

Jurisdictional Review

Various jurisdictions in Canada use different approaches to providing land for affordable housing development. The jurisdictional scan below illustrates that seven of the country's largest municipalities that are active in supporting the provision of affordable housing are providing land at below-market values to stimulate the development of affordable housing.

Jurisdictions have chosen approaches to land disposition based on opportunity (availability of City-owned land), or strategically to support affordable housing development in particular locations, such as where there is a need for more affordable housing or in proximity to transit and other services and amenities. In all cases, municipalities have identified that the provision of land at less than market value enables non-profit housing providers to leverage City land to obtain support from other orders of government, and is one of a limited number of tools available to municipalities to enable affordable housing development.

Vancouver

The City of Vancouver is considering determining land rent for housing cooperatives based on income benchmarks for moderate and low-income households in Vancouver, rather than the market appraisal of the land. This approach would allow co-ops to maintain affordable rents in locations where property values have increased dramatically since the co-ops were established.

Calgary

The City of Calgary's Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy Implementation Plan identified the target to dispose of five parcels of City land at below-market value for non-market housing projects in 2017 and 2018, as well as developing a prioritized inventory of sites suitable for affordable housing, including City-owned surplus land. Since that time, Calgary City Council adopted a new policy allowing for the sale of up to 10 parcels of City land to non-profit housing developers every two years.

Saskatoon

The City of Saskatoon is the only city in Canada that has maintained and expanded its role as a land bank. The City's Sale of Serviced City-Owned Lots Policy No. C09-033 provides the direct sale of land to non-profit corporations for the purpose of providing affordable housing. The Land Branch notifies affordable housing providers when disposable lands suitable for affordable housing become available through the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership. Saskatoon pre-designates land for affordable housing in all new neighbourhoods. For City-developed neighbourhoods, the land is sold at a fixed price to the developer whose proposal best meets the specified criteria for the site. For

privately-developed neighbourhoods, developers generally sell the sites directly to builders that they have established business relationships. Revenue generated from the sale of City-owned lands goes into Saskatoon's Affordable Housing Reserve to further fund affordable housing development.

Regina

The City of Regina's Comprehensive Housing Strategy includes a policy to dedicate a portion of the increase in value/proceeds of any sales from City-owned lands to addressing the issue of rental and affordable housing supply, provide a portion of City-owned lands at discounted prices for the creation of affordable housing, and revise the City's Real Property Acquisition and Disposal Policy to formalize contributions of land to affordable housing and establish affordable housing as the first consideration for surplus residential lots or land capable of being used for residential development.

Winnipeg

The City of Winnipeg engaged for a number of years in selling City-owned properties for a nominal fee of \$1 for the development of affordable housing. From 2000-2012, 302 vacant lots or derelict buildings were sold for rehabilitation, conversion to housing, or new construction. The City is currently considering a pilot project to reinitialize this process with some limits, specifically that lots are located in the William Whyte neighbourhood and will be sold for no less than 50% of the assessed value.

Toronto

Toronto's Housing Now Initiative, which stems from the City's Housing Opportunities Toronto Action Plan 2020-2030, focuses on the strategic disposition of City-owned land to create a mix of ownership and rental units, with 30 percent of new units being reserved for affordable rental. Affordability will be maintained through long-term land leases (99 years).

Halifax

Halifax Regional Municipality recently sold lands previously designated for affordable housing, appraised at \$236,000, for four dollars to the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia.