

**Ministry of  
Municipal Affairs  
and Housing**

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**234-2023-4155**

August 22, 2023

Your Worship  
Mayor Shelley Ann Bentley  
Haldimand County  
sbentley@haldimandcounty.on.ca

Dear Mayor Bentley,

**Subject: Municipal Housing Pledges and Targets, Strong Mayor Powers and Building Faster Fund**

**Haldimand County: 4,200 Homes**

All levels of government play an important role in solving Ontario's housing crisis. That is why, on June 16<sup>th</sup> of this year, I asked the Haldimand County, along with 20 other municipalities, to demonstrate its commitment to accelerate housing supply by identifying a locally appropriate housing target (i.e., new housing units) to meet current and future housing needs to 2031; and to develop a Municipal Housing Pledge to increase and accelerate housing supply.

Further to my letter in June, the Ministry has now set a specific housing target for Haldimand County of 4,200 new homes constructed in your community by 2031. I am asking you, as head of council, to respond in writing by October 15, 2023 confirming your commitment to meet this target.

To further support municipalities in delivering much-needed housing, the government will also extend **Strong Mayor** powers to the 21 municipalities with newly assigned housing targets, provided that the head of council has committed in writing to meet their provincially assigned target.

To be clear, I am still requesting that your Municipality prepare and submit to the Ministry a **Housing Pledge** by December 15, 2023 that showcases the strategies and actions that it will take in order to achieve the above housing target. I encourage you to

complete this critical work without delay to help build the homes Ontarians need and deserve.

To demonstrate the government's support as you work toward this goal, on August 21, 2023, Premier Ford announced the new Building Faster Fund, a new three-year-\$1.2 billion program to help municipalities meet or exceed the provincially assigned housing targets they have committed to achieve by 2031 as described in their housing pledge. The Building Faster Fund will provide up to \$400 million over three years of financial support for municipalities that can be directed toward housing-enabling infrastructure and related costs that support community growth.

Funding under the program will be based on two key criteria. First, each municipalities' potential share of the \$400 million annual allocation will be based on their target's share of the overall goal of 1.5 million homes in Ontario by 2031. Second, each municipalities' actual funding will be based on whether their annual housing performance is on track to meet its 2031 target. Municipalities on track to exceed their target based on annual housing performance will receive additional funding.

Ontario will be consulting with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team, and the City of Toronto on the program design details of the Building Faster Fund, including eligible expenses and ways to track the progress of municipalities. Funding is anticipated to start in 2024-25 based on performance in 2023. I look forward to sharing more details in the near future.

Our government remains committed to addressing the policy and implementation barriers you may encounter as you develop your pledges. I encourage you to send any questions to Christina Thomas, the Ministry's Manager of Growth Planning, Data and Analysis, [Christina.Thomas@ontario.ca](mailto:Christina.Thomas@ontario.ca).

As Ontario grows, we need to build more homes. I look forward to your support in ensuring that everyone – newcomers, young families and seniors – can afford a place to call home.

Sincerely,



Steve Clark  
Minister  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

C: Hon. Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Housing  
Kirstin Jensen, Deputy Chief of Staff, Minister's Office  
Martha Greenberg, Deputy Minister

Sean Fraser, Assistant Deputy Minister, Planning and Growth Division  
Joshua Paul, Assistant Deputy Minister, Market Housing Division  
Caspar Hall, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Division  
Evelyn Eichenbaum, Clerk, Haldimand County  
Cathy Case, CAO, Haldimand County

## **Info Sheet: Considerations in Developing Municipal Housing Pledge**

The pledge is not intended to be a land-use planning document, and its development should not require external technical expertise. The format and language used in the pledge should be accessible to the general public. The pledge is intended to be approved by municipal councils and should help codify Council's commitment to meeting their municipal housing target.

Municipalities can leverage new and existing policy tools as they develop housing pledges and work towards their housing targets.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of potential strategies and actions that municipalities may include in developing their housing pledges. There may be additional opportunities based on local circumstances and the Province is interested in hearing about those ideas and creative solutions.

- Strategies to encourage and promote gentle intensification to enable and expedite additional residential units in existing residential areas
- Outline ways in which funding under provincial programs, such as the Streamline Development Approval Fund (SDAF) or Municipal Modernization Program (MMP), has been used to streamline existing municipal development approval processes
- Information on municipal development approval timelines and whether municipalities are being appealed for non-decisions
- Identify potential measures where current lack of infrastructure capacity (e.g., water/wastewater servicing) may limit future housing development
- Strategies to use municipal surplus lands
- Commitment to plan for, fund, and approve (where applicable) specific critical municipal infrastructure to support growth and new housing (e.g., water, wastewater, transit etc.), which may include expanded capacity as well as fully new facilities/assets
- Priorities for strategic and site-specific planning decisions to expedite housing in priority areas (e.g., around transit stations and in transit-serviced areas)
- Update zoning by-laws to permit a greater range of housing to be built without the need for costly and lengthy rezoning applications
- Municipalities may also consider existing tools such as the Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator, Community Planning Permit System, Major Transit Station Areas, and Protected Major Transit Station Areas.

Below are some of the potential components of a municipal housing pledge. Municipalities are free to choose, alter, or add any new components that seem reasonable. Pledges can be represented in the form of plain text, tables, charts, maps, or a combination of them.

- Municipal Housing Target
- Planned and proposed Municipal Initiatives
- Initiative Owner and Additional Stakeholders

- Context and Description of How Initiative Accelerates Housing
- Number of units per initiative and housing type
- Considerations (Barriers, Implementation, Risks, etc.)
- Potential Mitigation Strategies and Proposal to Accelerate Housing
- Potential Reporting and Monitoring Measures

Municipal housing pledges are intended to be public documents and it's anticipated that municipalities will post them online.

Municipalities can contact Ministry staff with any questions and for clarification.