



October 1, 2023

Office of the Mayor  
London City Hall  
Suite 214  
300 Dufferin Avenue  
London ON, N6B 1Z2

**RE: Establishing Homes Ontario**

Dear Mayor Morgan and Councillors,

I write to you today in the hope that you'll support bold new housing legislation that I will be introducing into the Legislative Assembly later this month. London has shown itself to be a leader in the field of housing and homelessness by pioneering new models of support for those most marginalized in our community. The Whole of Community Systems Response is unprecedented, a true testament to the bold and collaborative vision of the council as well as the generosity of the London community. It is my hope that we will continue to be leaders in developing unique partnerships across levels of government and thinking big about how we can make housing affordable and attainable in the province of Ontario.

Government was once an integral part of building the vital housing we need. Following World War II, a Crown corporation known as Wartime Housing Limited successfully built and managed thousands of units for returning veterans. Canada built 1.5 million of these 'Homes for Heroes' between 1943 and 1960 on government land for moderate income households. This is equivalent to 6 million homes today. Between 1973 and 1994, Canada built or acquired around 16,000 non-profit or co-operative homes every year. Since the 1990s though, federal and provincial governments' housing policies moved away from this, and toward relying on the for-profit private market to deliver the new housing that people need.

Both private developers and non-profit providers have noted that without access to free land, creating new rental housing is increasingly difficult due to high development costs, and creating affordable rental housing is nearly impossible. Thus, the private sector has not built enough affordable housing, supportive housing, or purpose-built rental housing to meet Ontario's housing needs.

What this means for families and people across the province is that housing has never been more expensive to rent or buy. Ontario must build 1.5 million homes just to meet the current needs of Ontarians. A phrase that I have heard from constituents with alarming regularity is that we need a "war effort" to bring our housing crisis to an end. I couldn't agree more, and for that reason, I am proposing that the provincial government needs to get back in the business of building housing.

On October 24th, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario will be debating my motion calling on the province to establish a new public agency, Homes Ontario, to finance and build 250,000 new affordable and non-market rental homes at cost on public land. Homes Ontario would ensure an adequate supply of rental homes meeting the needs of low-to-moderate income households at all stages of life, from couples to young families starting out, to seniors looking to downsize. These homes would be operated



and/or constructed by public, non-profit or co-op housing providers, and permanently protected from the factors contributing to the high costs of housing in the private market, such as speculation and financialization. This investment is cost-effective, it will ensure Ontario builds the kind of homes we need at an affordable price, and it will create good jobs and economic prosperity for all regions of Ontario - including London.

London is once again a leader in this field. In 2015, the City of London created the Housing Development Corporation (HDC), through which the city uses surplus municipal and school board land for housing development. The HDC has over 8 completed projects, ranging in size from 14 units to 69, with a mix of affordable and market rentals.

I ask for your endorsement of the following motion to be debated on Tuesday, October 24th:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government of Ontario should establish and fund a new public agency called Homes Ontario to finance and build 250,000 new affordable and non-market homes on public land over ten years, to be operated and/or constructed by public, non-profit or co-op housing providers.

Central to the mission of addressing the homelessness epidemic is the need for all levels of government to break from their silos, work alongside one another, and collaborate in groundbreaking ways. As your Member of Provincial Parliament, my goal is and always has been a “Team London” approach. I can’t thank everyone involved in the Health and Homelessness Summits enough for their foundational work. I look forward to your support so that the province can support you, and resume their historic responsibility for the construction, delivery, and provision of truly affordable housing.

Sincerely,

Terence Kernaghan  
Member of Provincial Parliament  
London North Centre

CC:

Councillor Hadleigh McAlister, Ward 1

Councillor Sam Trosow, Ward 6

Councillor Skylar Franke, Ward 11

Councillor Shawn Lewis, Ward 2

Councillor Corrine Rahman, Ward 7

Councillor David Ferreira, Ward 13

Councillor Peter Cuddy, Ward 3

Councillor Steve Lehman, Ward 8

Councillor Steven Hillier, Ward 14

Councillor Susan Stevenson, Ward 4

Councillor Anna Hopkins, Ward 9

Councillor Jerry Pribil, Ward 5

Councillor Paul Van Meerbergen, Ward 10