



KENSINGTON MARKET COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

Celia Wandio
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Budget Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen St. W.
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Sent via email at buc@toronto.ca

RE: 2026 Budget, MURA Funding

Dear Budget Committee,

My name is Celia Wandio and I am the Co-Director, Development with the Kensington Market Community Land Trust. KMCLT is a community-led non-profit organization that seeks to remove property from the for-profit, speculative market and return it into community benefit. KMCLT is part of a growing movement of community land trusts across the country implementing innovative solutions to the housing affordability crisis.

We currently own and manage three properties with a total of 40 affordable rental units and 17 commercial spaces in Kensington Market. We acquired our first property in 2021, with the support of Section 37 funds from our City Councillor. Our two subsequent acquisitions, both completed in 2025, were supported by funds from the Multi-Unit Residential Acquisition (MURA) Program. Thanks to the funds provided through MURA and Section 37, we have been able to prevent displacement of low-income community members and convert at-risk market rental units into permanently affordable community-owned housing.

Our work is not done. There is a continued need for more high-quality affordable housing in our community; and we continue to see the erosion of Kensington Market's naturally-affordable market housing stock. New affordable housing construction plays a role here, and KMCLT is delighted to be partnering with the City of Toronto and St. Clare's on a 78-unit affordable housing development at 35 Bellevue Avenue; but new development is not sufficient to respond to this crisis. Funding the acquisition of existing affordable housing is the most sustainable, the most cost efficient, and the quickest affordable housing solution the city can deploy.

The City of Toronto's MURA Program was a result of CLT-led advocacy and collaboration with the City. It has been a major success, with aspects of the program being replicated across Canada. Together, CLTs and the City of Toronto have helped policymakers across the country recognize the vital importance of preserving existing affordable housing.

Given the importance of the MURA Program, I am disappointed to see that only \$46.8 million is budgeted for 2026, and no specific funding commitments have been made for 2027 or beyond. \$46.8 million may seem like a lot, but it translates to just over 300 units¹ - this is a drop in the bucket compared to the size of the crisis, and it will lead to many valuable units of affordable housing being lost to the non-profit sector forever. The last MURA RFP in 2024 was oversubscribed, and while a record-breaking 700 units of affordable housing were preserved, many qualified housing providers were still unable to be funded.

While I recognize the need for investment from other levels of government, and appreciate the City's continued pressure on provincial and federal governments to fund acquisitions, it is vital that the City commit to maintaining or increasing MURA funding allocations year-on-year. We cannot simply wait for more information on the Canada Rental Protection Fund, which may not be responsive to the unique needs of the City of Toronto.

I am therefore here today to request that the City of Toronto increase the 2026 MURA budget to \$100 million. This could protect 600 units of affordable housing in the span of a year. This means saving 600 households from the risk of renoviction, of displacement, and sadly, for some, the risk of becoming unhoused and reliant on our burdened shelter system.

I am speaking on behalf of KMCLT, but I also know that CLTs and other non-profits across Toronto are building capacity to acquire and preserve affordable housing. We have the skills and the drive to make a significant impact on housing need in our communities. We simply need you, our City Council, to support us with the necessary funding.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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¹ Based on the City's average per-unit/room allocation from the 2024 MURA RFP.