

# Seeking Feedback on Housing Needs in Rural and Northern Municipalities

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This consultation closes at 11:59 p.m. on:

**April 29, 2022**

## Proposal summary

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is seeking feedback on ideas to address the unique housing needs for rural and northern Ontario municipalities.

## Proposal details

Ontario is the best place to live, start a business and raise a family – but we can only build on our success if all Ontarians and their families are able to find a home that’s right for them. The province’s housing policies are working to get more homes built faster, but too many Ontarians still struggle to find a home. We are introducing **More Homes for Everyone**, that proposes targeted policies for the immediate term that make housing fairer for hard-working Ontarians and make it faster to build the homes that families need and deserve.

Addressing the housing supply crisis is a long-term strategy that requires long-term commitment and co-ordination from all levels of government.

The Task Force report is our long-term housing roadmap. Similar to Ontario's approach with regular Red Tape Reduction bills, the province is committed to implementing the Task Force's recommendations with a housing supply action plan every year over four years, starting in 2022-2023, with policies and tools that support multi-generational homes and missing middle housing.

### **Housing Needs in Rural and Northern Municipalities**

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is seeking feedback on ways to address the unique housing needs of rural and northern municipalities in Ontario. The government recognizes the importance of supporting a range of housing options and increasing overall housing supply in rural and northern municipalities.

To support this commitment, the Ministry is seeking feedback on:

- The specific challenges and barriers faced by **rural** municipalities to better understand their unique needs; and
- The specific challenges and barriers faced by **northern** municipalities to better understand their unique needs; and
- Ideas, solutions, or proposals on potential ways to help address the housing needs in these areas. This could include a range of land use planning and non-land use planning tools (e.g., programs, financial etc.).

### **Context**

The provincial land use planning policy framework, such as the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), 2020, and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe work together to support the government's goals to increase housing choices. A range of tools, including financial, regulatory and policy tools, also support this land use policy framework.

In 2019, the government released More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan to help increase the supply of housing and to support the development of more affordable housing options across the province.

The government continues ongoing work to increase the supply of housing. This includes reviewing recommendations from its **Housing Affordability Task Force** (<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001556/ontario-publishes-housing-affordability-task-force-report>) on additional measures to increase

the supply of market housing and collaborating with the municipal sector, including big city mayors and regional chairs, as well as rural and northern municipalities. Further, the government is also consulting on a range of proposals related to More Homes for Everyone [Consultations on the More Homes for Everyone Plan (<https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-5283>)].

To address the unique needs and challenges of rural and northern municipalities and to provide for more flexibility for local decision making, the Provincial Policy Statement was updated in 2020 to:

- Clarify that residential development on rural lands is permitted, includes lot creation that is locally appropriate, to allow more flexibility for local decision-making and help increase housing supply; and
- Allow appropriate development in areas without full municipal sewer/water services.

More broadly, changes were also made to the Planning Act to support a range and mix of housing options and boost housing supply by requiring municipalities to authorize an additional residential unit in both primary dwellings and ancillary buildings or structures. Other recent changes to the Planning Act, which came into effect on January 1, 2022, make it easier to transfer parcels of land, by clarifying Ontario's subdivision control system.

Rural and northern municipalities, as well as stakeholders have indicated that there are unique opportunities and challenges for these areas that should be considered in meeting their housing needs.

While supporting the protection of farmland and other key provincial priorities, rural and northern municipalities and stakeholders have noted that they face challenges in providing housing that supports youth, vulnerable populations (including seniors and Indigenous populations), newcomers, and families through planning and non-planning tools. More specifically, stakeholders indicate there are barriers that exist (e.g., limited supply of lots, limited affordable worker and rental housing, lot creation policies that make it difficult for farmers to allow other family members to live and work on the farm, higher material and construction costs, supply chain issues, lack of skilled trades labour, delays in providing sewer, water, and hydro servicing, etc.).

## **Proposal Details**

To support the government's commitment to provide more housing options and increase overall housing supply in rural and northern municipalities, this consultation is seeking feedback on:

- The specific challenges and barriers faced by **rural** municipalities to better understand their unique needs; and
- The specific challenges and barriers faced by **northern** municipalities to better understand their unique needs; and
- Ideas, solutions, or proposals on potential ways to help address the housing needs of these municipalities. This could be through a range of tools including land use planning and non-land use planning tools.

The government recognizes that these examples are not a one size fits all approach. However, initial examples of opportunities to support rural and northern municipalities' housing needs could include:

- affordable and appropriate worker housing (e.g., on- and off-farm housing for domestic and international farm workers, seasonal, hospitality, and recreation workers)
- lot creation in rural areas
- lot creation in agricultural areas (e.g., additional support for family-owned farms)
- additional residential units
- affordable rental housing, including on-site housing for seasonal hospitality and recreational workers
- more options for vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors housing)
- additional flexibility or supports to facilitate municipal infrastructure or servicing expansion for hamlets and villages

Any proposal or idea would need to complement other provincial priorities such as supporting and protecting prime agricultural areas, areas with significant mineral potential, natural heritage and water resources and systems, protecting public health and safety (i.e., natural and human made hazards), infrastructure (e.g., provincial highways, sewer and water servicing, agri-food network, utilities, etc.), growth management, as well as the rural and agricultural economy.

**Any specific policy proposals to address these unique housing needs would be consulted on prior to the government making any changes.**

## **Discussion Questions**

Question 1:

- What are the key barriers impacting your municipality in meeting its housing needs that may be unique to northern and rural communities?

Question 2:

- What kind of flexibility is needed to address housing needs in your municipality?

Question 3:

- What potential tools or policies could the government consider to address housing needs in your municipality while balancing other provincial priorities?

Question 4:

- Do you have other suggestions for ways to improve housing supply and needs in rural and northern municipalities?

## Supporting materials

### Related links

More Homes, More Choice: Ontario's Housing Supply Action Plan (2019)  
(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/more-homes-more-choice-ontarios-housing-supply-action-plan>).

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019  
(<https://www.ontario.ca/document/place-grow-growth-plan-greater-golden-horseshoe>)

Provincial Policy Statement, 2020  
(<https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-policy-statement-2020>).

Planning Act (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90p13>).

### Related ERO (Environmental Registry of Ontario) notices

Consultations on the More Homes for Everyone Plan (/notice/019-5283)

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## View materials in person

Important notice: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, viewing supporting materials in person is not available at this time.

Please reach out to the Contact listed in this notice to see if alternate arrangements can be made.

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Let us know what you think of our proposal.

Have questions? Get in touch with the contact person below. Please include the ERO (Environmental Registry of Ontario) number for this notice in your email or letter to the contact.

[Read our commenting and privacy policies. \(/page/commenting-privacy\)](/page/commenting-privacy)

## Submit by mail

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## Contact

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## Connect with us