



## Committee Report

**To:** Warden Chris Peabody and  
Members of the Executive Committee

**From:** Christine MacDonald, Deputy CAO

**Date:** October 5, 2023

**Re:** MMAH Priorities from Provincial Housing Affordability Task Force Report

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### Staff Recommendation:

Council direct staff to prepare a response to the Minister of Municipal Affairs that shares the top 5 recommendations identified by County Staff; and the County's willingness to engage the Ministry in support of addressing the Housing Crisis; and

Council direct the Clerk to circulate this report to municipal CAOs and Clerks in Bruce County.

### Background:

Local Municipal heads of Council received the attached letter from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Hons. Paul Calandra on September 15, 2023.

The letter asks municipal councils to identify the top 5 recommendations from the [Housing Affordability Task Force Report](#) that they want the provincial government to focus on next. The deadline to provide a response is October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

While member municipalities each received a letter from the Minister, a similar letter was not received by the Warden of Bruce County.

Based on consultation with other County Planning Directors and the Western Ontario Wardens Caucus members, it appears the upper-tier Wardens were not sent a letter by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Rather the letters were sent to local municipalities, and single-tier municipalities.

Municipalities with allocated growth targets from the province received a letter, which requires comments on each of the Task Force Report's recommendations by October 16<sup>th</sup> in order for them to remain eligible for the \$1.2 Billion Building Faster Fund.

Given the County role in delivery of land use planning services to local Municipalities and its role as the Housing System Service Manager, some municipalities reached out to see if the County will provide a response to letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and if so, what 5 recommendations County staff recommend the provincial government focus on next.

The Housing Affordability Task Force Report (HATF) was released in February 2022. The report outlines 55 recommendations to address the housing crisis, and a further 19 recommendations that were beyond the scope of its mandate (for a total of 74 recommendations). Their recommendations include the province establish the target of building 1.5 million homes in Ontario over the next 10 years.

The Housing Affordability Task Force's (HATF) mandate was to identify actions to increase market housing supply and affordability. The report is focus on market housing, which is defined in the report as homes that can be purchased or rented without government support. Affordable housing (units provided at below-market rates with government support) was identified as being outside the mandate of the task force.

The recommendations delivered in the HATF report are organized around the following 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

At the time the report was released, several organizations including the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and the Ontario Provincial Planners Institute (OPPI) provided responses to the HATF report. Below are links to those responses:

- [AMO Response to HATF Report 2022-03-01.pdf](#)
- [OPPI-Top-10-Housing-Supply-and-Affordability-Recommendations.pdf](#)

When the HATF report was released, several organizations that the report largely focused on development issues in the Greater Toronto Area and Ontario's larger cities. It is noted that the Housing Crisis is Ontario wide and that solutions to address this crisis are needed to address housing needs of rural and smaller, but growing communities, like Bruce County.

Consultation with the County's Housing Services Manager, Manager of Land Use Planning, other County Planning Directors, Western Ontario Warden Caucus staff and municipal CAOs, in response to the request to identify priorities, yielded the following recommendations:

- Give municipalities tools to facilitate the timely construction of units that are or have been approved through planning processes;
- Align provincial and federal ministry reviews and permitting with the timelines required for local municipal approvals;
- Make improvements to the Ontario Land Tribunal to reduce timelines and prevent abuse of the appeal process;
- Support education and training for skilled trades needed to support the construction industry;
- Funding for infrastructure projects needed to support housing;
- Funding from provincial and federal levels of government to facilitate rental and affordable housing projects.

- Prescribe Counties in Ontario so that they can establish upper-tier Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plans and implement financial incentives for affordable housing development.

In reviewing the recommendations included in the HAFI report, it is noted that many of the recommendations have been included in recent legislative changes implemented or in-progress by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Examples include Bill 23 - More Homes Built Faster Act and the proposed changes to the Provincial Planning Statement anticipated to be released in late 2023.

Looking to align the priorities outlined above with recommendations in the HAFI report, County staff identified the following recommendations as the Top 5 priority actions for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

1. **Recommendation 3b)** 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 storey's, allow single egress, etc.).
2. **Recommendation 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.
3. **Recommendation 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.
4. **Recommendation 42.** Provide provincial and federal loan guarantees for purpose-built rental, affordable rental and affordable ownership projects
5. **Recommendation 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.

#### **Financial/Staffing/Legal/IT Considerations:**

There are no financial, staffing, legal or IT considerations associated with this report.

#### **Interdepartmental Consultation:**

The Deputy CAO consulted the CAOs of the 8 local municipalities in Bruce County. Consultation has occurred with the Manager of Land Use Planning, as well as the Director of Human Services and Manager of Housing Services.

#### **Link to Strategic Goals:**

1. Build a strong and inclusive community - Increase housing options and encourage innovative solutions.

2. Enhance and grow partnerships -Advocate for Bruce County perspective on provincial legislative changes.

**Report Author:**

Claire Dodds, Director of Planning & Development

**Approved for Submission:**

Derrick Thomson  
Chief Administrative Officer