

Firgrove-Grassways Frequently Asked Questions

Why is TCHC revitalizing its Firgrove-Grassways community?

In 2018, TCHC informed community residents that the Firgrove-Grassways community would undergo a revitalization to address aging buildings that were prohibitively expensive to repair.

Revitalization is a model approach to social housing redevelopment focused on thoughtful planning and partnership. The goal of the Firgrove-Grassways revitalization is to build quality homes and vibrant communities where our tenants and community residents are proud to live, work, and play.

Toronto Community Housing is working together with the City of Toronto, TCHC tenants and current and former residents of Firgrove-Grassways, as well as the surrounding community and private sector development partners, to thoughtfully transform aging housing infrastructure into a mixed-income, mixed-use neighbourhood.

What is the current status of the Revitalization?

TCHC received planning approvals for its Rezoning and Draft Plan of Subdivision applications at the July 2022 City Council meeting. The approved master plan that was developed with TCHC tenants consists of eight new blocks that includes two TCHC buildings with 343 (236 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) and 107 affordable rental units); a community centre with an outdoor pool; a new park; four new municipal streets; and four mixed-use buildings with 644 market units.

TCHC is currently working on securing funding for the project.

The demolition of 236 units was completed in late 2022, and there is a new fence along the perimeter of the vacant site. It has been seeded and will be covered with grass until construction begins.

The refurbishment of the remaining buildings at Needle Firway has been completed.

What is Rezoning and Draft Plan of Subdivision? Why did TCHC submit a Rezoning application?

Rezoning is an application to the City of Toronto to allow for a change to the size, height and location of buildings and the permissible uses on a parcel of land.

Draft Plan of Subdivision is used to divide larger plots of land into new parcels of land which commonly establish new development blocks. Through this process, new public streets, public parks and municipal services may also be provided to support the new development blocks.

One of the most important reasons for rezoning is to ensure that the policy framework that governs the site matches the master plan vision. The rezoning codifies the massing of the buildings, the location of the community, retail, and open spaces.

Were tenants involved in the Rezoning / Master Planning?

Tenant engagement on the revitalization process began in early 2018. Tenants have actively participated in an extensive revitalization planning process, including master plan, concept design, rezoning application and relocation engagement processes.

Engagement of the community took various forms. Both formal and informal engagement events and public workshops have been held to gather input on the master plan and design. There have also been community update meetings; consultation on the City application and deputation process; relocation meetings with tenants; and City-led public meetings.

Community consultations to date centered on four focus areas:

- Official Plan;
- Relocation;
- Community Economic Development; and
- Social Development Plan

At the end of each consultation, the project team reported priority areas or key issues back to the community to incorporate into the master plan. The

project team also reported outcomes of the consultation process to City staff and the local City Councillor's office.

Moving forward, community engagement in Firgrove-Grassways will continue to focus on fostering a sense of empowerment, celebrating heritage, promoting economic development, and providing meaningful programs and events to keep relocated TCHC tenants from Firgrove-Grassways engaged with their community.

What are the next steps in the Revitalization process?

Once funding is secured, TCHC will take the next steps to advance the revitalization.

1. Finalize the next set of City approvals including the implementation plan;
2. Prepare a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a Developer Partner
3. Submit a Site Plan Application to City Planning; and,
4. Continue to work with tenants, the broader community and the City to refine and detail the plans for revitalization.

When and where will funding come from?

Funding of the Firgrove-Grassways revitalization will be determined in conjunction with the City of Toronto's annual budget process.

Further, in the September 12, 2019, report to the TCHC Board of Directors, staff recommended that the Firgrove Revitalization proceed and that staff "pursue funding from all levels of government to fund the shortfall and seek funding opportunities and partnerships that will add additional affordable housing units and an expanded community space to the Firgrove Community."

How long will it take to rebuild units in the Firgrove community?

TCHC has to secure planning approvals and funding prior to rebuilding units. Once we have these two things in place, we will inform tenants what the timeline for rebuilding units looks like.

Following receipt of funding and all necessary municipal approvals, a 3- to 4-year construction timeline is anticipated.

Are RGI units going to be replaced? Will there be additional affordable units?

Yes, once funding is secured, the new development will include 236 RGI replacement units.

The approved master plan allows for an additional 107 new affordable housing units contingent on approved funding.

Will the TCHC Firgrove revitalization provide opportunities for affordable homeownership?

As a rental housing landlord, TCHC's mandate is to provide affordable rental units. The approved master plan allows for 987 units including 236 RGI rental replacement units and 107 new affordable rental units. The type and tenure of the remaining new units is yet to be determined and could depend on the business model of a potential development partner secured through the RFP process. In addition, the local area councillor's office may be able to assist with information on the current available affordable home ownership programs in the City.

How can I get involved in Revitalization planning?

TCHC will continue to engage community residents throughout the revitalization process. We will provide updates through our many communication channels (for example, social media, posters, newsletter, and email) to keep tenants informed about upcoming meetings and events and how you can participate.

TCHC encourages relocated tenants of Grassways and current tenants of Needle Firway to join the Firgrove-Grassways tenant advisory group known as the Firgrove Focus Table (FFT). The FFT meets regularly to exchange updates, ideas, and feedback. Being an active member of the community is crucial to achieving a community-centric revitalization. If you would like to learn more about the FFT Tenant Advisory Group and to get involved, please email Firgrove@torontohousing.ca or call Marveh Farhoodi at 416-688-1583.

What happened to the people who lived here?

TCHC relocated tenants of Firgrove in two groups:

- The first group was relocated in 2017 and consisted of 134 households
- The second group was relocated in 2021 and consisted of 90 households
- About 90 households relocated to units within the Jane/Finch area

When will tenants be able to move back?

A timeline for construction will be developed once funding for the Firgrove-Grassways revitalization is secured. First steps will be tenant engagement around the implementation process, detailed building designs and timelines. Following receipt of all necessary approvals, a 3- to 4-year construction timeline is anticipated.

Are tenants going to be paying the same amount of rent as before the relocation?

If you are a subsidized Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) tenant, your rent will continue to be calculated in accordance with the City's RGI administration model (<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/community-partners/social-housing-providers/rent-geared-to-income-administration/>). Your rent will be calculated after you accept a relocation unit offer. If you are a market tenant, your relocation unit may have a different market rent depending on the location and size of the unit you are relocating to.

TCHC will let you know the cost of rent in that unit before you accept an offer.

What will happen if replacement units are not built?

As per the Tenant Relocation and Assistance Implementation Plan (TRAIP) for Firgrove-Grassways, if revitalization units are not built and ready for occupancy by March 31, 2027, tenants will have to remain in their relocation units. If there is indication that revitalization units can be built and ready for occupancy after March 31, 2027, the right to return to Firgrove could be extended.

How was the community informed and engaged during the relocation process?

TCHC supported tenants throughout the relocation process through the following:

- Frequent updates and information shared with tenants using a variety of mediums including community update meetings and drop-in sessions, door knocking, phone calls, flyers and updates in the community newsletter;
- Providing interpretation and translation services;
- Connecting tenants to social services based on their requests;
- Providing moving supports, including but not limited to movers, insurance for major items, packing materials, packing and unpacking services(if no adult in the household was physically able to do this), reimbursement for disconnection and reconnection of services and mail forwarding.
- Remaining accessible to tenants through the Relocation and Affordable Rental Office (located at 22 Needle Firway) to address any questions they may have.

How does TCHC keep relocated tenants informed on revitalization updates and opportunities for participation?

The TCHC Revitalization team connects with tenants in many ways to ensure that tenants remain informed about the revitalization process and opportunities.

Some key channels and outreach strategies to communicate with tenants and residents include:

- Establishing a Tenant Advisory Group (Firgrove Focus) at the beginning of the revitalization process to facilitate regular communication and brainstorming with tenants;
- Recruiting community ambassadors/animators from the Firgrove community, whose role has been instrumental in getting tenants informed and engaged throughout the revitalization;
- Sending out regular newsletters with updates about relocation, development and opportunities to participate;
- Maintaining active social media pages and sharing updates and opportunities on a regular basis;
- Connecting with tenants and residents one-on-one through email, phone calls, and meetings; and,
- Hosting community drop-in sessions, update meetings and events to share information and hear from TCHC tenants.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions about the revitalization process, including progress on construction and available engagement opportunities, please reach out to:

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