

No Health without Housing

Angela Robertson, Executive Director
Parkdale Queen West Community Health
Centre



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QUEEN WEST**
Community
Health Centre

About Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre

Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre (PQWCHC) is a community-based health service organization located in south-west Toronto. We offer a broad range of services, including **primary health care, dental care, harm reduction, health promotion, counselling, and community development programming**. We offer services at three main clinic locations, as well as within the community.

We work to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities who are at risk and/or face barriers to accessing high quality health care services and supports.

Priority is given to individuals and groups who encounter barriers to high quality health care services, including **marginalized or vulnerable populations** such as newcomers, Indigenous (minimum 30% of units prioritized for Indigenous People) and racialized communities, people who are homeless or street-involved, people living with mental health issues, people who use drugs, people living with disabilities, isolated seniors, LGBTQ communities and people living in poverty.



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Responding to the Need for Affordable Housing in South Parkdale

South Parkdale Community Profile

- As of 2020, **71% of 6,060 rental units in South Parkdale were owned by large corporate landlords and financial firms**. The latter owned over half of South Parkdale's private apartment units.
- **198 rooming houses in Parkdale with an estimated 2,715 dwelling rooms** — more than double the number of units owned by Toronto Community Housing
- 28 rooming houses have been lost to conversion and upscaling, displacing an estimated 347 people. We believe 59 more, housing 818 people, are at imminent risk of being lost.
- Population of just over 23,000 and **87% of the population are renters, spending 49% income on rent**
- Highest rates of **seniors living alone (49%)**
- High proportion of **lone-parent families (43%)**
- **Double the rate of recent immigrants (32%)**
- Higher % of people living **on low incomes (34%)**
- Lower % of people with a higher education
- Indigenous Peoples make up 2.7% of Toronto's population yet makes up 16% of Toronto's homeless populations - *Our Health Counts Study, 2017*



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Housing & Health

The relationships between homelessness and health is complex and bi-directional.

- Homelessness has a direct impact on health
- Homeless individuals have reduced life expectancy
- Health status can contribute to homelessness, for example, certain health conditions (e.g., mental health issues) may influence the onset of homelessness and worsen the homeless state
- Housing precarity and homelessness contribute to increase risk of chronic and acute illnesses in short and long-term (e.g. injury from cold, tuberculosis, skin diseases, cardio-respiratory disease, nutritional deficiencies, sleep deprivation, musculoskeletal pain, and dental trouble)
- For women, LGBTQ populations, and youth housing precarity and homelessness increase risk and experience of violence and exploitation
- Being precariously housed or unhoused makes it difficult, and in some cases impossible, to access general health care services



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Responding to the Need: Project Vision

In 2021, PQWCHC began a Feasibility Study to explore the opportunity to build affordable housing with supports atop our existing location at 1229 Queen Street West.

PQWCHC's Board of Directors adopted the following project principles in January 2022:

- Commitment to use Centre owned property asset to create housing
- Creating **deeply affordable housing** that is geared to those with the most housing insecurity and affordability challenges
- **Integration of harm reduction supports** which attempts to allow for a continuum of harm reduction needs to be served
- **Accessibility** of the space for those with physical disabilities
- Supports for people with **mental health challenges**
- The principles of the **Niiwin Wendaanimak (Four Winds) – Indigenous Health and Wellness Program** (an Indigenous staff-led program for Indigenous clients of PQWCHC) should be honoured, that of non-judgement, unconditional love, culturally responsive services, meeting people where they are, and program Council leadership team being an important part of success.
- Partnering with an organization to manage the housing that is well versed in **anti-oppressive and anti-racism practices**
- Setting target population definitions that are grounded in PQWCHC's mandate and approaches tenant selection based on a principle of **inclusion rather than exclusion**
- Design:
 - Enable **resident autonomy and privacy** (e.g. including kitchens in every unit, laundry facilities), but also design to **decrease social isolation**



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The Project



Perspective View

Unit Mix	Number
studio	3
1 bedroom	42
2 bedroom	10
Total	55

Other Spaces	Size
Tenant Support Space	2,020 sq ft
New PQWCHC Space	1,616 sq ft

Total Building Size (sq. ft.)
41,201

As per June 2024 – Schematic Plan by Hilditch Architect



Early Funder Support

The project has garnered support from leading affordable housing funders:

Over \$2 million in development fee waivers from the **City of Toronto Open Door Affordable Housing Program**

\$150k in predevelopment funding from **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Seed Funding Program (CMHC)**

\$175k in study grant funding from **The Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Affordable Housing Program**

If all goes well: Building Permits and Construction Start

- Target late 2025 for Construction Start pending Building Permit submission in mid-2025 and securing all required project funds



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What can we do together

Actions to advance a Housing for Health strategy



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