



Mayor Olivia Chow
Via electronic mail
mayor_chow@toronto.ca

November 22, 2023

Dear Mayor Chow,

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss the City of Toronto's application to the federal government's Housing Accelerator Fund.

Toronto's housing and homelessness crisis is Canada's housing and homelessness crisis, and it's time to take bold action.

I recognize that this housing crisis in Toronto has been decades in the making, and it is going to take a relentless and concerted effort to make progress. The way to do this will be by working together to meet this moment, and to change the way and the pace that homes are built in Toronto.

The City has made great strides to do this. This includes legalizing multiplexes, and removing restrictive zoning measures. I appreciate our conversations to date, and your personal engagement in this application, including your decision to replace the submission of your predecessor with your own revised plan. In Toronto's revised application, you have proposed to take on more ambitious measures. Some of these ideas include:

- Transforming the City of Toronto's administrative structure and increasing capacity to expedite the approval of new development applications;
- Expanding missing middle housing options and allowing increased density; and
- Protecting rentals and increasing the climate performance of homes and affordability for more renters.

I believe that we can do more still to tackle other barriers that stand in the way of Torontonians finding places to live that they can actually afford.

Before making a final decision on Toronto's application, I would like you to address the following requests, which will improve the application and better reflect my ambition for the Housing Accelerator Fund:

- Increase minimum allowable density and minimum allowable height within walking distance to transit. Consider the merits and opportunities of the legislation introduced by the provincial government in British Columbia and advocate alignment with Ontario's approval of Toronto's Protected Major Transit Station Area Official Plan;
- Streamline the issuance of building permits through innovative digital technologies which enable more automation and conserve valuable staff time;

- Where enabled by legislation, empower City staff in decision-making to ensure routine matters do not have to be decided on by Council, and where constrained by legislation move forward on ways to expedite the process, including and in particular for modular and non-market affordable housing as well as allow them more flexibility with development applications;
- Significantly increase the percentage of land in the City with 4 storey as-of-right zoning;
- Commit to reducing restrictions requiring angular planes and rules regarding the “no net new shadow” policy that restricts apartments to areas further from parks and schools;
- Allow more multi-tenant housing within walking distance to post-secondary institutions without parking minimums or unit caps;
- Where enabled by legislation, establish pre-approved designs including for four unit multiplexes, and accessory dwelling units like garden and laneway suites; and
- In implementing HAF initiatives, work with Toronto’s world-class foundation and philanthropic community to leverage funding for the city’s Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition program.

These changes will increase housing supply, expand housing within walking distance to transit, and facilitate more genuine housing options for the people of Toronto.

If you and Council can enhance the City of Toronto’s application by addressing these items, it will allow us to ensure Toronto leverages the full potential of the Housing Accelerator Fund to supply the housing the people of Toronto need and that they can afford.

My colleagues who represent Toronto have provided invaluable advice to me on Toronto’s unique needs, and on recommending these suggestions for a made-in-Toronto solution. They have also expressed their confidence to me that the City of Toronto can and will do its part to close Canada’s housing supply gap, and that federal funding through this application would help to make this possible.

I appreciate your consideration of this request and eagerly anticipate our future discussions.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Sean Fraser, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities