



OLIVIA CHOW MAYOR

July 23, 2025

Dear Minister Robertson,

RE: Building More Homes Faster in Partnership with the Federal Government

Thank you for your letter and our recent conversation about building more homes faster in Toronto.

Toronto has been the leading municipal partner in getting housing built. Under your government's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) agreement with the City of Toronto, we will exceed the target of building 60,980 net new homes over the course of the three-year agreement.

We are speeding up development approvals.

As part of our HAF agreement, we have transformed the City of Toronto administrative structure and increased its capacity to approve new housing. Approval timelines are now over [80% faster](#) compared to the previous five-year average for major zoning approvals.

Despite the current downturn in the housing market, development applications in Toronto have increased by 46% over the previous year.

The City now offers 'concierge-style' service to expedite priority projects such as affordable housing, student housing, long-term care homes, and manufacturing facilities, so they can get to construction within 12 to 24 months.

Stakeholders from across the development industry, such as [BILD](#) and [Tridel](#), have shared that these improvements are being felt on the ground, and they're getting faster, more coordinated and predictable service. This, in turn, will help them build housing faster and more efficiently.

We're getting shovels in the ground, more than anyone else in the country.

While zoning permissions are important, with the current challenges in the market, very few projects are breaking ground without City financial support. This not only has impacts to future housing supply and affordability, but also threatens the jobs of thousands of Torontonians who build housing.

We have rolled out a slate of programs to get shovels in the ground, several of which were key commitments under HAF:

- 8,000 new purpose-built rental units, of which 20% are affordable, are being built through the City's landmark Purpose-Built Rental Housing Incentives program. The City has waived \$200 million in development charges since December 2024. 15% in property taxes has also been cut to get more housing built. Construction has started on nearly 800 homes in Scarborough and York with more to come shortly.
- 3,200 condo units, of which 8.4% are affordable homes, are being built now because they can pay development charges later, interest free.
- 3,200 rental units, of which 35% are affordable homes, are starting because of City of Toronto grant funding. This includes projects by community housing providers, a community land trust, and the private sector.
- We are working to rebuild capacity in the affordable and co-op development sectors. Thirteen housing providers are receiving \$16.9 million in pre-development funding to help engage architects and other professionals to help bring new projects to reality.
- To make it faster and easier for homeowners to build garden and laneway suites, the City has [launched](#) a suite of free, publicly accessible and standardized 'Made in Toronto' building plans. We will also pre-approve the building plans for CMHC's design catalogue to make it faster and easier to build.

Across our different incentive and funding programs, the City of Toronto is building 25,000 new homes. That is more than one third of all of Ontario's forecasted housing starts this year.

These units are either under construction now, or are planned to start in the next 12 months. This number includes more than 11,000 homes that we've secured as rent-controlled or designated affordable.

At the end of 2024, after the first year of implementation of HAF, the City of Toronto had delivered on 37.5% of the three-year target.

We are expanding permissions for more housing.

Townhouses, multiplexes, four and sixplexes, garden and laneway suites are all allowed on Major Streets in neighbourhoods throughout Toronto.

On Avenues, we are permitting 6-14 storey midrise buildings on 283 km of transit corridors.

We are permitting six-storey, 60-unit apartment buildings on Major Streets in Neighbourhoods.

The City has removed outdated angular plane requirements so more housing units can be built.

These changes alone have the potential to add 61,000 more homes than were permitted before.

The homebuilding industry is taking notice. Builders are lining up to take advantage of these new zoning permissions, to build the types of housing that people want, in neighbourhoods with access to transit, retail and services, where people want to live.

These new zoning permissions are also helping to catalyze a new market, where [some builders](#) are using modular, panelized and prefabricated technologies to build more housing faster and at a lower cost.

Regarding sixplex permissions on residential streets: Toronto City Council voted to move forward with as-of-right zoning permissions for sixplexes in nine wards, namely the Toronto-East York district and Scarborough North. Other wards can receive as-of-right permissions for sixplex if the local councillor opts in. At the July 23 meeting of City Council, I have added a motion to waive development charges for sixplexes to make these projects more financially viable and easier to build.

I support these changes city-wide.

We are protecting renters.

While much of the City's focus is on building new housing, we are protecting our existing supply of homes that people can afford.

Partnering with non-profits, co-ops and community land trusts, 1,000 homes have been made permanently affordable through the City's Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition Program (MURA). With your Canadian Housing Acquisition Fund, we will do more.

We are also bringing a groundbreaking new [Rental Renovations Licence Bylaw](#) into effect on July 31, 2025, to curb bad-faith evictions and to protect tenants from 'renovictions.' These are evictions where tenants are forced from their home under false pretense of necessary renovations so landlords can increase rents significantly. These have become increasingly

common in Toronto's tight rental market, and hit low-income and marginalized communities the hardest.

The housing crisis was decades in the making, but we can't let it take decades to fix. We are making progress on multiple fronts: zoning, building, cutting red tape, and protecting existing homes. This is transformational change that will see more housing built in our city. We will keep advancing policies that address the housing crisis. There is much more work to do, and I look forward to continuing to work in partnership on our shared goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Olivia Chow', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Olivia Chow
Mayor of Toronto

cc: Toronto Members of Parliament