

HART Government Partner Meeting – April 26, 2022

Summary of Small Group Discussions

There were 7 local or regional governments and one territorial government represented.

1. How can you ensure that housing strategies are effectively implemented through zoning bylaws and official plans?

- General comments:
 - Cities need to integrate housing strategies into OCP
 - Easy to have policies in OCPs but more difficult to put in by-laws
 - Supportive housing should be allowed in every zone
 - Removal of appeal rights for official plans will allow for effective implementation
 - Need broad, diverse support of stakeholders (e.g. when meeting with developers, staff needs to frame not just in terms of what developers need to contribute but how they are going to be part of the solution)
 - Need to make approval process less political – relying on Minister’s Zoning Orders (MZOs) leaves progress very influenced by local elections
- Durham
 - Depending on MZOs is very frustrating – creates legal costs, delays, public opposition
 - If a project is in line with political objectives, it should be approved
- Edmonton
 - There is a lack of common language about what affordable housing is
 - In Edmonton they struggle with NIMBYism. Neighbourhood plans are the most defensive part of any new development
 - Targeted communications for specific demographics to mitigate concerns around negative perceptions
 - There is a 10 year strategy for Alberta but with very low targets – 25,000 new non-profit homes, [Stronger foundations affordable housing strategy | Alberta.ca](#)
 - There is also the plan to transfer provincially owned public housing to the private sector
 - Difficult for municipalities to set their own targets without adequate provincial and federal support and funding for non-profit and supportive housing
- Hamilton
 - Have things pre-zoned appropriately
 - 7 municipalities amalgamated and still catching up on zoning after 20 years
 - Skipping the public hearing would not fly in Hamilton, local politicians might not want to relinquish control, for better or worse
 - Could enhance the YIMBY voices in the community
 - YIMBYism: broad support for a project can overcome opposition
 - In Ontario they are seeing more ministerial decisions at the provincial level to avoid dealing with official plans and zoning
 - This creates a grey area that leaves open the question as to what development can be approved this way
 - This has upset communities across the province because it is seen as benefitting developers
- Ottawa

- Removed appeal rights to official plans – has been very helpful to get things moving, more predictable
- Ontario Land Tribunal can't change it
- Toronto
 - Staff wants this to be easier
 - City of Toronto is doing annual process now and wants to take elements of Edmonton's plan
 - Rapid housing and hotel conversions – needed zoning exceptions.
 - Toronto should put supportive housing allowed everywhere into their official plan to avoid begging for zoning changes
 - Allow secondary suites, eliminating parking requirements
 - Need to integrate housing plans with city plan – housing plan used to be more of the social side but it needs to be in the OCP
- Victoria
 - 30% of HH income for median to low-income
 - After talking with affordable housing providers in Victoria, a project is affordable as long as it is done with a non-profit provider, and it's for 60 years
 - This puts a lot of trust in the NP housing providers
 - Still reviewed by staff
 - OCP process had a lot of engagement
 - Consistent with reports on the housing strategy, with lots of granular data
 - Consistent with messaging around the housing crisis, vacancy rates
 - New legislation cuts out the rezoning process, all affordable housing projects automatically are at the max under the OCP
 - Will save 9 months and save \$2 million
 - This will also increase confidence in the project moving forward
- York Region
 - Hard to set targets without provincial support. There are regional targets for 120 new non-profit and supportive homes a year – that is all current funding will allow.
 - There is a general target in the Official Plan of 35% Affordable Housing in transit corridors and 25% elsewhere, but only .15% of housing is affordable to households with 60% Area Median Income or less.
 - There is new legislation from the Province of Ontario (More Homes for Everyone) but it just suggests undifferentiated supply – there are no targets, let alone targets linked to housing need or homelessness Bill 109, [More Homes for Everyone Act, 2022 - Legislative Assembly of Ontario \(ola.org\)](https://www.ola.org/en/legislation/bills-acts/109)
 - The Inclusionary Zoning allowed by Ontario only applies to a few small parts of the region with major public transport stations.
- AHMA – BC urban, rural, and northern indigenous housing strategy
 - Data has to be part of the housing strategy development in order to support arguments for inclusionary zoning
 - In BC AHMA is working with SFU prof to get affordable housing project exempt from public hearing
 - Why can't we expedite the process on rezoning for affordable housing?
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities
 - There may eventually be funds made available to help with stalled projects

- FCM supports TOD and will think through how to assist

2. How might HART data help you develop better planning and zoning policies?

- Definitely for information to politicians and the general public. In Edmonton at present, the rezoning won't allow market homes that are affordable to 80% Area Median Income. So there needs to be other forms of subsidy or a lot more funding and financing to non-profit housing.
- Canadian Urban Institute has been working with Big City Executives (including Edmonton, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Halifax - but not York or Peel Regions, who have more population than most of those "Big Cities") to get feedback on the Housing Accelerator Fund. It will only work to get moderate income homes if other NHS programs feed into that supply.
- Even condominiums are twice the affordability threshold, let alone single family homes (including townhouses). There is the need to scale up non-profit alternatives. The Housing Need Assessments will help show that.
- Maybe data could suggest fed gov't intervention in the case of domestic speculation (that is, they are currently focused on housing speculation by people who don't live in Canada, which is just a small part of the problem.
- Info would help inform a scoring mechanism; right housing is built in right locations. Looking at those areas where we don't concentrate poverty, housing choices! Another tool in the toolbox
- Potential for integration of the data/analysis technique into a site selection tool
- Made up/manipulated stats are often used by neighbourhood groups to use in opposition of proposed projects. Having easily accessible information that can be provided to media quick, trustworthy fashion
 - Accurate current data
 - Debunk "facts"
 - Would love the ability to put in address and surrounding geography and pull that information – i.e. within 800m of this location, what is the actual demography
- Align data of housing types that are needed with zoning so that there aren't issues down the line when supportive projects get proposed
- Managing expectations – staff have seen cases where data is used to ask why a project isn't being located elsewhere
- Public may expect that housing goes where there is existing poverty/concentration of poverty
 - Could this be weaponized? i.e. to call for concentration of poverty
- Data is key, as well as an analysis of policies across Canada