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ENC 2135

14 December 2025

Housing Affordability in Toronto

Life in Toronto for middle-class citizens isn't what most would imagine it to be. You would think the middle class in the keystone city of one of the world's most developed economies is rather financially prosperous. However, the housing market in Toronto has been struggling for many years, leading to home prices becoming increasingly unaffordable for the average Torontonian today. This issue has caused greater financial strain on residents and has further increased the prevalence of housing insecurity. The Canadian government has intervened by instituting policies aimed at alleviating housing affordability pressure; however, this has not been enough to provide the people with the relief they need. As the housing affordability crisis has further developed, Canadians have been actively voicing their opinions on this issue and expressing what they expect their elected officials to deliver. This rhetorical analysis will examine two different artifacts related to the housing affordability crisis in Toronto by comparing and contrasting them. Through analyzing these artifacts, a deeper understanding of the various perspectives on housing affordability shall be achieved.

In a YouTube video titled "More evidence revealed correlating with Toronto's troubled housing market" posted by CTV News in August 2025, a wide variety of perspectives on Toronto's housing market were incorporated. While CTV News does have local channels, this story was covered on their national news channel, thus revealing that the audience is not just

Torontonians but rather all Canadians. The fact that this story is being covered on national news further testifies to the importance of Toronto's economy to the economic well-being of Canada as a whole. A story about the housing market in a small, less economically pivotal town would likely not make national headlines. The video begins by setting the stage through the news anchors, making powerful evidence-backed claims, saying, "The city saw its worst July in decades for new home sales" and "new home sales across the GTA haven't been this low in decades" (CTV News, 2025). This serves as a hook to intrigue the viewer, as those claims made can appear shocking at first, especially without further elaboration. Immediately following these claims, the video cuts to an interview they conducted with Justin Sherwood, a member of the Building Industry and Land Development Association. This can be considered an ethical appeal as Sherwood is an expert in the field with extensive knowledge of the Toronto housing market. In his short speech, Sherwood says that the cost of producing housing is higher than what the market can currently handle, and as a result, new buyers are left priced out of the market. This not only provides further evidence to support the claims made at the beginning of the video but also provides the missing context those claims initially had. While the claims used to hook the viewer may have lost some shock value after Sherwood's explanation, they gained context that allows them to appear more logical.

Following the interview with Sherwood, the broadcast read off stats about home sales in July for the GTA market over the past two years compared to the ten-year average. The video claimed that in 2025, only 359 new homes were sold, and in 2024, only 684 new homes were sold. This difference compared to the previous year already appears bad at first but is then further developed when it is stated that the ten-year average for home sales in Toronto is 1941 new homes per year. The video initially shocked the viewer with the claims made about the housing

market over the summer, but this shock value was lost after Sherwood's explanation. However, after presenting these statistics, CTV News creates new shock value that pulls the viewer back in and maintains their interest at a high level.

The broadcast then makes another strong ethical appeal by interviewing locals who are directly impacted by the issues in the housing market. In these interviews, locals made claims that the new condos being built are too small to serve as family homes and that the cost of a house or condo, relative to average annual incomes, is significantly higher than in the past. Gathering statements from locals that support the previous claims made during the broadcast further contribute to the credibility of these claims, as they demonstrate that they are representative of how locals feel and that all that is said is grounded in reality. This can also be considered an emotional appeal as it is easier for those viewing the broadcast to connect on a human level with the stories of how locals are being impacted rather than simply hearing statistics and professional analysis.

“Beyond Shelter: A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Canada’s Housing Crisis” by Reza Farkhondehpay is an opinion piece that argues Canada's affordable housing crisis must be addressed through the collaboration of various groups of stakeholders. Farkhondehpay begins the article by emphasizing the urgency of the housing crisis by stating that the housing crisis has “far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and communities across the nation” (Farkhondehpay, 2024). Following this statement, he says property prices have risen at a faster rate than incomes, and that homeownership has become increasingly difficult for Canadians. This can be considered an emotional appeal as the reader can put themselves in the shoes of a Canadian struggling to pay rent or find a home in their budget. Farkhondehpay’s views can also

be compared to the statements made by one of the locals in the CTV News segment, as both noted how home prices are rising at a faster rate than incomes.

Farkhondehpay then builds logos in his argument by citing a variety of statistics to define the scope of the housing crisis and show why housing is very unaffordable for Canadians. This is exemplified when he cites a statistic showing that Torontonians spend 73.1% of their income on mortgage payments. The fact that Farkhondehpay is an expert in Canadian real estate with impressive accolades, such as founding his own contracting and construction management company, along with authoring numerous books and peer-reviewed articles, is an ethical appeal on its own. However, his expertise alone is not enough to justify the argument he makes about how to address the housing crisis. By including credible statistics that support his argument, Farkhondehpay makes up for what his expertise lacks in terms of justifying his argument.

Once finished defining the scope of the issue, Farkhondehpay begins to propose a solution to the housing crisis based on government involvement. In doing this, Farkhondehpay combines the previously established ethos and logos to justify his proposal. By introducing credible and relevant statistics while also establishing his own credibility as an author, he is able to make the reader believe the conclusion he reaches with his expertise based on evaluating these statistics can be considered reliable. The previous portion of his essay was used to establish credibility and set the stage for his proposal by introducing information he plans to use later. This makes it so that once it's time to make his proposal, he no longer has to make any rhetorical appeals. While he does continue to make a logical appeal by introducing new statistics during the explanation of his proposal, there are little to no ethical or emotional appeals for the rest of the essay, as they are no longer necessary and would only distract from the plan he is trying to detail.

CTV News and Farkhondehpay have very different overall structures in how they use rhetorical appeals throughout their work. Farkhondehpay provides context from the beginning of his essay and works to establish his credibility early, allowing him to focus less on making appeals and more on clearly outlining his plan later in the essay. CTV News adopts a completely different approach to implementing appeals in its broadcast. Unlike Farkhondehpay, they deliberately leave out context at the start of the video to make their hook statement seem more shocking, thus catching the viewers' attention more. The lack of context that CTV News provides at the beginning of the broadcast is part of a strategy they implement to keep the viewer engaged by leaving room for curiosity, which they satisfy later on. By making the viewer wait for their curiosity to be satisfied, they ultimately end up keeping the viewer engaged for longer.

Farkhondehpay does not utilize either of the strategies to keep the readers' attention. This is exemplified in his opening line, "The affordable housing crisis in Canada has reached a critical juncture, with far-reaching consequences for individuals, families, and communities across the nation" (Farkhondehpay, 2024). It uses very direct language that is more focused on getting the point across rather than inciting an emotional reaction in the reader. This choice is likely at least partially due to the nature of the paper compared to that of the news broadcast. An academic paper is expected to be more focused on logic and credible references, while appealing to emotion is less important comparatively. On the other hand, in a news broadcast, referencing credible sources and making logical appeals is still important, but there is a lot more room for emotion as the audience is the general public rather than experts and fellow academics. With this established, it makes sense why CTV News may include statements from locals and only add a few statistics, while Farkhondehpay included no statements from Torontonians but had far more statistics in his report than CTV News.

When comparing the rhetorical strategies used by both CTV News and Farkhondehpay, it is important to acknowledge that the two artifacts serve different purposes. CTV News is focused on simply putting forward the facts on the situation and including a variety of perspectives. While some of the people interviewed in the report expressed specific opinions on how the housing crisis should be handled, CTV News itself never endorsed a specific course of action. On the other hand, Farkhondehpay was suggesting a specific course of action to be taken in regard to the housing crisis. The primary purpose of Farkhondehpays' commentary is to explain the solution he is proposing and to convince other people in his space that his ideas could be effective if implemented. The nature of these two artifacts is inherently different, with the CTV News report being primarily focused on keeping the viewer engaged while educating them on the state of the Toronto housing market, while Farkhondehpay is focused on convincing other academics of his stance and the course of action he believes should take place. Trying to keep someone engaged and trying to convince someone of your stance are very different in how they are communicated. This can be seen in the differences in the strategies used by both artifacts. The way CTV News continues to introduce new information as the story goes on, while Farkhondehpay lays everything out first, is a clear example of how convincing and engaging requires different strategies.

Overall, CTV News and Farkhondehpay are both effective in getting their message across despite using very different methods of doing so because they both understand what works for their respective form of media. CTV News focused less on adding lots of statistics and forming a complex argument, as they know that their audience would benefit more from hearing the ideas of their peers instead. On the contrary, Farkhondehpay understands that his primarily academic audience will gain more value from hearing an evidence-heavy argument and will value his

personal expertise more than the public might when reading his work. However, both do share certain similarities in that both made ethical appeals through referencing expert opinion in their work, while also recognizing the importance of using statistics, even if not to the same degree. If anything can be taken away from comparing the rhetoric of CTV News and Farkhondehpay, it can certainly be that understanding your audience is key to using the most effective rhetoric to communicate your message.

References

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