



**HOUSING
TASK
FORCE**



Progress Update and Initial Findings

27 October 2023

Contents

Phase 1: Orientation Sprint

- What, who, why
- Early research results and progress updates

Phase 2: Deep Dive

- Research
- Engagement
- Analysis
- Potential solutions

Phase 3: Future Phases, Action, and Advocacy

- Opportunities
- Partnerships



Why do we care about housing?

- The shortage of affordable housing is a growing challenge for many of our community members, students and employees alike.
- As living in the Greater Toronto Area becomes even more costly, inaction could lead to mounting challenges in attracting talent, ensuring student success, and retaining our invaluable employees.
- The housing crisis will not be solved by GBC alone. It is, however, vitally important that we do our part to help advance understanding of the issue, explore meaningful solutions, and work with urgency to identify the tools available to GBC, our government partners, and others.

Student Success
and Well-Being

Attract and
Retain Quality
Workforce

Inform Peers and
Government

Campus and
Capital Planning

Positive Outcomes
for Broader Public

Take Urgent Action
and Plan for Future

Who and what is the Housing Task Force?

- Established early 2023, and working to support the ongoing GBC Campus Master Plan project
- Internal stakeholders meeting frequently to discuss the GBC and local housing challenge
- Focused purpose on understanding, informing, and identifying solutions related to housing
- Representation from five core areas and senior leadership meet regularly
- Additional participation from others on an ad hoc basis, in respect of limited time
- Anticipate a widening circle as the work advances

Student Success

People and Culture

Government Relations

Institutional Research

Facilities and Sustainability

+ ad hoc participation

Housing Task Force work to date

- George Brown community engagement
- Early research and discovery
- City of Toronto Post-Secondary Affordable Housing Strategy
- Conversations with housing service providers
- Conversations with developers
- Update to Board of Governors
- Informing government partners





Early Research Results

Toronto is experiencing a crisis of housing affordability

- Adequate housing is a basic human right and a requirement for good health. It is essential to every person's welfare, prosperity, and dignity. ([CMHA Ontario](#))
- In the Toronto CMA in 2021, 41% of renters and 25% of owners were spending more than 30% of their gross income on shelter, which is considered the limit of affordability. ([Statistics Canada](#))
- The average asking rent for a new lease on a 2-bedroom apartment in Toronto in September 2023 was \$3,411/month. ([Rentals.ca](#))
- At least 10,274 people were known to be actively experiencing homelessness in the City of Toronto in the three months leading up to January 2023. ([City of Toronto](#))



Toronto has a shortage of housing

- The pace of homebuilding in Ontario has been less than half that required for population growth. Estimates put the existing shortage at 500,000 homes. ([Ontario BCM](#))
- Ontario has tasked Toronto with a new growth target that will require approximately doubling the historic rate of housing production to build 31,050 homes each year through 2031. ([City of Toronto](#))
- According to th City of Toronto, the supply of new and existing homes fails to meet the population needs in the following ways:
 - Not enough at a price affordable to lower and moderate-income households
 - Not enough purpose-built rentals
 - Not enough larger units with multiple bedrooms
 - Not enough in walkable, transit-oriented, sustainable communities close to jobs ([City of Toronto](#))
- Lack of government funding has resulted in negligible amounts of new non-market or deeply affordable homes for decades. ([City of Toronto](#))



Working Together to Build 1.5 Million Homes

PLACE Centre

CAEM

PLACE Centre

REALPAC

THE NATIONAL HOUSING ACCORD

A Multi-Sector Approach to Ending Canada's Rental Housing Crisis



Report of the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force

February 8, 2022



Housing a Generation of Essential Workers

The Cost of Inaction

JULY 2021

3

High housing costs are negatively affecting student learning and well-being

- Preliminary academic investigation into student homelessness in Canada suggests about 1 in 25 post-secondary students – approximately 80,000 in total across the country – are experiencing homelessness on any given day (including couch surfing, sleeping in a vehicle or locker room, or relying on an emergency shelter). ([HomeslessHub.ca](https://www.homeslesshub.ca))
- Local youth homeless shelter Covenant House Toronto estimated, in 2022, that approximately one-third of their residents were enrolled in college or university courses. ([BNN Bloomberg](https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca))



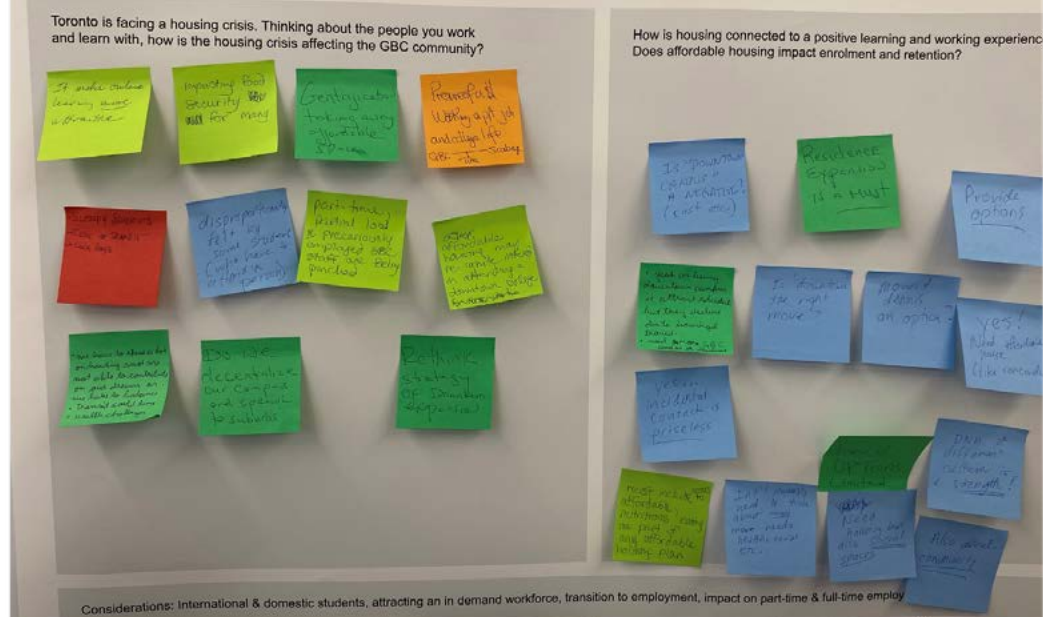
High housing costs are negatively affecting student learning and well-being

GBC students and employees were asked about housing issues at three on-campus engagement sessions in spring 2023. We heard:

- A broad consensus that housing issues are a serious challenge to the well-being and success of students.
- High housing costs can become a barrier to learning when students work long hours to pay rent and/or commute long hours to access cheaper housing options.
- Widespread concern with the prevalence of unsafe and unsuitable housing targeted at students who cannot afford any other options, and in particular such students arriving from overseas.



Housing & the GBC Experience



High housing costs are negatively affecting student learning and well-being

We surveyed GBC students in early 2023, and the 770 responses we received indicated the following:

- Nearly half of students reported commuting at least one hour each way.
- Students commute predominantly (83%) by public transit.
- Societal trends and anecdotal evidence suggest that these extremely long commutes are, at least in part, connected to high housing costs near our campuses. Many students may choose a long commute that enables them to obtain more affordable housing or to live with family.

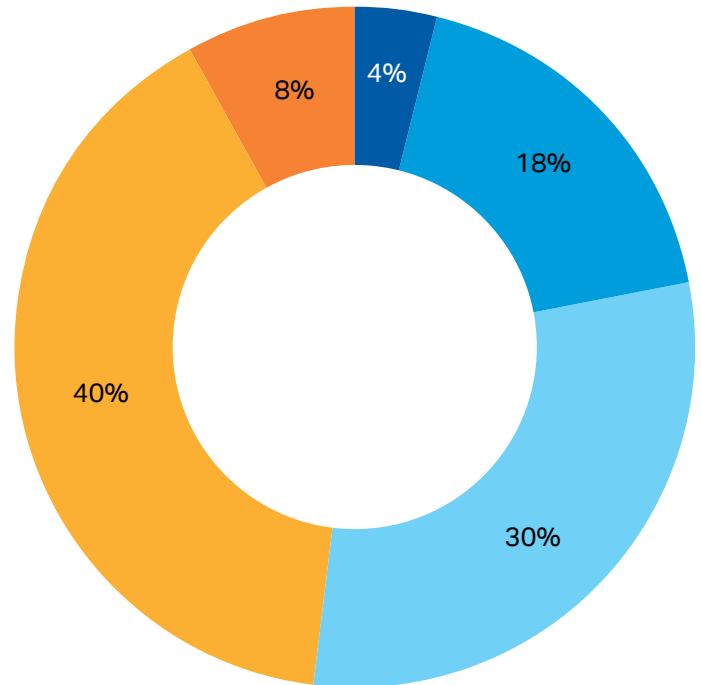
Commute Time

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| ● Less than 10 mins | 4% |
| ● 10–30 minutes | 18% |
| ● 30 minutes to 1 hour | 30% |
| ● 1–2 hours | 40% |
| ● More than 2 hours | 8% |

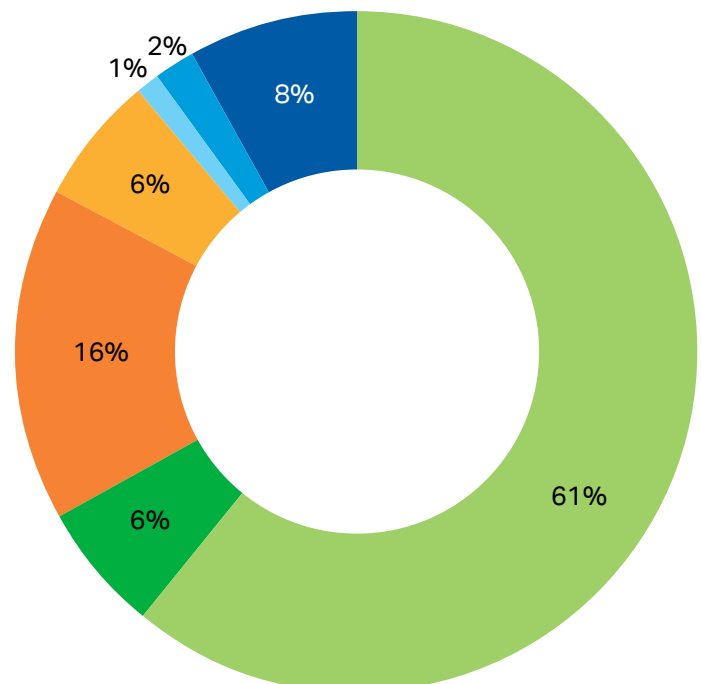
Travel Mode

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| ● TTC | 61% |
| ● GO Transit | 6% |
| ● GO + TTC | 16% |
| ● Car | 6% |
| ● Carpool | 0% |
| ● Rideshare / Taxi | 1% |
| ● Bike | 2% |
| ● Walking | 8% |

Commute Time



Travel Mode



Collaborating to understand the issue and find solutions

GBC participates in the HousingTO Plan and Academic Institutions Working Group hosted by the City of Toronto as part of the development of the city's Post-Secondary Affordable Housing Strategy. Common themes identified by the Working Group to date include:

- Access to affordable housing is a critical factor impacting universities and colleges' ability to attract and retain international talent (both students and faculty);
- Students are not recognized as priority populations in housing policies and programs while they contribute substantially to the economic, social and cultural life of the city;
- Definition of affordability based on average market rates does not reflect what students can pay;
- Lack of knowledge about tenancy rights and responsibilities particularly among international students;
- Unsafe housing conditions in unregulated multi-tenant houses; and,
- Government funding programs for affordable housing do not consider student residences as an eligible type of housing and there are no additional funding sources available to acquire and/or build new student residences.

There is strong interest in on-campus housing from many students

- GBC has one student residence building known as The George within walking distance of the St. James and Waterfront campuses.
- 500 beds in furnished 2-bedroom suites with kitchenette and bathroom. All utilities included. No mandatory meal plan.
- Residents are predominantly age 20 or younger, and two-thirds identify as female.
- 20% of residents commute 40 minutes by public transit to attend programs based at the Casa Loma Campus
- 74% of residents with previous domestic addresses already lived in Toronto or the GTA before moving into The George.
- The waitlist for The George is consistently 400-600 applicants per year.
- When Ontario colleges were first established in the mid-20th century, they were mandated to serve local commuter populations. Unlike at universities, residences were not part of college campus plans in the 1960s-1980s.
- The George was built to house athletes during the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games and opened to students in 2016.
- The cost to live at The George for 2023-2024 is approximately \$1,360 per month including furnishings, utilities, and internet, which compares very favourably to the cost of an average unfurnished 2-bedroom private rental with a roommate (\$1,706 plus utilities per person per month based on current market rents).



Student Housing Models

There are a variety of student housing models and precedents to explore further

Centennial Place, Centennial College:

- College-owned land
- Developer-owned and operated building (unlike The George, which is owned by GBC)
- Building also has classrooms, event centre, and campus amenities
- Student experience is integrated with College services and branding for “on campus” student experience
- 4-bed and 2-bed suites



There are a variety of student housing models and precedents to explore further

Note des Bois, Montreal:

- Purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA)
- Privately developed by a non-profit
- Funding/financing sources included the Concordia Student Union, City of Montreal, CMHC, and private investment funds.
- Managed independently by a co-operative governance model.
- 90 units, studios through 4-bed suites



There are a variety of student housing models and precedents to explore further

CampusOne, 253 College St, Toronto:

- Purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA)
- Privately developed, owned, and operated
- “Affiliated with” and promoted to students by the University of Toronto
- Studios through to 5-bed suites



There are a variety of student housing models and precedents to explore further

Tall Timber Student Housing, BCIT Burnaby

- Under construction
- Virtually the entire \$120 million project is funded by the Province of British Columbia
- 470 beds in studios and shared suites





Workforce Housing

High housing costs are increasingly a challenge for Toronto's employers

- The Toronto Region Board of Trade has identified the lack of housing affordability as a critical challenge confronting the region's continued growth and prosperity, with serious implications for employers.
- High housing costs present hard choices to Toronto employers:
 - Move the jobs away from Toronto to be closer to more affordable housing
 - Pay employees higher wages to compensate for housing costs
 - Fail to retain employees, accept difficulty attracting new talent, and adapt to rapid employee turnover
- The Board of Trade highlights Silicon Valley as a cautionary example: a place where vacant positions for service workers and even teachers cannot be filled because housing is so expensive.



High housing costs are increasingly a challenge for Toronto's employers

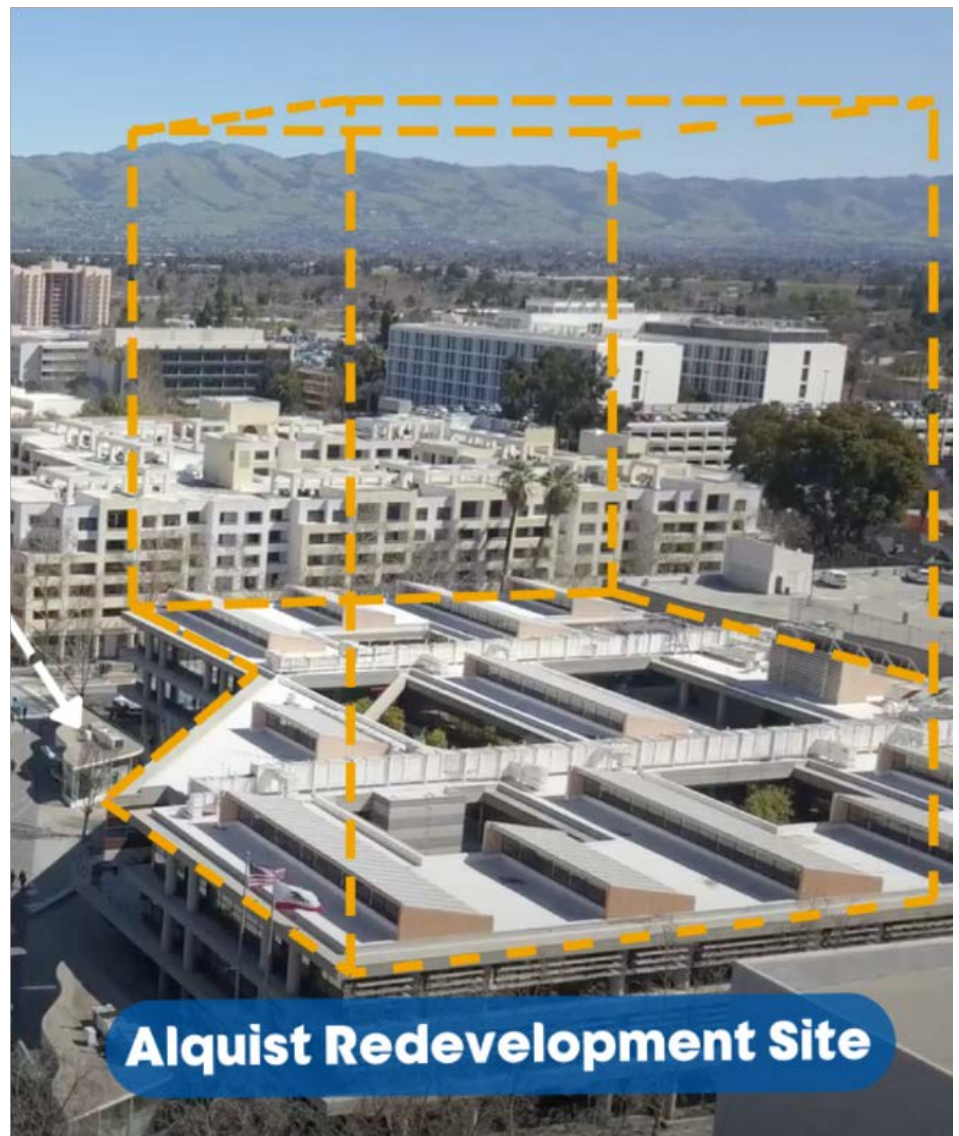


- A 2019 analysis of local housing affordability found that “essential workers” were already priced out of most of Toronto. No neighbourhood in the city was affordable to a full-time worker earning minimum wage. ([TRBoT](#))
- In 2023, an annual income of at least \$135,000 is required to afford an average 2-bedroom apartment in Toronto at \$3,411/month.
- In September 2023, a household income of \$235,100 was required to afford to purchase an average Toronto home, valued at \$1,127,000. ([ratehub.ca](#))

Workforce housing is less common but it is an increasingly active conversation

Alquist Redevelopment, San Jose SU:

- 1.6 acre state-owned site with existing 3-storey office building
- University advancing plans to redevelop with a 24-storey building creating 800-1,200 apartments.
- Half of units to be affordable (households earning up to 100% local Average Market Income) and the rest rented at market rates to offset costs
- Focusing on addressing the needs of workforce and graduate students



Workforce housing is less common but it is an increasingly active conversation



Workforce Housing, University of British Columbia:

- UBC has 950 non-market rental apartments on campus for employees. Staff and graduate students are eligible for these units but the primary focus is on attracting faculty.
- Of these, 100 apartments have been set aside specifically for full-time non-faculty employees.
- Rent is geared to income for up to 10 years, i.e. paying no more than 30% of their pre-tax household income.
- Employees who reach the 10-year limit or are otherwise no longer eligible can continue to live in the apartment by paying market rent.
- UBC Properties Trust is constructing an additional 211 market rentals and 152 affordable rental homes for faculty and staff on campus

Workforce housing is less common but it is an increasingly active conversation

Educators' Village, San Francisco State University:

- SFSU proposes to construct at least 250 apartments at below-market rents for their employees due to extreme commute times and difficulties with attraction and retention of employees.
- Active discussions with City College of San Francisco and the San Francisco Unified School District to pool resources, which could result in up to 1,000 new apartments.
- Proposed location is a parking lot owned by the state and thus exempt from local municipal land use controls.



Workforce housing is less common but it is an increasingly active conversation

Gateway Project, University of Toronto:

- Advancing a project on campus including two new towers with 700-800 apartment-style residential units for student families, faculty, and staff.
- A private-sector development partner has been selected to design, develop, and build the project.



Bottom line

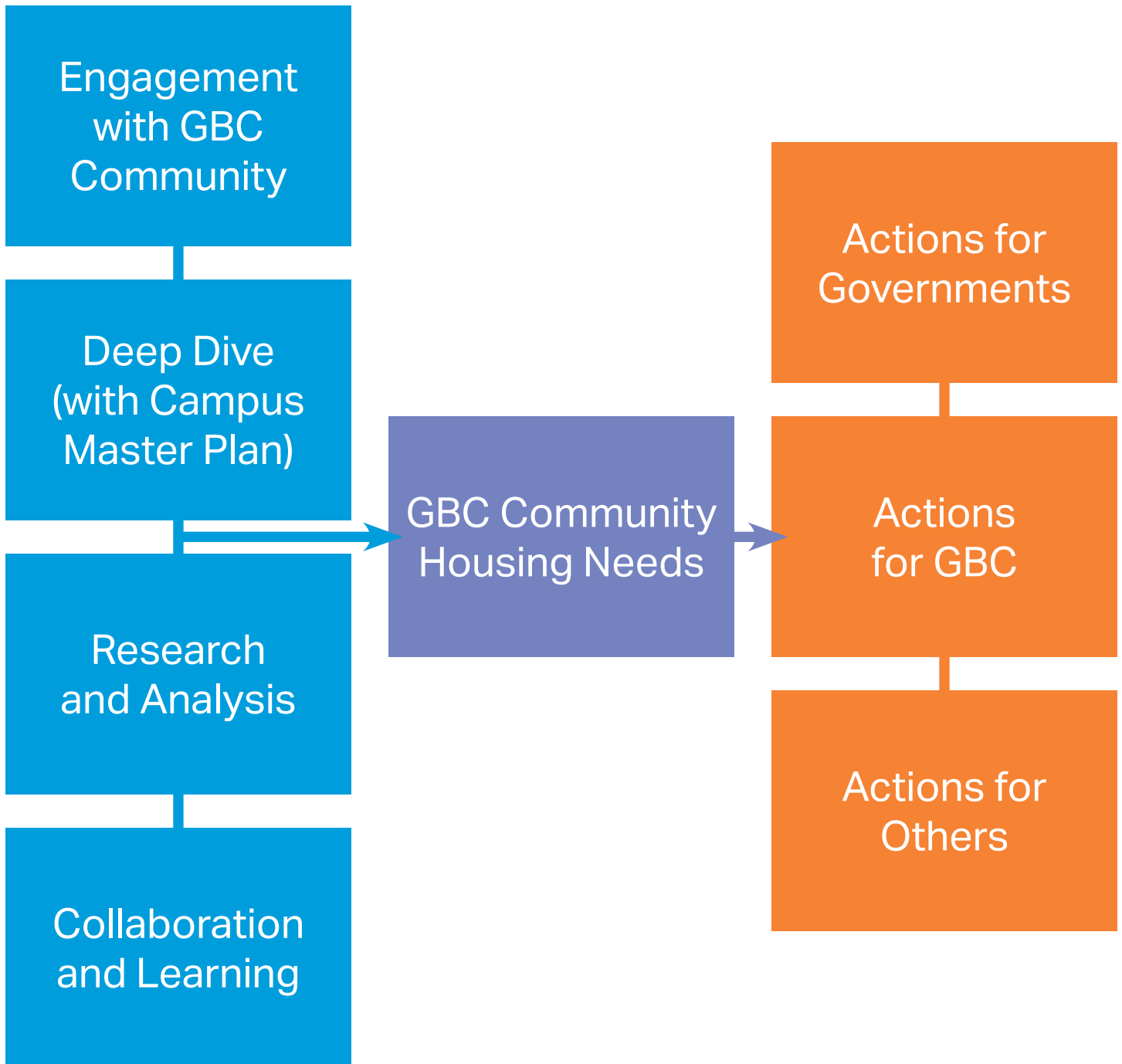
- Housing affordability is a growing challenge for more and more of the GBC community.
- There is no indication that conditions are improving or will improve without significant coordinated efforts.
- Some students and employees are already deeply affected.
- George Brown's position in downtown Toronto may become a strategic vulnerability due to the housing crisis, but it can also be a strategic opportunity if we help solve it with our partners.
- The housing crisis will not be solved by GBC alone. It is, however, vitally important that we do our part to help advance understanding of the issue, explore meaningful solutions, and work with urgency to identify the tools available to GBC, our government partners, and others.
- Through the work of the Housing Task Force, and the ongoing Campus Master Plan, GBC is working to do its part on tackling the housing crisis.





Next Steps

Housing Task Force next steps



Housing Task Force next steps: deep dive and engagement

- Procuring consultant services, as part of the Campus Master Plan, for deep dive into the housing needs of the GBC community.
- Research and engagement to understand in detail what the GBC community needs from a housing perspective to thrive and succeed
 - What can individuals and families afford?
 - What layout, amenities, and supports do students need?
 - Can students and employees be organized into “personas” or similar tools to help us focus on problem-solving and solutions?
- More engagement opportunities for students and employees coming up.



Housing Task Force next steps: advocacy

- Active and ongoing engagement with governments and peers in higher education to influence direction of policy
- Early policy priorities include:
 - Safety of students in off-campus housing
 - Increasing the supply and diversity of off-campus homes to address the broader housing shortage
 - The need for dedicated funding and expedited approvals for affordable on-campus housing construction
 - Provincial support to enhance existing co-ordination and collaboration among Ontario colleges, provide greater guidance, and help resolve complex challenges
- Our advocacy will be refined and strengthened by the engagement and research of our deep dive into GBC community housing needs.



Housing Task Force next steps: collaboration and learning



- Talking to a variety of potential partners and subject matter experts on issues of housing, affordability, funding, and development.
- Conversations with housing service providers:
- Active innovation in this space
- Potential ideas and tools require due diligence (e.g., centring student success and well-being)
- Conversations with developers (for-profit and non-profit):
- Many potential partners willing to explore opportunities and think creatively
- General concern that rising construction costs and interest rates are a barrier
- The status quo in development cannot deliver solutions to every challenge. Requires new approaches.



Future Opportunities

Future opportunities

- Ongoing update to the Campus Master Plan includes reviewing GBC properties for intensification potential.
- There may be opportunities to add housing when renewing or redeveloping existing facilities in the future.
- The work of the Housing Task Force and the outcome of the deep dive into GBC community housing needs will inform our long-term targets for building on-campus housing.



GBC's three main campuses with 15-minute walking distance identified in blue.

Future opportunities

GBC can't solve the housing crisis on our own. But we are keeping open minds to a variety of potential actions for GBC and others. Additional ideas will arise through the work ahead.

Subject to the outcome of the coming months of study and engagement, as well as policy advancements from government, potential initiatives could include:

Building new GBC student housing at affordable and market price points

Partnering with the private sector and/or local universities to build off-campus housing

New partnerships with housing services like home-sharing

New services and supports targeting students with the greatest needs

Design innovation and new models of student housing

Buying and renovating existing offices or hotels near campus



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