

Paul Chiang, MP Markham-Unionville  
Francesco Sorbara, MP Vaughan-Woodbridge  
Tony Van Bynen, MP Newmarket-Aurora



Hon. Helena Jaczek, MP Markham-Stouffville  
Majid Jowhari, MP Richmond Hill  
Leah Taylor Roy, MP Aurora-Oak Ridges-  
Richmond Hill

**February 20, 2024**

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance  
Department of Finance Canada  
90 Elgin Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G5

Dear Minister Freeland,

As the York Region Liberal Caucus, we are writing in support of the Regional Municipality of York's requests to address their critical housing priorities: increasing the supply of affordable housing, addressing their community housings' capital repair needs, and meeting the challenges presented by the increase in asylum seekers.

In recent years, York Region has been grappling with a housing affordability crisis. While much of the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area faces similar challenges, according to the 2021 Census, our Region has the highest proportion of households spending 30% or more of income on housing costs in the GTHA. While subsidized housing is essential to housing the most vulnerable, despite significant investments by the Region, there is far more demand than supply. An increase in asylum seekers has strained the Region's Emergency Housing System, which is now consistently operating at, or near, full capacity.

The following investments would make a difference:

- The Region is ready to build 1,700 new community housing units in 9 community housing developmental projects over the next decade -- if the Federal and Provincial Governments come to the table and each commit to funding one-third of the cost.
  - The Region has identified two priority projects: 62 Bayview Parkway - Town of Newmarket (250 new units); and 14th Avenue, Box Grove - City of Markham (150 new units). The Region is seeking \$60 million in Federal funding for these critical projects. Construction could begin in 2025.
- \$90 million for capital repairs to maintain the existing community housing supply.
- Increased and sustained funding for community housing, with the Government of Ontario, through programs like the federally funded Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative and the federal/provincial Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative -- they have been critical in helping address housing needs, but long-term, predictable funding commitments are needed.

- increased, long-term and predictable funding beyond 2029 for the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit to improve affordability and provide stability for renters.
- a role for/making upper-tier governments in Ontario like York Region eligible for the Housing Accelerator Fund, because upper-tier governments are the Service Managers responsible for the community housing system.

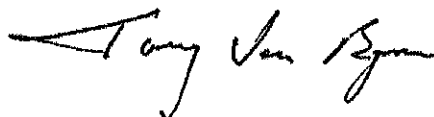
Measures to address to assist asylum seekers:

- additional funding is needed to maintain the current level of interim housing and supports for asylum claimants to the end of this year.
- Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) funding should at least match the enhanced provincial allocation of \$2.4 million -- enabling asylum claimants to find more stable housing.
- increase capacity in interim housing and supports to take advantage of economies of scale and provide equitable access to resources and services; and
- senior levels of government should coordinate and streamline the intake and housing supports for asylum claimants.

We know that our government is committed to working with all levels of governments to provide affordable housing for people who need it most. The Region Municipality of York has been a valued partner in those efforts. Our Caucus supports the Region's asks to better address their community housing and affordable housing needs, and to ensure the most vulnerable newcomers have safe interim housing options.

We hope you will give these requests due consideration as you prepare the 2024 Budget. Thank you for your hard work for Canadians.

Sincerely,




Tony Van Bynen, MP  
Newmarket-Aurora



Hon. Helena Jaczek  
Markham-Stouffville



Paul Chiang, MP  
Markham-Unionville



Majid Jowhari, MP  
Richmond Hill



Francesco Sorbara, MP  
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Leah Taylor Roy, MP  
Aurora-Oak Ridges- Richmond Hill

cc: The Hon. Marc Miller,  
The Hon. Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities  
York Region Council