



MY FUTURE HOME FORUM

Regional Youth: Ages 25 to 29 Session Report

November 2022

Future 43- to 47-year-olds envision a future where home is affordable and close to community, services and nature, includes a food garden and sustainable features and honours truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities

Convened by:



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Overview



How do today's youth aspire to live in 2040? Is home ownership the goal for everyone? How important is walkability and access to nature? To understand the answers to these questions, residents of tomorrow 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 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 May 12, 2022, 20 youth between the ages of 25 and 29 years old, 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, Caledon, Mississauga and Toronto.

Participants had a range of housing situations from living with their parents, to renting a room with friends or other family members. All 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. Youth in this session identified the following as elements of an aspirational housing future:

My future home is affordable

Many participants expressed a desire for home ownership in the future but felt that this was unachievable given the current housing market situation in the Greater Toronto & Hamilton Area & Niagara Region. Participants described a future where housing is not tied to financial investments or wealth creation. Participants want to have access to affordable housing options but are less interested in some of the alternatives available today such as communal living; participants want their own space. The ideal is to make home ownership possible for everyone to enable independence and control.

My future home has access to nature

Participants want to have close proximity and access to nature and greenspaces. They want green space around their homes (e.g., front and back yard greenspace, vertical gardens in low or high-rise buildings).

My future home has a food garden

Participants want to be able to grow their own food at home, to have a sustainable food source and to know that their food is safe in that it has not been treated with pesticides.

A Vision for Home in 2040



My future home is close to services

Participants want to be close to services (e.g., community buildings, transit, health facilities). The concept of 15-minute communities was seen as optimal, where residents can walk and bike to amenities in 15 minutes or less.

My future home provides a sense of community

Participants want space for social gatherings and for their home to facilitate a sense of community.

My future home supports land back

Some participants raised that land back¹, when fully achieved, is in direct conflict with ideals of individual home ownership. While participants acknowledged that land back may not be fully understood, it may mean embracing anti-ownership or a land back tax. These are two of many possible mechanisms to acknowledge settler commitments to truth and reconciliation.

My future home has a sustainable design

Participants described the ideal physical dwelling as designed to reduce waste, enable energy efficiency and leverage technology.

¹Land back is an Indigenous-led movement to return land to the Indigenous communities who traditionally cared for it and called it home. To learn more: <https://landback.org/>

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 youth participants, 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 youth perspectives on the role of government, private, sector, community organizations and individuals, and what some youth deem as housing priorities.

Key Actions for Change

Table 1: Actions identified by youth, ages 25 to 29, 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"> • Implement interventions to manage house prices (e.g., increase taxes for multiple property owners, end blind bidding, stop foreign buyers) • Ensure everyone has access to clean water • Subsidize costs for first time home buyers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislate that housing is a human right • Identify and make progress on land back policies • Support affordable food • Pass more legislation to limit air pollution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create co-operative housing models for all income levels • Reconfigure transit to support greater proximity to services
PRIVATE SECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop affordable housing units • Incorporate community gardens in new developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate services to enable greater proximity to homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build homes that incorporate greenhouses • Build homes that focus on energy efficiency
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for community-oriented values 		
INDIVIDUALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build awareness of land back and what it means 		

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 and beyond the housing ecosystem to build on these actions to advance a future where youth have their desired future home - close to community, services and nature, includes a food garden and sustainable features and honours truth and reconciliation with Indigenous communities.

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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