



Resolution submitted by Sheila Lacroix, on behalf the Legislation Standing Committee  
Final Revision: April 15, 2018

### **Housing for all through sustainable and mixed urban development in Ontario**

**RESOLVED** that the Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW OC) urges the Government of Ontario and municipal governments to cooperate through laws, bylaws and policies to guarantee that plans for redevelopment and new development for housing, and land use intensification, ensure that a full range of mixed income housing be integrated in urban communities.

**RESOLVED** that the Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW OC) urges the Government of Ontario and municipal governments, in cooperation with First Nations, to ensure that, where urban areas expand beyond current boundaries, urban growth is sustainable and protects parks, crown lands, First Nation communities, river basins and wetlands, farm lands and designated green spaces.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this resolution is to enable CFUW Ontario Council and Ontario Clubs to advocate on a broad variety of issues relating to housing and urban development. To meet the needs of the growing urban population, Ontario and municipal governments must work together with First Nations communities to ensure that, as our urban areas are renewed or expand, a full range of housing options is offered, meeting the need for: healthy communities with accessible services; controlled development through regulated land use; and respectful consideration of the environment.

Related CFUW policies exist. **Affordable Housing**, 1992, CFUW National, offers policy to urge the Government of Canada to reinstate and finance non-profit, co-operative and affordable housing programs, and all levels of government to co-operate in establishing comprehensive plans for land use, which will guarantee affordable housing within community developments. **Preservation of Wetlands**, 1991, CFUW OC (There is also National Policy). Relating to sustainability, Clause 2 involves evaluations when proposed development affects wetlands.

It is time to update and integrate existing CFUW policy. The Ontario government has been rolling out policy and legislative changes affecting both Ontario and municipal strategies. In municipalities, higher density housing options are replacing older residential communities and former industrial sites. It is important that development or redevelopment is community oriented, offering a full range of mixed housing, both market and non market, preserving or offering green space and providing housing for economically disadvantaged residents who rely on shelters and social or low cost housing. See page 5 of **Municipal Tools for Affordable Housing** (MAH, 2011) for Ontario's housing affordability continuum. The knowledge and acceptance of environmental impacts have grown; for example, the significance of smaller, local wetlands has been recognized through research at the University of Waterloo as reported in **Waterloo News** (2015). The calls to action of the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) report have increased awareness of land claims and our relationship with First Nations with whom we share our province. The changing landscape justifies this update.

#### **Introduction**

The United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal 11 is: "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable". In his article about the UN's 2016 Habitat III international conference on housing and sustainable urban development, Dennis Carr (2017) reports that by 2050, 70% of the world's population will be living in urban centres. The conference's output, the **New Urban Agenda**, available on the Habitat III website, provides direction to reverse the 20th century legacy of uncontrolled sprawl and urban poverty. Ontario has witnessed both. Canadian delegates included

MPs, municipal leaders and NGO advocates. Canada's national report to Habitat III (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016) is worth reading to gain a national perspective. According to the 2016 Canadian Census, 37% of Canadians live in the largest municipalities.

In the Ontario Ministry of Finance (2017) report, **Ontario Population Projections Update**, based on the 2011 Census, and taking into consideration projected migration to Ontario, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is predicted to be the fastest growing region, passing the 50% (of the Ontario population) mark in 2025. Population is predicted to increase from 6.7 million to 9.6 million by 2041. The census regions of Simcoe and Dufferin north of the GTA will experience more than average growth. In Eastern Ontario, Ottawa will grow fastest, by 35.7%. In Southwestern Ontario, Middlesex and Oxford will be the fastest growing districts. Northern Ontario will remain stable. This report also provides age structure by region which is important in planning for housing needs.

**The Greater Golden Horseshoe Region**, indicates this region is home to 9 million, and is predicted to increase to 13.5 million by 2041. It is one of North America's fastest growing regions; in addition to being important to the Canadian economy it also encompasses productive farmland, the Niagara Escarpment, the Green Belt and the Oak Ridges Moraine (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing). The map provided indicates the urban growth centres. Planning now for the next 20 years is essential.

In terms of poverty and homelessness, the Campaign 2000 (2016) Ontario report card indicates that many families across Ontario are in core housing need, meaning their housing does not meet one or more of the affordability, adequacy or suitability standards and the household must spend 30% or more of before tax income on housing. This is particularly the case for renter households where at least 30% of the rental units are unaffordable, require major repair or are overcrowded. The Homeless Hub is a good resource for data on homelessness.

### **Government Strategies**

Being aware of federal policy is essential. The 2017 federal budget proposed investing more than \$11.2 billion over 11 years towards housing needs, and has developed the first National Housing Strategy through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) which reports to Parliament through the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development. The strategy was released November 2017 and information can be found on the CMHC website. For an analysis from the policy consultation process, refer to **Let's Talk Housing** (Conference Board of Canada, 2017). Although the funding and news of the strategy has been well received, there is concern that much of the funding is delayed until after the next election. According to Dennis Carr (2017), as of summer 2017, the Liberal government had not committed to the goals of Habitat III. So, although there is a greater expectation for support at the federal level, Carr points out that "the real power of Habitat III is the recognition of the role that provincial and municipal leaders, as well as civil society, will play in reshaping urban policy." The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Big City Mayors' Caucus (BCMC) also emphasizes the value of local expertise in its recommendations to the National Housing Strategy, (FMC BCMC, 2017). Including local governments in local decision making is one of the ten principles the BCMC put forward.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) now has two ministers, the Minister of Housing, also responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. In 2016, Ontario committed \$178 million over three years to the housing system and updated the 2010 housing strategy. **Ontario's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy: Update** (MAH, 2016) provides a report card of accomplishments since 2010. Some highlights include funding for: a portable housing benefit for survivors of domestic violence; new supportive housing units; development of an Indigenous housing strategy focusing on off reserve Indigenous families; additional funding for the Community Homeless Prevention I (CHPI), although this may not compensate for the loss of the

Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) eliminated January 1, 2013. Effective April, 2018, legislative changes now enable municipalities to mandate affordable housing in residential developments through inclusionary zoning. Also flagged is support for non profit and co-operative housing, as well as enhanced land use planning and municipal finance tools to support municipalities and private developers in developing affordable housing.

### **Ontario. Promoting Affordable Housing Act**

Resulting from the strategy, this act, passed late 2016, amends existing legislation, including the **Planning Act**, aiming to increase affordable housing and modernize the social housing system. It introduced Inclusionary Zoning (IZ), a mechanism whereby municipalities can require that private developers reserve a portion of units to be rented at below market rates. Its aim is to increase the supply of affordable housing, create integrated and inclusive communities and provide tools for municipalities to meet their targets around housing and homelessness. Regulations of the Act relating to IZ have now been passed. This Act requires that municipalities and private developers enter an agreement and be accountable. Clayton and Schwartz (2015) offer a research based paper on IZ. It was written before the legislation was updated, but offers background information, including a literature review, recommendations and a non government perspective. The authors conclude that the **Planning Act** should be sufficient to achieve the same results.

### **Ontario's Fair Housing Plan**

Introduced in 2017 as a result of sky rocketing rental and housing costs, it includes measures spearheaded by different ministries to address this crisis; some have been included in this review. Refer to the Ministry of Finance (2017) backgrounder in its April 20, 2017 news release. One outcome was the establishment of the **Ontario Housing Forum**, a range of experts working together to determine how to make housing more affordable. The second meeting focused on the "missing middle" in the Ontario housing market; (Ministry of Housing, 2017). Another was the Development Approval Roundtable which released its **Action Plan**, (Development Approval Roundtable, 2017) to streamline the approval process to bring more housing to market, in particular for low and middle income households.

### **Ontario Bill 139, Building Better Communities and Preserving Watersheds Act**

This Bill, which received Royal Assent Dec.12, 2017, will affect many laws, including **The Planning Act**. Once proclaimed, it repeals the **Ontario Municipal Board Act**, creating Local Planning Appeal Tribunals, giving more power to local councils and planning authorities. This will enhance our ability to act locally when concerned about development in our communities. Concerns have been expressed that this will cause NIMBYism (not in my back yard), but it also enables us to advocate to a local appeal body for housing that meets the criteria of mixed, affordable and sustainable.

### **Sustainable Development**

This is widely known as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Another guiding principle is from the wisdom of Indigenous peoples: the Seventh Generation Principle: decisions made today should consider impacts seven generations ahead. These principles should drive today's planning for growth beyond current urban areas.

The four main land use plans in southern Ontario to curb growth and protect the natural environment and farmlands are: the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. They are interconnected and available on the MAH website. All were updated effective, 2017, and municipalities must update their plans to conform. However, concern remains. The Grow Our Greenbelt movement promotes yet a bigger, stronger Greenbelt. The building industry remains a constant threat to green belt

preservation. Some powerful developers claim that lack of land for development is driving up house prices. Groups such as the Ontario Green Belt Alliance counteract such arguments; for example, there is currently sufficient land for development to accommodate population growth and increased housing options will reduce the demand for single family detached homes. The Neptis Foundation (2017) has concerns about rural settlements being a focus for growth. The 'Crombie Report' (Advisory Panel on the Coordinated Review of the Growth Plan, 2015) offers detailed justification for the plans.

Ontario has vast regions of crown land; 95% of Northern Ontario is crown land. Approximately 10% is held in provincial parks and conservation reserves. Most is managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. The most recent strategic directions for the management of crown lands (Ministry of Natural Resources, 1993) is very general with regards to disposition of lands. The Objectives do offer balance. The first is to promote environmental protection whereas another (number 6) is to support development. Another objective supports the resolution of Indigenous issues. Obviously this ministry is an important player when it comes to development that could encroach on crown lands.

Considering First Nations, it is important to be aware of current land claims in your region which could impact development. The largest land claim under current negotiation is the Algonquin Land Claim which will transfer crown land to Algonquin ownership. Another ongoing claim, sparked by development, is that of the Six Nations of the Grand River in the Caledonia area. An example of partnerships to enhance urban green space in Indigenous traditional territory is the Trillium Park and William G. Davis Trail Toronto waterfront park designed in collaboration with the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation on whose traditional lands the GTA has spread.

While Indigenous rights were recognized and confirmed in the Constitution Act of 1982, it was the Supreme Court decision of 2004 (Taku River Tlingit First Nation v. British Columbia) that established the legal need to consult Indigenous communities. As stated by the Ontario Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing in **Municipal-Aboriginal Relationships: Case Studies**, one of the first of these responsibilities is land-use planning and development. (Ontario, 2009)

### **Additional Selected Non Government Organizations (NGOs) to Monitor**

The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) has a membership of over over 760 non-profit organizations providing housing in 220 communities across Ontario. It tracks and analyzes the housing situation and works with governments. Wigwamen is the oldest Indigenous non profit housing provider in Ontario. It provides housing units in both Toronto and Ottawa. It has partnered with YWCA Toronto and two other local partners to build the YWCA Elm Centre to house 50 Indigenous families. The Wellesley Institute focuses on advancing urban health and offers research and policy on housing. Evergreen's mission is to make cities flourish. Through its Mid Sized Cities Program, it works across the province with municipal leaders to consult regarding sustainable and inclusive development.

### **Conclusion**

As our urban centres grow, advocating to ensure there is housing to meet all needs in healthy communities through sustainable development requires awareness of current policy and legislation at all government levels as well as data and resources from government and relevant NGOs. This resolution will provide policy to enable us to: advocate locally for specific housing needs and projects; advocate at the provincial and local level to ensure compliance with law, policy and funding targets; and to speak out if the progressive legislation and policy currently underway is compromised.

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## **Websites to Consult**

**Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation** - <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/>

Note: for information on the National Housing Strategy, use the search engine.

**Centre for Urban Research and Land Development. Ryerson University** -

<http://www.ryerson.ca/cur/>

**Evergreen** - <http://www.evergreen.ca>

**Grow Our Greenbelt** - <http://www.growourgreenbelt.ca/>

**Habitat III** - <http://habitat3.org/>

**Homeless Hub** - <http://homelesshub.ca/>

**ONPHA** (Ontario Non Profit Housing Assoc.) - <http://www.onpha.on.ca>

**Ontario - Current Land Claims** - <https://www.ontario.ca/page/current-land-claims>

**Ontario Greenbelt Alliance** - <http://greenbeltalliance.ca/>

**Wellesley Institute** - <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/>

**Wigwamen Incorporated** - <http://www.wigwamen.com/>

**YWCA Canada: Shelter, Housing & Support** - <http://ywcacanada.ca/en/pages/programs/shelter>