

Archived Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the current status of the project?

The project is currently in a state of intense review called “due diligence”, which is expected to last to the end of the year. The purpose of this review is to verify that the important aspects of the project are viable and will yield the desired result of ultimately improving the Estonian community’s infrastructure and provide a long-term, financially sound home base that meets our needs. This phase will be completed when the experts advise that the risks are manageable and that the project can go ahead.

2. What is meant by the term “due diligence”?

We are currently in the process of determining the ongoing viability of the project as promised. This phase of work is called “due diligence”. Due diligence is work that focuses specifically on verifying the cost, funding and sustainability of the project. This is a critical step, as it will determine the feasibility of building and operating the new centre.

We continue to work with Build Toronto and with city planning, urban design and heritage, and physical testing of the new site from an environmental and geotechnical perspective.

The areas being studied under due diligence include project funding, project cost and long-term sustainability.

The project cost component of this work involves determining major expenditures such as construction, design and city approvals. The property 11 Madison Ave., currently owned by the Estonian Credit Union, will be sold to the Estonian Centre project.

Project funding involves identifying sources of funds available and assessing if they will be adequate to fulfill the requirements of running the centre in a fiscally responsible manner. One of the major sources of funds identified is the sale of the Estonian House at 958 Broadview Ave. and a market evaluation is underway. This sale is critical to the project. The three properties owned by the Estonian Foundation of Canada located next to the Estonian House will be included in the sale to enlarge the property’s footprint and make it more attractive for a new owner or developer. EFC will receive back fair value for its properties.

Finally, we are working on the financial stability component of the project to ensure it is viable over the long term. This includes an in-depth look at the operating revenues and costs of the centre itself once it is fully complete.

All in all, the due diligence phase represents a tremendous amount of work and attention to every aspect of the centre’s development and operation. We expect this phase to be completed by the end of the year, keeping in mind that some decisions

such as municipal approvals (including review and approval by the Toronto Transit Commission), are subject to change.

3. What has been accomplished so far?

The project managers—overseen by the heads of the four organizations involved—are focusing on a number of key areas. These include:

- Working with Build Toronto on city planning, urban design and heritage
- Developing a responsible and effective ownership and operational structure to enable the viable operation of the new centre
- Assessing the value of the Estonian House property
- Completing a cost analysis on the new centre with contractors and the architect

4. What is the status of the sale of the Estonian House?

In April 2017, a majority of two-thirds of shareholders voted to support the opportunity on Madison Avenue which, if deemed viable at the end of due diligence, would result in the sale of 958 Broadview Avenue. The project team is actively exploring interest, value and the best structure for the potential sale of the property if due diligence results show the project can proceed.

5. What is the expected value of the Estonian House property?

This is one of the key items to be determined in the due diligence process.

6. Does the roof of the Estonian House need to be replaced?

The situation of the roof needs to be addressed. The building will be in use by our community and others until the new centre is completed.

7. What is the closing date for the purchase of 9 Madison Avenue?

This is still to be determined and is based on when the due diligence has been completed and the four organizations are satisfied that the new Estonian Centre is a viable project. Further information on the purchase and sale of the property is subject to a confidentiality agreement.

8. Will there be washrooms on every floor?

Yes. And there will also be elevators to access each floor.

9. Will there be enough storage—this is an ongoing issue?

Yes. Storage is an important part of the design. There is ample opportunity and ability to ensure storage issues are adequately met.

10. Are there any security concerns with there being a park included in the centre?

We are discussing this issue with Build Toronto to ensure community safety. Adequate lighting and other security measures will be incorporated in the design including the inclusion of video cameras to ensure a safe environment.

11. Will there be condominiums in the new centre?

No. A previous design including condominiums was accepted initially but later rejected.

12. Will the new centre be built in phases?

This is yet to be determined as a major part of the due diligence process. It is with the best intention that the centre will be built in one phase if at all possible and that there will only be a single move between facilities to hold the community together during the transition and move-in.

13. Will there be upcoming opportunities for the Estonian community to provide input into the project?

Yes, there will be opportunities for the community to discuss and have input into the project. There will be regular updates on the project as due diligence moves forward now that a professional team is in place. Once due diligence is complete and the project moves ahead, the community will be able to discuss the needs of the Estonian Centre in more detail and be involved in the important process of how the space will be best utilized to meet the needs of the community.

Current major tenants of the Estonian House, such as the Estonian Credit Union, have specific requirements and the other organizations who rent space, such as the Estonian schools and kindergartens, folk dancers and others will need to provide more input about their needs and future space requirements as well before the design of the Estonian Centre is finalized.

All of these needs and desires must be updated, heard and discussed prior to finalizing the design of the Estonian Centre.

The new Estonian Centre will be far more flexible in its use of space, but we do need to agree on what we, as a community, view as our needs for the next several decades. Moving forward, this will be a community effort, led by professionals, following the due diligence period.