



News Release

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Breaking new ground on the homelessness front.

TORONTO, ONTARIO—Construction is set to begin on one of Toronto's first affordable rental buildings under the city's Let's Build program. Through Let's Build, the City of Toronto is providing land and financing to Trellis Housing Initiatives, a community-based non-profit organization, to build 24 affordable rental units at Lawrence Av. W. at Allen Rd. Additional support comes from the Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative in association with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). A groundbreaking ceremony was held at the construction site today.

Seventeen of the Trellis Gardens apartments will provide below-market value housing for about 44 women and their children, and offer support services such as child care and skills training. The site also accommodates a community garden and children's play area.

Rents for the 17 below-market value units will range from \$500 per month for a one-bedroom unit to about \$550 for a two-bedroom. Seven more units will rent at affordable market rates. Tenants will be selected from Toronto's waiting list for assisted housing, from the city's emergency shelter system and the Out of the Cold program.

"Trellis Gardens will be more than bricks and mortar," said Valerie Elliott Hyman, co-chair of Trellis Housing Initiatives. "It will be a community that offers a variety of skills to help people get back into the mainstream. We chose the name Trellis because it is a support for growth, development and beauty."

"Toronto and the Government of Canada have set the stage for partnerships among community groups and government to make housing happen," said Toronto Councillor Brad Duguid, chair of the city's community services committee.

“This project is an example of the Government of Canada’s commitment to working with our partners to find innovative and successful ways of combating homelessness in Canada,” said Joe Volpe, Member of Parliament for Eglinton-Lawrence on behalf of the Honourable Claudette Bradshaw, Federal Co-ordinator on Homelessness, and the Honourable Alfonso Gagliano, Minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. “This is the kind of support to those in need that the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation are providing,” he added.

Trellis Housing Initiatives is a coalition of Congregation Darchei Noam and the Out of the Cold program, a faith-based network that provides meals and overnight shelter to people without a home. These groups have a demonstrated ability to develop affordable housing and have experience in providing services to people in need.

Applying the city’s Housing First Policy for Affordable Housing, Let’s Build is leasing city-owned land at a nominal cost and providing a grant of \$288,000 from Toronto’s Capital Revolving Fund for Affordable Housing. An interest-free second mortgage of \$800,000 and waiver of development fees rounds out the City of Toronto’s support to the project.

“I encourage other community partnerships, like Trellis Initiatives, to work with us to help bring their affordable housing projects to life,” said Councillor Michael Feldman, chair of the Capital Revolving Fund’s advisory committee.

The Government of Canada is providing an additional grant of \$500,000 in capital funding under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). Trellis Housing Initiatives is committed to raising at least \$360,000 towards capital costs. The CMHC’s contribution to this project includes \$87,000 in interest-free loans and grants, in addition to providing mortgage loan insurance on Trellis’ \$1.9 million mortgage. The mortgage loan insurance helps to facilitate construction by enabling a larger mortgage to be obtained at a lower rate.

Let’s Build is the City of Toronto’s affordable housing development program that helps community and commercial developers build affordable housing. Let’s Build makes available city-owned land along with capital grants, loans and development assistance. There are currently 304 units of affordable housing in various stages of development through Let’s Build.

The Government of Canada's \$305-million SCPI sponsors broad partnerships to implement a community plan for preventing and alleviating homelessness. Toronto will receive \$53 million under the SCPI for service programs and capital projects.

Funding for the National Homelessness Initiative was provided for in the February 2000 Budget and is therefore built into the existing financial framework.

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