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CANADA

# South London, Ont. community housing getting first upgrade in 50 years

By Ben Harrietha • 980 CFPL  
Posted March 6, 2024 4:51 pm  
3 min read



Officials from both the city and LMCH were present Wednesday, March 6, to break ground on phase one of Reimagine Southdale. Ben Harrietha/980 CFPL

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In its first housing start in over 50 years, **London Middlesex Community Housing** (LMCH) is beginning construction on a new building that will both upgrade housing stock and provide more affordable housing.

Officials from both the city and LMCH were on site Wednesday at 1057 Southdale Rd. East to break ground on the first phase of the Reimagine Southdale project.

The project will see a new six-storey, 53-unit apartment building replace 18 aging townhomes that were torn down.

The townhomes currently on the property were originally built in 1971.

It's the first of three buildings planned for the site and will feature a mix of rent-g geared-to-income (RGI), affordable, and market rate units, with 20 per cent being fully accessible.

"Three of (the units) are one-bedroom, five of them are four-bedroom, and the rest are three-bedroom and two-bedroom units," says LMCH CEO Paul Chisholm.

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"11 of these units, including one of the four bedrooms, will be fully accessible, so folks who require those modifications, we built with those right in."

The breakdown of which units will be RGI, affordable, or market rate has not yet been decided, but Chisholm says at least 18 of the units will be RGI to replace the ones torn down at the beginning of the project.

Tenants who were living in those units were offered units in the new building, but none took LMCH up on the offer, choosing instead to relocate to units in the complex or another community site. The same offer will be given to tenants when construction on phase two begins.

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"The RGI units will always be filled through our internal tenants or through the waitlist the City of London manages," Chisholm said.

"For the affordable units, we will provide information late in 2024 of how people can register for information and then we'll do an application process that looks very much like the market."



Ongoing construction at the site of phase one of the Reimagine Southdale project. **Ben Harrietha/980 CFPL**

London Mayor Josh Morgan says this is the first of many Council investments into London's social housing stock.

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"We need to do more of this, and we need to continue to do it into the future to ensure that the next 50 years have adequate social housing stock in the city," Morgan said.

According to the Mayor, the city plans to take a two-step approach to community housing, building more units and refurbishing existing stock.

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“Yes, we need more units, yes, we need modern facilities, but we also have to look at the conditions of the existing units and say people do deserve a respectful place to live with some dignity. The decline of these units over decades has led to them having conditions that that are not up to acceptable standards for a place for someone to live,” Morgan said.

Morgan says council's new multi-year budget has over \$30 million in funding to support LMCH's regeneration plan, and an addition \$5 million for LMCH's service improvement plan.

“We know that this isn't just about putting actual capital in the ground, but also giving this organization the resources they need to change the way they do business to provide better service to the people who live in London Middlesex Community Housing.”

Construction is expected to be complete on phase one of Reimagine Southdale sometime in summer of 2025. Phase two will go much the same way as phase one, starting with tenant relocation before moving onto unit demolition and construction.

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A mock-up of the Reimagine Southdale project. **London Middlesex Community Housing**

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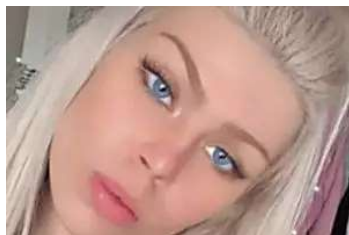


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