

**Remarks by:  
Brian Rosborough,  
Executive Director,  
Association of Municipalities of Ontario**

**Presentation to the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA) study on the Housing Accelerator Fund**

**Thursday May 19, 2022 – 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm EDT**

**Length: 5 minutes**

---

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today before this committee.

Good afternoon everyone. I am Brian Rosborough, Executive Director of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. As the chair mentioned, I'm joined today by my colleague, Amber Crawford, who is a senior advisor at AMO.

AMO is the collective voice of the 444 municipal governments in Ontario.

Housing affordability is one of the greatest challenges facing our province and, indeed, the country.

AMO has worked on this issue for many years with the provincial and federal governments.

It is a truly complex issue and not one that municipal governments can solve on their own. In fact, the demand levers, and supply actions, are mostly held by others.

Ultimately, we believe that solutions must involve a variety of actions from all orders of government, *and* the development industry.

Earlier this year, AMO released a policy paper with nearly 90 recommendations for the various stakeholders that need to be involved.

The document, titled "A Blueprint for Action: An Integrated Approach to Address the Ontario Housing Crisis" can be found on our [website](#).

Local leaders in Ontario are already rolling up their sleeves to do their part to improve housing options for people.

The measures and investments in Federal Budget 2022, including of course the Housing Accelerator Fund and those are most are welcome.

The Housing Accelerator Fund has great potential to help get housing built faster through **direct and flexible investments** that allow municipalities to tackle the most serious local barriers to supply.

Increasing supply is crucial, but it is important to ensure that the Housing Accelerator Fund enables the **RIGHT kind of supply**.

Like FCM, which have also appeared before this committee, AMO believes that the RIGHT supply means affordable options, both market and non-market, aligned with the shared federal-provincial-municipal vision of low-carbon intensification and transit-oriented development.

The RIGHT supply also means focusing on the specific local supply gaps unique to each local market.

However, we would also say that new supply is not the only solution. There is also work to be done to preserve existing housing stock that is affordable, especially purpose-built rental housing.

In our Blueprint, AMO supported the call by FCM for the federal government to provide acquisition financing and/or grants for the non-profit and co-operative sectors - to purchase existing multi-residential buildings and keep them affordable for low-income tenants.

Our main purpose today with the time remaining is to provide input on the Housing Accelerator Fund's program design.

All municipalities can benefit from these investments.

Flexibility is key to customized local solutions. The Housing Accelerator Fund must account for the unique needs of smaller, rural, and northern communities.

So, ultimately, we would like to see a broad list of eligible activities that can be funded. Some examples we would highlight include activities such as:

- Establishing digital e-permitting
- Improving development approvals processes - such as instituting Lean Sigma methodologies
- Increasing human resource capacity for municipal planning and approval processes
- Adoption of new systems, where feasible and desirable, such as the Community Planning Permit System, and/or Community Improvement Plan
- Conducting data analysis of local housing market needs
- Studying market conditions that are required prior to enacting inclusionary zoning or for transit-oriented housing developments
- Purchasing land for affordable housing development
- Addressing NIMBYism through public awareness campaigns
- Consulting about Indigenous Peoples' housing needs within municipal boundaries, and
- The collection and dissemination of best practices.

Our point is that there are many things that would help - on the ground - with different local circumstances.

We also have advice about implementation considerations that include:

- Giving priority to projects that increase affordable housing supply both in the private market and, in the non-profit and co-operative housing sectors
- Make the Housing Accelerator Fund stackable with other federal funding

programs such as the National Co-Investment Fund

- Consider formula-based allocations rather than application-based funding as much as is feasible.

Lastly, we understand the Committee is open to advice about the Federal Lands Initiative.

This is important, given the high cost of land in the development process.

AMO supports the government working with FCM to re-design and expand the Federal Lands Initiative by providing surplus land, under-used crown lands to municipal governments.

This should be contingent on building affordable and/or 'missing middle' housing solutions.

With that I'll conclude my remarks.

Thank you for listening and for your consideration.

Amber Crawford and I would be pleased to answer your questions.