



Session 402

Collaborating for Change: The GTA Housing Action Lab

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John Purkis, The Natural Step



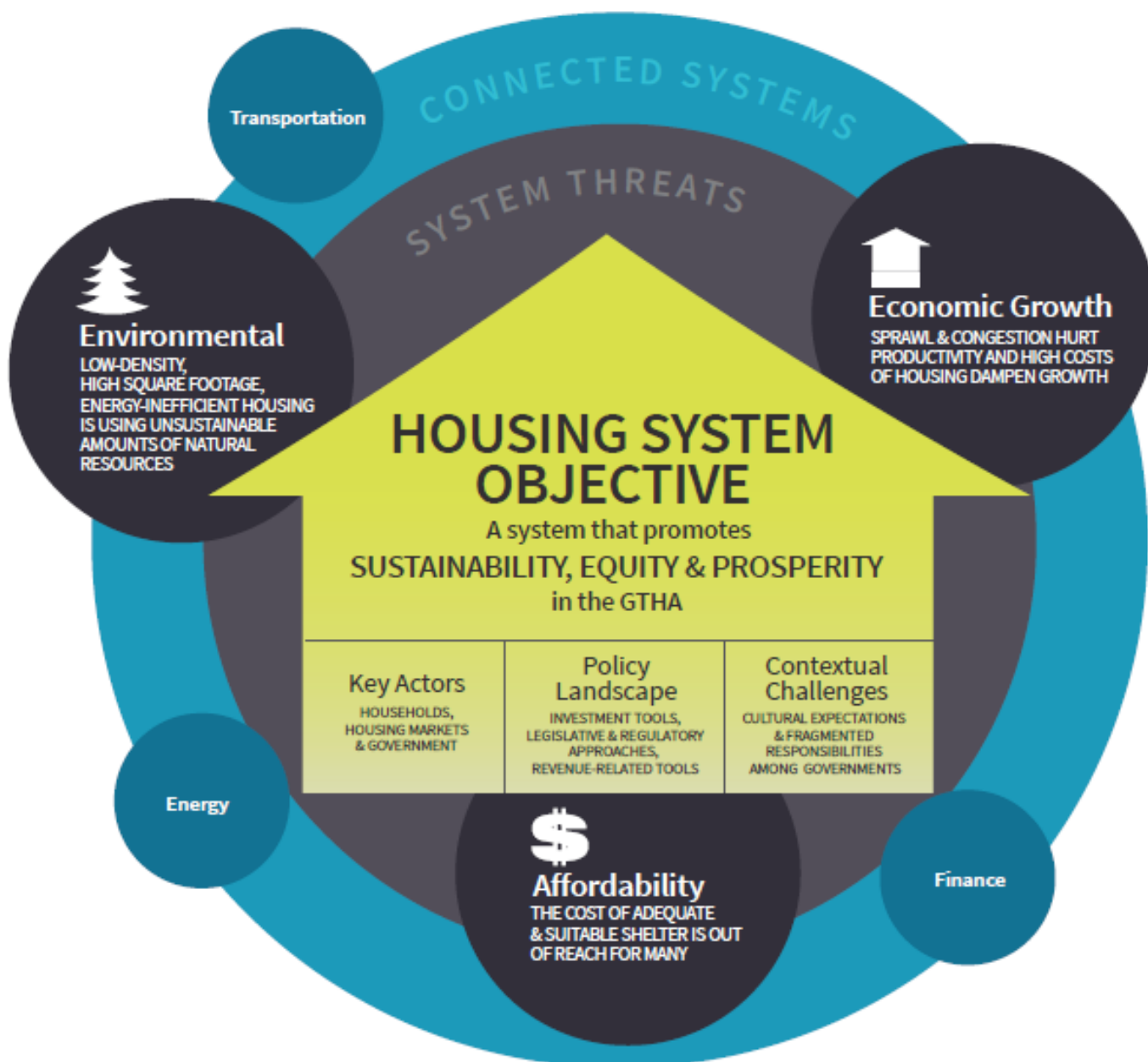


The Greater Toronto Housing System Challenge

Noah Zon
Mowat Centre



ONPHA
Ontario
Non-Profit Housing
Association



The Environmental Sustainability Threat

- Inefficient homes, wasting water, electricity, gas
- Low-density reliance on cars
- Multi-residential waste diversion only 16%



Photo – St. James Town, 2010
credit: Steve Hoang, Flickr
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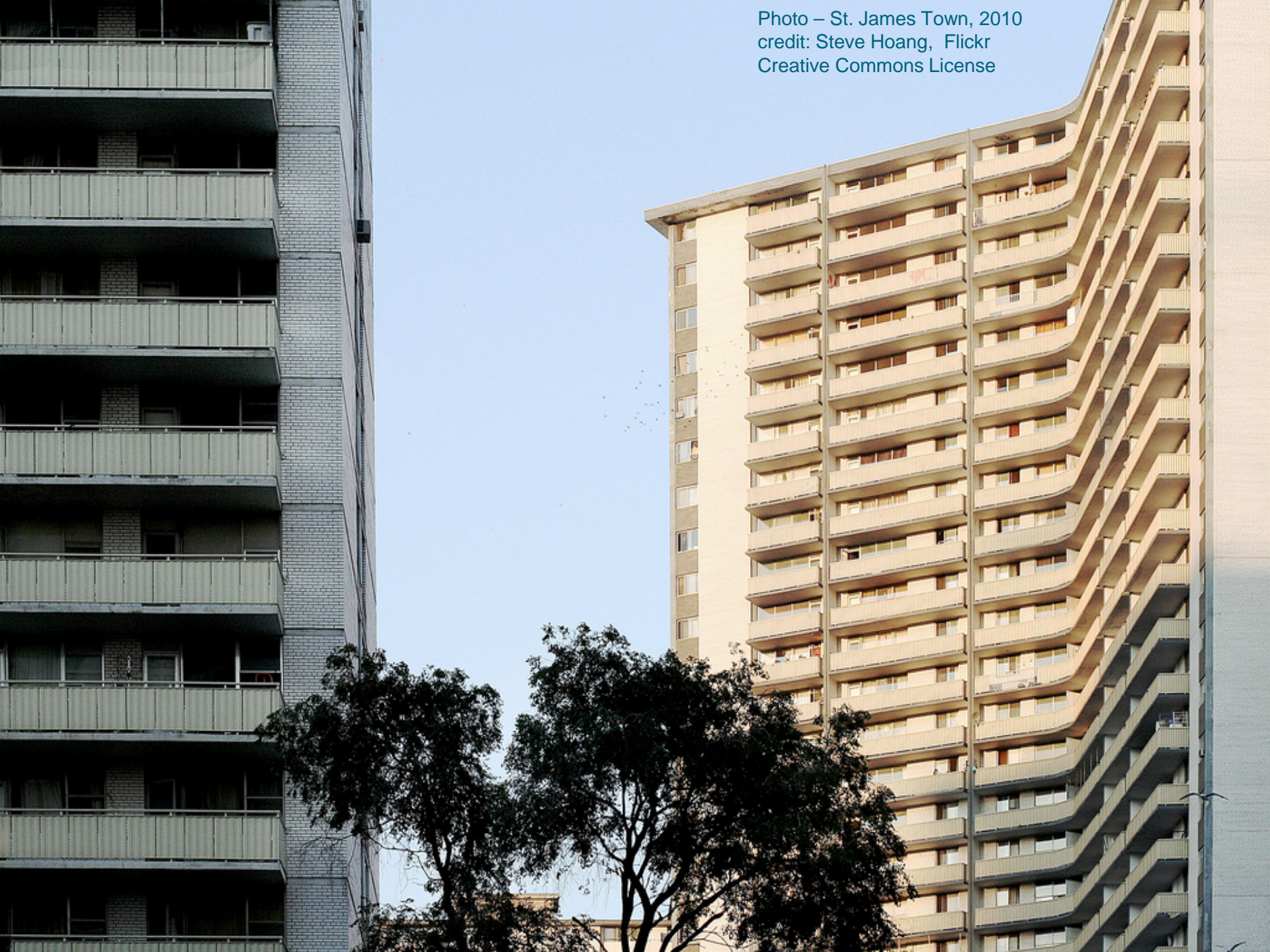




Photo: Toronto, July 2013 Storm
Credit: Chris Bateman, blogTo

The Economic Growth Threat

- Productivity costs of congestion
- Difficulty attracting immigrants
- Recruitment difficulties for businesses
- General drag on consumer spending



The Affordability Threat

Incomes of Ontario Households in Core Housing Need

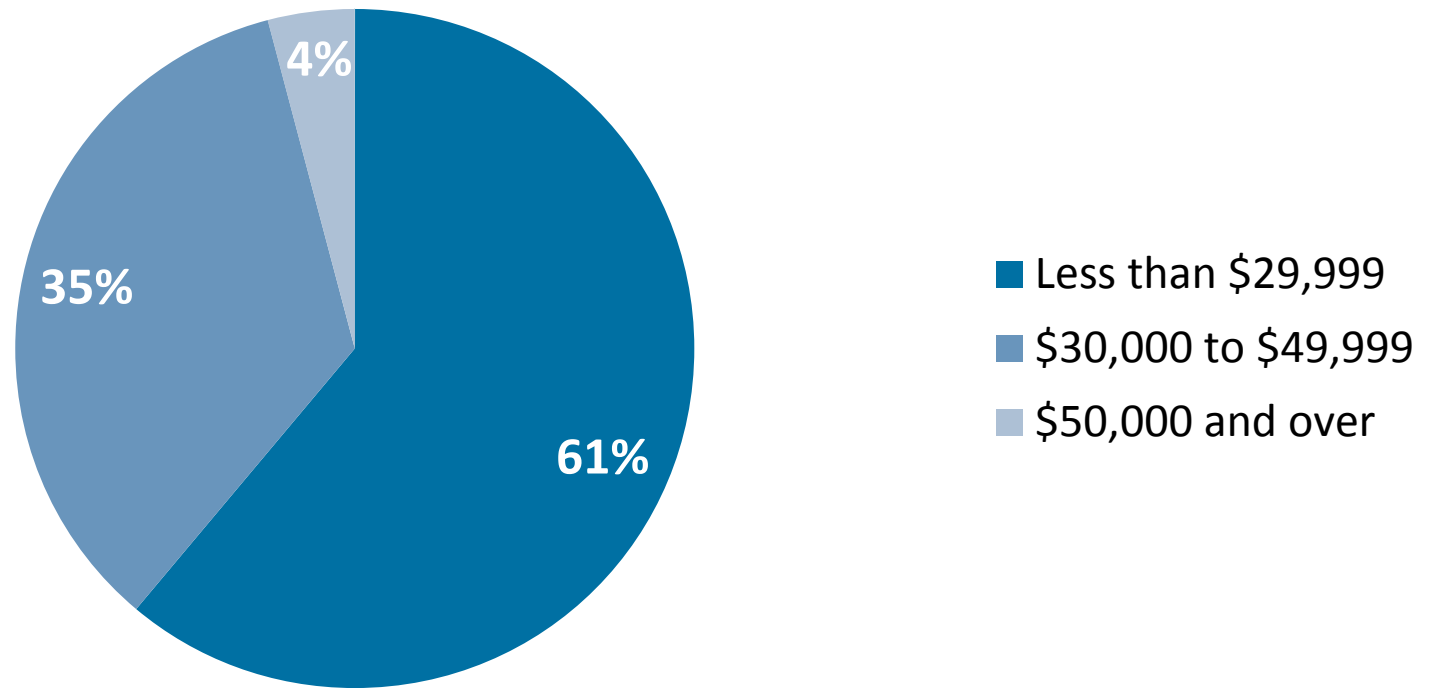




Photo – Don Valley Parkway, 2009
credit: Doughtone, Flickr Creative
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The Policy Landscape

Three major components in the toolkit:

- Investment Tools
- Legislative and Regulatory Tools
- Revenue Tools and Price Signals





Fundamental Challenges:

- 1) Cultural Expectations
- 2) Fragmented Responsibilities

Challenge #1: Cultural Expectations

Canadians have a strong preference
for owning over renting



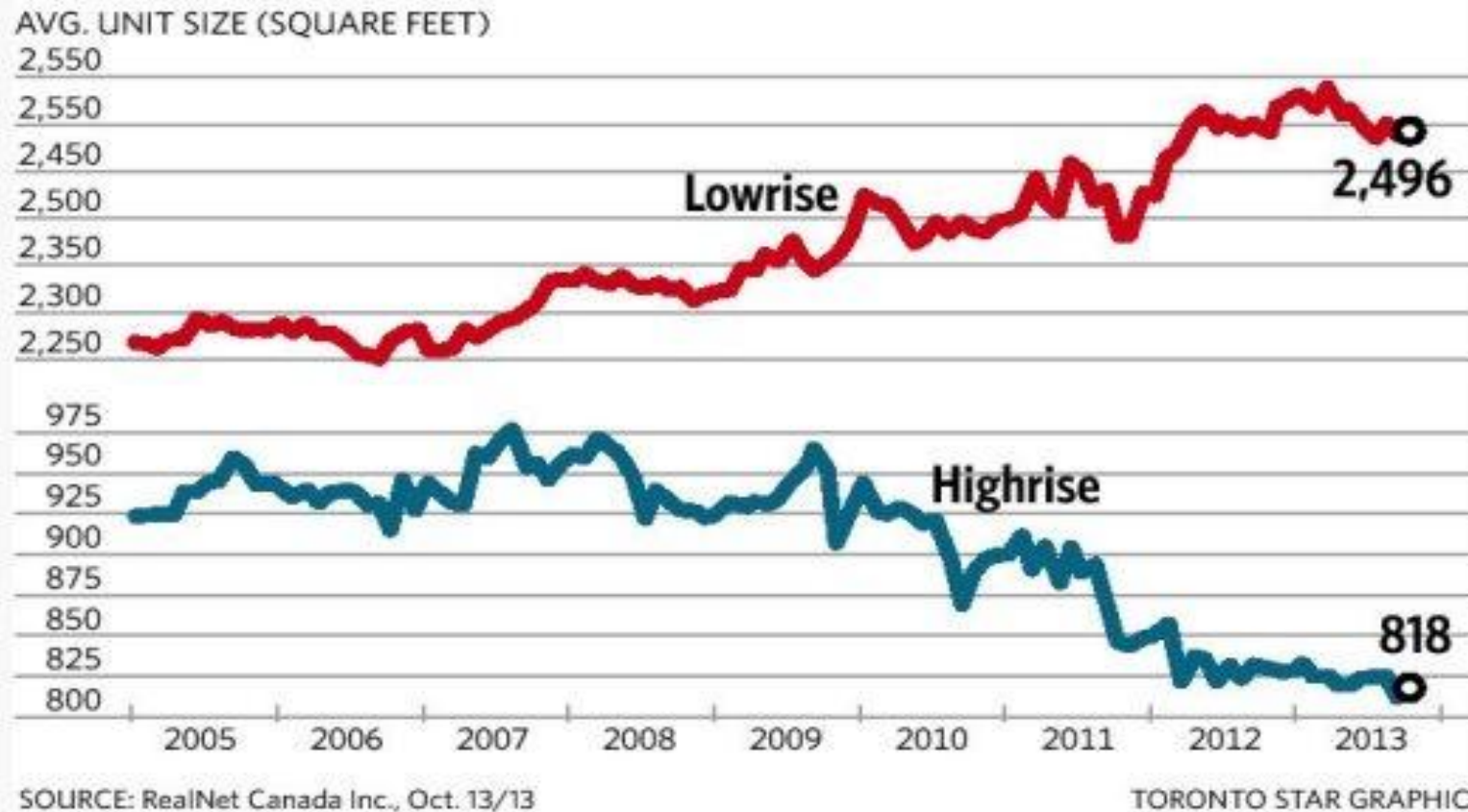
Average size of New Canadian Home: **2300 sq feet**



Photo: Brampton 'Monster Home'
Credit: johnsees.wordpress

Houses getting bigger, apts smaller

The changing average size of new GTA homes



Challenge #2: Fragmented Responsibilities

‘Silo thinking’ separates housing from other policy areas and undermines effectiveness of the housing system.



Policy Area	Federal Government	Provincial Government	Municipal Government
<i>Infrastructure Investment</i>			
<i>Social and Affordable Housing</i>			
<i>Income Tax</i>			
<i>Property Tax and Development Charges</i>			
<i>Land Use Planning</i>			
<i>Excise Taxes</i>			
<i>Building Code</i>			
<i>Resource Pricing (including energy, water)</i>			
<i>Housing Finance Regulation</i>			
<i>Rent Regulation</i>			





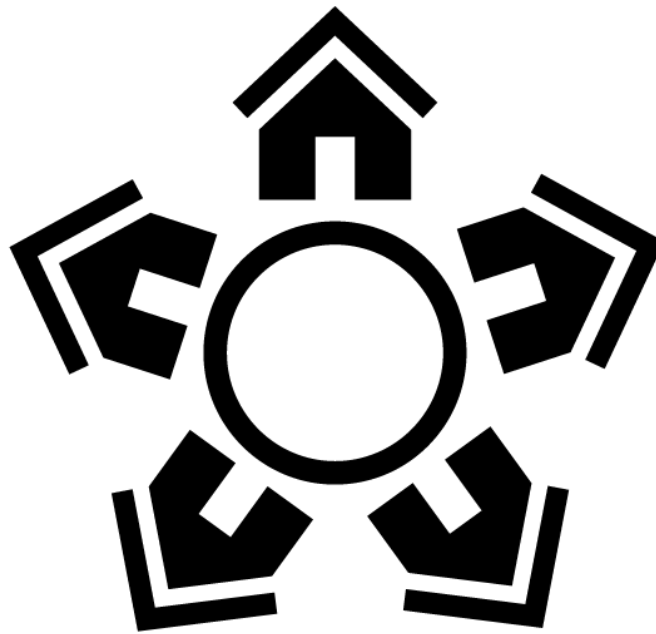


GTA Housing Action Lab

John Purkis, The Natural Step



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GTA Housing Action Lab



GTA – Housing Action lab Process

What

How

Test

Scale

What is the problem? How can we look at this issue in new ways and bring in new perspectives? Are we asking the right questions?

What is our shared vision for the future of the system? What are the priorities that will enable us to make an impact in moving towards this future?

Test new ideas that require prototyping in the real world and evaluate their effectiveness

Scale ideas that have been tested



process to date

SUMMER/FALL 2013

Small group initiates Housing Action Lab

Mowat publishes foundation report

SPRING 2014

Interviews conducted with key actors

Design brief created

JUNE 2014

Foundations Workshop held to establish
vision for Lab

Created outcomes report from workshop

SEPTEMBER 2014

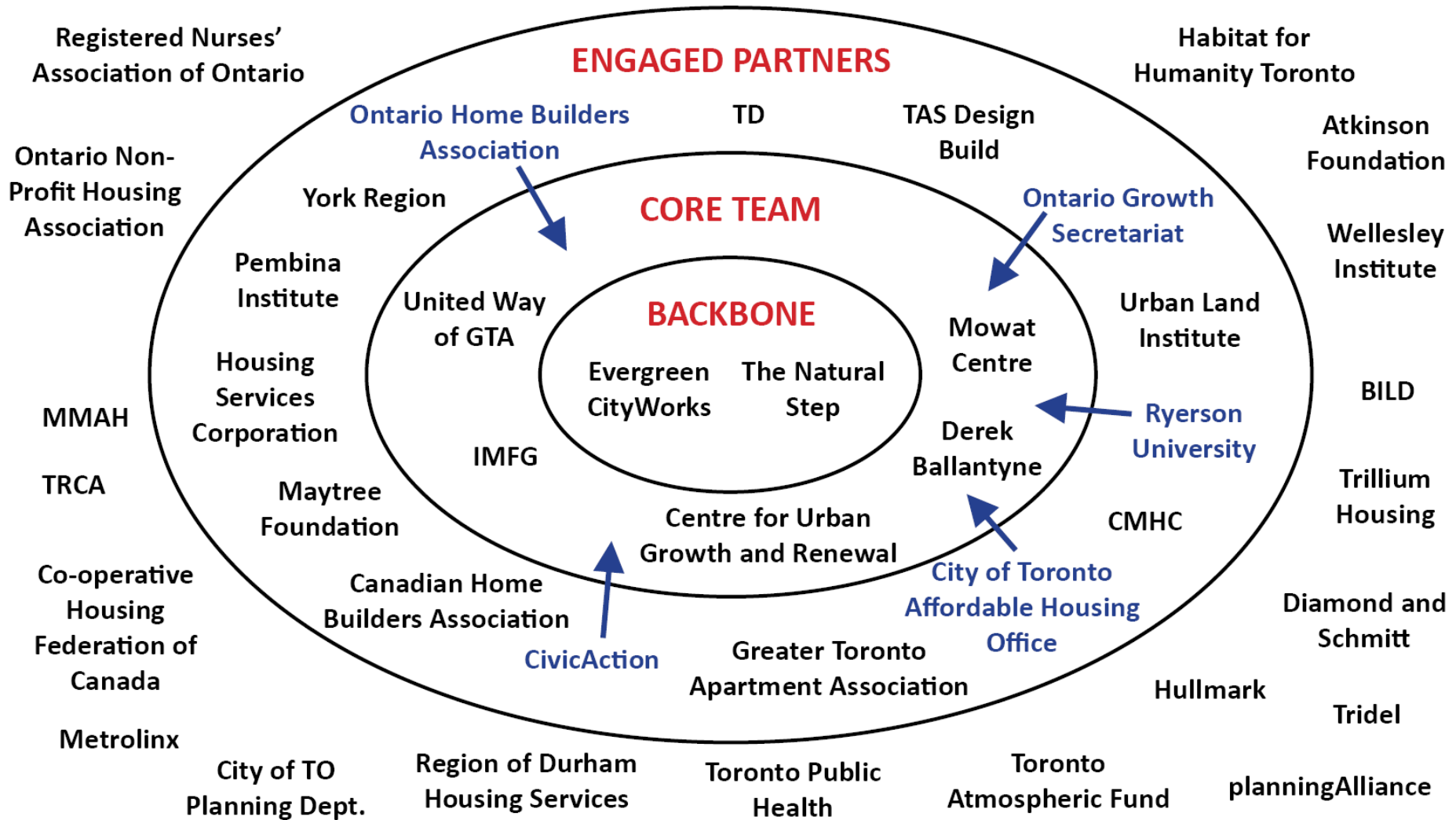
Created backgrounder

Core group convenes at Wasan Island

Synthesis and summary of findings created



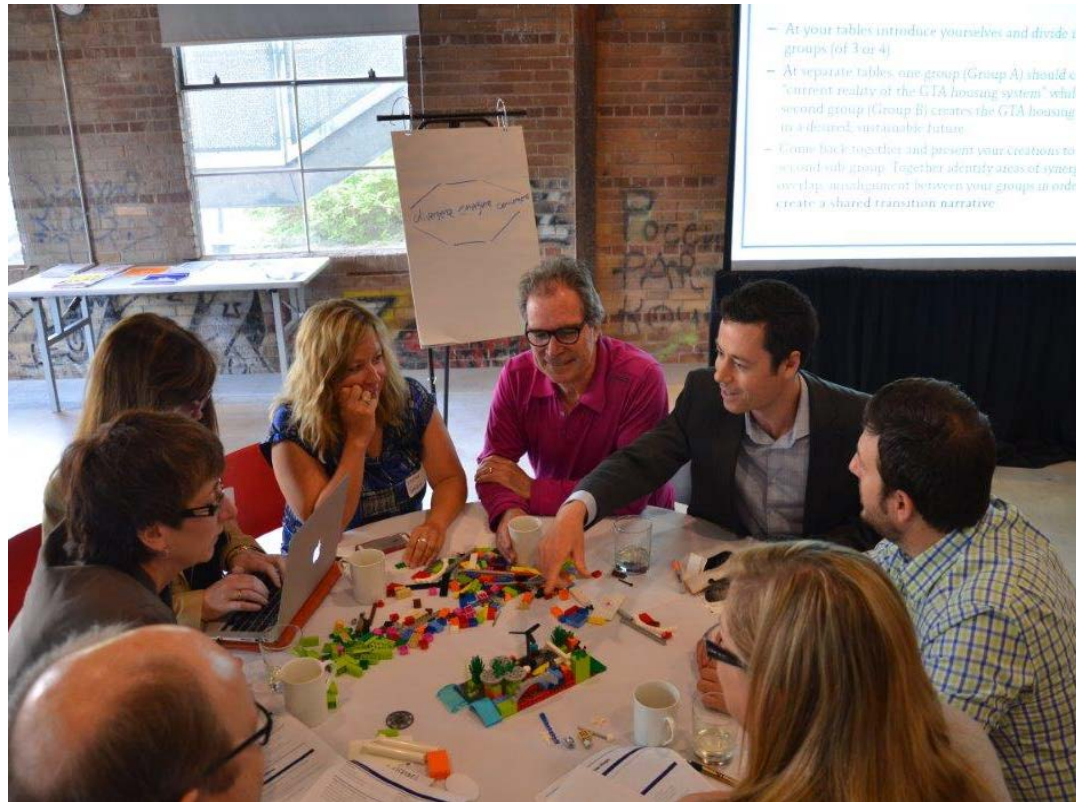
partners



Workshop 1

June 2014

40 cross-sector came together to develop a shared understanding of the problem, deepen our understanding of one another's perspectives and begin to develop a framework for change.



- At your tables introduce yourselves and divide into groups (of 3 or 4)
- At separate tables one group (Group A) should create "current reality of the GTA housing system" while the second group (Group B) creates the GTA housing system in a desired, sustainable future
- Come back together and present your creations to the second table group. Together identify areas of synergy, overlap, misalignment between your groups in order to create a shared transition narrative



workshop 2

September 2014

20 cross-sector leaders came together on Wasan Island to refine the thinking that emerged from previous work.



the vision

The GTA Housing Action Lab is a collaborative working group that has come together to build:

- Programs and policies that **support the affordability of housing** to ensure residents of all incomes have the best chance to live in a suitable home and have a choice in their housing
- **Public support for intensification**, aware of the benefits of complete communities, and policies that support creative infill in our urban centres and a connected region
- A policy and regulatory framework that **encourages diversity in form and tenure**, intensification and affordability, and creates incentives aligned with the needs of the residents of the region while creating an economically viable housing sector



intervention areas

1. Taking a regional approach
2. Where and what we build
3. Investing in affordability



TAKING A REGIONAL APPROACH

WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

1. Integrated land use transportation and housing policies across the region
2. Coordinated regional approach to housing issues including approvals process and municipal land use and housing service plans
3. Public narrative about land use / density / housing as a regional issue

HOW WE GET THERE

Utilize existing legislation

Reviews of Growth Plan for GGH,
The Big Move, Greenbelt Act (+
LTAAS?)

Advocate for
coordinated
reviews

Develop &
submit recs for
reviews

Enable
Metrolinx TPPS
to require
smarter density

Advocate for
a modernized
Land Use
Planning System

Enable regional
coordination
across
municipalities

RESEARCH

RESEARCH

RESEARCH?

RESEARCH?

POLICY DESIGN

POLICY DESIGN

POLICY
DESIGN?

POLICY
DESIGN?

ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, NARRATIVE AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

HOUSING ACTION LAB GROUP [SELF IDENTIFIED AT WASAN]

PembinaYork Region

OHBA

ULI

CivicAction

Paul Bedford

CityWorks

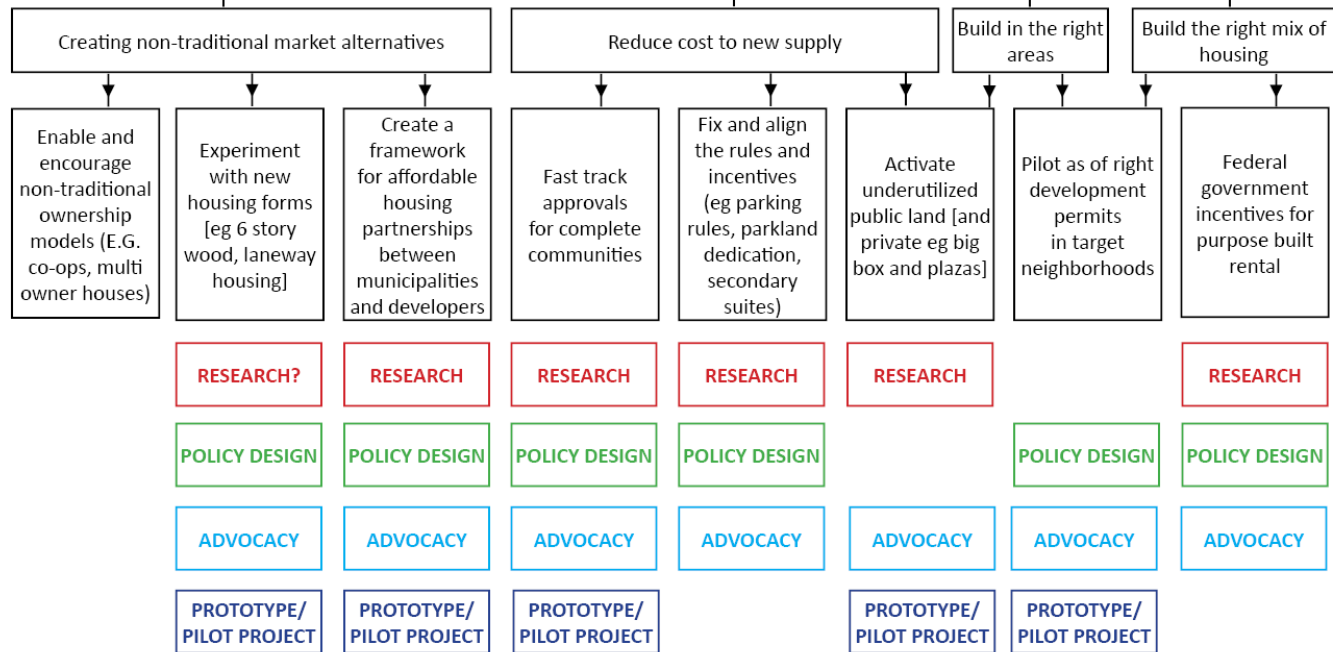


WHERE WE BUILD AND WHAT WE BUILD

WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

1. Increase choice of tenure and form across the region
2. Increase affordability of new housing
3. Densify / intensify housing in the right areas

HOW WE GET THERE



NARRATIVE AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

HOUSING ACTION LAB GROUP [SELF IDENTIFIED AT WASAN]

OHBA York Region GTAA CityWorks Pemina United Way of Greater TO ULI
Affordable Housing Office, City of TO Paul Bedford

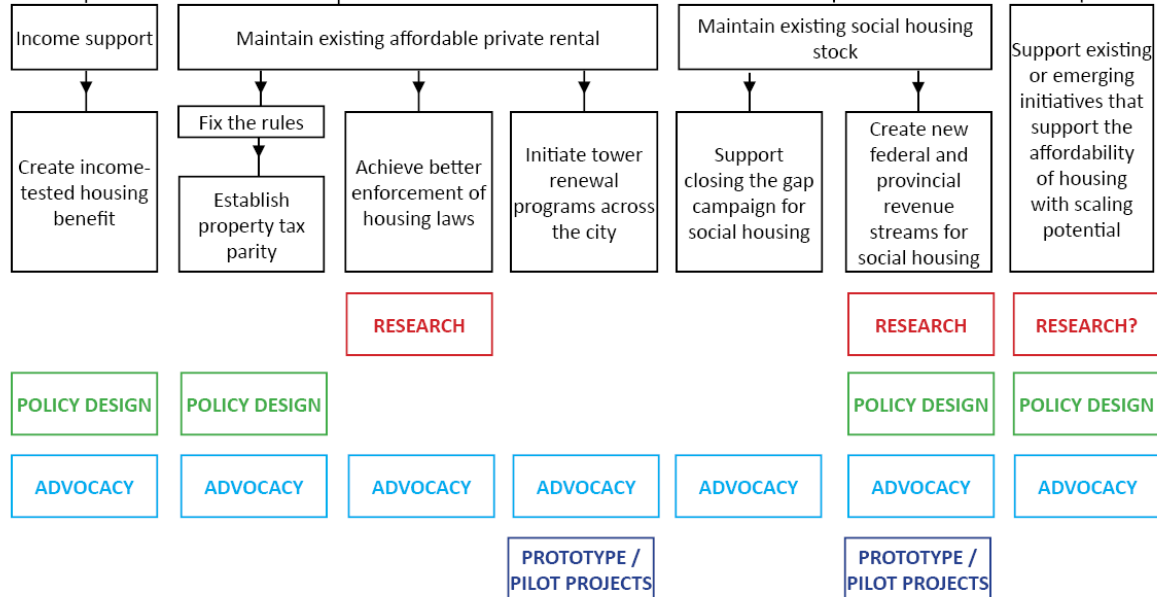


INVESTING IN AFFORDABILITY

WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

1. Provide income support to enable people to enter the housing market
2. Maintain existing affordable private rental stock
3. Maintain existing social housing stock

HOW WE GET THERE



NARRATIVE AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

HOUSING ACTION LAB GROUP [SELF IDENTIFIED AT WASAN]

CityWorks

United Way of Greater TO

CivicAction

HSC

Paul Bedford



draft research agenda

Mapping housing stock across the GTA (present and future)

The economic impacts of the housing market

How the housing market responds to plans and policies (eg how Places to Grow has impacted the housing market)

Plus more detailed policy research needed (eg. barriers and incentives to purpose-built rental)



next steps

TIMELINE

NOVEMBER 2014

Workshop in conjunction with TD
Economic Club lunch and Ed
Clark Speech

WINTER 2014/2015

Working session with core group

Begin research

Finalize Strategy by end of 2014

SPRING / SUMMER 2015

Execution of Action Plan

KEY NEAR TERM WORK PRODUCTS

- Video produced for TD Economic Club luncheon about housing in the GTA
- Research agenda and foundational research
- GTA Housing Action Lab Strategy



Shaping our Desired Transition

Exercise description: Your group's task is to create a visual representation of the desired transition in the Ontario housing system using Lego.



Shaping our Desired Transition

- At your tables introduce yourselves and divide into 2 sub-groups (of 3 or 4).
- At separate tables, one group (Group A) should create the “current reality of the Ontario housing system” while the second group (Group B) creates the “Housing system in a desired, sustainable future”.
- Come back together and present your creations to the second sub-group. Together identify areas of synergy, overlap, misalignment between your groups in order to **create a shared transition narrative**.
- We'll debrief as a large group.





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