

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Parkdale Land Trust Preserves and Protects At-Risk Rooming House

Toronto, ON – May 1st, 2019 – As development pressures and renovictions continue to push tenants across Toronto out of their homes, on May 1st [The Neighbourhood Land Trust](#) (the charity arm of the [Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust](#)) will purchase its first at-risk rooming house in order to preserve and protect affordable housing for low-income residents.

On May 1st join the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust and Gord Perks at 10am at City Hall for a press conference to announce this historic first!

Championed by City Councillor Gord Perks, **the City of Toronto** Rooming House Acquisition Pilot Program provided \$1.5 million in municipal funding, coupled with a further \$601,426 from Ontario Renovates.

Gord Perks - "The goal of the pilot program was to enable local non-profit organizations to buy a rooming house before it's sold to someone else and all the tenants get evicted."

This project aims to stop the eviction of tenants out of low-end market rental housing, into situations where they face housing precarity and **homelessness**. The acquisition will be the first affordable rooming house in Toronto to be owned by a **community land trust** guaranteeing **affordable rents** for 99 years.

Joshua Barndt (NLT Executive Director) - "Through this pilot project the Land Trust has shown that it is possible to preserve and protect affordable housing by removing it from the speculative real estate market and bringing it into non-profit community ownership!"

Elizabeth McIsaac (President of Maytree) - "Rooming houses are an essential element of the deeply affordable housing stock of our city. This purchase is an integral part of protecting the right to housing for everyone in Toronto. Maytree has been pleased to support The Neighbourhood Land Trust's efforts leading up to this and recognizes the important leadership shown by the City in finding innovative approaches to making this happen."

Home to 15 working class and low-income tenants, the 15-unit Parkdale property will be owned by the Land Trust but will be operated and managed by [PARC](#), **(a United Way Anchor Agency)**, which now provides 71 units of affordable housing for adults who are low-income and or experience mental health and addictions challenges in South Parkdale. The project will ensure that existing tenants, many of whom are low-income, will continue to enjoy affordable rental housing. For any new tenants being considered in the future, priority will be given to those who have experienced homelessness.

Victor Willis (PARC Executive Director) – “Rooming houses are a viable form of housing that plays a very important function providing affordable and low-barrier housing. If we don’t invest in it and save it, the people who live there will be economically evicted!”

In 2017, The [Parkdale Rooming House Study](#) documented an escalating crisis of rooming house loss due to real estate speculation and upscaling. The study confirmed the loss of 28 rooming houses, displacing an estimated 347 people. The continued loss of rooming houses in Parkdale will be catastrophic to the lives of hundreds of mostly low-income, vulnerable residents who depend on Parkdale’s social and community supports and are at risk of eviction, displacement, and homelessness.

Lynne Sky (Parkdale Tenant) - “I’m really fond of Parkdale. But I’m not too fond of the gentrification going on because it often means that your rent has doubled or tripled. People in rooming houses are just terrified. People are choosing between food, bills and a roof.”

Joshua Barndt – “Every year we lose more affordable housing to real estate speculation than we could ever build or replace. Building on this successful pilot the City of Toronto needs to create a city-wide funding program to support non-profit organizations to purchase and preserve affordable rental housing.”

Thank you to the funders who have contributed to this project and the work of the land trust:

- City of Toronto
- Ontario Renovates
- Funding support from Government of Ontario’s Local Poverty Reduction Fund, with administrative support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Maytree
- Catherine Donnelly Foundation



ABOUT: The Neighbourhood Land Trust (NLT) is a non-profit organization that acquires and manages land under the unique community ownership model of a Community Land Trust (CLT), promoting long-term community benefits such as affordable housing, supportive housing and community economic development.

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