

on themarket

Early into 2019, and the new home market has already featured many site openings. For example, Hart Village in south Guelph had its grand opening last weekend with tremendous success.

'Net zero-ready' homes with energy efficiency features that exceed the Ontario Building Code minimum standards are being offered, along with modern bungalow elevations with two-car garages, two-storey detached homes with an optional finished attic. This site captures the needs of the current buyer demographic.

Summerfields by Sorbara Homes in Fergus features bungalow townhomes and detached homes at affordable prices, and Trimart anticipates many more bungalow, townhome and detached homes to be released in the next two months. Stay tuned for more information.

Examples of notable sites are Breeze in North Oshawa by Midhaven Homes; Hart Village in South Guelph by Terra View Custom Homes; Summerfields in Fergus by Sorbara Homes; Pavilia Park Towns in Markham by Times Group Corporation; and, North Oakville by Valery Homes.



North Oshawa

Breeze

Midhaven Homes

Prices range from \$687,900 to \$729,900 for 1,609 to 3,248 sq. ft. Detached homes on 30', 36' and 40' lots
www.midhavenhomes.com/breeze-models/



South Guelph

Hart Village

Terra View Custom Homes

Prices range from \$744,900 to \$965,900 for 1,230 to 2,262 sq. ft. Bungalows on 45' lots, plus detached homes on 36.7', 40' and 45' lots
www.terra-view.com/hart-village/



Fergus

Summerfields

Sorbara Homes

Prices range from \$412,990 to \$619,990 for 1,208 to 2,938 sq. ft. Freehold bungalow townhomes plus detached homes on 32' and 40' lots
sorbara.com/projects/summerfields-2/



Markham

Pavilia Park Towns

Times Group Corporation

Prices range from \$1,350,000 to \$1,512,000 for 2,230 to 2,930 sq. ft. Freehold townhomes
www.timesgroupcorp.com



Oakville

North Oakville

Valery Homes

Prices Range from \$1,190,000 to \$1,580,000 for 2,125 to 3,628 sq. ft. Detached homes on 36', 38' and 43' lots
www.valeryhomes.com

Toronto's youthful city opportunity



MARK WESSEL
GREEN
LIVING

What's life like for the youth in Toronto these days?

As recently as 2014, Toronto was ranked number one in the world by the Youthful Cities index. But at the same time the GTA has eclipsed Vancouver as Canada's most expensive city for rent, averaging \$2,260 per month for a one-bedroom apartment.

And the average cost of public transit — even when purchasing an annual Presto card is \$4.40 per day, compared to Vienna (with a million fewer residents than Toronto), which is just one Euro per day or almost one-third of what Torontonians pay.

So, on the one hand, much of Toronto's growth and vibrancy can be attributed to its strong and ever growing youth population, which gives it an edge over other major cities. On the other, realities such as high rent and transit fees are making living in the GTA cost prohibitive for many youths.

To address both these opportunities and challenges head on, while harnessing the brainpower and innovation of youth, a program called Future Cities Canada is currently recruiting 30-35 young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 to take part in what's known as the 30Lab.

Presented in partnership with Youthful Cities and Evergreen and with RBC funding, Future Cities' 30Lab is a think-tank program where participants create and launch innovative ideas tied to such areas as urban food, water, transportation, housing and waste systems. Each of the cities involved (Toronto, Hamilton, Halifax, Vancouver and Calgary), will zero in on one of these areas. For Toronto — not surprisingly, the focus is on housing.

"I'm really happy we're addressing housing," observes Lhazin Nedup, Evergreen project manager and one of the leads for the Future Cities Builders Toronto program. "Our participants will be looking at housing not only in terms of affordability, but with the whole ecosystem, which includes everything



Youth participants along with program leads from 2018 Youthful Cities initiative. Photo by Kristina Smith.

from temporary shelter to the cost of rental units to access to food, transportation and health services."

Described as a 'pop up and do think tank' on the Youthful Cities website, over the course of four workshops in April and May, the participants will be led through a design process to brainstorm and refine community projects that address Toronto's housing challenges. Ultimately, one of these projects will be selected and launched over the coming year.

"A big benefit of the program is enabling youth to have a voice in city planning," observes Niklas Agarwal, one of the Toronto 30Lab leads. "Right now, young people aren't at the table when it comes to discussing such things as housing. And we hope that (with the initiative selected) we can have an impact."

A budget of \$5,000 has been set to fund the eventual program Toronto's 30Lab participants come up with, which on the surface, isn't a lot. But Agarwal helps put this seemingly insurmountable challenge into perspective, citing Vancouver's Empty Nest program as a creative yet affordable housing solution.

Modelled after similar programs in the Netherlands, Germany, France, the UK and the U.S., Empty Nest is a multigenerational solution whereby homeowners open up bedrooms for youth at an affordable price.

In many instances, it's a symbiotic relationship whereby older homeowners rent their spare rooms at a reduced rate in return for assistance provided by their youthful tenants on the home front.

To put the potential impact of such a program into perspective — Vancouver has a rental vacancy rate of a mere .8 percent and a month's rent for a one-bedroom apartment is the second most expensive amongst Canadian cities — just shy of Toronto at \$2,130. However, it's estimated there are potentially over 800,000 'spare bedrooms' for the city's youth to live at an affordable price.

Considering the endless possibilities with the right mix of youthful zeal and creativity, it will be interesting to see what the Future City Builders Toronto 30Lab program comes up with at the end of May.

Author's note: if you're between 18 and 29, live in Toronto, are unemployed or underemployed and are interested in taking part in 30Labs, the deadline to apply is February 24. To learn more and apply, go to:

www.evergreen.ca/our-projects/future-city-builders

— Mark Wessel lives in Collingwood, Ont. and is a passionate advocate for living more sustainably at home and in the greater community. Visit his blog at www.sustainablerebuildercommunity.com.