



## Updated Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy

03/14/2016

Today the government announced their highly anticipated update to the provincial Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, Ontario Transforming Housing and Homelessness System.

The renewal of the strategy provides an opportunity to provide more safe, secure, suitable, and adequate affordable housing options ranging from social housing to rental to home ownership. This is vital as affordable housing contributes to the economic, social, and healthy well-being of Ontario's communities and the Province as a whole.

AMO has long advocated for the Province to renew its strategy in a manner that will both sustain the existing housing system and expand it further to meet the needs of Ontarians. This requires a mix of legislative and regulatory change, but also new resources. As announced in the 2016 Budget, the Province is investing much welcomed and appreciated resources for the strategy's implementation as follows:

- \$100 million over three years to provide housing allowances and benefits to additional households, including up to 1500 supportive housing units over the long-term
- \$45 million over three years for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)
- \$2.5 million to pilot a portable housing benefit for those fleeing domestic violence in 2016/17
- \$92 million for social housing green energy retrofits was announced prior to the 2016 Budget.

Today's announcement proposed legislation for inclusionary zoning that will, if passed, provide municipal governments with additional authority to require private developers to build a certain percentage of new affordable housing units in new residential developments in a manner that could withstand an appeal at the OMB. This discretionary tool would be an additional option to municipal governments to employ in their communities if they so choose.

Other highlights of the updated Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) include:

- ending chronic homelessness in ten years
- creating a framework for a portable housing benefit that would give people who receive housing assistance the flexibility to choose where they want to live
- conducting a portable housing subsidy pilot of over \$17 million over 3 years for up to 3,000 domestic violence survivors
- developing a Supportive Housing Policy Framework to improve access to services like counselling, medication support, and life skills
- consultations on how to make rent-gear-to-income calculations

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### Links

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cover the cumulative costs of necessary capital repairs, operations, administration, and the development of much-needed new housing. When the costs of social housing were downloaded by the Province to municipal governments in the late 1990s, this was done without the transfer of adequate financial reserves to address capital needs. It is not manageable for municipal governments to address this situation on their own off the property tax base. Simply put, more provincial and federal help is required.

AMO is also anticipating positive announcements in the 2016 federal Budget, expected March 22nd, including new investments for housing and other social infrastructure. Solving the affordable housing crisis in Ontario is beyond the magnitude of both the municipal and provincial governments to address on their own. It will require a concerted effort of all three orders of government working together with the non-profit and private sectors.

The LTAHS is headed in the right direction to further transform the housing system in Ontario. There is much to be done to ensure the successful implementation of the strategy. AMO looks forward to working collaboratively with the Province to advise on the necessary legislative and regulatory changes to ensure the sustainability of social housing as it is a top of mind consideration for municipal members.

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