

UPCOMING DATES

MARCH

- 8 CreateTO, 1:30 p.m.
- 18 Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m.
- 20-22 Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 25 Board of Health, 9:30 a.m.
- 26 General Government Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 27 Infrastructure & Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m.
Design Review Panel, 12:45 p.m.
- 28 Economic & Community Development Committee, 9:30 a.m.
Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m.

APRIL

- 2 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 3 Toronto & East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 4 Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 5 Planning & Housing Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 8 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 9 Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 17-19 Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 22 CreateTO, 2:30 p.m.
- 24 Design Review Panel, 12:45 p.m.
- 29 Board of Health, 9:30 a.m.
- 30 Economic & Community Development Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 1 General Government Committee, 9:30 a.m.



ACCELERATOR PROGRAM TO HELP NON-PROFITS DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN RACIALIZED NEIGHBOURHOODS

CREATING NEW PATHWAYS



Lana Hall

A new accelerator program will provide mentorship and resources to address barriers that non-profit organizations face in the development and procurement of affordable housing, particularly those looking to develop affordable housing in racialized neighbourhoods.

The six-month 'Roadmap Connect: Accelerator Program' is a collaboration between the **Infrastructure Institute** at the **University of Toronto's School of Cities** and **CP Planning**. The program runs from March 28 until September 2024, and is open to non-profit organizations that are led by or serve racialized communities across Ontario wish to develop or expand their own affordable housing projects. The program will include a series of workshops and a mentorship component, ultimately culminating in a 'pitch night' in September where program participants can appeal to potential sponsors and development partners who

might help them move these projects forward.

The Roadmap Connect: Accelerator Program is informed by the 'Roadmap for Redevelopment Plans to Confront Systemic Racism,' a program launched in 2022 under the direction of CP Planning founder and executive director **Cheryll Case**. The needs of racialized communities are not always taken into consideration during the planning process, says Case, pointing to the mass displacement of residents and businesses in neighbourhoods undergoing major transit construction, such as Little Jamaica and Flemingdon Park.

"The issue of transit-oriented communities resulting in mass

evictions, that's something that racialized communities are more likely to experience harm from, or more likely to experience disruption in their life," Case told *NRU*. "... It's really important that racialized communities are able to be an active participant in the planning process and that attention is brought towards solutions to those issues."

People living in racialized neighbourhoods are also more likely to experience housing insecurity, and amid a worsening housing affordability crisis, it's critical that these neighbourhoods see the development of affordable housing. But developing

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- Cheryll Case

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that kind of housing—and the necessary community supports—works best when it’s implemented by organizations who already understand the needs of those communities. The challenge is that those organizations may lack the capital or the resources to even begin this process, says Infrastructure Institute project lead **Helen Ketema**.

“[Considering] the perspectives of diverse communities and having them also be an active member and leading projects hasn’t been as common,” Ketema told *NRU*. “And when we’re thinking about the communities that are often disproportionately affected by housing insecurity, it really is important to try and incorporate the folks who are already experts in working with their communities and supporting their communities, and also giving them the resources and the capital and the ... opportunities to partner, to build more affordable housing projects that categorically serve the needs of their communities.”

In his 2022 report, “The Uneven Racialized Impacts of Financialization,” **Toronto Metropolitan University** School of Urban and Regional Planning assistant professor **Nemoy Lewis** used

data from the **Landlord and Tenant Board** of Ontario to map evictions across Toronto, and found that the incidence of evictions was higher in Black and other racialized neighbourhoods. And even among residents housed in racialized communities, the rent burden is often higher. According to 2016 census data, Black and Chinese renters within the City of Toronto are more likely to pay more than 30 per cent of their income in rent than residents from other demographic groups.

Research findings like these are one reason that non-profit organizations should have the resources to build affordable housing projects, says Case. “I think the best case scenario after this program is that [participants] are actually able to pursue an affordable housing development and are close to securing funding or have secured funding for development.”

In addition to the formal mentorship and workshop opportunities, the accelerator program will also include webinars open for anyone to attend, something Case says she hopes will be helpful for professionals in the planning and development industry who want to learn more about these issues. Though

racialized communities face disproportionate levels of housing security, they are typically underrepresented in the development and planning sectors.

“In Toronto, we did research and found that less than a quarter of the workforce in planning is racialized. ... And then when you go towards leadership, that percentage goes down even further,” says Case. “The hope is that with programs like this, more of our development industry will look like the region that we are living in, in terms of diversity.”

The inaugural cohort for the Roadmap Connect program will begin work on March 28.





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