

## Toronto's C2K initiative is a step in the right direction

by Richard Lyall on 16 Aug 2021



We are in the middle of a housing crisis here in the GTA and across Ontario—and Canada for that matter. The cost of building new homes continues to rise. The situation is dire and hampering our economic growth.

The shortage of affordable housing is costing the GTA up to \$7.9 billion annually, according to a report released by the Toronto Region Board of Trade (TRBT) and WoodGreen Community Services. Over a five-year period, cumulative losses could amount to an estimated \$29.4-37.9 billion.

It's a very stark and eye-opening assessment of how a shortage of affordable housing is already harming our economy and society, and, as TRBT president and CEO Jan De Silva has so rightly noted, how the staggering numbers show that housing solutions must be part of our recovery plan.

There is some light on the horizon, however, as the City of Toronto has embarked on a crusade to dramatically overhaul and accelerate the system for reviewing development applications. This will undoubtedly benefit our community of builders and new homebuyers by speeding up the review process.

The initiative is called Concept 2 Keys, or C2K. It will radically transform how planning and development applications are reviewed by modernizing organizational structures, processes, and technology.

The initiative was started in 2020 and the goal is to remove obstacles that slow down the development review process and, in turn, make the system more efficient with shorter turnarounds.

The new review process will help to ensure problems with applications are identified and resolved early on, with the goal of producing more efficient reviews.

Technology will be used to make submitting a development application more convenient and transparent for applicants and easier and less time-consuming for city staff to process, manage and prioritize.

In the first phase of the project, 21 affordable housing development projects were prioritized and expedited. As part of the process, a new application management function was set up to oversee development applications.

The second phase of the project was launched in June and is focused on applications in the Etobicoke-York geographic planning area. The idea here is to test the process and technology improvements.

In time, the initiative will be rolled out to other areas of the GTA.

The builder community is certainly supportive of this initiative. Considering our dire housing situation, we must speed-up the development review process in order to get homes built. A more efficient development review system will enable housing to be delivered faster and reduce costs for consumers, new home buyers, renters and those in need of social housing.

There are a number of factors that cause higher prices for new homes, such as rising costs for materials and labour, but speeding up the review process would certainly improve the situation.

We can't just continue along the same path. The lack of housing will stymie our growth if we don't take action. Our housing-to-population ratio is the lowest of any G7 nation and, with more than 400,000 immigrants expected to come into Canada in both 2021 and 2022, the situation will only get worse.

The C2K initiative is a step in the right direction.

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