



# **STEP UP SERIES**

# ***CONVERSATIONS***

CanU 2020 Vancouver

***Access to Housing***



# INTRODUCTION:

As one of four conversations planned for this year, this is an opportunity to explore more deliberately and creatively how we can support resilience in Canadian city-building. We have heard from a series of urbanists who have shared their personal perspectives and insights - the 'big ideas' that they believe will provide better access and equitable options for a diverse range of housing types within our cities.

The goal of the STEP UP Series is to articulate actions for change in the design of Canadian cities underpinned by equity, livability and sustainability. Our panelists' experience and insight will help us unlock the 'big ideas' behind these actions. In this online dialog series we are especially interested in the idea of 'access for all' to the benefits of the urban environment - with an emphasis on nature, mobility, housing and daily needs.

HOST: Mark Guslits

Architect, Urban Designer, Community  
Development Advisor, Professor  
U of T Daniels Faculty of Architecture

Patrick Condon

Urban Designer, Planner and Professor  
(Vancouver, BC)

Elina Eskela

Planner / Helsinki City Executive Office  
(Helsinki, Finland)

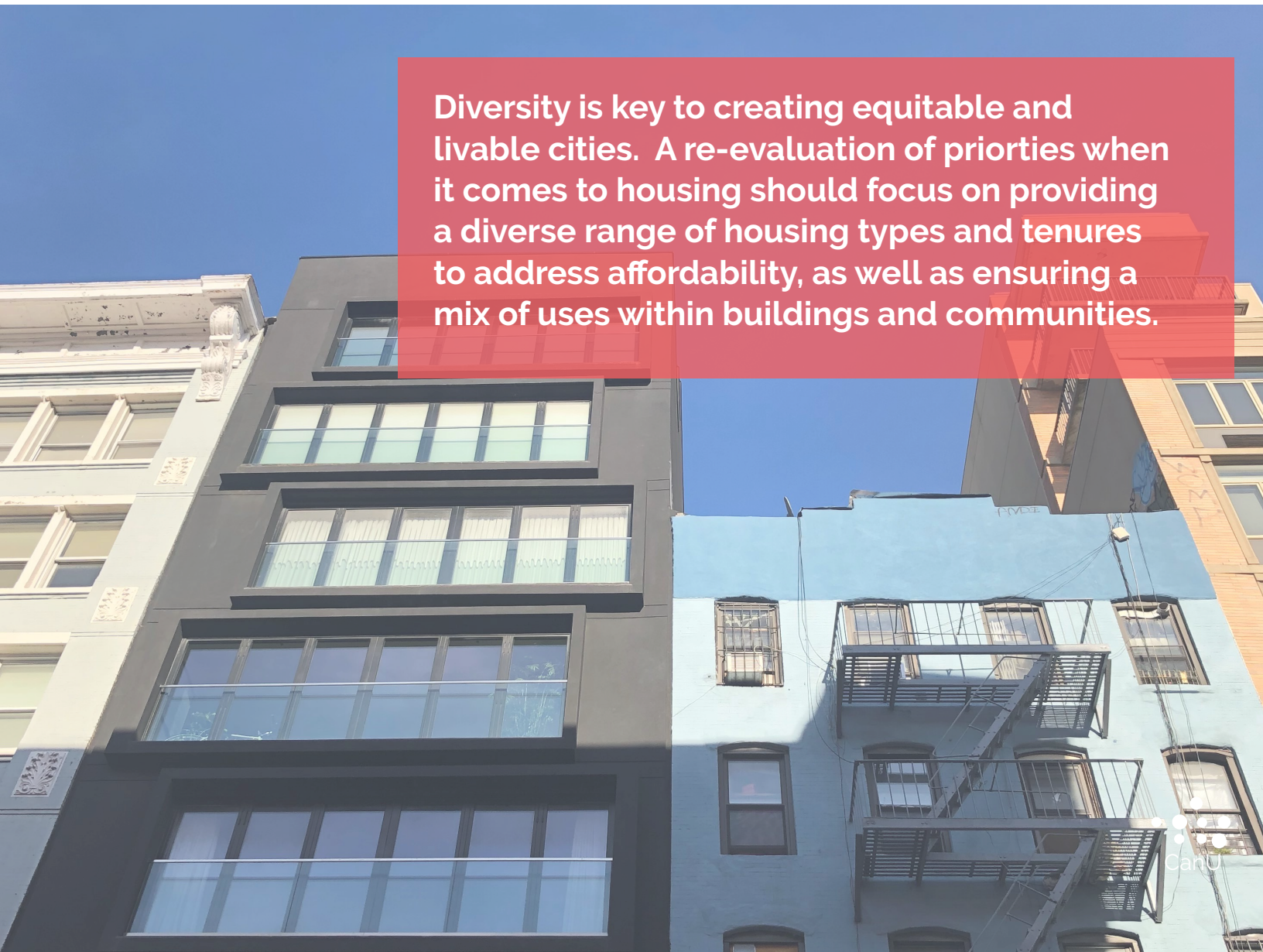
Ken Greenberg

Principal / Greenberg Consultants  
(Toronto, On)

Serena Purdy

Co-Chair of Friends of Kensington Market  
(Toronto, On)

Diversity is key to creating equitable and livable cities. A re-evaluation of priorities when it comes to housing should focus on providing a diverse range of housing types and tenures to address affordability, as well as ensuring a mix of uses within buildings and communities.





# Access to Housing

## SUMMARY

Canada is a country of a wealthy and stable economy, yet hundreds of thousands of Canadians are homeless, or living in poor and unhealthy conditions.

The webinar Access to Housing brought insight into our affordability crises and some of its causes – the land value in the cities increasing disproportionately to the wages of its residents; segregation of uses leading to separation within communities, displacement of people to the periphery and consequently their dependence on automobile.

Looking at the examples from cities around the world which are thriving and which are conquering homelessness, it is clear that the private market cannot provide housing for everyone and that an intervention from and a vigorous involvement of governments in building of housing is inevitable. Our cities must develop new models to balance private with public, to create a wide variety of tenures and to regulate prices of housing.

It is also apparent that for a strong city, its communities must be flourishing. It is our responsibility as urbanists to design environments which are inclusive and which provide walkable, healthy neighbourhoods with variety of uses, amenities, and housing choices for everyone.

## BOLD IDEAS

### Reframe

- Re-evaluate the ways we develop communities and ensure that housing is embedded as a basic human right in our city building
- Endorse inclusion and equality

### Advocate

- Advocate for the government to control the land value and the housing market
- Prepare new model in which cities own a large portion of housing to create affordability through different tenures and price regulations
- Develop policies requiring new development to create a significant percentage of non-market, permanently affordable housing
- Eliminate the harmful segregation of uses and building types

### Design differently

- Create 15-20 minute walkable, mixed-use neighbourhoods
- Design housing for all ages and include variety of options for specific groups such as artists, students, people with disabilities and low-income families
- Diversify everything- the uses, the building typology, the tenures, the unit types, the income levels
- Distribute the density using a variety of low and mid-rise housing within the existing neighbourhoods
- Focus on building strong, diverse communities which support all of their members