



MY FUTURE HOME FORUM

Regional Older Adults Session Report

November 2022

Adults, ages 47 and up, envision a future where home is community-oriented, tech-enabled, accessible and close to nature and services

Convened by:



With funding provided by:





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Overview

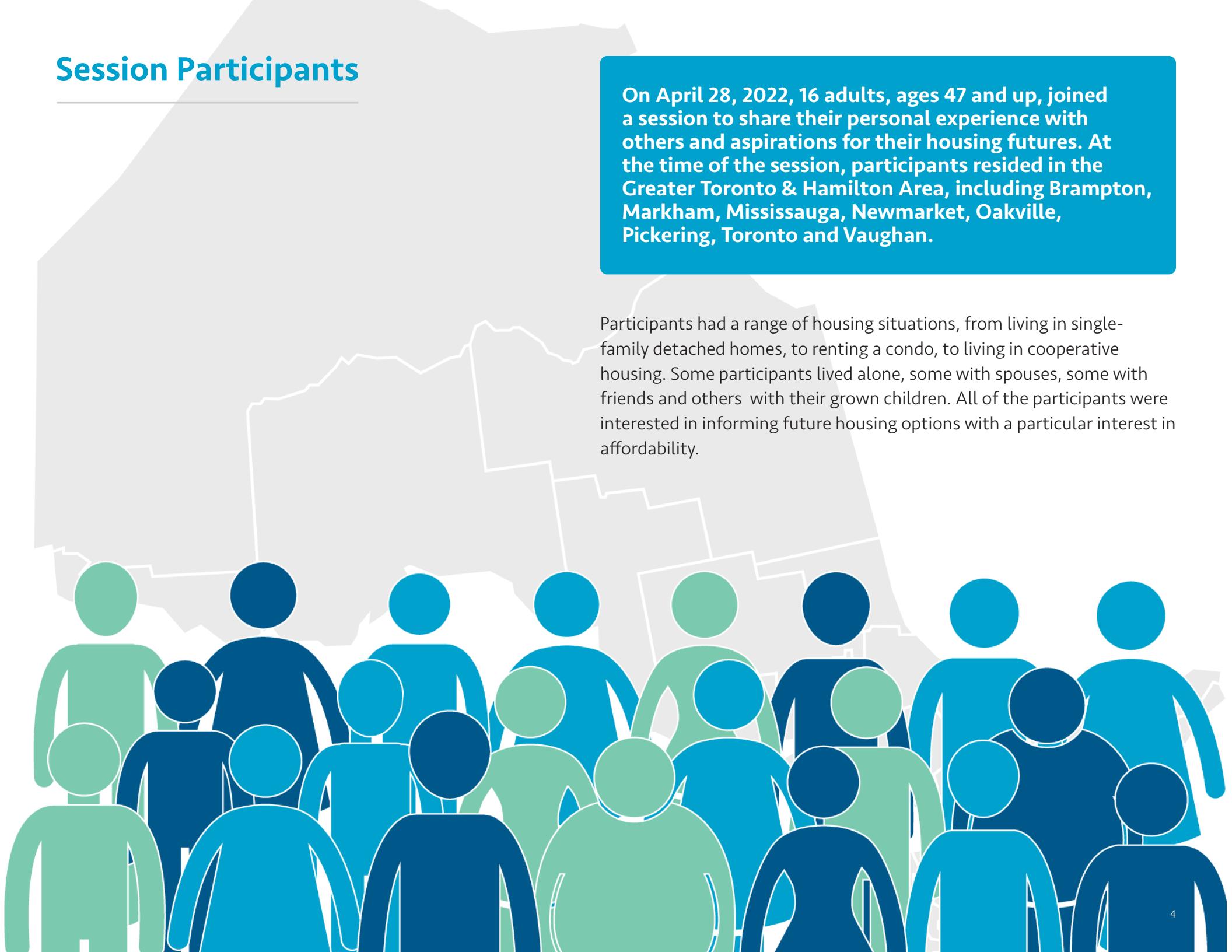


How do today's adults, ages 47 and up, aspire to live in 2040? Is there an alternative to long-term care and the current retirement home model? How important is access to nature or proximity to family? To understand the answers to these questions, people who will be 65 years old or greater in 2040 were engaged to share their perspectives on their future housing, home and community needs.

Evergreen hosted the regional My Future Home Forum sessions to identify the future housing needs of community members in and around the Greater Toronto & Hamilton Area. With generous support from Meridian Credit Union, the focus of the sessions was to engage youth, newcomers and older adults to share their individual lived experience and insights, a personal perspective often not integrated into housing policy decisions. They were asked to imagine their future, including an exploration of their aspirations and the needs that housing solutions will have to meet. Participants joined facilitated, highly participatory virtual sessions to share their perspective on their future needs, in their own words.

Session Participants

On April 28, 2022, 16 adults, ages 47 and up, joined a session to share their personal experience with others and aspirations for their housing futures. At the time of the session, participants resided in the Greater Toronto & Hamilton Area, including Brampton, Markham, Mississauga, Newmarket, Oakville, Pickering, Toronto and Vaughan.



Participants had a range of housing situations, from living in single-family detached homes, to renting a condo, to living in cooperative housing. Some participants lived alone, some with spouses, some with friends and others with their grown children. All of the participants were interested in informing future housing options with a particular interest in affordability.

A Vision for Home in 2040

To invite personal perspectives, participants were asked to come to the session prepared to display and share an object that represented their aspirations for the future of home. This might have been a physical item from their current home such as a houseplant, a picture or image of something they hoped to have or experience or any other visual aid that helped to evoke for them their idea of home. Participants took turns sharing their objects and describing to the group how and why it represented their ideal future home. Based on what participants shared, the facilitators worked with the group to identify common themes related to their ideal future homes, and important differences in their perspectives. Participants in this session identified the following as elements of an aspirational housing future:

My future home is communal and community-oriented

To combat social isolation, participants want more housing options that support communal and community-oriented living that provides their own space, communal spaces, as well as access to shared activities and experiences. A number of participants also expressed a desire for intergenerational living. This particular theme was of significant interest to participants.

My future home is automated

Participants want affordable and helpful technology such as medical alerts, light sensors and smart appliances that make everyday life safer and easier.

My future home is affordable

Participants want a variety of housing options to choose from, such as bungalows with gardens, walkable urban homes and alternatives to retirement communities, without affordability being a significant stressor.

My future home enables my independence

Participants want community services and features that enable and encourage mobility, such as the de-icing of sidewalks and ramps. They also want their dwellings to feature accessible designs.

A Vision for Home in 2040



My future home has access to nature

Participants described an ideal future home that provides access to nature such as a small garden, forest or body of water.

My future home is close to services

Participants want to be in close proximity to services (e.g., hospitals, health services, shops and restaurants).

My future home is not in traditional assisted living

Many participants expressed a strong desire for new housing models. The current assisted living model options such as retirement homes, assisted living communities and long-term care facilities were not described as desirable future housing or community options. Aging in place was also a common theme, as many participants did not want to move away from their friends and family.

Key Actions for Change



After exploring future housing aspirations, participants were asked to identify what changes to existing programs, policies or social norms might be needed to make their vision a reality. In doing so, it was identified that a mix of actors - from government (municipal, provincial/territorial, federal), to private sector (financial institutions, mortgage lenders, property developers, other businesses), to community organizations and individuals, all have a critical role to play in creating these future changes. Table 1 lists the actions identified by adult participants, ages 47 and up, classified by whether the action must happen immediately, in the near-term (two to four years) or longer-term (five or more years).

Table 1 highlights what participants identified as important actions required to drive the change needed to meet their future needs. While some participants had knowledge of current housing policies, some did not, but all were highly encouraged to contribute regardless of how much they knew about housing policies and programs. Therefore, some of the actions identified by participants may have already been implemented or are being implemented, while others may lie outside the realms or capacities of the interested parties under which they are classified. In addition to identifying potential future actions, this activity provided insight into adult (ages 47 and up) perspectives on the role of government, private, sector, community organizations and individuals, and what some individuals deem as housing priorities.

Key Actions for Change

Table 1: Actions identified by adults, ages 47 and up, classified by whether the action must happen immediately, in the near-term (two to five years) or longer-term (five or more years).

Actor	Now	Near-term (2 to 5 years)	Longer-term (5+ years)
GOVERNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new public and private sector financing opportunities to support collective ownership and other non-traditional housing options Create more government incentives and regulations to ensure developers build purpose-built rental units, larger communal living areas and other specialized housing developments Integrate public, community and private sector tools and programs for older adults to enhance access to employment, living resources and affordable food Subsidize equitable government housing based on income to include and accommodate different income levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandate that new builds by developers have assistive technology built in, such as medical alerts Regulate caps on housing prices Integrate older adults into the public education system to foster more intergenerational learning and relationship-building 	
PRIVATE SECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new public and private sector financing opportunities to support collective ownership and other non-traditional housing options Integrate public, community and private sector tools and programs for older adults to enhance access to employment, living resources and affordable food 		

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Actor	Now	Near-term (2 to 5 years)	Longer-term (5+ years)
ORGANIZATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community lobbying and advocacy to help government understand what housing is needed and wanted • Integrate public, community and private sector tools and programs for older adults to enhance access to employment, living resources and affordable food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new community governance structures to ensure housing for older adults is run by older adults themselves 	
INDIVIDUALS			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change broader cultural and societal perceptions about aging to ensure older adults are valued and treated with dignity

While the opportunities for action are classified by actor, it is clear that solutions must be developed collaboratively between community members, government, developers, financiers, not-for-profit organizations and more.

How to Stay Involved

Evergreen is committed to creating innovative housing solutions by building a healthy housing ecosystem. Evergreen looks forward to working with key players in the housing ecosystem and beyond to build on these actions to advance a future where older adults have their desired future home - community-oriented, tech-enabled, accessible and close to nature and services.

To learn about the insights captured through all the My Future Home Forum sessions, visit the [Future Cities Canada Portal](#) to read the other reports.

Thank you to Meridian Credit Union for their generous funding to support the regional My Future Home Forum sessions.

A special thank you to all the participants who contributed their experience and energy to help identify future housing needs that will inform housing innovators in Canada.

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