voices from the Street
- Wellesley Institute
- WoodGreen
- York Region

4. AGENDA

Regional Housing Forum Agenda	
9:45 a.m.	Registration and Refreshments
10:00 a.m.	Welcome and Opening Remarks John Tory, Chair, CivicAction
10:10 a.m.	Speaker Stephen DuPuis, President & CEO, Building Industry and Land Development
10:20 a.m.	Speaker Sean Gadon, Director, Affordable Housing Office, City of Toronto
10:30 a.m.	Discussion Session Gillian Mason, Senior Vice President, Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships, United Way of Greater Toronto
11:40 a.m.	Wrap Up Discussion Session Sharad Kerur, Executive Director, Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
11:55 a.m.	Close and Thank You Mitzie Hunter, Chief Administrative Officer, Toronto Community Housing
12:00 p.m.	Networking Lunch

5. SPEAKERS

5.1 John Tory

CHAIR, CIVIC ACTION

SUMMARY OF REMARKS:

John Tory welcomed participants to the Regional Housing Forum. He thanked them for bringing their expertise and experience together to discuss the important issue of affordable housing in the Toronto region. He spoke of the positive impacts that affordable housing has on economic and social well-being of the region - now and in the future. More affordable housing means job creation, worker retention, healthy communities and healthy people. John spoke of the potential for a regional approach to allow for sharing of best practices and solutions and provide the basis for communicating with provincial and federal partners. He concluded his welcome with an overview of the Forum's agenda.

ABOUT JOHN TORY:

John Tory is a lawyer, business leader, community activist and broadcaster. He was formerly an elected representative serving as Member of Provincial Parliament for Dufferin Peel Wellington Grey, as Leader of the Ontario PC Party and as Leader of the Official Opposition in the Ontario Parliament.

The early years of Mr. Tory's career were spent practicing law in Toronto, and he was later elected as a managing partner of one of Canada's biggest law firms. In the 1980's he served as Principal Secretary to Premier Bill Davis and as Associate Secretary of the Ontario Cabinet.

In 1995, John Tory joined the Rogers Group of Companies, first as President and CEO of Rogers Media Inc. and then as President and CEO of Rogers Cable, Canada's largest cable and internet service provider. He presently serves on the Board of Directors of Rogers Communications Inc. and a number of other companies.

Mr. Tory has an extensive background in volunteer community service. He served as volunteer Chairman and Commissioner of the Canadian Football League and has chaired fundraising campaigns for St. Michael's Hospital and the United Way. He maintains an active involvement in those two organizations, as well as chairing the current fundraising campaign for the Toronto International Film Festival. He also holds leadership positions in a wide range of charitable organizations ranging from autism to kids at risk, Canadian authors and children with physical disabilities.

John Tory was a founding Board Member and is the voluntary Chair of the CivicAction, a highly respected city-building organization. He hosts a daily three hour talk show on Canada's leading talk station Newstalk 1010.

John Tory's community work has been widely recognized. He is a recipient of both the Paul Harris and Mel Osborne Awards from the Rotary and Kiwanis organizations respectively and was named a Life Member of the Salvation Army Advisory Board. He is also the recipient of an African Canadian Achievement Award.

5.2 Stephen DuPuis

PRESIDENT AND CEO, BUILDING INDUSTRY AND LAND DEVELOPMENT (BILD)

SUMMARY OF REMARKS:

Stephen DuPuis presented an overview of the work BILD is doing in the Greater Toronto Area, emphasizing the importance of working together as a sector and taking the lead on energy efficient initiatives. He also spoke about BILD's relationship and support for Habitat for Humanity Toronto's work. He emphasized cross-sectoral partnerships as an essential part of housing provision in the GTA.

ABOUT STEPHEN DUPUIS:

Stephen Dupuis is President and CEO of the Building Industry & Land Development, the voice of the residential land development, home building and professional renovation industry in the Greater GTA. BILD was formed in 2007 through the merger of the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association and the Urban Development Institute/Ontario.

Prior to joining BILD, Dupuis worked for the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

A graduate of the University of Waterloo, he also holds a Certificate in Voluntary Sector Management from York University/Schulich School of Business.

Dupuis is a member of the Canadian Society of Association Executives and sits on the CSAE Government Relations Committee.

He is also an Advisory Council Member for the Program in Real Estate and Infrastructure at the York University Schulich School of Business. Dupuis also serves on the Canadian Newspaper Advisory Board.

Mr. Dupuis is extremely proud of BILD's long-standing community partnership with Habitat for Humanity Toronto.

5.3 Sean Gadon

DIRECTOR, AFFORDABLE HOUSING OFFICE, CITY OF TORONTO

SUMMARY OF REMARKS (presentation attached as appendix):

Sean Gadon presented the Toronto Regional Housing Data Bank as a fundamental building block for understanding the current housing situation within the region. Preliminary regional indicators show that more than 300,000 households are in homes that are too expensive, too small or rundown, costs of renting and owning homes are rising, most new construction is in the ownership market, and fewer low-rent apartments are available every year due to construction, demolition and inflation. In addition, more people are using food and rent banks every year and the social housing waitlist has grown by almost 10,000 households in the last year alone. On average, people can wait from 2.5 to 21 years for social housing in the region.

Economic stimulus investments in housing for 2009 to 2011 totaled more than \$500 million in the Toronto region. As these funds are ending, the federal government has committed to providing \$387 million for housing annually across Canada for the next three years. The Toronto region can

expect additional investments each year until 2014, assuming provincial participation in renewal of current cost-shared programs.

Sean concluded by remarking that the Toronto Regional Data Bank can be used as a tool to guide affordable housing investments and decisions for the whole region and the Regional Housing Forum was an opportunity to present regional data for discussion and feedback. Input from today's meeting will be considered at the CivicAction Summit in February.

ABOUT SEAN GADON:

Sean Gadon cares deeply about our city and has been active in Toronto politics and housing advocacy since the late 1970's.

From 1985 to 1988 as the Executive Assistant to two Ontario Housing Ministers he was instrumental in rolling out major non-profit housing initiatives to create over 25,000 new homes in the province. From 1989 to 1993 he co-ordinated the creation of some 2,000 non-profit and co-operative homes for the Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto and York Region.

Over the past 15 years, Sean has been called upon as a senior advisor to Mayors Barbara Hall, Mel Lastman and David Miller.

Sean is currently the Director of Toronto's Affordable Housing Office responsible for working with the non-profit and private sectors to delivery new affordable housing. He is also facilitating the implementation of the city's recently adopted 10 year housing plan: Housing Opportunities Toronto.

He is a graduate from the University of Toronto's Urban Studies Program where he acquired his love of all things urban. In his spare time, when not with his family, he is the volunteer president of Raising the Roof, Canada's national homelessness charity.

6. DISCUSSION SESSION

6.1 Gillian Mason

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, UNITED WAY OF GREATER TORONTO

Gillian presented participants with four questions for discussion and participants joined the table with the question most appealing to them. Each table was given one hour to discuss the questions and then asked to provide a report on their discussion.

ABOUT GILLIAN MASON:

Gillian Mason joined United Way Toronto in October 2007 and now holds the position of Senior Vice President, Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships. Gillian is responsible for advancing United Way's community impact work by providing leadership on research, public policy as well as the development of community initiatives and partnerships. She also works closely with Board Committees such as the Community Impact Committee and the Research, Policy and Priorities Committee.

Gillian previously held the position of Executive Director and CEO of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM), an international organization

she helped found. At CAPAM she was responsible for the leadership and strategic management of its international membership association of senior public officials, both appointed and elected.

Gillian gained a wealth of experience working in diverse, multicultural environments while traveling to many of the 53 Commonwealth nations, where Gillian worked closely with local teams in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the south Pacific as well as the United Kingdom and Malta in Europe in capacity building and knowledge exchange.

Prior to CAPAM, Gillian was the Vice President of the Canadian Urban Institute which she also helped found. In the late 1980s, Gillian was Project Manager, Municipal Economic Development Program and Director, Policy and Research Department with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). At FCM, she led projects including the establishment of the FCM International Office, which works with municipal governments worldwide to improve the quality of life and the sustainability of local communities.

Gillian holds a number of volunteer positions in the community that have included member and Vice Chair of the Toronto Public Library Foundation, member and Chair of the Toronto Public Library Board, and various positions with the Diaspora Dialogues, the Community and Race Relations Committee – City of Scarborough, the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Wilderness Canoe Association. She is the recipient of a number of leadership and community service awards.

Gillian holds a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Western Ontario, where she graduated with distinction. She also holds a Bachelor of Environmental Studies (Honours) in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Waterloo.

7. WRAP UP DISCUSSION SESSION

7.1 Sharad Kerur

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ONTARIO NON-PROFIT HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Sharad led participants through the wrap up discussion session. Facilitators from each table reported back on key points from their discussion. The following is a summary of the discussions that took place at each table.

QUESTION 1: How could a regional strategy help increase affordable housing choices? What would it look like?

A regional approach to problem solving is not new. It supports a 'people first' approach by championing opportunities for everyone, regardless of regional boundaries. As many citizens live, work and play without regard to boundaries, a regional strategy can help provide a 'base' of housing affordability, supply and support services throughout the region.

Participants acknowledged the value of adopting a regional approach in order to allow different sectors and jurisdictions to work together and learn from one another while also recognizing important differences across the region. A regional approach to housing should also take regional development and employment variations into account. There is a need for a champion to facilitate this approach and continue to bring people together. Participants also felt that a comprehensive, well-researched and evidence-based tool box would be necessary in order to support a collective regional voice that could, for example, influence provincial (and perhaps federal) decision making.

Participants also discussed the allocation of public sector dollars, agreeing that they must be spent strategically and are spread appropriately, particularly in areas where there are no incentives for private investment. It was emphasized that suburban communities are increasingly facing urban realities. As a result, increasing the availability of a variety of housing across the region is essential.

QUESTION 2: How could we use the Regional Data Bank?

The Toronto Regional Housing Data Bank marks a significant advance in our understanding of social and economic conditions across the Toronto region. For the first time, statistics and trends concerning housing, poverty and other indicators have been brought together for the use of governments, the private sector, non-profit organizations, academics and community agencies.

Participants agreed that the Data Bank provides sound evidence on housing and is useful for understanding the depth and complexity of the affordable housing and poverty across the region as well as providing measures to report housing results. Suggested improvements to the Data Bank included: breaking income into quintiles; disaggregating core housing need data; adding indicators pertaining to health; and, adding investments from Infrastructure Ontario. Others suggested adding indicators on the conditions of housing stock, such as high-rise apartment buildings, over time.

Participants also suggested adding information about secondary suites but acknowledged the challenges in finding reliable and consistent data. The challenge of differing definitions across the region and that data on some indicators are not collected the same way, or at all, in different regional municipalities was discussed in detail. They spoke of an apparent 'disconnect' between the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ministry of Health and Long Term-Care as a barrier to collecting information. Others mentioned the challenge of data unavailability due to the loss of the long-form census and suggested creating a data consortium that could populate the Data Bank and establish a time frame for updating its contents. They also discussed the potential to tie the Data Bank into existing projects such as the Neighbourhood Well-Being Index that is currently being created by the City of Toronto.

Others suggested incorporating more data on accessibility, long-term care and supportive housing. They also discussed adding information on evictions, possibly from Landlord Tenant Board reports, in order to more fully examine why people are evicted across the region. Another area of interest was the relationships between mental health issues, the aging population and evictions.

Participants questioned how and who would link the Data Bank to policy and how this information could be disseminated to a broader audience. Some commented that the Data Bank did not tell a story of tenants' experiences and may not be accessible or understandable to some individuals or groups. They discussed using information from the Data Bank to prepare other documents that could be compelling to a wider audience. The Data Bank could be used as background material for a more persuasive presentation of the problem and incorporate qualitative data. For example, it could be used to provide information for a 'social housing primer' or executive summary of the issues or be brought to life by incorporating people's lived experiences.

QUESTION 3: What form could a Public Education Housing Campaign take?

Over the past several months, participants in CivicAction's Affordable Housing Working Group have emphasized the need to broaden the conversation about housing issues to a target a wider

audience. While the importance of housing is commonly understood by housing stakeholders, it is generally not seen as an urgent priority from the general population.

Participants agreed that some form of public education campaign is necessary but that public education on housing needs to expand beyond a single campaign. Participants suggested starting at the high school level and incorporating lived experiences to tell a story that engages people. Curricula could be developed and used in formal and informal settings (both inside and outside the classroom). They also emphasized the need to convey a message to the private sector about the benefits of building affordable housing and create awareness of what affordable housing is and accurately define it. They discussed the need to break down stigma associated with those who live in social housing, show a connection between housing outcomes and health and present success stories.

Incorporating facts aimed at different target audiences in simple and effective ways and creating different methods of engagement to garner attention was put forward by the group. They stressed the importance of education for all sectors involved in housing, particularly the private sector.

Participants emphasized that the strategy for a public education campaign must be tied to an explicitly stated purpose and that public education must be solution focused. Tasks must be delegated to partners and there must be champions from different sectors. Messages must focus on community building, and the outcomes and successes of public education should also be documented. Focus groups were suggested as one way to find out how to effectively message to people. Others suggested that a campaign should focus on humanizing the experiences of people who live in social housing in order to create pressure on governments to act.

QUESTION 4: What could the benefits of a regional working group be?

There are current initiatives being undertaken to address social and economic prosperity from a regional perspective. Is there a need for a regional working group to identify how existing strategies such as the Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy will have an impact on the region as a whole? Is there value in integrating affordable housing opportunities into existing regional transportation plans, such as Metrolinx's The Big Move, that would help direct housing development to areas with the transportation infrastructure and services people need?

Participants discussed how a regional working group could provide an opportunity to bring people together to discuss the potential to streamline waitlists, integrate housing into existing regional transit strategies and change the way we think of ourselves, our needs and solutions to those needs. They said a regional working group could help to shift our actions from reactionary to proactive solutions to housing issues. A regional working group could collaborate on how to turn unused units into affordable homes, discuss problems that are relevant across boundaries and examine policies regarding privacy and eligibility that might help strip away complexity and make it easier for those in need of housing to get housing.

Part of the challenge would be to ask the right questions. A regional working group could ask things like "are we providing an adequate social network around housing?" and "how do we activate the supports to make housing desirable?" or "can we employ social inclusion on a regional scale?" It could engage private developers in a conversation about how their involvement in affordable housing can be profitable. They hoped a regional working group would foster working together, avoid friction and miscommunication and avoid building up stronger silos.

Participants suggested that a regional working group could be comprised of commissioners of planning from each region, representatives from health and food banks, social services, businesses, the United Ways, community health services, chairs of human service plans, as well as different levels of government. The working group could address root causes and encourage housing solutions that would allow people to live and work in the same area. Participants did not view a regional working group as a quick fix to problems but rather an opportunity to examine what is wrong and what is working. It would also require significant leadership in order to succeed.

Participants suggested surveying regions to compile information in order to encourage fact-based analysis that would highlight both commonalities and differences. A regional working group would need to look at the housing system as a whole and recognize related issues broader than housing. This would mean considering public health and a more 'human service' approach to housing.

Membership would need to incorporate not just housing experts but a range of individuals and organizations. Housing should be viewed as the foundation piece but not the end game. A regional working group must recognize this is not just a Toronto issue. It should work to end the adversarial nature of territorial issues, encourage common definitions and provide a space for sharing best practices.

ABOUT SHARAD KERUR:

Since November 2003, Sharad Kerur has been Executive Director of the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association where he leads a team of dedicated staff and board members to represent 760 non-profit housing providers in the areas of government relations, housing policy and advocacy, education, management support, communications and group procurement.

Prior to this, Sharad spent 17 years from 1985 to 2002 with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) as Director in a variety of different policy and corporate capacities. While there, he helped to create and was the first CEO for Local Authority Services Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary company to AMO providing group procurement products and services to municipalities.

In 2002 he left to join OMEX (the Ontario Municipal Insurance Exchange) as Director of Corporate Services to expand the use of structured pooled insurance programs. Currently he serves as a board member of the social housing sector's Asset Management Centre.

8. CLOSE AND THANK YOU

8.1 Mitzie Hunter

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING

Mitzie Hunter thanked the participants for their time and engagement on housing issues emphasizing the value of discussing the who, what, where and why of a regional approach to housing. Her comments recognized participants' support for a regional approach and the value in fleshing out the opportunities and benefits of such an approach. She explained that participants' feedback would help to inform the CivicAction Summit taking place on February 10th and 11th, 2011 and concluded with an invitation for participants to stay for a networking lunch.

ABOUT MITZIE HUNTER:

Mitzie is the first Chief Administrative Officer for Toronto Community Housing, effective October 2009. In this newly created position, Mitzie leads the organization's strategic and business support

functions. This includes Corporate Communications, Strategic Planning and Research. Gradually, Mitzie will also assume the responsibility for Human Resources and Information Technology.

Mitzie brings a wealth of experience in strategic communications and planning along with her commitment to building strong communities. She is a seasoned executive with an extensive background in government relations, corporate branding and marketing, issues management, community and economic development, information technology and partnerships from the corporate and non-profit sectors. Mitzie was vice president, external relations for Goodwill Industries of Toronto from 2002 to 2009.

Mitzie is committed to building a vibrant city and is actively involved in her community. She has held governance positions in numerous non-profit organizations including co-chairing the CivicAction, Emerging Leaders Network and participating in CivicAction DiverseCity initiatives. She has also served on the Board of Directors of Housing Services Inc., a subsidiary of Toronto Community Housing, TVOntario, United Way and the Yonge Street Mission. Mitzie is a graduate of the University of Toronto Rotman School of Management.

9. APPENDIX



1

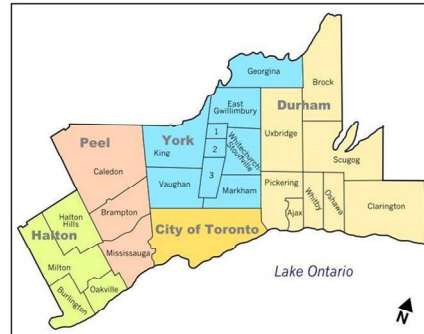
TORONTO REGIONAL HOUSING DATA BANK

Regional Housing Forum
Presented by: Sean Gadon, Director
Affordable Housing Office, City of Toronto
November 24, 2010

Toronto Regional Housing Data Bank

3

- For the first time, we have a comprehensive regional picture of affordable housing and poverty
- Crucial building block for understanding affordable housing in a regional context
- Includes Durham, Halton, Peel, York Regions and City of Toronto



The Regional Picture so far...

4

- 322,415 households (19%) are in core housing need
- Costs of owning and renting homes are rising
- New construction is mostly ownership housing (93%)
- There are fewer low rent apartments available for rent every year due to demolition, conversion and inflation

The Regional Picture so far...

5

- More people are using rent banks (16%) and food banks (15%) compared to last year
- Social housing wait lists have grown by almost 10,000 households in one year to 87,175
- People are waiting from 2.5 to 21 years for social housing

Investments now and in the future

6

- More than half a billion has been invested in housing in the region through the federal/provincial Economic Action Plan, 2009 to 2011
- Federal government has committed \$387 million to housing and homelessness programs across Canada until 2014
- Toronto region can expect additional investments each year until 2014 assuming provincial participation in renewal of current cost shared programs.

Toronto Regional Housing Data Bank

7

- Toronto Regional Data Bank can be used as a tool to guide affordable housing investments and decisions for the whole region
- Presenting first draft today for consideration and feedback
- Revised Data Bank and input from today's meeting will be considered at the Toronto City Summit Alliance Summit in February