

**RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPONSE TO ONTARIO HOUSING AFFORDABILITY
TASK FORCE REPORT**

Recommendations:

1. Council endorse the following comments on the Provincial Housing Affordability Task Force report:
 - a. The Housing Affordability Task Force report has some promising policy outcomes for further investigation, in particular, increasing the supply of rental housing, missing middle housing, increasing second suites and increasing density particularly in Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs).
 - b. York Region takes specific exception to the undue focus in the report on municipal process and politics thereby erroneously suggesting that there is lack of support for housing options and increased housing supply at the municipal level and erroneously suggesting that the housing affordability challenge could be meaningfully addressed if municipalities would only 'allow builders to build' or by removing heritage protections or public consultation.
 - c. The report fails to recognize that the majority of municipalities and municipal Council's are fully and significantly engaged in supporting more housing options, intensification, transit-oriented development and increasing the supply of rental housing.
 - d. The report seems to suggest that local planning is best achieved at the Provincial level and fails to recognize the deep understanding that local elected officials and staff have in relation to their communities, including how best to achieve housing targets and intensification.
 - e. The report suggests, without evidence, that municipal red tape is responsible for the slow progress of new housing options yet fails to recognize that the greatest element of red tape in the planning process is the OLT as well as the lack of EA approval for critical servicing infrastructure in York Region.
 - f. The report suggests without evidence that the housing supply is being limited as a result of the abuse of the OLT process by the public and calls for the end of 'politicization' of the planning process – this approach could result in the limitation of legitimate public participation and the ability of local elected officials to respond to the concerns of the public. Democracy and public participation cannot be seen as a barrier to development but rather as part of a healthy and respectful dialogue.

- g. The report suggests without evidence that Development Charges and Planning Fees are a cause of lack of housing supply and/or affordable housing supply. Artificially limiting or reducing development charges and planning fees will undermine the financial sustainability of towns and cities that do not have the recreational or community infrastructure that is necessary for a healthy and vibrant and livable community. There is no evidence that reduced fees will be passed on to the homeowner, but the community will be left without the financial resources to provide the required infrastructure and services to their growing community.
 - h. The report fails to examine, in a meaningful way, the role the Province could play in addressing housing affordability through direct funding, financial incentives, or the provision of Provincial land for affordable housing projects.
2. Council urge the Province to:
- a. take a more comprehensive approach to housing affordability which focuses on issues beyond just housing supply but also explore such issues as: innovative funding options, rental housing incentives and policies, investor speculation, community housing, innovative financial tools, and use of Provincial land including surplus school sites.
 - b. achieve objectives in the report at a more macro level by setting intensification targets, unit targets and tenure targets through their approval of municipal Official Plans and then let municipalities achieve those targets as they see fit based upon their significant understanding of their communities and their Official Plans.
 - c. consult directly and meaningfully with municipal leaders before implementing any recommendations of the Provincial Housing Affordable Task Force.
 - d. further limit matters that can be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT) including municipal Official Plans that conform to Provincial Plans and policies.
 - e. engage municipalities to determine an alternative land use planning appeals process to replace the OLT and eliminate one of the most significant sources of red tape delaying the development of more attainable housing in Ontario.
3. The Regional Chair request a meeting with the Premier and Minister Clark to discuss York Region's comments on the Provincial Housing Affordability Task Force report and the Chairman's February 15, 2022 letter to Minister Clark about housing affordability.

4. The Regional Clerk circulate York Region's comments on the Provincial Housing Affordability Task Force Report to the Premier, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Local MPPs and the municipalities.

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