

The County of Grey

Brief to

House of Commons Standing Committee on Human
Resources, Skills and Social Development and the
Status of Persons with Disabilities

Regarding

Options for the Design and Rollout of the Housing
Accelerator Fund



Grey
County
Colour It Your Way

Submitted by:

Kim Wingrove, CAO
Randy Scherzer, Deputy CAO
Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing
Scott Taylor, Director of Planning and Development
Jody MacEachern, Director of IT

June 30, 2022

Background and Key Recommendations

- Similar to other communities throughout Ontario and Canada, Grey County is experiencing an affordable housing shortage.
- The affordable housing crisis is being exacerbated as a result of increasing land costs, increasing development and construction costs, not enough builders and licensed contractors to keep up with demand, NIMBYism, as well as housing being used for short-term accommodation which impacts overall housing supply for residents.
- The following identifies items to consider for the design and rollout of the Housing Accelerator Fund to ensure that communities can respond to the call for action to create more affordable housing within communities across Canada:
 - Ensure that any funds provided by the Federal and Provincial governments are provided through a simplified application process and that the eligibility criteria are flexible enough to allow municipalities, non-profit housing groups, and private developers to be creative in their solutions for creating affordable housing in their communities.
 - Ensure that the reporting process is streamlined to ensure that limited resources can be focused on the actual affordable housing project versus spending time and resources on complex reporting.
 - Transfer any surplus federally owned lands that are suitable for the creation of affordable housing to municipalities.
 - Allow funds to be used for the following:
 - Financial programs to create or renovate existing buildings for transitional housing, supportive housing and not-for-profit housing.
 - Housing supports such as rent subsidies and emergency housing vouchers for those most in need in our communities.
 - Funds to help implement Inclusionary Zoning provisions. This could include support for developing the framework and process to apply inclusionary zoning, as well as funds to developers to help offset any additional costs associated with providing a percentage of housing with a development project to be at affordable housing rates. Inclusionary zoning would allow municipalities to set a specified percentage of housing be at an affordable housing rate for all new developments or the developer could provide a contribution in-lieu of affordable housing that can then be used to build more community housing/not-for-profit housing.
 - Funding towards creating affordable housing that addresses accessibility standards.
 - Funds to ensure that builds achieve net zero readiness to minimize long-term operational costs.

- Funding to increase staff resources at all levels of government to help expedite the processing of development applications and other approvals associated with affordable housing developments
- Funds to support educational and awareness programs to ensure that all members of our communities are aware of the need for and importance of affordable housing to help address NIMBYism
- Investing in technological solutions, or enhancing existing technological solutions, to help create efficiencies in the development approval process (e.g. tech systems and web apps to support planning application and building permit processing and tracking).
- Funds to help support colleges, trade programs, and apprenticeship programs to ensure that we have the skilled workforce to build the affordable housing units
- Funds that can be used by municipalities to purchase land to support affordable housing builds
- Funds provided to municipalities to support adding additional lands to settlement areas to support the creation of future housing
- Funds to support infrastructure studies and upgrades (e.g. increased water and sewer capacity, road upgrades, etc.) required to support the creation of affordable housing builds.
- Funds provided to local municipalities to help incentivize private developers to create affordable housing through community improvement plans (i.e. funds that can be used to offset development charges, application fees, tax incentives, etc.).
- Support for building code updates to allow for more housing types to be created (e.g. modular housing, tiny housing, etc.) and to ensure that the minimum building code standards require net zero/net zero readiness housing. The Building Code updates will help to sustain long-term operating costs for housing and to achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets set by the federal government.
- Grants/interest free loans to support renovating existing housing units to be more energy efficient to help retain and sustain the existing affordable housing units within our communities.

Conclusion

We would like to express our sincere appreciation for being able to provide these comments to the House of Commons Standing Committee regarding options for design and rollout of the Housing Accelerator Fund. We look forward to continuing to work

together with all levels of government towards the common goal of creating more affordable housing.