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Comments

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA) section 88.18 requires municipalities and local boards, before May 1 of an election year, to establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources during the election Campaign Period.

This memo ensures the City of Cambridge has established a consistent approach and clear direction regarding the use of corporate resources during an election as per the Municipal Election Act, 1996 (MEA). The policy as attached should be interpreted as a general prohibition against the use of corporate resources for any election-related purpose in Municipal, Provincial or Federal elections.

A Use of Corporate Resource Policy outlines the appropriate use of corporate resources during an election period, in order to protect the interests of elected officials, candidates, registered third parties, staff, volunteers and the corporation and ensures accountable and transparent election practices are in place to maintain non-partisanship and demonstrate impartiality towards provincial and federal partisan political activities during the campaign period.

A contribution may take the form of money, goods or services. Any use by a Council Member, candidate, third party advertiser, volunteer or city employee of the City’s resources for an election campaign could be viewed as a contribution by the municipality to that campaign, and is a violation of the MEA.

The contribution provisions found in the MEA are echoed in provincial and federal legislation, and therefore this policy will be applied to provincial and federal elections and candidates.

It is recognized that subject to the provisions of the Municipal Act, 2001, persons elected to an office on City Council (“Member of Council”) are holders of their office until the end of their term and until their successors are elected and the newly elected Council is organized.

Federal and Provincial Elections
The City continues to emphasize the importance of strengthening relationships with all levels of government. To avoid the appearance of City support for partisan political activities, discretion will be used in considering requests for government events leading up to and during the period when the writ of election (dissolution of parliament [federal] or legislature [provincial]) is issued.

The attached policy highlights the following:

- The current definition of election campaign has been clarified to include all elections, including municipal, regional, provincial, federal and party leadership contests
- Provide guidance and clarity regarding the use of personal time for City Staff considering participation in election campaigns
- Provide clarification on Campaign Activities at City Owned/Operated Facilities

Awareness to all Candidates

At the time of nomination appointments, candidates will be provided with a copy of the attached policy. Staff will take the time to outline the policy and point to the consequences of violating the MEA. This review will be a compulsory component of the nomination appointment to ensure candidates and potential candidates are aware and comply. Further, the policy will be shared online as a candidate and public resource.

Candidate Enquiries Webpage

In addition, staff will provide all candidates with a protocol on how to ask questions of municipal staff. The city’s webpage on elections will include a webform for candidates to submit questions of City staff.

The questions received will be sent to the appropriate staff/department and a response will be provided to the requestor. For transparency purposes, the response will be redacted for any identifying information and posted to a webpage for all candidates to view. This practice is customary for many municipalities and it ensures that all candidates have a level playing field to information received.

Effectively using this process may lead to a reduction in repetitive questions to particular departments or municipal officials and will ensure official responses are available to all candidates and the public.

Conclusion

Staff are committed to ensuring that the election plans, policies, guides and materials provide clear and consistent messaging, rules and understanding to ensure that candidates, voters and staff are able to understand the expectations. This policy is intended to ensure compliance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, in regards to the prohibitions against the City contributing to a municipal and trustee election campaign.

It is important for the success of this policy that current elected officials, candidates, registered third parties and volunteers and staff are treated fairly and consistently within the municipality and that the integrity of the election process is maintained at all times.
2022 Municipal Election: Restricted Acts After Nomination Day (Lame Duck Period)

Under Section 275 of Ontario’s Municipal Act, 2001 a council becomes “lame duck” if it is determined that less than three-quarters of current members could potentially return after the election.

In 2022, City Council may be in a ‘lame duck’ situation if fewer than 75% of Councillors return following the election on October 22, 2022 until the swearing in of the new Council, or where fewer than 75% of current Councillors submit their nomination on Nomination Day (August 19, 2022). Should the City have a lame duck Council after either of these dates, this would pose some potential challenges for the operations of the City, as the Municipal Act, 2001 s.275 outlines some acts that a “lame duck” Council would be restricted from engaging in.

The restricted acts of Council, if lame duck, include:

- The appointment or removal from office of any officer of the municipality;
- The hiring or dismissal of any employee of the municipality;
- The disposition of any real or personal property of the municipality which had a value exceeding $50,000. when it was acquired by the municipality;
- Making any expenditures or incurring any other liability which exceeds $50,000.

There are exceptions within the Municipal Act which do provide limits to the above restrictions, including:

- Existing delegated authority is not impacted. This would include examples such as the City Manager’s authority over administration (including hiring and termination), and much of procurement authority.
- Council may act on disposing of property or incurring a liability if this was included in the most recent approved budget.
- Council may act on any matter in the event of an emergency.

Key dates to consider:

- August 23, 2022 – Last Council Meeting prior to Nomination Day
- August 19, 2022 – Nomination Day
- September 27, 2022 – Last Council Meeting prior to the Election
- October 24, 2022 – Election Day
- November 15, 2022 – New Council term begins

Attachments

- Use of Corporate Resources During an Election Policy
Approvals:
☒ Manager/Supervisor ☒ Deputy City Manager ☒ City Manager
POLICY TITLE Use of Corporate Resource Policy During an Election
CATEGORY Governance
POLICY NUMBER A09 ADM 039
DEPARTMENT Corporate Services
POLICY AUTHOR City Clerk
POLICY TYPE Administrative Policy
APPROVED BY City Manager/CLT
EFFECTIVE DATE (03/30/2022)
REVIEW DATE (03/30/2026)

POLICY STATEMENT

In compliance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (the MEA), public funds and resources are not to be used for any election-related purposes, including the promotion of or opposition to the candidacy of a person for elected office.

Specifically, Section 88.18 of the MEA provides that municipalities “… shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of [municipal resources] during the election campaign period.”

The Ontario Election Finances Act, 1990 and the Canada Elections Act, 2000 include similar prohibitions with respect to provincial and federal election campaigns. Specifically, Section 29 of the Election Finances Act, 1990 prohibits contributions from corporations, which includes municipal corporations. Section 363 of the Canada Elections Act, 2000 similarly provides that only individuals may make campaign contributions.

This policy supports compliance with the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, the Council Code of Conduct, Code of Conduct for Members of Local Boards and Advisory Committees, the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy and the Employee Code of Conduct.

PURPOSE

This policy applies to all Members of Council, municipal staff, registered election Candidates, registered third parties, Members of Advisory Committees and Members of the public in relation to the occurrence of a municipal election, by-election, or campaign related to a question on the ballot; in relation to any participation in federal and provincial elections that is partisan in nature.

Where applicable, provisions in this policy shall also apply to activities of all Candidates, registered third party advertisers and ballot question campaigns in relation to City resources.
This policy is intended to:

- Ensure compliance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, in regards to the prohibitions against the City contributing to a municipal and trustee election campaign.

- Ensure Candidates and Registered Third Parties are treated fairly and consistently within the municipality.

- Ensure that the integrity of the election process is maintained at all times.

- Establish the appropriate use of Corporate resources during an election period, in order to:
  
  (a) protect the interests of Elected Officials, Candidates, Registered Third Parties, Staff and the Corporation, and
  
  (b) ensure accountable and transparent election practices

- Maintain non-partisanship and demonstrate impartiality towards provincial and federal partisan political activities during the Campaign Period.

Certain provisions of this policy may be subject to additional City by-laws, policies and procedures. Guidance should be sought from the City Clerk or designate if clarification or interpretation is required, or if any situation arises that is not expressly addressed in this policy.

**APPLICATION AND SCOPE**

This policy applies to all Members of Council (including those not seeking re-election), Members of local boards and advisory committees, Candidates, Registered Third Parties in a municipal and school board trustee election or by-election, and all Staff, including staff in the offices of the Mayor and Members of Council, during a Campaign Period.

Where applicable, this policy also applies to all registered Candidates and Registered Third Parties for a provincial or federal election or by-election.

**EXCEPTIONS**

Municipal information prepared, posted and maintained by the City, names and photographs of Elected Officials, their contact information, and a list of current representation on committees that is prepared, posted and maintained by the City.

Agendas and minutes of Council and Committee meetings.

Media releases and City materials that describe inter-governmental activities of the Mayor in the capacity as Head of Council of the City.

A provincial or federal announcement in which one government is in a writ period may be permitted if directly related to government business.
ACTIVITIES

The following activities are not permitted during an election campaign period:

(a) All-Candidates meetings may be held at a City facility provided the expectations for campaigning on City property is reviewed with all renters and staff.

(b) Members of Council, a registered third-party advertiser or its agents, or City Staff may not display campaign-related materials inside, or on the property of, any Municipal facility, which includes individual offices, parking lots and workspaces. Members of Council, a registered third-party advertiser or its agents, or City Staff may not use City facilities for campaign-related activities, unless the facility is rented in accordance with municipal agreements and the appropriate fees are paid. Such rental must be paid from the campaign account of the Candidate or registered third party;

(c) City facilities may not be booked for campaign activities on a date where there is voting taking place at that facility.

(d) Corporate resources, assets and funding may not be used for any election related purposes.

(e) Campaigning or solicitation (including display or distribution of Campaign material, wearing Campaign buttons or clothing, etc.) at a City-organized Event (e.g. Canada Day, flag raisings, etc.).

(f) Use of City funds to acquire any resources for any Campaign or Campaign related activities, including ordering/printing of stationary and office supplies.

Note: Campaigning on City Property, whether it is during or outside of an election campaign period, is not permitted at any time.

CAMPAIGN MATERIAL

The following restrictions apply to campaign related material:

(a) Use of Member of Council office budgets to sponsor or produce any campaign material.

(b) Use of City funds or resources to print or distribute any material that refers to, or contains the names or photographs of, or identifies Candidates or Registered Third Parties.

(c) Use of lists, data and files produced using City resources, with the exception of lists to which a particular Candidate is entitled, pursuant to the MEA, for the current election (e.g. permitted use of Voters’ List for election purposes only).
(d) Display of Campaign material, including clothing, in or on any City Property.

(e) Display of Campaign material at any voting location, including the voting location’s parking lot.

(f) Display of Campaign material, including clothing, by any City Staff, during working hours.

ELECTION SIGNS

Placement of election signs for municipal, provincial and federal elections must be in accordance with the City’s Sign By-law.

TECHNOLOGY, EQUIPMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The following restrictions apply to the use of information technology and social media during a campaign period:

(a) Refer to and/or identify any individual as a candidate, political party, Registered Third Party or a supporter or opposer of a question on a ballot during an election, on any social media sites, blogs, and other new media created and/or managed by the City and/or City Staff.

(b) Use City owned or managed technology (IT) assets, infrastructure, or data (e.g. computers, printers, wireless devices, portals, corporate email, web pages, blogs, telephone) to communicate election-related messages.

Note: The City’s online list of candidates and registered third parties shall be the only area of the City of Cambridge’s website where a link to external election campaign contacts, websites and/or social media may be posted during the Campaign Period.

MEMBER OF COUNCIL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

The following restrictions apply to Member of Council use of social media during a campaign period:

(a) Any and all links to social media accounts and personal external websites will be removed from City websites and domains during a municipal election period.

(b) Members of Council are not permitted to use electronic materials paid for by the City for municipal election campaign purposes.

(c) Members of Council and candidates may not include election related material on websites or domain names paid for by the City.
USE OF CITY LOGO/IDENTIFIERS

Use of a video, photo, logo, crest, coat of arms, slogan, or identifier for which the City has proprietary rights, including municipal election logos, in any capacity, is strictly prohibited.

MEMBER OF COUNCIL CONDUCT

Current Members of Council may be invited to provide remarks at City events, and maintain their duties within their role as an elected official.

All forms of advertising, including municipal publications (e.g. paper or web-based) will be discontinued for Members of Council who are candidates at the end of Nomination day.

CANDIDATE AND REGISTERED THIRD-PARTY CONDUCT

(a) Candidates and Registered Third Parties who attend City-organized Events are not permitted to campaign, including without limitation, distribute campaign material, wear campaign buttons or shirts.

(b) Candidates and Registered Third Parties shall not be invited to deliver remarks at City events in their capacity as a Candidate or registered third party advertiser.

(c) The City’s Staff supervising a City-organized Event may request that a Candidate or Registered Third Party leave the event if campaigning is reported or suspected.

(d) Members of Council attending City-organized Events, or events held at a City property may act as a representative participant in their capacity as an elected official, including speaking and offering greetings. Elected Officials and Members of Council who are also Candidates at the time of their attendance and participation at the City-organized Event may not campaign. No election signs or Campaign materials, including clothing, may be publicized at the event.

(e) Candidates or Registered Third Parties are not permitted to engage in Campaign activities directed at City Employees while those employees are at their workplace or engaged in work for the City.

Note: The above extends to registered Candidates and Registered Third Party advertisers for a provincial or federal election or by-election.

Note: City-led Events should be kept to a minimum between Nomination Day and Voting Day during the year of a municipal election, unless extenuating circumstances require an official City Event to take place.
CITY STAFF/VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

In recognizing the right of employees and volunteers to participate in political activity, the provisions set out below ensure the requirement for public service to be politically impartial.

City Staff, shall not:

(a) Canvass or perform any work in support of a Candidate or Registered Third Party (e.g. campaign), during hours in which a person is working for and/or receiving any compensation from the City, except during scheduled time off (e.g. scheduled vacation time).

(b) City Staff shall not post or distribute Campaign material on behalf of a Candidate or Registered Third Party at City facilities or on City property including City parks.

(c) Engage in any political activity while wearing a City uniform or identifier (e.g. name badge, hat, lanyard).

(d) Engage in any political activity while wearing clothing or buttons that advertise any Candidate, Registered Third Party or political party while wearing a City uniform or identifier.

(e) Use their title or position within the City in a way that may lead a member of the public to infer that the City is endorsing a Candidate, Registered Third Party or political party.

Note: The City Clerk and City Clerk’s Office Election staff may not engage in political activity in any election. City Staff that support the City Clerk in the administration of a municipal election may not engage in political activity during such election.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE/LOCAL BOARD MEMBERS CONDUCT

This policy applies to all Council-appointed citizen members of advisory committees and local boards and is intended to balance the duties of citizen members with the legal obligation of the City not to contribute to, or be perceived as contributing to, an election campaign.

As such, citizen members engaged in political activities must take care to separate those personal activities from their appointed positions on Committees or Boards. The Code of Conduct for Local Boards and Citizen Advisory Committee members applies to citizen members when acting in their official capacity. Citizen members are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the MEA and this policy.

The Advisory Committee Members’ Code of Conduct recognizes the role of Advisory Committees in providing informed, impartial and objective advice and guidance, as well
as facilitating public input to Council on programs and policies in support of Council’s priorities.

This policy requires that an appointed member of an Advisory Committee and/or Local Board “shall not engage in political campaigning of any sort (municipally, provincially or federally) on behalf of the Advisory Committee, Local Board or as a member of an Advisory Committee.”

Citizen Committee activity is to be paused from August – December of a Municipal Election year.

**CONTENT OF COMMUNICATIONS**

Members of Council may not deliver any unsolicited material outside of their existing ward where the printing and/or distribution costs are paid by the municipality. Care should be taken to ensure that the mailing of newsletters, etc., be restricted to the Member’s ward only.

In accordance with the provisions of the **MEA**, Members of Council may not:

(a) Print or distribute any material paid by municipal funds that illustrates that the Member of Council or any other individual is registered in any election or where they will be running for office;

(b) Profile (name or photograph), or refer to, in any material paid by municipal funds, any individual who is registered as a Candidate in any election; and

(c) Print or distribute any material using municipal funds that refers to, or contains the names or photographs, or identifies registered Candidates for municipal elections; and that the minutes of municipal Council and Committee meetings be exempt from this policy.

Members of Council are responsible for ensuring that the content of any communication material, printed, hosted or distributed by the City of Cambridge at the request of the Member of Council is not for campaigning.

Candidates may not print or distribute any election related material using municipal funds or equipment.

In any material printed or distributed by the City of Cambridge, Candidates are not permitted to:

(a) Image or illustrate that an individual (either a Member of Council or any other individual) is a Candidate registered in any election;

(b) Identify where they or any other individual will be running for office; or
(c) Profile or refer to Candidates in any election.

The municipality’s voice mail system may not be used to record election related messages, unless authorized by the City Clerk for the purposes of informing residents of the election process and the registered Candidates running for office.

The City’s computer network (including the City’s email system), may not be used to distribute election related correspondence.

AUTHORITY

The City Clerk and their authorized designate or designates shall have the delegated authority to investigate and resolve any issues arising from a complaint regarding a contravention of this policy.

Additionally, the City Clerk may immediately order the removal of any campaign related activities or materials found to be in violation of this policy.

It is the responsibility of all Candidates, Members of Council, City Staff and City Volunteers to adhere to this policy.

DEFINITIONS

CANDIDATE means any person who has filed the prescribed nomination form to run in a Municipal, Regional, School Board, Provincial or Federal Election or By-Election or for a position in a political party, including anyone acclaimed to a position.

CAMPAIGNING means any election-related activity for the purpose of supporting or opposing the Election of a Candidate or a political party involved in a municipal, provincial or federal election or activities involved in becoming or seeking to become a Candidate in a municipal, provincial or federal election, and includes, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the production and distribution of materials (paper and electronic), advertising (including any form of electronic advertising), any form of promotion (including by means of social media), display of signage including but not limited to the following types of activities:

- events
- canvassing
- fundraising
- media relations
- municipal public meetings
- research
- brochures
- posters
- TV, video, digital and radio commercials
- newspaper ads
- social media posts and online content
- stationary
- campaign signs
- buttons, stickers, decals, masks
- mail outs

**CITY** means The Corporation of the City of Cambridge

**CITY VOLUNTEER** means an individual who performs duties on behalf of Councillors or the City and who does not receive financial payment from the City for their work as a volunteer

**CITY CLERK** means the City Clerk and Returning Officer of the City

**CORPORATE RESOURCE** includes but is not limited to the following:
- the City crest, corporate seal and/or corporate logo
- City Employees or volunteers
- City property, facilities, equipment
- City funds or grants (including in-kind support)
- Any photos or videos produced by City Staff, including electronic images/videos
- City information technology systems including but not limited to all computer and telephone networks and applications, printers and copiers, including voice-mail, e-mail, internet and intranet along with City funded or maintained social media accounts or online content, any mailing lists/data files collected or produced by City Staff or Members of Council as part of City business
- any information, reports, presentations gathered/prepared by City Staff for a Member of Council as requested by that Member in their official capacity as a Member of City Council and not already made public

**COUNCIL** means the elected officials of the City of Cambridge

**COUNCILLOR** means a Member of Cambridge City Council

**DISCRETIONARY EXPENSE** is an expense that is incurred by an individual Member of Council and is charged to an individual Council Member's discretionary account. The responsibility for determining the appropriateness of a Discretionary Expense rests with the individual Member of Council and/or the Chief Financial Officer

**ELECTION** means an Election or By-Election at the Municipal, School Board, Regional, Provincial, or Federal level of government, political party nomination contest or leadership contests, or the submission of a question or bylaw to electors

**ELECTION RELATED** means anything that relates directly to an Election

**MEA** means the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, as amended
MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEE means an individual who is hired on a temporary, part-time, contract, or permanent basis by the City, and receives financial payment from the City for their employment.

NEWSLETTER means a printed or electronic publication produced and distributed by or on behalf of a Councillor or the Mayor (and using City Resources) to provide information to constituents.

NOMINATION DAY is the date in a regular Election or a By-Election (as defined in Municipal, Provincial or Federal legislation) where nominations close.

NOMINATION PERIOD is the period of time between the Opening of Nominations and Nomination Day in a regular Election or a By-Election (as defined in Municipal, Provincial or Federal legislation).

OPENING OF NOMINATIONS is the first date in a regular Election or a By-Election (as defined in Municipal, Provincial or Federal legislation) where nominations can be filed.

REGISTERED THIRD PARTY means an individual or corporation or trade union as defined in Municipal, Provincial or Federal legislation.

THIRD PARTY REGISTRANT means an individual, corporation or trade union that has filed a notice of registration with the Clerk in relation to the municipal election pursuant to the MEA.

ELECTION PERIOD means the official campaign period of a Municipal, Regional, Provincial or Federal Election, Byelection or political party contest as outlined below:

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<th>Election Type</th>
<th>Election Period</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Municipal Election (includes Local Councillors, Regional Councillors, Regional Chair and School Board Offices)</td>
<td>The Election Period commences on the first day nominations may be filed and ends on Voting Day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal By-Election (includes Local Councillors, Regional Councillors, Regional Chair and School Board offices)</td>
<td>The Election Period commences on the first day nominations may be filed and ends on Voting Day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial or Federal Elections</td>
<td>The Election Period commences the day the writ for the Election is issued and ends on Voting Day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial party leadership and nomination contests</td>
<td>The Election Period commences with the date of registration as a Candidate with the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario and ends after the date fixed for the leadership vote as filed with the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal party leadership and nomination contests</td>
<td>The Election Period commences when a contestant first receives contributions, incurs expenses or borrows money or is</td>
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<td>deemed to be a contestant in accordance with sections 478.2 (2) and 476.2 of the Canada Elections Act and ends with the date of selection.</td>
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February 25, 2022

The Honourable David Piccini, Minister
Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks
College Park 5th Floor, 777 Bay St.
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Re: Municipal Accommodation Tax and Crown Campgrounds

On January 1st, 2022, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula implemented a Municipal Accommodation Tax (MAT). The tax equates to a 4% fee Levied on short term accommodations including, hotels, motels, rooming houses, bed & breakfast, cottage rentals and campgrounds, for all bookings of 30 days or less.

The Town of South Bruce Peninsula is the first jurisdiction in Ontario to levy the MAT on campgrounds. There are approximately 14 campgrounds within the Town of South Bruce Peninsula. Of those, one is a municipally owned campground, and one is a provincially owned campground, known as the Sauble Falls Provincial Park.

The Town recently amended the MAT program to confirm that our Town owned campground will contribute to MAT in the same manner as all of our privately owned campgrounds.

The Municipal Act states that “the Crown, any agency of the Crown in right of Ontario or any authority……” is exempt from MAT. As such, the Sable Falls Provincial Park is not participating in the MAT program.

Several campground owners within the Town recently attended a Council meeting and stated their concerns and objections pertaining to the MAT exemption for the Sauble Falls Provincial Park. Town Council and private campground owners believe that this exemption creates an unfair competitive advantage for the provincially operated campground.

Council fully supports the position of our local campground owners and has passed the following resolution

"And further that the Town sends a letter to the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks as well as to MPP Bill Walker requesting the removal of the Municipal Accommodation Tax exemption for all Crown owned campgrounds and that this letter is sent to all Ontario municipalities to seek their support"
By way of this letter, we are asking the province to remove exemptions listed within section 400.1 (1) of the Municipal Act pertaining to Crown owned facilities, specifically campgrounds.

Sincerely,

Janice Jackson – Mayor
Town of South Bruce Peninsula
Janice.jackson@southbrucepeninsula.com
519-534-1400 ext. 200

cc. MPP Bill Walker
Re: Termination of the Town of Collingwood’s Membership in the OMWA

Please be advised that Council of the Corporation of the Town of Collingwood, respectfully wishes to advise you that the Town of Collingwood can no longer remain a member of the Ontario Municipal Water Association. At the regular meeting of Council held January 24th, 2022, Council passed the following motion:

WHEREAS Collingwood is a member of the Ontario Municipal Water Association (OMWA); AND

WHEREAS the OMWA website lists Mr. Ed Houghton as the Executive Director of OMWA; AND

WHEREAS Mr. Houghton was the CEO of Collus Power Corporation and the Acting CAO for the Town of Collingwood when the Town closed the sale of 50% of its interest in Collus Power Corporation to Powerstream Incorporated in 2012 and subsequently used the proceeds to purchase 2 Sprung buildings for the Town’s recreation facilities through a sole-sourced procurement; AND

WHEREAS the Town of Collingwood Council of 2014-2018 asked the Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Ontario to strike a Judicial Inquiry into these 2 transactions in 2018 and the then Associate Chief Justice Frank Marrocco was appointed the Commissioner of the Collingwood Judicial Inquiry; AND

WHEREAS Justice Marrocco released his report on November 2, 2020, in which he found that, “undisclosed conflicts, unfair procurements, and lack of transparency stained both transactions;” AND

WHEREAS Justice Marrocco found that when, “the answers to legitimate questions are dismissive, spun, or obfuscated, public trust further erodes” and that, “the relationship between the public and its municipal government may never be the same;” AND

WHEREAS Justice Marrocco found that Mr. Houghton, “enjoyed unusual influence and freedom in his roles with the Town and Collus corporations” and that Mr. Houghton was a central figure in both transactions; AND

WHEREAS Mr. Houghton’s actions during these two transactions, as found by Justice Marrocco in his report, undermined the credibility and integrity of the Town of Collingwood and had a profound, devastating and lasting impact on our community.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council terminate the Town’s membership in OMWA effectively immediately; AND
FURTHER THAT a letter be sent to the OMWA Board and copied to all members of OMWA attaching this motion and the link to Justice Marrocco’s Report, “Transparency and the Public Trust: Report of the Collingwood Judicial Inquiry.” CARRIED.

Yours truly,

Sara Almas | CMM III Director of Legislative Services / Clerk

TOWN OF COLLINGWOOD | 97 Hurontario Street, P.O. Box 157 | Collingwood ON L9Y 3Z5
705-445-1030 Ext. 3294 | www.collingwood.ca
March 8, 2022

Via email: LMcdonald@bracebridge.ca

Lori McDonald, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk
Town of Bracebridge
100 Taylor Court
Bracebridge, ON
P1L 1R6

Dear Ms. McDonald,

RE: Motion 22-PD-014 regarding Hospital Capital Funding, dated February 24, 2022

On behalf of the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Lake of Bays, please be advised that the above-noted correspondence was presented at the last regularly scheduled Council meeting on March 8, 2022 and the following resolution was passed.

“Resolution #7(a)/03/08/22

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Corporation of the Township of Lake of Bays received correspondence from Lori McDonald, Director of Corporate Services/Clerk, Town of Bracebridge re: Motion 22-PD-014 regarding Hospital Capital Funding, dated February 24, 2022 and supports their requests for a provincial re-examination of the “local share” hospital capital calculation methodology, to better reflect the limited fiscal capacity of municipalities, and the contributions to health care services they already provide to a community;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Local member of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities, and all Ontario Municipalities.

Carried.”
In accordance with Council's direction, I am forwarding you a copy of the resolution for your reference. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned to provide any additional clarification in this regard.

Sincerely,

Carrie Sykes, Dipl. M.A., CMO, AOMC,
Director of Corporate Services/Clerk

Copy to: Premier of Ontario
Minister of Health
Minister of Affairs and Housing
Local member of Provincial Parliament
Association of Municipalities
All Ontario Municipalities
March 8, 2022

Prime Minister of Canada
Hon. Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Premier of Ontario
Hon. Doug Ford
Legislative Building
Queen’s Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 1A1

Honorable Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Ford:

RE: Resolution Passed by Woolwich Township Council – Mental Health Supports

This letter is to inform you that the Council of the Township of Woolwich endorsed the following resolution at their meeting held on March 7, 2022:

WHEREAS the Council of the Township of Woolwich (the "Township") has been an annual funding partner of Woolwich Counselling Centre to support local mental health counselling; and

WHEREAS Woolwich Counselling Centre is part of the broader Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region, a community-based partnership between six community counselling service providers within Waterloo Region; and

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on individuals and families, both globally and locally, including immediate and ongoing mental health concerns; and

WHEREAS the Township is aware that there has been an average 39% increase in total client referrals, which includes a 71% increase in child and youth referrals, for government funded programs in 2021 across member organizations of the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region, which has led to difficulty for the member organizations to keep up with the demand in terms of bringing on new qualified staff to support the substantial increase in local client needs; and
WHEREAS the Township believes local needs for mental health supports and difficulties in responding to this increased need is indicative of a broader issue across Ontario and is expected to continue in the future; and

WHEREAS the current provincial funding model for mental health support is fragmented across several ministries and programs;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the Township of Woolwich requests that the Government of Canada ensure appropriate and sustained funding is transferred to provinces for mental health purposes in their 2022 budget; and

THAT the Council of the Township of Woolwich requests the Government of Ontario to provide stable, reliable and predictable funding for mental health organizations in their 2022 budget; and

THAT this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister, the Federal Minister of Finance, the local Member of Parliament, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the Premier of Ontario, the Ontario Minister of Finance, the local Member of Provincial Parliament, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and other municipalities in Ontario.

Should you have any questions, please contact Alex Smyth, by email at asmyth@woolwich.ca or by phone at 519-669-6004.

Yours truly,

Jeff Smith
Municipal Clerk
Corporate Services
Township of Woolwich

cc. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Tim Louis, MP Kitchener-Conestogo
Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Peter Bethlenfalvy, Ontario Minister of Finance
Mike Harris, MPP Kitchener-Conestogo
Association of Municipalities in Ontario (AMO)
Municipalities in Ontario

“Proudly remembering our past; Confidently embracing our future.”
February 28, 2022

The Honorable Doug Ford  
Premier of Ontario  
Room 281, Legislative Building, Queen's Park  
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

RE: DISSOLVE ONTARIO LAND TRIBUNAL (OLT) (13.2)

Dear Premier:

This will confirm that at its February 23, 2022 meeting, Markham City Council adopted the following resolution:

Whereas Municipalities across this province collectively spend millions of dollars of taxpayer money and municipal resources developing Official Plans that meet current Provincial Planning Policy; and,

Whereas an Official Plan is developed through months of public consultation to ensure, “that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of our community”; and,

Whereas our Official Plan includes zoning provisions that encourage development of the “missing middle” or “gentle density” to meet the need for attainable housing in our community; and,

Whereas our Official Plan is ultimately approved by the province; and,

Whereas it is within the legislative purview of Municipal Council to approve Official Plan amendments or Zoning By-law changes that better the community or fit within the vision of the City of Markham Official Plan; and,

Whereas it is also within the legislative purview of Municipal Council to deny Official Plan amendments or Zoning By-law changes that do not better the community or do not fit within the vision of the City of Markham Official Plan; and

Whereas municipal planning decisions may be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT; formerly the Ontario Municipal Board or “OMB”), an unelected, appointed body that is not accountable to the residents of the City of Markham; and,

Whereas the OLT has the authority to make a final decision on planning matters based on a “best planning outcome” and not whether the proposed development is in compliance with municipal Official Plans and Provincial Planning Policy; and,
Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada that empowers a separate adjudicative tribunal to review and overrule local decisions applying provincially approved plans; and,

Whereas towns and cities across this Province are repeatedly forced to spend millions of dollars defending Official Plans that have already been approved by the province in expensive, time consuming and ultimately futile OLT hearings; and,

Whereas lengthy, costly OLT hearings act as a barrier to the development of all housing and commercial properties.

1. Now Therefore Be It Resolved That the City of Markham requests the Government of Ontario to instruct the OLT to immediately cease accepting new cases and then dissolve the OLT once its current caseload has been addressed, thereby eliminating one of the most significant sources of red tape delaying the development of housing in Ontario; and,

2. Be It Further Resolved That a copy of this Motion be sent to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders of the Liberal and Green Party, all MPPs in the Province of Ontario; the Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario, the Small Urban GTHA Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario; and,

3. Be It Further Resolved That a copy of this Motion be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all Ontario municipalities for their consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Kimberley Kitteringham
City Clerk

cc: Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Opposition, New Democratic Party
Steven Del Duca, Leader, Ontario Liberal Party
Mike Schreiner, Leader, Green Party of Ontario
All MPPs in the Province of Ontario
Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario
Small Urban GTHA Mayors
Regional Chairs of Ontario
Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
All Ontario Municipalities
March 1, 2022

Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario
Premier’s Office
Room 281
Legislative Building, Queen’s Park
Toronto, ON
M7A 2J3

Sent via email: doug.fordco@p.ola.org

Dear Premier Ford,

Re: Dissolution of the Ontario Land Tribunal

This is to confirm that at the Feb 28, 2022 Council Meeting the following resolution was adopted with respect to the above noted matter:

That, the Township Clerk be and is hereby authorized to advise the Regional That, the resolution adopted by the Town of Halton Hills Council at their meeting of February 7, 2022, regarding the request for the Government of Ontario to Dissolve the Ontario Land Tribunal; be received and supported.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the above, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Joanne Scime, Clerk

cc. Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Official Opposition
Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Green Party
Steven Del Duca, Leader of the Liberal Party
All Ontario MPPs
Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario
Small Urban GTHA Mayors of Ontario
Regional Chairs of Ontario
AMO
All Ontario Municipalities
On February 24, 2022 Regional Council received the communication from the Town of Aurora dated February 22, 2022 and supported the motion, amended as follows:

WHEREAS Municipalities across this province collectively spend millions of dollars of taxpayer money and municipal resources developing Official Plans that meet current Provincial Planning Policy; and

WHEREAS an Official Plan is developed through months of public consultation to ensure, “that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of (our) community”; and

WHEREAS our Official Plan includes provisions that encourage development of the “missing middle” or “gentle density” to meet the need for attainable housing in our community; and

WHEREAS our Official Plan is ultimately approved by the province; and

WHEREAS it is within the legislative purview of Municipal Council to approve Official Plan amendments or Zoning By-law changes that better the community or fit within the vision of the Town of Aurora Official Plan; and

WHEREAS it is also within the legislative purview of Municipal Council to deny Official Plan amendments or Zoning By-law changes that do not better the community or do not fit within the vision of the Town of Aurora Official Plan; and

WHEREAS municipal planning decisions may be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT; formerly the Ontario Municipal Board or “OMB”), an unelected, appointed body that is not accountable to the residents of Aurora; and

WHEREAS the OLT has the authority to make a final decision on planning matters based on a “best planning outcome” and not whether the proposed development is in compliance with municipal Official Plans; and

WHEREAS all decisions - save planning decisions - made by Municipal Council are only subject to appeal by judicial review and such appeals are limited to questions of law and or process; and

WHEREAS Ontario is the only province in Canada that empowers a separate adjudicative tribunal to review and overrule local decisions applying provincially approved plans; and

WHEREAS towns and cities across this Province are repeatedly forced to spend millions of dollars defending Official Plans that have already been approved by the province in expensive, time consuming and ultimately futile OLT hearings; and
WHEREAS lengthy, costly OLT hearings add years to the development approval process and acts as a barrier to the development of attainable housing;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Ontario be requested to immediately engage municipalities to determine an alternative land use planning appeals process in order to dissolve the OLT and eliminate one of the most significant sources of red tape delaying the development of more attainable housing in Ontario; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That a copy of this Motion be sent to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders of the Liberal and Green Party, all MPPs in the Province of Ontario; the Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario, the Small Urban GTHA Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED That a copy of this Motion be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all Ontario municipalities for consideration.

Regards,

Christopher Raynor | Regional Clerk, Regional Clerk’s Office, Corporate Services

The Regional Municipality of York | 17250 Yonge Street | Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1
O: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71300 | christopher.raynor@york.ca | york.ca

Our Mission: Working together to serve our thriving communities – today and tomorrow
March 7, 2022

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building
Queen’s Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier,

RE: Dissolve Ontario Land Tribunal

At is meeting held on February 14, 2022, Township of Georgian Bay Council adopted the following resolution with respect to the Ontario Land Tribunal:

WHEREAS Municipalities across this Province collectively spend millions of dollars of taxpayer money and municipal resources developing Official Plans that meet current Provincial Planning Policy; and

WHEREAS an Official Plan is developed through months of public consultation to ensure, “that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of our community”; and

WHEREAS our Official Plan includes zoning provisions that encourage development of the “missing middle” or “gentle density” to meet the need for attainable housing in our community; and

WHEREAS our Official Plan is ultimately approved by the Province; and

WHEREAS it is within the legislative purview of Municipal Council to approve Official Plan amendments or Zoning By-law changes that better the community or fit within the vision of Township of Georgian Bay Official Plan; and

WHEREAS it is also within the legislative purview of Municipal Council to deny Official Plan amendments or Zoning By-law changes that do not better the community or do not fit within the vision of the Township of Georgian Bay Official Plan; and

WHEREAS municipal planning decisions may be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT - formerly the Ontario Municipal Board or “OMB”), an unelected, appointed body that is not accountable to the residents of Township of Georgian Bay; and

WHEREAS the OLT has the authority to make a final decision on planning matters based on a “best planning outcome” and not whether the proposed development is in compliance with municipal Official Plans and Provincial Planning Policy; and
WHEREAS all decisions—save planning decisions—made by Municipal Council are only subject to appeal by judicial review and such appeals are limited to questions of law and or process; and

WHEREAS Ontario is the only province in Canada that empowers a separate adjudicative tribunal to review and overrule local decisions applying provincially approved plans; and

WHEREAS towns and cities across this Province are repeatedly forced to spend millions of dollars defending Official Plans that have already been approved by the province in expensive, time consuming, and ultimately futile OLT hearings; and

WHEREAS lengthy, costly OLT hearings act as a barrier to the development of attainable housing;

1. NOW THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT Township of Georgian Bay requests the Government of Ontario to dissolve the OLT immediately thereby eliminating one of the most significant sources of red tape delaying the development of more attainable housing in Ontario; and

2. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Motion be sent to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders of the Liberal and Green Party, all MPPs in the Province of Ontario; the Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario, the Small Urban GTHA Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario; and

3. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this Motion be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and all Ontario municipalities for their consideration.

Your favorable consideration of this request is respectfully requested.

Sincerely,

Julie Bouthillette, CPA, CGA
Acting Chief Administrative Officer
Township of Georgian Bay

cc: Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; Leader of the Opposition; Leaders of the Liberal and Green Party; MPPs in the Province of Ontario; Large Urban Mayors’ Caucus of Ontario, Small Urban GTHA Mayors and Regional Chairs of Ontario; AMO and All Ontario Municipalities
March 7, 2022

Sent via email: doug.fordco@pc.ola.org

Attn: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

RE: Dissolution of the Ontario Land Tribunal

I am writing to advise you that at the Council meeting held on March 7, 2022, Council adopted the following recommendations regarding the above referenced matter:

Whereas Municipalities across this province collectively spend millions of dollars of taxpayer money and municipal resources developing Official Plans that meet current Provincial planning policy; and,

Whereas an Official Plan is developed through months of public consultation and in consideration of Provincial planning policy; and,

Whereas our Official Plan is ultimately approved by the province and the Province has the ability at the time of approval to demand any policy changes it feels is necessary to reflect Provincial Planning Policy and goals; and,

Whereas currently municipal planning decisions may be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT; formerly the Ontario Municipal Board or “OMB”), an unelected, appointed body that is not accountable to the residents of Newmarket; and,

Whereas towns and cities across this Province are repeatedly forced to spend millions of dollars defending Official Plans that have already been approved by the province in expensive and time consuming OLT hearings; and,

Whereas lengthy, costly OLT hearings act as a barrier and slow the process of development of housing options including affordable housing options; and,

Therefore Be It Resolved:

1. That Newmarket requests the Government of Ontario to dissolve the OLT thereby eliminating one of the most significant sources of red tape and delaying the development of more housing options including affordable housing options in Ontario OR create an adjudication process to only hear cases that challenge a municipality on the basis that it is not adhering to the local Official Plan; and,

2. That a copy of this motion be sent to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Leader of the
Opposition, the Leaders of the Liberal and Green Party, all MPPs in the Province of Ontario; and,

3. That a copy of this motion be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) and all Ontario municipalities for their consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Jaclyn Grossi
Acting Deputy Clerk

Copy:
Hon. Steve Clark, Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing
Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Official Opposition
Steven Del Duca, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party
Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party
MPPs in the Province of Ontario
All Ontario municipalities
Title: Motion - Councillor Bisanz - Dissolution of the Ontario Land Tribunal
Date: Monday, March 7, 2022

Moved by: Deputy Mayor & Regional Councillor Vegh
Seconded by: Councillor Woodhouse

Whereas Municipalities across this province collectively spend millions of dollars of taxpayer money and municipal resources developing Official Plans that meet current Provincial planning policy; and,

Whereas an Official Plan is developed through months of public consultation and in consideration of Provincial planning policy; and,

Whereas our Official Plan is ultimately approved by the province and the Province has the ability at the time of approval to demand any policy changes it feels is necessary to reflect Provincial Planning Policy and goals; and,

Whereas currently municipal planning decisions may be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT; formerly the Ontario Municipal Board or “OMB”), an unelected, appointed body that is not accountable to the residents of Newmarket; and,

Whereas towns and cities across this Province are repeatedly forced to spend millions of dollars defending Official Plans that have already been approved by the province in expensive and time consuming OLT hearings; and,

Whereas lengthy, costly OLT hearings act as a barrier and slow the process of development of housing options including affordable housing options; and,

Therefore Be It Resolved:

1. That Newmarket requests the Government of Ontario to dissolve the OLT thereby eliminating one of the most significant sources of red tape and delaying the development of more housing options including affordable housing options in Ontario OR create an adjudication process to only hear cases that challenge a municipality on the basis that it is not adhering to the local Official Plan; and,

2. That a copy of this motion be sent to the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leaders of the Liberal and Green Party, all MPPs in the Province of Ontario; and,
3. That a copy of this motion be sent to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (OSUM) and all Ontario municipalities for their consideration.

Carried
Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Report, PDS.22.037

Moved by: Councillor Matrosovs
Seconded by: Deputy Mayor Bordignon

THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.22.037, entitled “Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Recommendations – Information Report”; AND THAT Council direct Town staff to monitor any provincial policy and legislative changes that may be proposed by the Province to address Housing and Affordability issues.

The motion is Carried
A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report PDS.22.037, entitled “Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Recommendations – Information Report”; AND THAT Council direct Town staff to monitor any provincial policy and legislative changes that may be proposed by the Province to address Housing and Affordability issues.

B. Overview

This is an Information report to Council regarding Town staff’s response to the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Report and additional suggestions Town staff provided to the Province.

C. Background

During its February 14, 2022 Council meeting, Town Council considered correspondence from the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing. Specifically, the Minister sent correspondence to all Heads of Council within the Province seeking feedback and suggestions regarding opportunities to increase the supply of housing and expand affordability. Staff also provided a high level verbal overview of the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Report that was attached to the Minister’s letter.

As background, the Provincial Government struck the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force in late 2021 to look into the housing and affordability challenges that continue to impact many Ontarians. The Task Force’s process included consultation with various stakeholders involved in the planning, development and housing industries. For more information on the Task Force and its mandate, please refer to Attachment #1.

On February 8, 2022, the Task Force released a report containing fifty-five (55) recommendations for the Provincial government to consider as potential actions to help address housing supply and affordability issues that are very prevalent across the Province. The Minister’s letter to Heads of
Council provided the Town with an opportunity to give feedback on the Task Force Recommendations as well as to offer additional suggested solutions that could also be explored.

Given that the Minister requested municipal feedback to be submitted by Tuesday February 15, 2022, there was insufficient turnaround time for Town staff to provide a thorough analysis of the Task Force Report recommendations through a staff report that could be considered by Council prior to the Provincial deadline. Therefore, Town Council directed staff to prepare a comment letter to the Province on behalf of the Town, with a copy of the letter provided to Council. On February 15, 2022, Town staff provided a letter to the Province outlining primary feedback on the Task Force’s recommendations as well as some additional ideas/suggestions for the Province to consider, please refer to Attachment 3.

D. Analysis

As Council is fully aware, the housing supply and affordability issues in the Province has reached dramatic levels exacerbated by several factors, and the Town is one of several municipal examples where the issues are very prevalent and impactful on current residents, future residents and the local economy. To be clear, there is no single “silver bullet” to address the issues that exist. To effectively address the issues requires a suite of changes to adjust the systems involved in planning, development, building, and financing homes. All levels of government have a role to play in facilitating change. However, because provincial legislation guides how municipalities function and the decisions they make regarding housing, it is critical that municipalities engage the province in constructive dialogue to drive change that municipalities can implement effectively.

The Province has indicated that it is committed to action and it is possible that the Province will move forward on some of the Task Force recommendation in the near future. However, it is important to note that the Task Force’s Report is only the first step towards action. They are recommendations at this time and are not yet proposed policy or legislation. Town staff have no indication regarding which, if any, of the Task Force recommendations will be acted upon. As a next step, staff expect that the Province will take the recommendations that are considered actionable and then translate them into proposed policy and legislation. The true impact of the Task Force recommendations will be difficult to fully understand until draft policy and draft legislation is released for further review and comment. It will be critical for the Town to continue to monitor the Province’s next actions and provide comments on proposed policy and/or legislation when released for consultation.

Looking ahead, Town staff expect a season of change in the near future which will very likely impact municipal planning documents, processes and possibly, municipal decision-making. The Town’s Official Plan Review process naturally offers the opportunity (if needed) to integrate proposed changes in Provincial policy into an updated Official Plan in the future. As noted above shifts in provincial policy direction and legislation will need to be assessed in the future by Planning staff to fully understand how the Official Plan Review workplan and timelines could be impacted. Depending on the scale of the policy and/or legislation changes the Province brings forward, it is possible that Phase One of the Official Plan Review Project may not be complete before the municipal election in Fall of 2022. The Planning Division remains well
positioned to continue to evaluate the impacts of future Provincial actions, policies and legislation on the Town. Under the leadership of Trevor Houghton, Manager of Community Planning, alongside Shawn Postma, Senior Policy Planner, the Planning Division will monitor these matters and report back to Council accordingly.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

F. Financial Impacts

There are no direct financial impacts on the Town as a result of this specific Staff Report. However, policy and/or legislative changes from the Province may have undetermined impacts on resources and projects in the future.

G. In Consultation With

Trevor Houghton, Manager of Community Planning

Shawn Postma, Senior Policy Planner

H. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Nathan Westendorp, directorplanningdevelopment@thebluemountains.ca

I. Attached

1. Attachment 1 – Provincial Task Force Overview
2. Attachment 2 – Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Report
3. Attachment 3 – Town Comment Letter to Province
Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Westendorp, RPP MCIP
Director of Planning and Development Services

For more information, please contact:
directorplanningdevelopment@thebluemountains.ca
519-599-3131 extension 246
NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Appoints Housing Affordability Task Force

Task Force of experts to provide recommendations on further opportunities to address housing affordability

December 06, 2021

Municipal Affairs and Housing

TORONTO — Ontario has appointed nine members to a new Housing Affordability Task Force who will provide the government with recommendations on additional measures to address market housing supply and affordability.

"Young families, seniors and all hardworking Ontarians are desperate for housing that meets their needs and budget," said Premier Doug Ford. "At a time when our government is hard at work building an economy that works for everyone, this Task Force will provide us with concrete, expert advice that will support our government as we make it easier for more Ontarians to realize the dream of home ownership."

The mandate of the Housing Affordability Task Force is to explore measures to address housing affordability by:

- Increasing the supply of market rate rental and ownership housing;
- Building housing supply in complete communities;
- Reducing red tape and accelerating timelines;
- Encouraging innovation and digital modernization, such as in planning processes;
- Supporting economic recovery and job creation; and
- Balancing housing needs with protecting the environment.

The Task Force, chaired by Jake Lawrence, CEO and Group Head, Global Banking and Markets at Scotiabank, represents a diverse range of experts in not-for-profit housing, Indigenous housing, real estate, home builders, financial markets and economics. The chair's report outlining the Task Force's recommendations will be published in early 2022.

"Our government's policies under the Housing Supply Action Plan are working to address affordability, but more needs to be done at all levels of government," said Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. "The Housing Affordability Task Force will help our government build on our progress by identifying more opportunities to increase the supply of all kinds of housing, especially the missing middle. Under Mr. Lawrence's strong leadership, I am confident in the expertise and experiences of this Task Force, and I thank them for their commitment to help us address the housing crisis."

"I'm honoured to have been appointed as the Chair of Ontario's new Housing Affordability Task Force," said Lawrence. "I'm proud to work with a diverse team of experts who are committed to ensuring improved housing affordability for current and future Ontarians. We are eager to begin our work to identify and recommend actionable solutions and policies to support the government's efforts to address the province's housing affordability crisis."

"Having a safe, affordable place to call home is an important building block in the foundation of success, which is why addressing housing supply and affordability is a key priority for our government," said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance. "We are creating a Task Force to examine innovative policy solutions in order to ensure that the dream of home ownership is in reach for families in every corner of Ontario."

The Housing Affordability Task Force was first announced as part of the 2021 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review: Build Ontario.

Everyone has a role to play in fixing Ontario's housing crisis. Ontario will continue to work with municipal partners to help them use the tools the province has provided to unlock housing and make finding a home more affordable for hardworking Ontarians. This includes working with municipalities through the upcoming Provincial-Municipal Housing Summit and a special session with rural municipalities leading up to the ROMA conference in January 2022.

Quick Facts

The provincial government’s housing policies under the More Homes, More Choice: Ontario’s Housing Supply Action Plan are working to make housing more affordable by increasing the supply of the full range of housing options, from single-family homes to midrise housing to apartment buildings.

In 2020, the year after More Homes, More Choice was implemented, Ontario saw the highest level of housing starts in a decade and the highest level of rental starts since 1992. Housing and rental starts in 2021 are on track to exceed these levels.

The province’s ongoing work to address housing affordability complements our continued supports for affordable housing for our most vulnerable Ontarians. Through the Community Housing Renewal Strategy and Ontario’s response to COVID-19, the province is providing more than $3 billion in this fiscal year and last year. This includes over $1 billion in flexible supports through the Social Services Relief Fund to municipal and Indigenous partners.

**Additional Resources**


**Related Topics**

**Government**

Learn about the government services available to you and how government works. [Learn more](https://news.ontario.ca/en/government)

**Home and Community**

Information for families on major life events and care options, including marriage, births and child care. Also includes planning resources for municipalities. [Learn more](https://news.ontario.ca/en/home)

**Media Contacts**

- **Zoe Knowles**
  - Minister’s Office
  - Zoe.Knowles@ontario.ca

- **Conrad Spezowka**
  - Communications Branch
  - mma.media@ontario.ca
Report of the
Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force

February 8, 2022
Dear Minister Clark,

Hard-working Ontarians are facing a housing crisis. For many years, the province has not built enough housing to meet the needs of our growing population. While the affordability crisis began in our large cities, it has now spread to smaller towns and rural communities.

Efforts to cool the housing market have only provided temporary relief to home buyers. The long-term trend is clear: house prices are increasing much faster than Ontarian’s incomes. The time for action is now.

When striking the Housing Affordability Task Force, you and Premier Ford were clear: you wanted actionable, concrete solutions to help Ontarians and there was no time to waste. You asked us to be bold and gave us the freedom and independence to develop our recommendations.

In the past two months, we have met municipal leaders, planners, unions, developers and builders, the financial sector, academics, think tanks and housing advocates. Time was short, but solutions emerged consistently around these themes:

- More housing density across the province
- End exclusionary municipal rules that block or delay new housing
- Depoliticize the housing approvals process
- Prevent abuse of the housing appeals system
- Financial support to municipalities that build more housing

We present this report to you not as an “all or nothing” proposal, but rather as a list of options that the government has at its disposal to help address housing affordability for Ontarians and get more homes built. We propose an ambitious but achievable target: 1.5 million new homes built in the next ten years.

Parents and grandparents are worried that their children will not be able to afford a home when they start working or decide to start a family. Too many Ontarians are unable to live in their preferred city or town because they cannot afford to buy or rent.

The way housing is approved and built was designed for a different era when the province was less constrained by space and had fewer people. But it no longer meets the needs of Ontarians. The balance has swung too far in favour of lengthy consultations, bureaucratic red tape, and costly appeals. It is too easy to oppose new housing and too costly to build. We are in a housing crisis and that demands immediate and sweeping reforms.

It has been an honour to serve as Chair, and I am proud to submit this report on behalf of the entire Task Force.

Jake Lawrence
Chair, Housing Affordability Task Force
Chief Executive Officer and Group Head, Global Banking and Markets, Scotiabank
Executive summary and recommendations

House prices in Ontario have almost tripled in the past 10 years, growing much faster than incomes. This has home ownership beyond the reach of most first-time buyers across the province, even those with well-paying jobs. Housing has become too expensive for rental units and it has become too expensive in rural communities and small towns. The system is not working as it should.

For too long, we have focused on solutions to “cool” the housing market. It is now clear that we do not have enough homes to meet the needs of Ontarians today, and we are not building enough to meet the needs of our growing population. If this problem is not fixed – by creating more housing to meet the growing demand – housing prices will continue to rise. We need to build more housing in Ontario.

This report sets out recommendations that would set a bold goal and clear direction for the province, increase density, remove exclusionary rules that prevent housing growth, prevent abuse of the appeals process, and make sure municipalities are treated as partners in this process by incentivizing success.

Setting bold targets and making new housing the planning priority

Recommendations 1 and 2 urge Ontario to set a bold goal of adding 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years and update planning guidance to make this a priority.

The task force then recommends actions in five main areas to increase supply:

Require greater density

Land is not being used efficiently across Ontario. In too many neighbourhoods, municipal rules only allow single-family homes – not even a granny suite. Taxpayers have invested heavily in subway, light rail, bus and rail lines and highways, and the streets nearby are ideally suited for more mid- and high-rise housing. Underused or redundant commercial and industrial buildings are ripe to be redeveloped into housing or mixed commercial and residential use. New housing on undeveloped land should also be higher density than traditional suburbs, especially close to highways.

Adding density in all these locations makes better use of infrastructure and helps to save land outside urban boundaries. Implementing these recommendations will provide Ontarians with many more options for housing.

Recommendations 3 through 11 address how Ontario can quickly create more housing supply by allowing more housing in more locations “as of right” (without the need for municipal approval) and make better use of transportation investments.

Reduce and streamline urban design rules

Municipalities require numerous studies and set all kinds of rules for adding housing, many of which go well beyond the requirements of the provincial Planning Act. While some of this guidance has value for urban design, some rules appear to be arbitrary and not supported by evidence – for example, requiring condo buildings to include costly parking stalls even though many go unsold. These rules and requirements result in delays and extra costs that make housing either impossible to build or very expensive for the eventual home buyer or renter.

Recommendation 12 would set uniform provincial standards for urban design, including building shadows and setbacks, do away with rules that prioritize preservation of neighbourhood physical character over new housing, no longer require municipal approval of design matters like a building’s colour, texture, type of material or window details, and remove or reduce parking requirements.
Depoliticize the process and cut red tape

NIMBYism (not in my backyard) is a major obstacle to building housing. It drags out the approval process, pushes up costs, and keeps out new residents. Because local councillors depend on the votes of residents who want to keep the status quo, the planning process has become politicized. Municipalities allow far more public consultation than is required, often using formats that make it hard for working people and families with young children to take part. Too few technical decisions are delegated to municipal staff. Pressure to designate buildings with little or no heritage value as “heritage” if development is proposed and bulk listings of properties with “heritage potential” are also standing in the way of getting homes built. Dysfunction throughout the system, risk aversion and needless bureaucracy have resulted in a situation where Ontario lags the rest of Canada and the developed world in approval times. Ontarians have waited long enough.

Recommendations 13 through 25 would require municipalities to limit consultations to the legislated maximum, ensure people can take part digitally, mandate the delegation of technical decisions, prevent abuse of the heritage process and see property owners compensated for financial loss resulting from designation, restore the right of developers to appeal Official Plans and Municipal Comprehensive Reviews, legislate timelines for approvals and enact several other common sense changes that would allow housing to be built more quickly and affordably.

Fix the Ontario Land Tribunal

Largely because of the politicization of the planning process, many proponents look to the Tribunal, a quasi-judicial body, to give the go-ahead to projects that should have been approved by the municipality. Even when there is municipal approval, however, opponents appeal to the Tribunal – paying only a $400 fee – knowing that this may well succeed in delaying a project to the point where it might no longer make economic sense. As a result, the Tribunal faces a backlog of more than 1,000 cases and is seriously under-resourced.

Recommendations 26 through 31 seek to weed out or prevent appeals aimed purely at delaying projects, allow adjudicators to award costs to proponents in more cases, including instances where a municipality has refused an approval to avoid missing a legislated deadline, reduce the time to issue decisions, increase funding, and encourage the Tribunal to prioritize cases that would increase housing supply quickly as it tackles the backlog.

Support municipalities that commit to transforming the system

Fixing the housing crisis needs everyone working together. Delivering 1.5 million homes will require the provincial and federal governments to invest in change. Municipalities that make the difficult but necessary choices to grow housing supply should be rewarded, and those that resist new housing should see funding reductions.

Recommendations 49 and 50 call for Ontario government to create a large “Ontario Housing Delivery Fund” and encourage the federal government to match funding, and suggest how the province should reward municipalities that support change and reduce funding for municipalities that do not.

This is not the first attempt to “fix the housing system”. There have been efforts for years to tackle increasing housing prices and find solutions. This time must be different. Recommendations 50-55 set out ways of helping to ensure real and concrete progress on providing the homes Ontarians need.
Introduction

Ontario is in a housing crisis. Prices are skyrocketing: the average price for a house across Ontario was $923,000 at the end of 2021.[1] Ten years ago, the average price was $329,000.[2] Over that period, average house prices have climbed 180% while average incomes have grown roughly 38%.[3][4]

Not long ago, hard-working Ontarians – teachers, construction workers, small business owners – could afford the home they wanted. In small towns, it was reasonable to expect that you could afford a home in the neighbourhood you grew up in. Today, home ownership or finding a quality rental is now out of reach for too many Ontarians. The system is not working as it should be.

Housing has become too expensive for rental units and it has become too expensive in rural communities and small towns.

While people who were able to buy a home a decade or more ago have built considerable personal equity, the benefits of having a home aren’t just financial. Having a place to call home connects people to their community, creates a gathering place for friends and family, and becomes a source of pride.

Today, the reality for an ever-increasing number of Ontarians is quite different. Everyone in Ontario knows people who are living with the personal and financial stress of not being able to find housing they can afford. The young family who can’t buy a house within two hours of where they work. The tenant with a good job who worries about where she’ll find a new apartment she can afford if the owner decides to sell. The recent graduate who will have to stay at home for a few more years before he can afford to rent or buy.

While the crisis is widespread, it weighs more heavily on some groups than on others. Young people starting a family who need a larger home find themselves priced out of the market. Black, Indigenous and marginalized people face even greater challenges. As Ontarians, we have only recently begun to understand and address the reality of decades of systemic racism that has resulted in lower household incomes, making the housing affordability gap wider than average.

The high cost of housing has pushed minorities and lower income Ontarians further and further away from job markets. Black and Indigenous homeownership rates are less than half of the provincial average.[5] And homelessness rates among Indigenous Peoples are 11 times the national average. When housing prevents an individual from reaching their full potential, this represents a loss to every Ontarian: lost creativity, productivity, and revenue. Lost prosperity for individuals and for the entire Ontario economy.
As much as we read about housing affordability being a challenge in major cities around the world, the depth of the challenge has become greater in Ontario and Canada than almost anywhere in the developed world.

Canada has the lowest amount of housing per population of any G7 country.

How did we get here? Why do we have this problem?
A major factor is that there just isn’t enough housing. A 2021 Scotiabank study showed that Canada has the fewest housing units per population of any G7 country – and, our per capita housing supply has dropped in the past five years. An update to that study released in January 2022 found that two thirds of Canada’s housing shortage is in Ontario. Today, Ontario is 1.2 million homes – rental or owned – short of the G7 average. With projected population growth, that huge gap is widening, and bridging it will take immediate, bold and purposeful effort. And to support population growth in the next decade, we will need one million more homes.

While governments across Canada have taken steps to “cool down” the housing market or provide help to first-time buyers, these demand-side solutions only work if there is enough supply. Shortages of supply in any market have a direct impact on affordability. Scarcity breeds price increases. Simply put, if we want more Ontarians to have housing, we need to build more housing in Ontario.

Ontario must build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years to address the supply shortage
The housing crisis impacts all Ontarians. The ripple effect of the crisis also holds back Ontario reaching its full potential.

Economy
Businesses of all sizes are facing problems finding and retaining workers. Even high-paying jobs in technology and manufacturing are hard to fill because there’s not enough housing nearby. This doesn’t just dampen the economic growth of cities, it makes them less vibrant, diverse, and creative, and strains their ability to provide essential services.

Public services
Hospitals, school boards and other public service providers across Ontario report challenges attracting and retaining staff because of housing costs. One town told us that it could no longer maintain a volunteer fire department, because volunteers couldn’t afford to live within 10 minutes drive of the firehall.

Environment
Long commutes contribute to air pollution and carbon emissions. An international survey of 74 cities in 16 countries found that Toronto, at 96 minutes both ways, had the longest commute times in North America and was essentially tied with Bogota, Colombia, for the longest commute time worldwide. Increasing density in our cities and around major transit hubs helps reduce emissions to the benefit of everyone.

Our mandate and approach
Ontario’s Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing tasked us with recommending ways to accelerate our progress in closing the housing supply gap to improve housing affordability.

Time is of the essence. Building housing now is exactly what our post-pandemic economy needs. Housing construction creates good-paying jobs that cannot be outsourced to other countries. Moreover, the pandemic gave rise to unprecedented levels of available capital that can be invested in housing – if we can just put it to work.

We represent a wide range of experience and perspectives that includes developing, financing and building homes, delivering affordable housing, and researching housing market trends, challenges and solutions. Our detailed biographies appear as Appendix A.
People in households that spend 30% or more of total household income on shelter expenses are defined as having a “housing affordability” problem. Shelter expenses include electricity, oil, gas, coal, wood or other fuels, water and other municipal services, monthly mortgage payments, property taxes, condominium fees, and rent.

Our mandate was to focus on how to increase market housing supply and affordability. By market housing, we are referring to homes that can be purchased or rented without government support.

Affordable housing (units provided at below-market rates with government support) was not part of our mandate. The Minister and his cabinet colleagues are working on that issue. Nonetheless, almost every stakeholder we spoke with had ideas that will help deliver market housing and also make it easier to deliver affordable housing. However, affordable housing is a societal responsibility and will require intentional investments and strategies to bridge the significant affordable housing gap in this province. We have included a number of recommendations aimed at affordable housing in the body of this report, but have also included further thoughts in Appendix B.

We note that government-owned land was also outside our mandate. Many stakeholders, however, stressed the value of surplus or underused public land and land associated with major transit investments in finding housing solutions. We agree and have set out some thoughts on that issue in Appendix C.

How we did our work

Our Task Force was struck in December 2021 and mandated to deliver a final report to the Minister by the end of January 2022. We were able to work to that tight timeline because, in almost all cases, viewpoints and feasible solutions are well known. In addition, we benefited from insights gleaned from recent work to solve the problem in other jurisdictions.

During our deliberations, we met with and talked to over 140 organizations and individuals, including industry associations representing builders and developers, planners, architects, realtors and others; labour unions; social justice advocates; elected officials at the municipal level; academics and research groups; and municipal planners. We also received written submissions from many of these participants. In addition, we drew on the myriad public reports and papers listed in the References.

We thank everyone who took part in sessions that were uniformly helpful in giving us a deeper understanding of the housing crisis and the way out of it. We also thank the staff of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing who provided logistical and other support, including technical briefings and background.

The way forward

The single unifying theme across all participants over the course of the Task Force’s work has been the urgency to take decisive action. Today’s housing challenges are incredibly complex. Moreover, developing land, obtaining approvals, and building homes takes years.

Some recommendations will produce immediate benefits, others will take years for the full impact.

This is why there is no time to waste. We urge the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and his cabinet colleagues to continue measures they have already taken to accelerate housing supply and to move quickly in turning the recommendations in this report into decisive new actions.

The province must set an ambitious and bold goal to build 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. If we build 1.5 million new homes over the next ten years, Ontario can fill the housing gap with more affordable choices, catch up to the rest of Canada and keep up with population growth.

By working together, we can resolve Ontario’s housing crisis. In so doing, we can build a more prosperous future for everyone.

The balance of this report lays out our recommendations.
Focus on getting more homes built

Resolving a crisis requires intense focus and a clear goal. The province is responsible for the legislation and policy that establishes the planning, land use, and home building goals, which guide municipalities, land tribunals, and courts. Municipalities are then responsible for implementing provincial policy in a way that works for their communities. The province is uniquely positioned to lead by shining a spotlight on this issue, setting the tone, and creating a single, galvanizing goal around which federal support, provincial legislation, municipal policy, and the housing market can be aligned.

In 2020, Ontario built about 75,000 housing units. For this report, we define a housing unit (home) as a single dwelling (detached, semi-detached, or attached), apartment, suite, condominium or mobile home. Since 2018, housing completions have grown every year as a result of positive measures that the province and some municipalities have implemented to encourage more home building. But we are still 1.2 million homes short when compared to other G7 countries and our population is growing. The goal of 1.5 million homes feels daunting – but reflects both the need and what is possible. In fact, throughout the 1970s Ontario built more housing units each year than we do today.

The second recommendation is designed to address the growing complexity and volume of rules in the legislation, policy, plans and by-laws, and their competing priorities, by providing clear direction to provincial agencies, municipalities, tribunals, and courts on the overriding priorities for housing.

1. Set a goal of building 1.5 million new homes in ten years.
2. Amend the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, and Growth Plans to set “growth in the full spectrum of housing supply” and “intensification within existing built-up areas” of municipalities as the most important residential housing priorities in the mandate and purpose.

The “missing middle” is often cited as an important part of the housing solution. We define the missing middle as mid-rise condo or rental housing, smaller houses on subdivided lots or in laneways and other additional units in existing houses.
Making land available to build

The Greater Toronto Area is bordered on one side by Lake Ontario and on the other by the protected Greenbelt. Similarly, the Ottawa River and another Greenbelt constrain land supply in Ottawa, the province’s second-largest city.

But a shortage of land isn’t the cause of the problem. Land is available, both inside the existing built-up areas and on undeveloped land outside greenbelts.

We need to make better use of land. Zoning defines what we can build and where we can build. If we want to make better use of land to create more housing, then we need to modernize our zoning rules. We heard from planners, municipal councillors, and developers that “as of right” zoning – the ability to by-pass long, drawn out consultations and zoning by-law amendments – is the most effective tool in the provincial toolkit. We agree.

Stop using exclusionary zoning that restricts more housing

Too much land inside cities is tied up by outdated rules. For example, it’s estimated that 70% of land zoned for housing in Toronto is restricted to single-detached or semi-detached homes. This type of zoning prevents homeowners from adding additional suites to create housing for Ontarians and income for themselves. As one person said, “my neighbour can tear down what was there to build a monster home, but I’m not allowed to add a basement suite to my home.”

While less analysis has been done in other Ontario communities, it’s estimated that about half of all residential land in Ottawa is zoned for single-detached housing, meaning nothing else may be built on a lot without public consultation and an amendment to the zoning by-law. In some suburbs around Toronto, single unit zoning dominates residential land use, even close to GO Transit stations and major highways.

One result is that more growth is pushing past urban boundaries and turning farmland into housing. Undeveloped land inside and outside existing municipal boundaries must be part of the solution, particularly in northern and rural communities, but isn’t nearly enough on its own. Most of the solution must come from densification. Greenbelts and other environmentally sensitive areas must be protected, and farms provide food and food security. Relying too heavily on undeveloped land would whittle away too much of the already small share of land devoted to agriculture.

Modernizing zoning would also open the door to more rental housing, which in turn would make communities more inclusive.

Allowing more gentle density also makes better use of roads, water and wastewater systems, transit and other public services that are already in place and have capacity, instead of having to be built in new areas.

The Ontario government took a positive step by allowing secondary suites (e.g., basement apartments) across the province in 2019. However, too many municipalities still place too many restrictions on implementation. For the last three years, the total number of secondary suites in Toronto has actually declined each year, as few units get permitted and owners convert two units into one.

These are the types of renovations and home construction performed by small businesses and local trades, providing them with a boost.

It’s estimated that 70% of land zoned for housing in Toronto is restricted to single-detached or semi-detached homes.

70%

of land zoned for housing in Toronto is restricted to single-detached or semi-detached homes.
Underused and vacant commercial and industrial properties are another potential source of land for housing. It was suggested to us that one area ripe for redevelopment into a mix of commercial and residential uses is the strip mall, a leftover from the 1950s that runs along major suburban streets in most large Ontario cities.

“As of right” zoning allows more kinds of housing that are accessible to more kinds of people. It makes neighbourhoods stronger, richer, and fairer. And it will get more housing built in existing neighbourhoods more quickly than any other measure.

3. Limit exclusionary zoning in municipalities through binding provincial action:
   a) Allow “as of right” residential housing up to four units and up to four storeys on a single residential lot.
   b) Modernize the Building Code and other policies to remove any barriers to affordable construction and to ensure meaningful implementation (e.g., allow single-staircase construction for up to four storeys, allow single egress, etc.).

4. Permit “as of right” conversion of underutilized or redundant commercial properties to residential or mixed residential and commercial use.

5. Permit “as of right” secondary suites, garden suites, and laneway houses province-wide.

6. Permit “as of right” multi-tenant housing (renting rooms within a dwelling) province-wide.

7. Encourage and incentivize municipalities to increase density in areas with excess school capacity to benefit families with children.

Align investments in roads and transit with growth

Governments have invested billions of dollars in highways, light rail, buses, subways and trains in Ontario. But without ensuring more people can live close to those transit routes, we’re not getting the best return on those infrastructure investments.

Access to transit is linked to making housing more affordable: when reliable transit options are nearby, people can get to work more easily. They can live further from the centre of the city in less expensive areas without the added cost of car ownership.

The impacts of expanding public transit go far beyond serving riders. These investments also spur economic growth and reduce traffic congestion and emissions. We all pay for the cost of transit spending, and we should all share in the benefits.

If municipalities achieve the right development near transit – a mix of housing at high- and medium-density, office space and retail – this would open the door to better ways of funding the costs. Other cities, like London, UK and Hong Kong, have captured the impacts of increased land value and business activity along new transit routes to help with their financing.

Ontario recently created requirements (residents/hectare) for municipalities to zone for higher density in transit corridors and “major transit station areas”[13a] [13b]. These are areas surrounding subway and other rapid transit stations and hubs. However, we heard troubling reports that local opposition is blocking access to these neighbourhoods and to critical public transit stations. City staff, councillors, and the province need to stand up to these tactics and speak up for the Ontarians who need housing.

The Province is also building new highways in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and it’s important to plan thoughtfully for the communities that will follow from these investments, to make sure they are compact and liveable.
8. Allow “as of right” zoning up to unlimited height and unlimited density in the immediate proximity of individual major transit stations within two years if municipal zoning remains insufficient to meet provincial density targets.

9. Allow “as of right” zoning of six to 11 storeys with no minimum parking requirements on any streets utilized by public transit (including streets on bus and streetcar routes).

10. Designate or rezone as mixed commercial and residential use all land along transit corridors and redesignate all Residential Apartment to mixed commercial and residential zoning in Toronto.

11. Support responsible housing growth on undeveloped land, including outside existing municipal boundaries, by building necessary infrastructure to support higher density housing and complete communities and applying the recommendations of this report to all undeveloped land.

Start saying “yes in my backyard”

Even where higher density is allowed in theory, the official plans of most cities in Ontario contain conflicting goals like maintaining “prevailing neighbourhood character”. This bias is reinforced by detailed guidance that often follows from the official plan. Although requirements are presented as “guidelines”, they are often treated as rules.

Examples include:

- Angular plane rules that require successively higher floors to be stepped further back, cutting the number of units that can be built by up to half and making many projects uneconomic
- Detailed rules around the shadows a building casts
- Guidelines around finishes, colours and other design details

One resident’s desire to prevent a shadow being cast in their backyard or a local park frequently prevails over concrete proposals to build more housing for multiple families. By-laws and guidelines that preserve “neighbourhood character” often prevent simple renovations to add new suites to existing homes. The people who suffer are mostly young, visible minorities, and marginalized people. It is the perfect example of a policy that appears neutral on its surface but is discriminatory in its application.

Far too much time and money are spent reviewing and holding consultations for large projects which conform with the official plan or zoning by-law and small projects which would cause minimal disruption. The cost of needless delays is passed on to new home buyers and tenants.

Minimum parking requirements for each new unit are another example of outdated municipal requirements that increase the cost of housing and are increasingly less relevant with public transit and ride share services. Minimum parking requirements add as much as $165,000 to the cost of a new housing unit, even as demand for parking spaces is falling: data from the Residential Construction Council of Ontario shows that in new condo projects, one in three parking stalls goes unsold. We applaud the recent vote by Toronto City Council to scrap most minimum parking requirements. We believe other cities should follow suit.

While true heritage sites are important, heritage preservation has also become a tool to block more housing. For example, some municipalities add thousands of properties at a time to a heritage register because they have “potential” heritage value. Even where a building isn’t heritage designated or registered, neighbours increasingly demand it be as soon as a development is proposed.

This brings us to the role of the “not in my backyard” or NIMBY sentiment in delaying or stopping more homes from being built.

New housing is often the last priority

A proposed building with market and affordable housing units would have increased the midday shadow by 6.5% on a nearby park at the fall and spring equinox, with no impact during the summer months. To conform to a policy that does not permit “new net shadow on specific parks”, seven floors of housing, including 26 affordable housing units, were sacrificed.

Multiple dry cleaners along a transit route were designated as heritage sites to prevent new housing being built. It is hard not to feel outrage when our laws are being used to prevent families from moving into neighbourhoods and into homes they can afford along transit routes.
NIMBY versus YIMBY

NIMBYism (not in my backyard) is a large and constant obstacle to providing housing everywhere. Neighbourhood pushback drags out the approval process, pushes up costs and discourages investment in housing. It also keeps out new residents. While building housing is very costly, opposing new housing costs almost nothing.

Unfortunately, there is a strong incentive for individual municipal councillors to fall in behind community opposition – it’s existing residents who elect them, not future ones. The outcry of even a handful of constituents (helped by the rise of social media) has been enough, in far too many cases, to persuade their local councillor to vote against development even while admitting its merits in private. There is a sense among some that it’s better to let the Ontario Land Tribunal approve the development on appeal, even if it causes long delays and large cost increases, then to take the political heat.

Mayors and councillors across the province are fed up and many have called for limits on public consultations and more “as of right” zoning. In fact, some have created a new term for NIMBYism: BANANAs – Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anything, causing one mayor to comment “NIMBYism has gone BANANAs”. We agree. In a growing, thriving society, that approach is not just bad policy, it is exclusionary and wrong.

As a result, technical planning decisions have become politicized. One major city has delegated many decisions to senior staff, but an individual councillor can withdraw the delegation when there is local opposition and force a vote at Council. We heard that this situation is common across the province, creating an electoral incentive for a councillor to delay or stop a housing proposal, or forcing a councillor to pay the electoral cost of supporting it. Approvals of individual housing applications should be the role of professional staff, free from political interference.

The pressure to stop any development is now so intense that it has given rise to a counter-movement – YIMBYism, or “yes in my backyard,” led by millennials who recognize entrenched opposition to change as a huge obstacle to finding a home. They provide a voice at public consultations for young people, new immigrants and refugees, minority groups, and Ontarians struggling to access housing by connecting our ideals to the reality of housing. People who welcome immigrants to Canada should welcome them to the neighbourhood, fighting climate change means supporting higher-density housing, and “keeping the neighbourhood the way it is” means keeping it off-limits. While anti-housing voices can be loud, a member of More Neighbours Toronto, a YIMBY group that regularly attends public consultations, has said that the most vocal opponents usually don’t represent the majority in a neighbourhood. Survey data from the Ontario Real Estate Association backs that up, with almost 80% of Ontarians saying they are in favour of zoning in urban areas that would encourage more homes.

Ontarians want a solution to the housing crisis. We cannot allow opposition and politicization of individual housing projects to prevent us from meeting the needs of all Ontarians.

12. Create a more permissive land use, planning, and approvals system:
   a) Repeal or override municipal policies, zoning, or plans that prioritize the preservation of physical character of neighbourhood
   b) Exempt from site plan approval and public consultation all projects of 10 units or less that conform to the Official Plan and require only minor variances
   c) Establish province-wide zoning standards, or prohibitions, for minimum lot sizes, maximum building setbacks, minimum heights, angular planes, shadow rules, front doors, building depth, landscaping, floor space index, and heritage view cones, and planes; restore pre-2006 site plan exclusions (colour, texture, and type of materials, window details, etc.) to the Planning Act and reduce or eliminate minimum parking requirements; and
   d) Remove any floorplate restrictions to allow larger, more efficient high-density towers.

13. Limit municipalities from requesting or hosting additional public meetings beyond those that are required under the Planning Act.

14. Require that public consultations provide digital participation options.

15. Require mandatory delegation of site plan approvals and minor variances to staff or pre-approved qualified third-party technical consultants through a simplified review and approval process, without the ability to withdraw Council’s delegation.
16. Prevent abuse of the heritage preservation and designation process by:
   a) Prohibiting the use of bulk listing on municipal heritage registers
   b) Prohibiting reactive heritage designations after a Planning Act development application has been filed

17. Requiring municipalities to compensate property owners for loss of property value as a result of heritage designations, based on the principle of best economic use of land.


We have heard mixed feedback on Committees of Adjustment. While they are seen to be working well in some cities, in others they are seen to simply add another lengthy step in the process. We would urge the government to first implement our recommendation to delegate minor variances and site plan approvals to municipal staff and then assess whether Committees of Adjustment are necessary and an improvement over staff-level decision making.
Cut the red tape so we can build faster and reduce costs

One of the strongest signs that our approval process is not working: of 35 OECD countries, only the Slovak Republic takes longer than Canada to approve a building project. The UK and the US approve projects three times faster without sacrificing quality or safety. And they save home buyers and tenants money as a result, making housing more affordable.[15]

A 2020 survey of development approval times in 23 Canadian cities shows Ontario seriously lagging: Hamilton (15th), Toronto (17th), Ottawa (21st) with approval times averaging between 20-24 months. These timelines do not include building permits, which take about two years for an apartment building in Toronto. Nor did they count the time it takes for undeveloped land to be designated for housing, which the study notes can take five to ten years.[16]

Despite the good intentions of many people involved in the approvals and home-building process, decades of dysfunction in the system and needless bureaucracy have made it too difficult for housing approvals to keep up with the needs of Ontarians. There appear to be numerous reasons why Ontario performs so poorly against other Canadian cities and the rest of the developed world. We believe that the major problems can be summed up as:

- Too much complexity in the planning process, with the page count in legislation, regulation, policies, plans, and by-laws growing every year
- Too many studies, guidelines, meetings and other requirements of the type we outlined in the previous section, including many that go well beyond the scope of Ontario’s Planning Act
- Reviews within municipalities and with outside agencies that are piecemeal, duplicative (although often with conflicting outcomes) and poorly coordinated
- Process flaws that include reliance on paper
- Some provincial policies that are more relevant to urban development but result in burdensome, irrelevant requirements when applied in some rural and northern communities.

All of this has contributed to widespread failure on the part of municipalities to meet required timelines. The provincial Planning Act sets out deadlines of 90 days for decisions on zoning by-law amendments, 120 days for plans of subdivision, and 30 days for site plan approval, but municipalities routinely miss these without penalty. For other processes, like site plan approval or provincial approvals, there are no timelines and delays drag on. The cost of delay falls on the ultimate homeowner or tenant.

The consequences for homeowners and renters are enormous. Ultimately, whatever cost a builder pays gets passed on to the buyer or renter. As one person said: “Process is the biggest project killer in Toronto because developers have to carry timeline risk.”

Site plan control was often brought up as a frustration. Under the Planning Act, this is meant to be a technical review of the external features of a building. In practice, municipalities often expand on what is required and take too long to respond.
Then: In 1966, a draft plan of subdivision in a town in southwestern Ontario to provide 529 low-rise and mid-rise housing units, a school site, a shopping centre and parks was approved by way of a two-page letter setting out 10 conditions. It took seven months to clear conditions for final approval.

And now: In 2013, a builder started the approval process to build on a piece of serviced residential land in a seasonal resort town. Over the next seven years, 18 professional consultant reports were required, culminating in draft plan approval containing 50 clearance conditions. The second approval, issued by the Local Planning Appeals Board in 2020, ran to 23 pages. The developer estimates it will be almost 10 years before final approval is received.

An Ontario Association of Architects study calculating the cost of delays between site plan application and approval concluded that for a 100-unit condominium apartment building, each additional month of delay costs the applicant an estimated $193,000, or $1,930 a month for each unit.[17]

A 2020 study done for the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) looked at impacts of delay on low-rise construction, including single-detached homes. It estimated that every month an approval is delayed adds, on average, $1.46 per square foot to the cost of a single home. A two-year delay, which is not unusual for this housing type, adds more than $70,000 to the cost of a 2,000-square-foot house in the GTA.[16]

Getting rid of so much unnecessary and unproductive additional work would significantly reduce the burden on staff.[16] It would help address the widespread shortages of planners and building officials. It would also bring a stronger sense among municipal staff that they are part of the housing solution and can take pride in helping cut approval times and lower the costs of delivering homes.

**Adopt common sense approaches that save construction costs**

Wood using “mass timber” – an engineer compressed wood, made for strength and weight-bearing – can provide a lower-cost alternative to reinforced concrete in many mid-rise projects, but Ontario’s Building Code is hampering its use. Building taller with wood offers advantages beyond cost:

- Wood is a renewable resource that naturally sequesters carbon, helping us reach our climate change goals
- Using wood supports Ontario’s forestry sector and creates jobs, including for Indigenous people

British Columbia’s and Quebec’s building codes allow woodframe construction up to 12 storeys, but Ontario limits it to six. By amending the Building Code to allow 12-storey woodframe construction, Ontario would encourage increased use of forestry products and reduce building costs.

Finally, we were told that a shift in how builders are required to guarantee their performance would free up billions of dollars to build more housing. Pay on demand surety bonds are a much less onerous option than letters or credit, and are already accepted in Hamilton, Pickering, Innisfil, Whitchurch-Stouffville and other Ontario municipalities. We outline the technical details in Appendix D.

19. Legislate timelines at each stage of the provincial and municipal review process, including site plan, minor variance, and provincial reviews, and deem an application approved if the legislated response time is exceeded.

20. Fund the creation of “approvals facilitators” with the authority to quickly resolve conflicts among municipal and/or provincial authorities and ensure timelines are met.

21. Require a pre-consultation with all relevant parties at which the municipality sets out a binding list that defines what constitutes a complete application; confirms the number of consultations established in the previous recommendations; and clarifies that if a member of a regulated profession such as a professional engineer has stamped an application, the municipality has no liability and no additional stamp is needed.

22. Simplify planning legislation and policy documents.

23. Create a common, province-wide definition of plan of subdivision and standard set of conditions which clarify which may be included; require the use of standard province-wide legal agreements and, where feasible, plans of subdivision.


25. Require municipalities to provide the option of pay on demand surety bonds and letters of credit.
Prevent abuse of the appeal process

Part of the challenge with housing approvals is that, by the time a project has been appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (the Tribunal), it has usually already faced delay and compromises have been made to reduce the size and scope of the proposal. When an approved project is appealed, the appellant – which could just be a single individual – may pay $400 and tie up new housing for years.

The most recent published report showed 1,300 unresolved cases.[18] While under-resourcing does contribute to delays, this caseload also reflects the low barrier to launching an appeal and the minimal risks if an appeal is unsuccessful:

- After a builder has spent time and money to ensure a proposal conforms with a municipality’s requirements, the municipal council can still reject it – even if its own planning staff has given its support. Very often this is to appease local opponents.
- Unlike a court, costs are not automatically awarded to the successful party at the Tribunal. The winning side must bring a motion and prove that the party bringing the appeal was unreasonable, clearly trying to delay the project, and/or being vexatious or frivolous. Because the bar is set so high, the winning side seldom asks for costs in residential cases.

This has resulted in abuse of the Tribunal to delay new housing. Throughout our consultations, we heard from municipalities, not-for-profits, and developers that affordable housing was a particular target for appeals which, even if unsuccessful, can make projects too costly to build.

Clearly the Tribunal needs more resources to clear its backlog. But the bigger issue is the need for so many appeals: we believe it would better to have well-defined goals and rules for municipalities and builders to avoid this costly and time-consuming quasi-judicial process. Those who bring appeals aimed at stopping development that meets established criteria should pay the legal costs of the successful party and face the risk of a larger project being approved.

The solution is not more appeals, it’s fixing the system. We have proposed a series of reforms that would ensure only meritorious appeals proceeded, that every participant faces some risk and cost of losing, and that abuse of the Tribunal will be penalized. We believe that if Ontario accepts our recommendations, the Tribunal will not face the same volume of appeals. But getting to that point will take time, and the Tribunal needs more resources and better tools now.

Recommendation 1 will provide legislative direction to adjudicators that they must prioritize housing growth and intensification over competing priorities contained in provincial and municipal policies. We further recommend the following:

26. Require appellants to promptly seek permission (“leave to appeal”) of the Tribunal and demonstrate that an appeal has merit, relying on evidence and expert reports, before it is accepted.

27. Prevent abuse of process:
   a) Remove right of appeal for projects with at least 30% affordable housing in which units are guaranteed affordable for at least 40 years.
   b) Require a $10,000 filing fee for third-party appeals.
   c) Provide discretion to adjudicators to award full costs to the successful party in any appeal brought by a third party or by a municipality where its council has overridden a recommended staff approval.

28. Encourage greater use of oral decisions issued the day of the hearing, with written reasons to follow, and allow those decisions to become binding the day that they are issued.

29. Where it is found that a municipality has refused an application simply to avoid a deemed approval for lack of decision, allow the Tribunal to award punitive damages.

30. Provide funding to increase staffing (adjudicators and case managers), provide market-competitive salaries, outsource more matters to mediators, and set shorter time targets.

31. In clearing the existing backlog, encourage the Tribunal to prioritize projects close to the finish line that will support housing growth and intensification, as well as regional water or utility infrastructure decisions that will unlock significant housing capacity.
Reduce the costs to build, buy and rent

The price you pay to buy or rent a home is driven directly by how much it costs to build a home. In Ontario, costs to build homes have dramatically increased at an unprecedented pace over the past decade. In most of our cities and towns, materials and labour only account for about half of the costs. The rest comes from land, which we have addressed in the previous section, and government fees.

A careful balance is required on government fees because, as much as we would like to see them lowered, governments need revenues from fees and taxes to build critically needed infrastructure and pay for all the other services that make Ontario work. So, it is a question of balance and of ensuring that our approach to government fees encourages rather than discourages developers to build the full range of housing we need in our Ontario communities.

Align government fees and charges with the goal of building more housing

Improve the municipal funding model

Housing requires more than just the land it is built on. It requires roads, sewers, parks, utilities and other infrastructure. The provincial government provides municipalities with a way to secure funding for this infrastructure through development charges, community benefit charges and parkland dedication (providing 5% of land for public parks or the cash equivalent).

These charges are founded on the belief that growth — not current taxpayers — should pay for growth. As a concept, it is compelling. In practice, it means that new home buyers pay the entire cost of sewers, parks, affordable housing, or colleges that will be around for generations and may not be located in their neighbourhood. And, although building affordable housing is a societal responsibility, because affordable units pay all the same charges as a market unit, the cost is passed to new home buyers in the same building or the not-for-profit organization supporting the project. We do not believe that government fees should create a disincentive to affordable housing.

If you ask any developer of homes — whether they are for-profit or non-profit — they will tell you that development charges are a special pain point. In Ontario, they can be as much as $135,000 per home. In some municipalities, development charges have increased as much as 900% in less than 20 years. As development charges go up, the prices of homes go up. And development charges on a modest semi-detached home are the same as on a luxury 6,000 square foot home, resulting in a disincentive to build housing that is more affordable. Timing is also a challenge as development charges have to be paid up front, before a shovel even goes into the ground.

To help relieve the pressure, the Ontario government passed recent legislation allowing builders to determine development charges earlier in the building process. But they must pay interest on the assessed development charge to the municipality until a building permit is issued, and there is no cap on the rate, which in one major city is 13% annually.

Cash payments to satisfy parkland dedication also significantly boost the costs of higher-density projects, adding on average $17,000 to the cost of a high-rise condo across the GTA. We heard concerns not just about the amount of cash collected, but also about the money not being spent in the neighbourhood or possibly not being spent on parks at all. As an example, in 2019 the City of Toronto held $644 million in parkland cash-in-lieu payments. Everyone can agree that we need to invest in parks as our communities grow, but if the funds are not being spent, perhaps it means that more money is being collected for parklands than is needed and we could lower the cost of housing if we adjusted these parkland fees.
Modernizing HST Thresholds
Harmonized sales tax (HST) applies to all new housing – including purpose-built rental. Today, the federal component is 5% and provincial component is 8%. The federal and provincial government provide a partial HST rebate. Two decades ago, the maximum home price eligible for a rebate was set at $450,000 federally and $400,000 provincially, resulting in a maximum rebate of $6,300 federally and $24,000 provincially, less than half of today’s average home price. Buyers of new homes above this ceiling face a significant clawback. Indexing the rebate would immediately reduce the cost of building new homes, savings that can be passed on to Ontarians. When both levels of government agree that we are facing a housing crisis, they should not be adding over 10% to the cost of almost all new homes.

32. Waive development charges and parkland cash-in-lieu and charge only modest connection fees for all infill residential projects up to 10 units or for any development where no new material infrastructure will be required.

33. Waive development charges on all forms of affordable housing guaranteed to be affordable for 40 years.

34. Prohibit interest rates on development charges higher than a municipality’s borrowing rate.

35. Regarding cash in lieu of parkland, s.37, Community Beneft Charges, and development charges:
   a) Provincial review of reserve levels, collections and drawdowns annually to ensure funds are being used in a timely fashion and for the intended purpose, and, where review points to a significant concern, do not allow further collection until the situation has been corrected.
   b) Except where allocated towards municipality-wide infrastructure projects, require municipalities to spend funds in the neighbourhoods where they were collected. However, where there’s a significant community need in a priority area of the City, allow for specific ward-to-ward allocation of unspent and unallocated reserves.

36. Recommend that the federal government and provincial governments update HST rebate to reﬂect current home prices and begin indexing the thresholds to housing prices, and that the federal government match the provincial 75% rebate and remove any clawback.

Make it easier to build rental
In cities and towns across Ontario, it is increasingly hard to find a vacant rental unit, let alone a vacant rental unit at an affordable price. Today, 66% of all purpose-built rental units in the City of Toronto were built between 1960 and 1979. Less than 15% of Toronto’s purpose-built rentals were constructed over the ensuing 40 years in spite of the significant population growth during that time. In fact, between 2006 and 2016, growth in condo apartments increased by 186% while purpose-built rental only grew by 0.6%. In 2018, the Ontario government introduced positive changes that have created growth in purpose-built rental units – with last year seeing 18,000 units under construction and 93,000 proposed against a 5-year average prior to 2020 of 3,400 annually.

Long-term renters often now feel trapped in apartments that don’t make sense for them as their needs change. And because they can’t or don’t want to move up the housing ladder, many of the people coming up behind them who would gladly take those apartments are instead living in crowded spaces with family members or roommates. Others feel forced to commit to rental units at prices way beyond what they can afford. Others are trying their luck in getting on the wait list for an affordable unit or housing co-op – wait lists that are years long. Others are leaving Ontario altogether.
A pattern in every community, and particularly large cities, is that the apartments and rented rooms that we do have are disappearing. Apartment buildings are being converted to condos or upgraded to much more expensive rental units. Duplexes get purchased and turned into larger single-family homes.

A major challenge in bridging the gap of rental supply is that, more often than not, purpose-built rental projects don’t make economic sense for builders and investors. Ironically, there is no shortage of Canadian investor capital seeking housing investments, particularly large pension funds – but the economics of investing in purpose-built rental in Ontario just don’t make sense. So, investments get made in apartment projects in other provinces or countries, or in condo projects that have a better and safer return-on-investment. What can governments do to get that investor capital pointed in the right direction so we can create jobs and get more of the housing we need built?

Some of our earlier recommendations will help, particularly indexing the HST rebate. So will actions by government to require purpose-built rental on surplus government land that is made available for sale. (Appendix C)

Municipal property taxes on purpose-built rental can be as much as 2.5 times greater than property taxes for condominium or other ownership housing. The Task Force recommends:

37. Align property taxes for purpose-built rental with those of condos and low-rise homes.

Make homeownership possible for hardworking Ontarians who want it

Home ownership has always been part of the Canadian dream. You don’t have to look far back to find a time when the housing landscape was very different. The norm was for young people to rent an apartment in their twenties, work hard and save for a down payment, then buy their first home in their late twenties or early thirties. It was the same for many new Canadians: arrive, rent, work hard and buy. The house might be modest, but it brought a sense of ownership, stability and security. And after that first step onto the ownership ladder, there was always the possibility of selling and moving up. Home ownership felt like a real possibility for anyone who wanted it.

That’s not how it works now. Too many young people who would like their own place are living with one or both parents well into adulthood.

The escalation of housing prices over the last decade has put the dream of homeownership out of reach of a growing number of aspiring first-time home buyers. While 73% of Canadians are homeowners, that drops to 48% for Black people, 47% for LGBTQ people (StatsCan is studying rates for other populations, including Indigenous People who are severely underhoused). This is also an issue for younger adults: a 2021 study showed only 24% of Torontonians aged 30 to 39 are homeowners.

In Canada, responsibility for Indigenous housing programs has historically been a shared between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government works closely with its provincial and territorial counterparts to improve access to housing for Indigenous peoples both on and off reserve. More than 85% of Indigenous people live in urban and rural areas, are 11 times more likely to experience homelessness and have incidence of housing need that is 52% greater than all Canadians. The Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls report mentions housing 299 times – the lack of which being a significant, contributing cause to violence and the provision of which as a significant, contributing solution. The Province of Ontario has made significant investments in Urban Indigenous Housing, but we need the Federal Government to re-engage as an active partner.

While measures to address supply will have an impact on housing prices, many aspiring homeowners will continue to face a gap that is simply too great to bridge through traditional methods.

The Task Force recognizes the need for caution about measures that would spur demand for housing before the supply bottleneck is fixed. At the same time, a growing number of organizations – both non-profit and for-profit are proposing a range of unique home equity models. Some of these organizations are aiming at households who have sufficient income to pay the mortgage but lack a sufficient down payment. Others are aiming at households who fall short in both income and down payment requirements for current market housing.
The Task Force heard about a range of models to help aspiring first-time home buyers, including:

- Shared equity models with a government, non-profit or for-profit lender holding a second “shared equity mortgage” payable at time of sale of the home
- Land lease models that allow residents to own their home but lease the land, reducing costs
- Rent-to-own approaches in which a portion of an occupant’s rent is used to build equity, which can be used as a down payment on their current unit or another market unit in the future
- Models where the equity gain is shared between the homeowner and the non-profit provider, such that the non-profit will always be able to buy the home back and sell it to another qualified buyer, thus retaining the home’s affordability from one homeowner to the next.

Proponents of these models identified barriers that thwart progress in implementing new solutions.

- The Planning Act limits land leases to a maximum of 21 years. This provision prevents home buyers from accessing the same type of mortgages from a bank or credit union that are available to them when they buy through traditional homeownership.
- The Perpetuities Act has a similar 21-year limit on any options placed on land. This limits innovative non-profit models from using equity formulas for re-sale and repurchase of homes.
- Land Transfer Tax (LTT) is charged each time a home is sold and is collected by the province; and in Toronto, this tax is also collected by the City. This creates a double-tax in rent-to-own/equity building models where LTT ends up being paid first by the home equity organization and then by the occupant when they are able to buy the unit.
- HST is charged based on the market value of the home. In shared equity models where the homeowner neither owns nor gains from the shared equity portion of their home, HST on the shared equity portion of the home simply reduces affordability.
- Residential mortgages are highly regulated by the federal government and reflective of traditional homeownership. Modifications in regulations may be required to adapt to new co-ownership and other models.

The Task Force encourages the Ontario government to devote further attention to avenues to support new homeownership options. As a starting point, the Task Force offers the following recommendations:

38. Amend the Planning Act and Perpetuities Act to extend the maximum period for land leases and restrictive covenants on land to 40 or more years.

39. Eliminate or reduce tax disincentives to housing growth.


41. Funding for pilot projects that create innovative pathways to homeownership, for Black, Indigenous, and marginalized people and first-generation homeowners.

42. Provide provincial and federal loan guarantees for purpose-built rental, affordable rental and affordable ownership projects.
Support and incentivize scaling up housing supply

Our goal of building 1.5 million homes in ten years means doubling how many homes Ontario creates each year. As much as the Task Force’s recommendations will remove barriers to realizing this ambitious goal, we also need to ensure we have the capacity across Ontario’s communities to deliver this new housing supply. This includes capacity of our housing infrastructure, capacity within our municipal planning teams, and boots on the ground with the skills to build new homes.

There is much to be done and the price of failure for the people of Ontario is high. This is why the provincial government must make an unwavering commitment to keeping the spotlight on housing supply. This is also why the province must be dogged in its determination to galvanize and align efforts and incentives across all levels of government so that working together, we all can get the job done.

Our final set of recommendations turns to these issues of capacity to deliver, and the role the provincial government can play in putting the incentives and alignment in place to achieve the 1.5 million home goal.

Invest in municipal infrastructure

Housing can’t get built without water, sewage, and other infrastructure

When the Task Force met with municipal leaders, they emphasized how much future housing supply relies on having the water, storm water and wastewater systems, roads, sidewalks, fire stations, and all the other parts of community infrastructure to support new homes and new residents.

Infrastructure is essential where housing is being built for the first time. And, it can be a factor in intensification when added density exceeds the capacity of existing infrastructure, one of the reasons we urge new infrastructure in new developments to be designed for future capacity. In Ontario, there are multiple municipalities where the number one barrier to approving new housing projects is a lack of infrastructure to support them.

Municipalities face a myriad of challenges in getting this infrastructure in place. Often, infrastructure investments are required long before new projects are approved and funding must be secured. Notwithstanding the burden development charges place on the price of new housing, most municipalities report that development charges are still not enough to fully cover the costs of building new infrastructure and retrofitting existing infrastructure in neighbourhoods that are intensifying. Often infrastructure crosses municipal boundaries creating complicated and time-consuming “who pays?” questions. Municipal leaders also shared their frustrations with situations where new housing projects are approved and water, sewage and other infrastructure capacity is allocated to the project – only to have the developer land bank the project and put off building. Environmental considerations with new infrastructure add further cost and complexity. The Task Force recommends:

43. Enable municipalities, subject to adverse external economic events, to withdraw infrastructure allocations from any permitted projects where construction has not been initiated within three years of build permits being issued.

44. Work with municipalities to develop and implement a municipal services corporation utility model for water and wastewater under which the municipal corporation would borrow and amortize costs among customers instead of using development charges.
Create the Labour Force to meet the housing supply need

The labour force is shrinking in many segments of the market

You can’t start to build housing without infrastructure. You can’t build it without people – skilled trades people in every community who can build the homes we need.

The concern that we are already facing a shortage in skilled trades came through loud and clear in our consultations. We heard from many sources that our education system funnels young people to university rather than colleges or apprenticeships and creates the perception that careers in the skilled trades are of less value. Unions and builders are working to fill the pipeline domestically and recruit internationally, but mass retirements are making it challenging to maintain the workforce at its current level, let alone increase it.

Increased economic immigration could ease this bottleneck, but it appears difficult for a skilled labourer with no Canadian work experience to qualify under Ontario’s rules. Moreover, Canada’s immigration policies also favour university education over skills our economy and society desperately need. We ought to be welcoming immigrants with the skills needed to build roads and houses that will accommodate our growing population.

The shortage may be less acute, however, among smaller developers and contractors that could renovate and build new “missing middle” homes arising from the changes in neighbourhood zoning described earlier. These smaller companies tap into a different workforce from the one needed to build high rises and new subdivisions. Nonetheless, 1.5 million more homes will require a major investment in attracting and developing the skilled trades workforce to deliver this critically needed housing supply. We recommend:

45. Improve funding for colleges, trade schools, and apprenticeships; encourage and incentivize municipalities, unions and employers to provide more on-the-job training.

46. Undertake multi-stakeholder education program to promote skilled trades.

47. Recommend that the federal and provincial government prioritize skilled trades and adjust the immigration points system to strongly favour needed trades and expedite immigration status for these workers, and encourage the federal government to increase from 9,000 to 20,000 the number of immigrants admitted through Ontario’s program.

Create a large Ontario Housing Delivery Fund to align efforts and incent new housing supply

Build alignment between governments to enable builders to deliver more homes than ever before

All levels of government play a role in housing.

The federal government sets immigration policy, which has a major impact on population growth and many tax policies. The province sets the framework for planning, approvals, and growth that municipalities rely upon, and is responsible for many other areas that touch on housing supply, like investing in highways and transit, training workers, the building code and protecting the environment. Municipalities are on the front lines, expected to translate the impacts of federal immigration policy, provincial guidance and other factors, some very localized, into official plans and the overall process through which homes are approved to be built.

The efficiency with which home builders can build, whether for-profit or non-profit, is influenced by policies and decisions at every level of government. In turn, how many home developers can deliver, and at what cost, translates directly into the availability of homes that Ontarians can afford.
Collectively, governments have not been sufficiently aligned in their efforts to provide the frameworks and incentives that meet the broad spectrum of housing needs in Ontario. Much action, though, has been taken in recent years.

- The Ontario government has taken several steps to make it easier to build additional suites in your own home: reduced disincentives to building rental housing, improved the appeal process, focused on density around transit stations, made upfront development charges more predictable, and provided options for municipalities to create community benefits through development.

- The federal government has launched the National Housing Strategy and committed over $70 billion in funding. Most recently, it has announced a $4 billion Housing Accelerator Fund aimed at helping municipalities remove barriers to building housing more quickly.

- Municipalities have been looking at ways to change outdated processes, rules, and ways of thinking that create delays and increases costs of delivering homes. Several municipalities have taken initial steps towards eliminating exclusionary zoning and addressing other barriers described in this report.

All governments agree that we are facing a housing crisis. Now we must turn the sense of urgency into action and alignment across governments.

**Mirror policy changes with financial incentives aligned across governments**

The policy recommendations in this report will go a long way to align efforts and position builders to deliver more homes.

Having the capacity in our communities to build these homes will take more than policy. It will take money. Rewarding municipalities that meet housing growth and approval timelines will help them to invest in system upgrades, hire additional staff, and invest in their communities. Similarly, municipalities that resist new housing, succumb to NIMBY pressure, and close off their neighbourhoods should see funding reductions. Fixing the housing crisis is a societal responsibility, and our limited tax dollars should be directed to those municipalities making the difficult but necessary choices to grow housing supply.

In late January 2022, the provincial government announced $45 million for a new Streamline Development Approval Fund to “unlock housing supply by cutting red tape and improving processes for residential and industrial developments.” This is encouraging. More is needed. Ontario should also receive its fair share of federal funding but today faces a shortfall of almost $500 million, despite two thirds of the Canadian housing shortage being in Ontario. We call on the federal government to address this funding gap.

**48. The Ontario government should establish a large “Ontario Housing Delivery Fund” and encourage the federal government to match funding. This fund should reward:**

- a) Annual housing growth that meets or exceeds provincial targets

- b) Reductions in total approval times for new housing

- c) The speedy removal of exclusionary zoning practices

**49. Reductions in funding to municipalities that fail to meet provincial housing growth and approval timeline targets.**

We believe that the province should consider partial grants to subsidize municipalities that waive development charges for affordable housing and for purpose-built rental.

**Sustain focus, measure, monitor, improve**

**Digitize and modernize the approvals and planning process**

Some large municipalities have moved to electronic tracking of development applications and/or electronic building permits (“e-permits”) and report promising results, but there is no consistency and many smaller places don’t have the capacity to make the change.

Municipalities, the provincial government and agencies use different systems to collect data and information relevant to housing approvals, which slows down processes and leaves much of the “big picture” blank. This could be addressed by ensuring uniform data architecture standards.

**Improve the quality of our housing data to inform decision making**

Having accurate data is key to understanding any challenge and making the best decisions in response. The Task Force heard from multiple housing experts that we are not always using the best data, and we do not always have the data we need.
Having good population forecasts is essential in each municipality as they develop plans to meet future land and housing needs. Yet, we heard many concerns about inconsistent approaches to population forecasts. In the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the forecast provided to municipalities by the province is updated only when the Growth Plan is updated, generally every seven years; but federal immigration policy, which is a key driver of growth, changes much more frequently. The provincial Ministry of Finance produces a population forecast on a more regular basis than the Growth Plan, but these are not used consistently across municipalities or even by other provincial ministries.

Population forecasts get translated into housing need in different ways across the province, and there is a lack of data about how (or whether) the need will be met. Others pointed to the inconsistent availability of land inventories. Another challenge is the lack of information on how much land is permitted and how much housing is actually getting built once permitted, and how fast. The Task Force also heard that, although the Provincial Policy Statement requires municipalities to maintain a three-year supply of short-term (build-ready) land and report it each year to the province, many municipalities are not meeting that requirement.

At a provincial and municipal level, we need better data on the housing we have today, housing needed to close the gap, consistent projections of what we need in the future, and data on how we are doing at keeping up. Improved data will help anticipate local and provincial supply bottlenecks and constraints, making it easier to determine the appropriate level and degree of response.

It will also be important to have better data to assess how much new housing stock is becoming available to groups that have been disproportionately excluded from home ownership and rental housing.

Put eyes on the crisis and change the conversation around housing

Ours is not the first attempt to “fix the housing system”. There have been efforts for years to tackle increasing housing prices and find solutions so everyone in Ontario can find and afford the housing they need. This time must be different.

The recommendations in this report must receive sustained attention, results must be monitored, significant financial investment by all levels of government must be made. And, the people of Ontario must embrace a housing landscape in which the housing needs of tomorrow’s citizens and those who have been left behind are given equal weight to the housing advantages of those who are already well established in homes that they own.

50. Fund the adoption of consistent municipal e-permitting systems and encourage the federal government to match funding. Fund the development of common data architecture standards across municipalities and provincial agencies and require municipalities to provide their zoning bylaws with open data standards. Set an implementation goal of 2025 and make funding conditional on established targets.

51. Require municipalities and the provincial government to use the Ministry of Finance population projections as the basis for housing need analysis and related land use requirements.

52. Resume reporting on housing data and require consistent municipal reporting, enforcing compliance as a requirement for accessing programs under the Ontario Housing Delivery Fund.

53. Report each year at the municipal and provincial level on any gap between demand and supply by housing type and location, and make underlying data freely available to the public.

54. Empower the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to lead an all-of-government committee, including key provincial ministries and agencies, that meets weekly to ensure our remaining recommendations and any other productive ideas are implemented.

55. Commit to evaluate these recommendations for the next three years with public reporting on progress.
Conclusion

We have set a bold goal for Ontario: building 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years.

We believe this can be done. What struck us was that everyone we talked to – builders, housing advocates, elected officials, planners – understands the need to act now. As one long-time industry participant said, “for the first time in memory, everyone is aligned, and we need to take advantage of that.”

Such unity of purpose is rare, but powerful.

To leverage that power, we offer solutions that are bold but workable, backed by evidence, and that position Ontario for the future.

Our recommendations focus on ramping up the supply of housing. Measures are already in place to try to cool demand, but they will not fill Ontario’s housing need. More supply is key. Building more homes will reduce the competition for our scarce supply of homes and will give Ontarians more housing choices. It will improve housing affordability across the board.

Everyone wants more Ontarians to have housing. So let’s get to work to build more housing in Ontario.
APPENDIX A: 
Biographies of Task Force Members

Lalit Aggarwal is President of Manor Park Holdings, a real estate development and operating company active in Eastern Ontario. Previously, Lalit was an investor for institutional fund management firms, such as H.I.G. European Capital Partners, Soros Fund Management, and Goldman Sachs. He is a past fellow of the C.D. Howe Institute and a former Director of both Bridgepoint Health and the Centre for the Commercialization of Regenerative Medicine. Lalit holds degrees from the University of Oxford and the University of Pennsylvania. He is also a current Director of the Hospital for Sick Children Foundation, the Sterling Hall School and the Chair of the Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario.

David Amborski is a professional Urban Planner, Professor at Ryerson University’s School of Urban and Regional Planning and the founding Director of the Centre for Urban Research and Land Development (CUR). His research and consulting work explore topics where urban planning interfaces with economics, including land and housing markets. He is an academic advisor to the National Executive Forum on Public Property, and he is a member of Lambda Alpha (Honorary Land Economics Society). He has undertaken consulting for the Federal, Provincial and a range of municipal governments. Internationally, he has undertaken work for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and several other organizations in Eastern Europe, Latin America, South Africa, and Asia. He also serves on the editorial boards of several international academic journals.

Andrew Garrett is a real estate executive responsible for growing IMCO’s $11+ Billion Global Real Estate portfolio to secure public pensions and insurance for Ontario families. IMCO is the only Ontario fund manager purpose built to onboard public clients such as pensions, insurance, municipal reserve funds, and endowments. Andrew has significant non-profit sector experience founding a B Corp certified social enterprise called WeBuild to help incubate social purpose real estate projects. He currently volunteers on non-profit boards supporting social purpose real estate projects, youth programs and the visual arts at Art Gallery of Ontario. Andrew sits on board advisory committees for private equity firms and holds a Global Executive MBA from Kellogg School Management and a Real Estate Development Certification from MIT Centre for Real Estate.

Tim Hudak is the CEO of the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA). With a passion and voice for championing the dream of home ownership, Tim came to OREA following a distinguished 21-year career in politics, including five years as Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario.

In his role, Tim has focused on transforming OREA into Ontario’s most cutting-edge professional association at the forefront of advocacy on behalf of REALTORS® and consumers, and providing world-class conferences, standard forms, leadership training and professional guidance to its Members. As part of his work at OREA, Tim was named one of the most powerful people in North American residential real estate by Swanepoel Power 200 for the last five years. Tim is married to Deb Hutton, and together they have two daughters, Miller and Maitland. In his spare time, Tim enjoys trails less taken on his mountain bike or hiking shoes as well as grilling outdoors.

Jake Lawrence was appointed Chief Executive Officer and Group Head, Global Banking and Markets in January 2021. In this role, Jake is responsible for the Bank’s Global Banking and Markets business line and strategy across its global footprint. Jake joined Scotiabank in 2002 and has held progressively senior roles in Finance, Group Treasury and Global Banking and Markets. From December 2018 to January 2021, Jake was Co-Group Head of Global Banking and Markets with specific responsibility for its Capital Markets businesses, focused on building alignment across product groups and priority markets to best serve our clients throughout our global footprint. Previously, Jake was Executive Vice President and Head of Global Banking and Markets in the U.S., providing overall strategic direction and execution of Scotiabank’s U.S. businesses. Prior to moving into GBM, Jake served as Senior Vice President and Deputy Treasurer, responsible for Scotiabank’s wholesale funding activities and liquidity management as well as Senior Vice President, Investor Relations.
Julie Di Lorenzo (GPLLM, University of Toronto 2020), is self-employed since 1982, operates one of the largest female-run Real Estate Development Companies in North America. She was instrumental in the Daniel Burnham award-winning Ontario Growth Management Plan (2004) as President of BILD. Julie served as the first female-owner President of GTHBA (BILD) and on the boards of the Ontario Science Centre, Harbourfront Toronto, Tarion (ONHWP), St. Michael’s Hospital, NEXT36, Waterfront Toronto, Chair of IREC Committee WT, Havergal College (Co-Chair of Facilities), York School (interim Vice-Chair), and Canadian Civil Liberties Association Board. Julie has served various governments in advisory capacity on Women’s issues, Economic Development, Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Awards include Lifetime Achievement BILD 2017, ICCO Business Excellence 2005 & ICCO Businesswoman of the Year 2021.

Justin Marchand (CIHCM, CPA, CMA, BComm) is Métis and was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS) in 2018. Justin has over 20 years of progressive experience in a broad range of sectors, including two publicly listed corporations, a large accounting and consulting firm, and a major crown corporation, and holds numerous designations across financial, operations, and housing disciplines. He was most recently selected as Chair of the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association’s (CHRA’s) Indigenous Caucus Working Group and is also board member for CHRA. Justin is also an active board member for both the Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership (CHIL) as well as Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, located in Bawaating. Justin believes that Housing is a fundamental human right and that when Indigenous people have access to safe, affordable, and culture-based Housing this provides the opportunity to improve other areas of their lives.

Ene Underwood is CEO of Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area), a non-profit housing developer that helps working, lower income families build strength, stability and self-reliance through affordable homeownership. Homes are delivered through a combination of volunteer builds, contractor builds, and partnerships with non-profit and for-profit developers. Ene’s career began in the private sector as a strategy consultant with McKinsey & Company before transitioning to not-for-profit sector leadership. Ene holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from the University of Waterloo and a Master of Business Administration from Ivey Business School.

Dave Wilkes is the President and CEO of the Building Industry and Land Development Association of the GTA (BILD). The Association has 1,300 members and proudly represents builders, developers, professional renovators and those who support the industry.

Dave is committed to supporting volunteer boards and organizations. He has previously served on the George Brown College Board of Directors, Ontario Curling Association, and is currently engaged with Black North Initiative (Housing Committee) and R-Labs I+T Council.

Dave received his Bachelor of Arts (Applied Geography) from Ryerson.
APPENDIX B: Affordable Housing

Ontario’s affordable housing shortfall was raised in almost every conversation. With rapidly rising prices, more lower-priced market rental units are being converted into housing far out of reach of lower-income households. In parallel, higher costs to deliver housing and limited government funding have resulted in a net decrease in the number of affordable housing units run by non-profits. The result is untenable: more people need affordable housing after being displaced from the market at the very time that affordable supply is shrinking.

Throughout our consultations, we were reminded of the housing inequities experienced by Black, Indigenous and marginalized people. We also received submissions describing the unique challenges faced by off-reserve Indigenous Peoples both in the province’s urban centres and in the north.

While many of the changes that will help deliver market housing will also help make it easier to deliver affordable housing, affordable housing is a societal responsibility. We cannot rely exclusively on for-profit developers nor on increases in the supply of market housing to fully solve the problem.

The non-profit housing sector faces all the same barriers, fees, risks and complexities outlined in this report as for-profit builders. Several participants from the non-profit sector referred to current or future partnerships with for-profit developers that tap into the development and construction expertise and efficiencies of the private sector. Successful examples of leveraging such partnerships were cited with Indigenous housing, supportive housing, and affordable homeownership.

We were also reminded by program participants that, while partnerships with for-profit developers can be very impactful, non-profit providers have unique competencies in the actual delivery of affordable housing. This includes confirming eligibility of affordable housing applicants, supporting independence of occupants of affordable housing, and ensuring affordable housing units remain affordable from one occupant to the next.

One avenue for delivering more affordable housing that has received much recent attention is inclusionary zoning. In simple terms, inclusionary zoning (IZ) requires developers to deliver a share of affordable units in new housing developments in prescribed areas. The previous Ontario government passed legislation in April 2018 providing a framework within which municipalities could enact Inclusionary Zoning bylaws.

Ontario’s first inclusionary zoning policy was introduced in fall 2021 by the City of Toronto and applies to major transit station areas. Internationally, inclusionary zoning has been used successfully to incentivize developers to create new affordable housing by providing density bonuses (more units than they would normally be allowed, if some are affordable) or reductions in government fees. Unfortunately, the City’s approach did not include any incentives or bonuses. Instead, Toronto requires market-rate fees and charges for below-market affordable units. This absence of incentives together with lack of clarity on the overall density that will be approved for projects has led developers and some housing advocates to claim that these projects may be uneconomic and thus will not get financed or built. Municipalities shared with us their concerns regarding the restriction in the provincial IZ legislation that prohibits “cash in lieu” payments. Municipalities advised that having the option of accepting the equivalent value of IZ units in cash from the developer would enable even greater impact in some circumstances (for example, a luxury building in an expensive neighbourhood, where the cost of living is too high for a low-income resident).

Funding for affordable housing is the responsibility of all levels of government. The federal government has committed to large funding transfers to the provinces to support affordable housing. The Task Force heard, however, that Ontario’s share of this funding does not reflect our proportionate affordable housing needs. This, in turn, creates further financial pressure on both the province and municipalities, which further exacerbates the affordable housing shortages in Ontario’s communities.
Finally, many participants in Task Force consultations pointed to surplus government lands as an avenue for building more affordable housing and this is discussed in Appendix C.

We have made recommendations throughout the report intended to have a positive impact on new affordable housing supply. We offer these additional recommendations specific to affordable housing:

- Call upon the federal government to provide equitable affordable housing funding to Ontario.
- Develop and legislate a clear, province-wide definition of “affordable housing” to create certainty and predictability.
- Create an Affordable Housing Trust from a portion of Land Transfer Tax Revenue (i.e., the windfall resulting from property price appreciation) to be used in partnership with developers, non-profits, and municipalities in the creation of more affordable housing units. This Trust should create incentives for projects serving and brought forward by Black- and Indigenous-led developers and marginalized groups.
- Amend legislation to:
  - Allow cash-in-lieu payments for Inclusive Zoning units at the discretion of the municipality.
  - Require that municipalities utilize density bonusing or other incentives in all Inclusionary Zoning and Affordable Housing policies that apply to market housing.
  - Permit municipalities that have not passed Inclusionary Zoning policies to offer incentives and bonuses for affordable housing units.
- Encourage government to closely monitor the effectiveness of Inclusionary Zoning policy in creating new affordable housing and to explore alternative funding methods that are predictable, consistent and transparent as a more viable alternative option to Inclusionary Zoning policies in the provision of affordable housing.
- Rebate MPAC market rate property tax assessment on below-market affordable homes.
APPENDIX C: Government Surplus Land

Surplus government lands fell outside the mandate of the Task Force. However, this question came up repeatedly as a solution to housing supply. While we take no view on the disposition of specific parcels of land, several stakeholders raised issues that we believe merit consideration:

- Review surplus lands and accelerate the sale and development through RFP of surplus government land and surrounding land by provincially pre-zoning for density, affordable housing, and mixed or residential use.
- All future government land sales, whether commercial or residential, should have an affordable housing component of at least 20%.
- Purposefully upzone underdeveloped or underutilized Crown property (e.g., LCBO).
- Sell Crown land and reoccupy as a tenant in a higher density building or relocate services outside of major population centres where land is considerably less expensive.
- The policy priority of adding to the housing supply, including affordable units, should be reflected in the way surplus land is offered for sale, allowing bidders to structure their proposals accordingly.
Surety Bonds

Moving to surety bonds would free up billions of dollars for building

When a development proposal goes ahead, the developer typically needs to make site improvements, such as installing common services. The development agreement details how the developer must perform to the municipality’s satisfaction.

Up until the 1980s, it was common practice for Ontario municipalities to accept bonds as financial security for subdivision agreements and site plans. Today, however, they almost exclusively require letters of credit from a chartered bank. The problem with letters of credit is that developers are often required to collateralize the letter of credit dollar-for-dollar against the value of the municipal works they are performing.

Often this means developers can only afford to finance one or two housing projects at a time, constraining housing supply. The Ontario Home Builders’ Association estimates that across Ontario, billions of dollars are tied up in collateral or borrowing capacity that could be used to advance more projects.

Modern “pay on demand surety bonds” are proven to provide the same benefits and security as a letter of credit, while not tying up private capital the way letters of credit do. Moving to this option would give municipalities across Ontario access to all the features of a letter of credit with the added benefit of professional underwriting, carried out by licensed bonding companies, ensuring that the developer is qualified to fulfill its obligations under the municipal agreement.

Most important from a municipal perspective, the financial obligation is secured. If a problem arises, the secure bond is fully payable by the bond company on demand. Surety companies, similar to banks, are regulated by Ontario’s Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions to ensure they have sufficient funds in place to pay out bond claims.

More widespread use of this instrument could unlock billions of dollars of private sector financial liquidity that could be used to build new infrastructure and housing projects, provide for more units in each development and accelerate the delivery of housing of all types.
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February 15, 2022

Hon. Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing
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RE: Opportunities & Feedback to Increase the Supply & Affordability of Market Housing
Town of The Blue Mountains Submission

Dear Minister Clark,

Thank you for your recent email correspondence to municipal Heads of Council on February 7, 2022 seeking further advice from municipalities regarding opportunities to increase the supply and affordability of market housing. Like many municipalities in Ontario, the Town of The Blue Mountains is experiencing significant growth, pressure to grow more, and market housing prices that have vastly outpaced the incomes of so many local residents.

We appreciate your willingness to ask tough questions regarding the current housing crisis and your openness to act swiftly on some of the answers you receive through your consultations. It should be noted that municipal staff and Councils would be better able to provide well-thought-out, constructive comments and suggestions with additional time. It is concerning that some innovative thoughts, ideas, and potential needed changes to Ontario’s Housing System may not be heard through an accelerated consultation period.

On behalf of the Town of The Blue Mountains, the following represents Town staff’s suggested opportunities for the Province’s consideration as well as comments pertaining to the Housing Task Force Report Recommendations:

General Comment – The Town supports the Province in setting a target for new dwellings to be built. Without a target, neither the Province, nor municipalities will know the magnitude of the goal or how each can do their part in achieving it.

General Comment – The Town supports a municipality’s ability to deliver a range of housing options that both meet local context and serviceability, while pursuing achievement of provincial priorities, objectives, and policies. Definition of terms such as “missing middle” and “attainable” may assist municipalities in understanding and what we are collectively striving towards.
**General Comment** – The current Planning System in Ontario is multi-tiered, complex and lengthy. In rural and small urban communities, plans, policies, and bylaws can articulate a community’s vision of a sustainable yet prosperous future. However, substantial amounts of information that guide development on the ground is left to landowners and applicants to provide for review. This “back-ending” of information to support development proposals results in time and money required for both preparation and review of those materials. The result: a land development process that is often consumed with ground-truthing, review, technical assessment, and professional debate. While detailed information is critical to good decision-making, the current reactive structure does not lend itself to accelerated delivery of market housing. Municipalities need to be equipped to identify and clearly delineate areas that are available for development at the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw stage. Mandating the use of the Community Planning Permit System may assist in bringing clarity and expediency to the process.

**Suggestion: Pursue Clarity & Predictability** – A new Planning System in Ontario needs to be based on clarity and predictability. Properties that are designated and zoned for uses that are deemed appropriate through Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw processes should be able to realize the community’s vision without further drawn-out processes. Similarly, community residents should have the confidence that lands that are designated and zoned for protection will stay that way until the next Official Plan Review and Zoning Bylaw Review without concern that technical evaluations will reveal opportunity for unexpected change.

**Suggestion: Stable & Sufficient Resources to Plan Ahead** – It is recommended that a portion of the Land Transfer Tax collected within a municipality be directed to fund municipal planning and development resources. This approach stabilizes funding for many smaller municipalities. This approach also ensures that municipalities with higher land sale volumes (a potential sign of growth) can benefit from that growth by investing in resources to manage it. Finally, this approach also lessens the burden of municipal planning resources on the tax levy, freeing up much needed tax income to be dedicated to other municipal services.

**Suggestion: Non-primary dwelling surtax to fund Community Improvement Plans** – Seasonal homes, second homes, vacation homes and short-term accommodation units make up a critical mass in the Provincial housing stock. Ontarians should always have the freedom to buy real estate. However, when not occupied as a principal residence by either the owner or a long-term tenant, this housing stock consumes land without helping satisfy the market’s demand for housing. It is recommended that the Province investigate a surtax or unit levy on dwellings that are not used as a principal residence by the owner or a long-term tenant. Legislation could be introduced to require the surtax revenues to support municipal Community Improvement Programs that support attainable housing.

**Suggestion: Attainable Unit Density Offset** – We recommend that the Province allow municipalities to require up to 10% of development proposals over 10 units to be attainable in exchange for a 10% increase in density. Effectively, bonus density can be provided for the attainable housing. This takes advantage of the critical mass/cost efficiency of a development that is already constructing market-priced dwellings.

**Suggestion: Minimum Density Plans** – To help achieve a provincial goal of dwelling creation, each region and municipality must understand what their respective contribution of new dwellings needs to be in the next 10 years. We recommend that the Province work with planning authorities to identify what the regional and local municipal dwelling targets shall be. The minimum densities required to achieve these dwelling targets should be outlined in Minimum Density Plans for serviced settlement areas with no threat of appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal. This will ensure the densities required to achieve dwelling targets are put into place in a timely manner and sites are pre-zoned for development.
Housing Task Force Report Recommendations 3 through 11 – Town staff generally support pursuit of “as-of-right” permissions. We support the Province furthering legislative change to permit two additional residential units on a lot, to a maximum of 3 units. However, we question the liveability of 4 units on a single residential lot. Issues related to amenity space, parking, and waste collection could be exacerbated, particularly in smaller communities with little to no access to transit or public parkland within walking distance. Also, we do not support Recommendation 11 in its entirety as it suggests supporting housing growth outside municipal boundaries and may lead to unnecessary sprawl and premature extension of costly municipal infrastructure.

Housing Task Force Report Recommendation 12 – We caution against a complete repeal or override of municipal documents that prioritize the preservation of physical character of neighbourhood. However, we acknowledge that character does not equate to “the same”. Municipalities that wish to address character should be required to develop community design standards how development should compliment existing character, albeit at a higher density.

Housing Task Force Report Recommendation 13 through 25 -- Blanket exemptions of developments <10 units may create unintended confusion regarding critical issues (i.e. infrastructure ownership, access, etc.) and may allow poor quality design. This concept should only be entertained if the Province identified strict requirements outlining the site level details that are typically dealt with through the site plan process. Also, we caution the Province in its consideration of restoring all rights of developers to appeals Official Plans and Municipal Comprehensive Reviews. This could result in additional appeals resulting in further time and money directed towards matters at the Tribunal rather than devoted to building communities.

We do not support automatic approvals of applications that exceed legislative timelines. Often lengthened timelines result from professional differences of opinion over policy interpretation or technical substance. Instead, we recommend the Province engage with professional associations involved in the development process (planners, engineers, etc.) to develop clear and comprehensive criteria for technical information associated with developments.

Thank you again for the opportunity to convey our suggestions and provide feedback. We look forward to further collaboration with the Province and remain available if you require additional information or clarity.

Sincerely,
The Town of The Blue Mountains

Nathan Westendorp, MCIP RPP
Director of Planning & Development Services

cc. Council Town of The Blue Mountains
    Shawn Everitt, CAO Town of The Blue Mountains
    Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO County of Grey