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# Policy Directions in Housing

Presentation to Ontario East Municipal Conference  
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)  
September 10-12, 2008

# Context

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## **Affordable housing is a key government priority**

- The government has promised to develop a long term strategy for affordable housing that will contain a mix of non-profit and cooperative housing and takes advantage of creative financial options.
- The government has also committed to develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy with targets and measures. The Premier has set a one-year deadline for the announcement of a full-fledged plan.

# Context

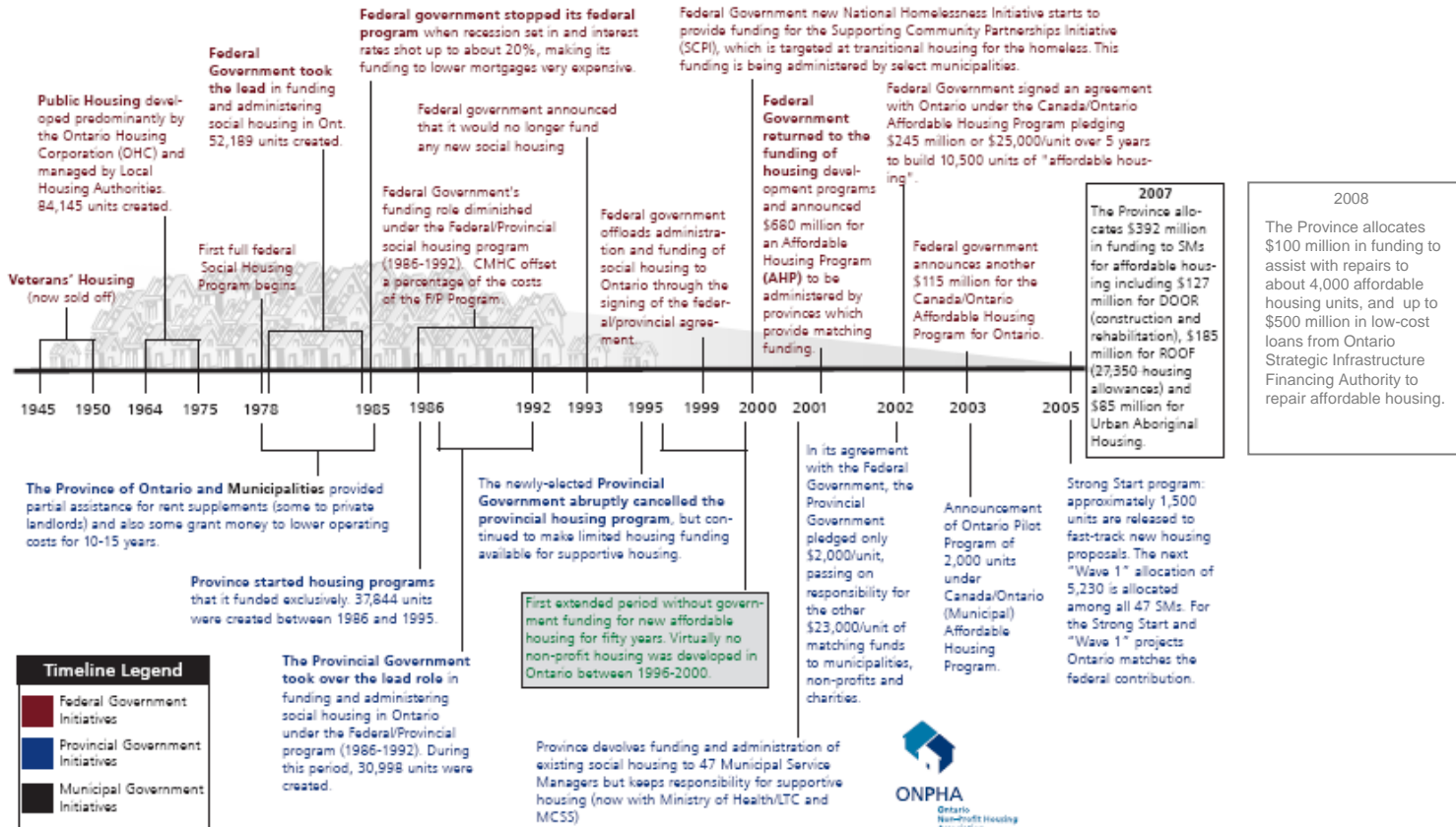
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## **Affordable housing is integral to other government priorities**

- Affordable housing and brownfield redevelopment can complement the Places to Grow Growth Plan by providing opportunities for intensification and housing choice.
- Housing is a determinant in crime reduction and more positive youth health, educational and economic outcomes which is key to the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence.
- Adequate and affordable housing is a key concern for Ontario's Aboriginal peoples and is integral to the government's plan to improve the quality of life for all Aboriginal peoples, both on-and off-reserve.

# Context

## Timeline: History of Social Housing in Ontario



# Context

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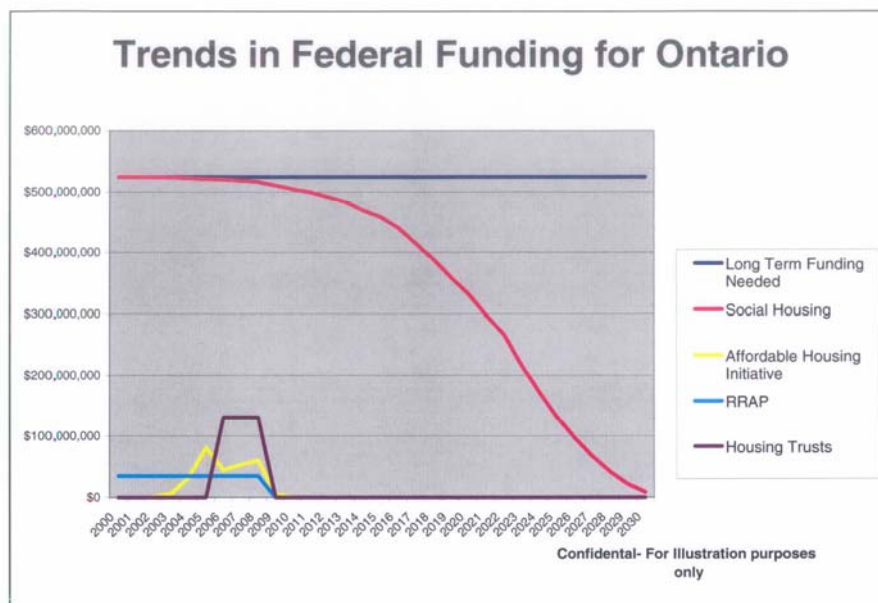
## There is a clear need for action

- Current estimates indicate 123,000 households on waiting lists, two-thirds have incomes < \$20,000.
- According to CMHC, 32% of Ontario renters are in core housing need.
- Approximately 6,000 people live in shelters on a daily basis in Ontario; 1,030 of them are children.
- Non-profit buildings average about 20 years of age, while public housing building are closer to 40 years old – many of these buildings require major capital repairs.



# Context

There is a clear need for action



- Federal funding for social housing under SHA declines over the next 20 years (\$6.5B in federal savings).
- The Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Agreement, which includes \$366M from Canada for affordable housing in Ontario, ends in March 2009 – no commitment from Canada to extend funding.

# Context

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**Our partners and stakeholders support the call for a new approach and increased funding for municipal and housing infrastructure.**



Supports local delivery of social housing so long as municipalities have the flexibility and funding to deliver effectively



Calling for adequate funding that does not expire over time, local decision-making ability, and strategies and tools to increase community capacity to build, maintain and manage social housing



Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Has called for renewed federal and provincial funding commitments to housing as well as a national housing plan led by the federal government



Advocates on behalf of service managers and housing providers for adequate funding, municipal control and engagement of all orders of government



Has asked that Ontario commit to the development of a long-term financing plan for the maintenance of the existing social housing stock and for a long-term policy and funding framework for social housing



Requesting provincial up-load of co-op housing

# Relationships

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- The province has worked hard to establish respectful ways of working together with local governments and stakeholders.
- The government has strengthened local powers by providing more tools and flexibility through the *Municipal Act* and the *City of Toronto Act*.
- Under Memoranda of Understanding with AMO and the City of Toronto, the province consults with AMO and the City on government-wide initiatives that may impact municipalities.
- Through the Provincial-Municipal Fiscal and Service Delivery Review the government has also committed to creating a sustainable provincial-municipal relationship.
- Work related to housing in the PMFSDR will be reflected in the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy.

# Challenges and Opportunities

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## **Complexity of Existing System**

- The existing social and affordable housing system in Ontario is complex, with +20 programs under 3 different ministries, 47 service managers and over 2,000 housing providers.
- The province has heard that simplifying provincial programs could improve outcomes for clients, providers and service managers.
- The province has heard from key stakeholders that there are varying levels of capacity in the housing sector.

# Challenges and Opportunities

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## **Risk to Existing Stock**

- There are numerous factors that could impact the existing stock of social and affordable housing units in the province. These include:
  - Declining federal funding
  - Operating agreements expiring
  - Increasing need for capital repair as the housing stock ages

# Challenges and Opportunities

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## Federal Engagement

- Ontario needs a strong federal partner to ensure stable, adequate, suitable and affordable housing for Ontarians. This is even more important as we're seeing modest economic growth anticipated in 2008-09.
- Provincial and territorial governments across Canada have called upon the Federal government to support a national housing strategy
- Without federal engagement and cooperation, there will be significant fiscal pressure left to be shouldered by all other housing partners, making it extremely difficult for Ontario to meet stakeholder expectations.

# Next Steps

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- The Provincial Municipal Service Delivery Review Final Report will be released shortly.
- The Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction is looking at poverty indicators and targets and developing a focused strategy for making clear-cut progress on reducing child poverty.
- MMAH is committed on continuing to work with all partners to develop a long-term affordable housing strategy.