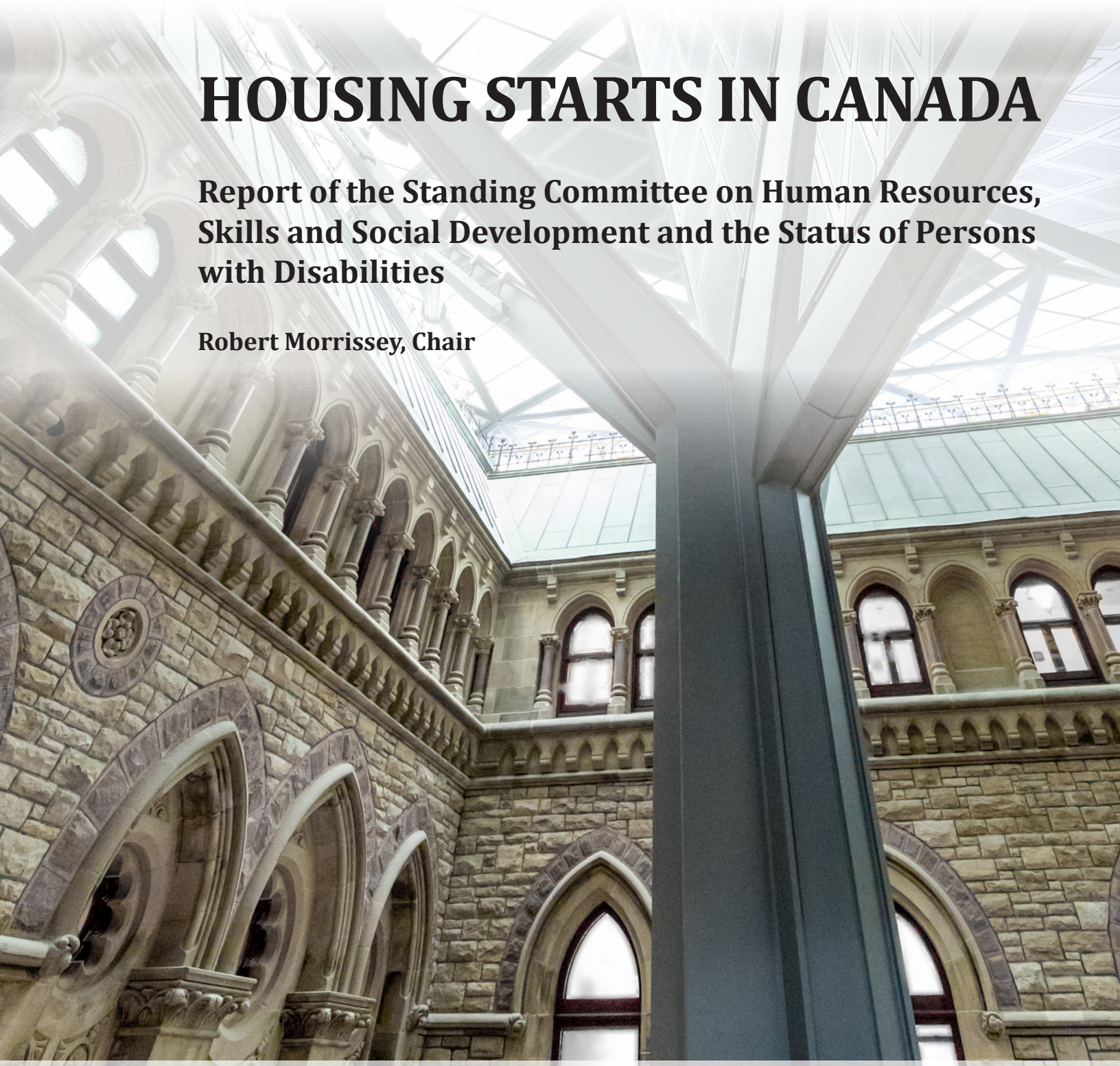
HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA



HOUSING STARTS IN CANADA

Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Robert Morrissey, Chair

NOVEMBER 2026
45th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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has the honour to present its

THIRTEENTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied the housing starts in relation to federal programs and has agreed to report the following:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY 1

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS 3

HOUSING STARTS IN CANADA 5

- Introduction 5
- Current Status of Housing Starts 6
- Barriers to Housing Starts 9
  - High Costs to Build and Buy 9
    - Costs to Build Homes 9
      - Building Codes 12
    - Helping Home Buyers 14
  - Other Barriers to Building 16
    - Labour Shortages 16
    - Market Uncertainty 17
- Federal Housing Programs 18
  - Moving Forward with the National Housing Strategy 18
    - National Housing Strategy Programs 18
      - Apartment Construction Loan Program 18
      - Affordable Housing Fund 19
      - Housing Accelerator Fund 20
    - Priorities for National Housing Strategy Renewal 20
    - Federal Housing Targets 21
  - Other Federal Programs 23
    - Build Canada Homes 23
    - MLI Select 25
    - First Nations Housing 26

Preserving Affordable Housing 26
Funding Predictability 27
Measurement, Data and Reporting 28
Housing Starts as a Measure of Progress 28
Additional Indicators of Progress 30
Need for Improved Data and Reporting 33
Data Collection 33
Reporting and Accountability 34
Conclusion 35

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES 37

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS 39

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE 41

SUPPLEMENTARY OPINION OF THE BLOC QUÉBÉCOIS 43

SUMMARY

Canada is facing housing supply challenges, with more than four million additional homes required over the next decade. While housing starts have recently been on an overall upward trend, data suggest a near-term slowdown. The number of homes built is important, but housing type matters just as much. Federal investments, including through the National Housing Strategy, have aimed to increase the housing supply. However, housing affordability is also critical to meet the needs of Canadians.

This report summarizes the testimony received regarding housing starts in Canada. Witnesses discussed the challenges with using housing starts as an indicator of the sector's health and provided alternate ways to measure progress against Canada's housing goals. The committee also heard about barriers facing builders and buyers, ultimately preventing home construction, including high costs due to taxes and fees, access to labour and market uncertainty. Witnesses discussed the National Housing Strategy, including the performance of programs such as the Apartment Construction Loan Program, Affordable Housing Fund, and Housing Accelerator Fund, as well as priorities for the Strategy going forward. The committee heard about other supports, including those provided through Build Canada Homes. Finally, witnesses indicated a need for better targets for federal investments, additional data on housing, and improved tracking and reporting on outcomes of federal programs.

The committee provides eight recommendations to the Government of Canada, to address the high costs to build, increase housing affordability, and improve the effectiveness and accountability of federal housing programs. It requests a government response to this report. The committee hopes these recommendations will contribute towards increasing the housing stock in Canada.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada, in collaboration and consultation with provinces and territories:

- **take additional action to incentivize reduction of timelines to issue building permits for residential housing; and**

- **accelerate initiatives to reduce development charges.** **13**

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada accelerate its timeline to streamline regulation, improve affordability and, working with the provinces and territories, reduce redundancy in the National Building Code. **14**

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada collaborate with provinces and territories to further implement measures to reduce taxes on new homes, similar to the GST/HST New Housing Rebate and GST/HST new residential rental property rebate. **16**

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada implement additional measures to assist home buyers, including by adjusting mortgage requirements. **16**

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada publish clear, measurable targets for Build Canada Homes and other federal housing programs, relating to the number of units created or preserved, as well as the type of housing and the level of affordability; and that, across programs, this be based on a consistent definition of affordability. 28

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada, across federal housing programs, make efforts to increase predictability for funding recipients, including by providing longer program durations and stable program criteria. 28

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada, when assessing housing market health and determining housing policy, consider a variety of indicators in addition to housing starts, including but not limited to early indicators like permits and excavations; as well as the composition of housing starts, housing completions, housing inventory levels, and affordability. 32

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada enhance accountability for federal housing programs by focusing reporting on concrete outcomes, including relating to affordability levels. 35

HOUSING STARTS IN CANADA

INTRODUCTION

Canada is facing significant housing supply and affordability challenges, with up to 4.8 million additional homes required over the next decade to restore affordability to pre-pandemic levels.[1] Federal investments, including through the National Housing Strategy, have aimed to maintain existing stock and increase the supply of housing that Canadians need. When measuring progress towards Canada's goals, data on housing starts – which are meant to indicate the beginning of construction on a new housing unit – provide only one part of the picture.

On 5 February 2026, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (the committee) adopted the following motion:

> That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study of at least six meetings on housing starts in relation to federal programs in Canada; that the committee invite the Minister of Housing and the President and Chief Executive Officer of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to appear separately for at least two hours each; that the committee invite other witnesses selected by its members to appear; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the government table a comprehensive response to the report.[2]

On 30 April 2026, the committee agreed to hold four meetings on this study.[3]

During May and June 2026, the committee heard from 17 witnesses, including industry associations, community organizations, housing policy experts, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). It also received 12 written briefs. This report summarizes the testimony received by the committee and makes recommendations to the federal government on ways to address barriers to residential

1 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), *Canada's housing supply shortages: moving to a new framework*, June 2025.

2 House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA), *Minutes*, 5 February 2026.

3 HUMA, *Minutes*, 23 April 2026.

construction, particularly through tackling high costs; maximize the impact and effectiveness of federal housing programs, including the National Housing Strategy; and improve measurement and reporting on housing market health and federal program performance.

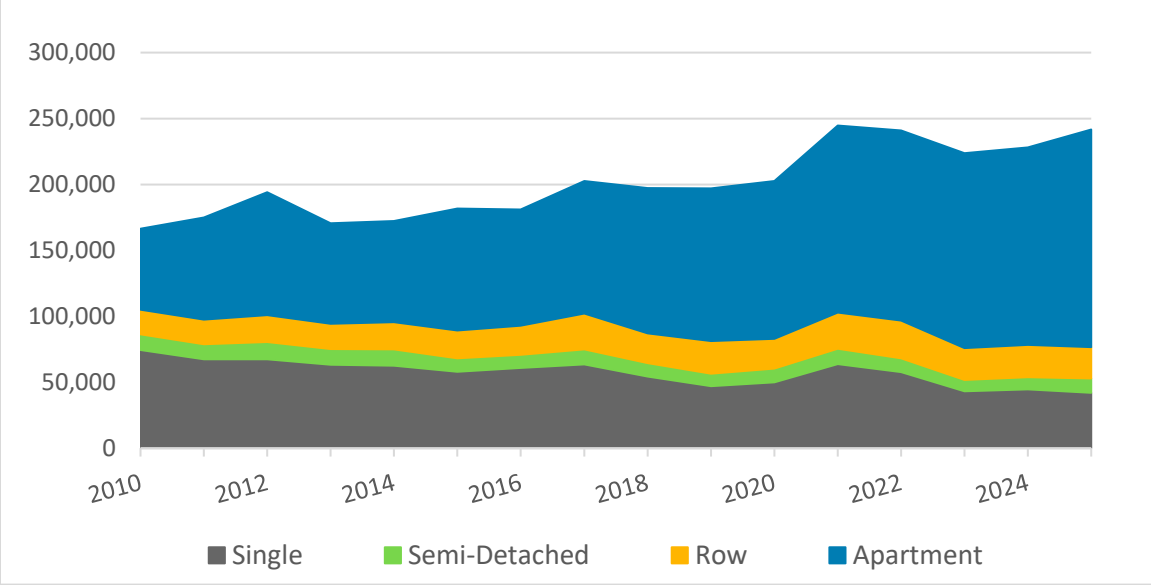
CURRENT STATUS OF HOUSING STARTS

According to the CMHC, a housing start represents "the beginning of construction work on a building. This is usually when the concrete has been poured for the whole of the footing around the structure or an equivalent stage where a basement will not be part of the structure."[4] CMHC data show that annual housing starts have been on an overall upward trend, growing from 166,356 in 2010 to 241,552 in 2025 (Figure 1). Mathieu Laberge, Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President of Housing Insights at CMHC, cited indicators from earlier in the housing development process suggesting that housing starts will slow in the near future. He stated: "When we look at building permits, we see that housing starts are expected to continue easing off for the rest of 2026 and into 2027." Further, "in the condo market, for example, pre-sales are at a historically low level. That tells us that housing starts should continue to slow down beyond 2027, at least for condos."[5]

4 CMHC, *Starts and Completions Survey and Market Absorption Survey Methodology*.

5 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1650 (Mathieu Laberge, Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President, Housing Insights, CMHC).

Figure 1—New Housing Starts in Canada, by Dwelling Type and Year



Note: Includes dwellings only in municipalities with at least 10,000 people.

Source: Table prepared by the Library of Parliament using data from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Housing Market Information Portal: New Housing Construction*, Database, accessed 7 May 2026.

Laberge also commented on the shifting composition of starts. He stated:

> What we see is that the largest units, which we call the missing middle, meaning multiplexes with large units, townhouses or, obviously, single-family homes, made up the vast majority of housing starts in Canada up until 2012. Starting in 2012, multi-unit buildings became the focus of the majority of housing starts, and that has grown over time. Initially, until 2025, it was condos. Since 2025, rental units have accounted for the largest share of housing starts.[6]

Other witnesses echoed this observation, pointing out that while starts have risen, this has been in large part due to an increase in apartments; and further, that the composition of housing starts has shifted. As shown in Figure 1, between 2010 and 2025, housing starts declined significantly for single family homes (74,338 to 41,951) and moderately for semi-detached homes (11,903 to 10,799); while starts increased moderately for row homes (18,685 to 23,750) and significantly for apartments (61,430 to 165,052).

6 Ibid.

Kevin Lee, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Home Builders' Association, stated that this change in composition "puts long-term affordability, economic stability and home ownership further out of reach for Canadians."[7] In its brief, the Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA) indicated:

> The problem is Canada is not building right kind of housing. Canada's housing starts challenge is fundamentally a question of typology, and until federal policy is explicitly designed to deliver missing middle supply broadly, starts will continue to climb on paper, while the rate of homeownership continues to decline, leaving the homes Canadians actually need out of reach.

CREA advocated building more small multi-unit housing to address current gaps, noting that according to a 2024 survey it commissioned, 61% of respondents indicated that not enough homes were being built that reflect their needs, for example, relating to size or layout.[8]

Some witnesses also noted the importance of the intended market, as "starts for ownership are way down."[9] Mike Moffat, Founding Director, Missing Middle Initiative, acknowledged that both rentals and homes intended for ownership are needed.[10] Michael Brooks, Chief Executive Officer, Real Property Association of Canada, pointed to a potential oversupply of purpose-built rental projects.[11] Brad Jones, Chief Development Officer, Wesgroup Properties, echoed this, citing "an oversupply of homes in certain areas, in certain urban regions, as a result of [the] massive immigration drive and then targeted programs to deliver rental housing." However, he remained concerned about an undersupply of housing overall in the long term.[12]

Mike Collins-Williams, Chief Executive Officer, West End Home Builders' Association, welcomed the increased purpose-built rental construction, with the caveat that "rental housing should not be replacing home ownership opportunities," as "[m]ost Canadians still aspire to own a home."[13] The committee heard that while the "development of more

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7 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1545 (Kevin Lee, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Home Builders' Association).

8 HUMA, *Brief*, Canadian Real Estate Association (CREA).

9 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1600 (Lee).

10 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1600 (Mike Moffatt, Founding Director, Missing Middle Initiative).

11 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1655 (Michael Brooks, Chief Executive Officer, Real Property Association of Canada).

12 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1735 (Brad Jones, Chief Development Officer, Wesgroup Properties).

13 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0820 (Mike Collins-Williams, Chief Executive Officer, West End Home Builders' Association).

non-market homes is indeed important… it is critical that, in parallel, there is a strong effort … to address housing affordability in order to double starts in market-rate housing, where 95% of Canadians reside."[14]

BARRIERS TO HOUSING STARTS

High Costs to Build and Buy

Witnesses discussed high costs, including those related to building codes, and other barriers that are discouraging the construction of new homes. Kevin Lee provided an overview of the issue for the committee, indicating that "[h]igh sales taxes and development taxes, restrictive mortgage policies, municipal red tape causing delays, excessive building code changes, and escalating material and labour costs have significantly driven up the cost of construction and reduced the viability of ownership housing projects." Lee summarized: "If buyers cannot buy, builders simply cannot build."[15] Mike Moffatt concurred, arguing "the biggest challenge right now is the cost of construction. We've seen the price of resale homes fall but, for the most part, the cost of construction hasn't."[16]

Costs to Build Homes

Many witnesses highlighted key issues contributing to higher building costs, particularly those relating to development charges, as well as costs associated with delays in permitting. Many noted that high building costs are impacting the construction of all housing types.

The committee heard repeatedly about the issue of municipal development charges, typically imposed on new construction to finance growth-related infrastructure. Mike Collins-Williams mentioned that in Hamilton, Ontario, development charges have increased by 87% since 2021 and are an average of $100,000 for a single-family home.[17] David Wilkes, President and Chief Executive Officer, Building Industry and Land Development Association, indicated with regard to government fees and taxes that

14 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1545 (Lee).

15 Ibid.

16 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1605 (Moffatt).

17 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0835 (Collins-Williams).

"some municipalities [have increased] those costs over the last several years by 1,000%."[18]

Jennifer Keesmaat, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Keesmaat Group, shared that over time, "municipalities have leaned too deeply into and too heavily on development charges, to the extent that they've added outrageous costs, almost to the point of absurdity, to delivering new housing," which greatly impacts the cost of new housing.[19] However, Kevin Lee reminded the committee of the funding challenges municipalities face:

> [M]unicipalities have come to rely on development charges to fund a lot of things beyond what they're supposed to be funding, and that's where they've become trapped. It's really important, moving forward, that the [federal government] and provinces work with municipalities to find other funding mechanisms, so that they're not putting this tax burden on the backs of new homebuyers.[20]

The CMHC informed the committee about the potential impact of development charge reductions on housing starts, referring to a 2025 report.[21] Mathieu Laberge noted that when examining development charges, reducing or removing them would have varying impacts across the country. Where these charges are particularly high, the CMHC found that "a significant reduction or elimination of development charges would have a major impact on project viability;" that is, a reduction in costs to build and buy. For example, if development charges were eliminated in Toronto, this could result in one third to one half of the housing supply deficit being filled.[22]

Another option discussed by Tony Irwin, President and Chief Executive Officer, Rental Housing Canada, was to amortize the cost of the development charge "over the life of the infrastructure," rather than upfront (at build).[23]

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18 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0940 (David Wilkes, President and Chief Executive Officer, Building Industry and Land Development Association).

19 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0840 (Jennifer Keesmaat, President and Chief Executive Officer, The Keesmaat Group). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0835 (Collins-Williams).

20 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1620 (Lee). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0935 (Dr. Carolyn Whitzman, Senior Housing Researcher, University of Toronto School of Cities, As an individual).

21 Mathieu Laberge, "We built this city on development charges…," *CMHC*, 4 December 2025.

22 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1700 (Laberge).

23 HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 1015 (Tony Irwin, President and Chief Executive Officer, Rental Housing Canada).

While development charges do not fall under the jurisdiction of the federal government, the committee heard about the need for "leadership at the federal level" in this regard.[24] Witnesses supported some of the current initiatives to address development charges. For example, the committee heard that the Development Charge Reduction Program, announced in 2026 by the federal government and Ontario, was an important step, but that this should become the "template," to be implemented in other provinces, not a one-off initiative.[25] David Wilkes encouraged the government to continue to play a role in incentivizing municipalities, through the provinces, to reduce development charges.[26] In their briefs, the Canadian Senior Living Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities recommended that the Build Communities Strong Fund, a fund supporting the creation and renewal of public infrastructure, be used to incentivize developers to build more seniors' housing and to provide better support to municipalities, including with regard to development charges.[27]

Another contributor to the high cost to build is the time needed to acquire the necessary permits. The committee heard about the extremely lengthy time it takes for a builder to acquire a building permit, and that this "has a dramatic impact on the cost of building."[28] The province of Alberta was mentioned as a good model with regard to length of time for permitting: it is "able to respond to demand a lot faster because they can get shovels in the ground faster…because they can get permits out faster. There's less regulation. The approval system is a lot faster."[29]

While building permits do not fall under federal jurisdiction, Tim Richter, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, reminded the committee of the important role the federal government can play in this regard, with Richard Lyall, President, Residential Construction Council of Ontario, applauding the Housing Accelerator Fund, which "has supported municipal zoning reform and

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24 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1625 (Lee).

25 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0925 (Richard Lyall, President, Residential Construction Council of Ontario); HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0940 (Wilkes); HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0930 (Irwin). For more information, see Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC), *Canada and Ontario Open Applications for New Development Charge Reduction Program*, News Release, 1 June 2026.

26 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0955 (Wilkes).

27 HUMA, *Brief*, Canadian Senior Living Association; HUMA, *Brief*, Federation of Canadian Municipalities. See also HICC, *Build Communities Strong Fund*.

28 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0940 (Tim Richter, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness).

29 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1650 (Lee). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0955 (Irwin).

contributed to more than 330,000 building permits in participating communities."[30] Lyall encouraged further action by the federal government to continue to support these types of initiatives, offering the suggestion of digital permitting initiatives such as "One Ontario," a tool designed to reduce duplication and make development approvals more efficient.[31]

Finally, some witnesses suggested reducing time to build and decreasing costs by leveraging modern methods of construction, such as modular homes, prefabricated components and off-site construction.[32]

Building Codes

The National Building Code (NBC) sets technical provisions for the design and construction of new buildings, establishing requirements with respect to safety, health, accessibility, fire and structural protection and environment. It is updated every five years by the National Research Council of Canada. Representatives from provincial, territorial and federal governments were responsible for developing the 2025 edition of the NBC, considering advice from the Advisory Council for Harmonized Construction Codes.[33] Many witnesses discussed the importance of simplifying building codes and reducing the extent of change to facilitate construction and minimize cost increases. To note, in the Spring Economic Update 2026, the government proposed funds to, among other things, streamline regulation, improve affordability and improve consistency in how NBC requirements are interpreted.[34]

The committee heard about the need to simplify and harmonize various building codes, including the national, provincial and municipal codes. Isabelle Demers, Vice-President, Strategic Development, Public Affairs and Innovation, Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec, indicated building requirements vary from one municipality to another, which is "hinder[ing] the scaling up of residential projects."[35] Richard Lyall explained that from the NBC, provinces pick up "part of the

30 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0955 (Richter); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0925 (Lyall).

31 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0925 (Lyall). For more information, see One Ontario, *Our purpose*.

32 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 1000 (Isabelle Demers, Vice-President, Strategic Development, Public Affairs and Innovation, Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0955 (Lyall); HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1725 (Laberge).

33 Government of Canada, *National Building Code of Canada: 2025*; Government of Canada, *New governance model for harmonized construction code development*.

34 Department of Finance, *Canada Strong For All*, Spring Economic Update 2026, p. 98.

35 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0920 (Demers).

federal code and then [develop their] own provisions and so on," resulting in building codes that are unwieldy.[36] The committee also learned that standardizing building codes is beneficial only "if you're harmonizing to a good building code."[37]

In addition, some witnesses called for a pause or slowdown on the changes to building codes. While the NBC is updated every five years, the committee heard that provincial codes adapt subsequently, and in some jurisdictions, municipalities adjust thereafter. Brad Jones noted that at his organization, "it's been rare in the last decade … that we've actually built two buildings under the same set of codes."[38] With builders needing to adapt so frequently, this results in time and cost inefficiencies.[39]

Finally, some witnesses called for prioritizing affordability in the building code. For example, Kevin Lee shared with the committee that when the 2025 NBC was published, it "increase[ed] the cost of a typical 2,500-square-foot home by an estimated $50,000 to over $100,000."[40] Isabelle Demers recognized the importance of the NBC, but noted the current state is one with "additional layers … to limit all risks."[41] Brad Jones agreed that "in just about every facet of the code," buildings are being overbuilt, leading to significant cost increases, noting that to respond to some of the NBC requirements, builders may need to source materials from outside North America.[42]

Considering this testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada, in collaboration and consultation with provinces and territories:

- **take additional action to incentivize reduction of timelines to issue building permits for residential housing; and**
- **accelerate initiatives to reduce development charges.**

36 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0930 (Lyall).

37 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1610 (Lee).

38 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1735 (Jones).

39 Ibid. See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1635 (Lee).

40 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550 (Lee).

41 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 1010 (Demers).

42 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1735, 1750 (Jones).

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada accelerate its timeline to streamline regulation, improve affordability and, working with the provinces and territories, reduce redundancy in the National Building Code.

Helping Home Buyers

Witnesses also discussed ways that homebuyers could be supported to mitigate high housing costs, ultimately bringing more buyers into the market and encouraging construction of new homes. In particular, the committee heard about the impact of the Goods and Services Tax/Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST) rebate and the mortgage stress test, along with other measures.

Many witnesses backed the GST/HST new housing rebate, which rebates the GST, or federal part of the HST, for first-time home buyers on a new home valued up to $1 million, or reduces the amount of the tax paid on a home valued between $1 million and $1.5 million. This initiative applies to houses purchased between 20 March 2025 and before 2031, with construction completed before 2036.[43] David Wilkes told the committee there is already “incredible, increased activity” in the housing market because of this initiative.[44] Mike Moffat noted the importance of this initiative and asked for the federal government to continue to encourage provinces to follow suit.[45]

Others also agreed with the GST/HST rebate initiative for residential rental properties, which increased the GST or federal portion of the HST rebate from 36% to 100% for construction beginning after 13 September 2023 but before 2031, with substantial completion before 2036, for units with a market value of less than $450,000.[46] Richard Lyall and Michael Brooks noted this initiative should be extended or be made permanent.[47]

Some discussed the mortgage stress test, which requires a buyer to prove they can afford mortgage payments with either a 5.25% interest rate, or the negotiated interest

43 Government of Canada, *GST/HST new housing rebate*; Canada Revenue Agency, *GST/HST New Housing Rebate*. Other eligibility criteria apply.

44 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1000 (Wilkes).

45 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026,1605 (Moffatt). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1615 (Lee); HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0955 (Wilkes).

46 Government of Canada, *GST/HST new residential rental property rebate*. Other eligibility criteria apply.

47 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1715 (Brooks); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0925 (Lyall).

rate plus 2%, whichever is higher, to qualify for a mortgage.[48] The committee heard about amending this test "so that well-qualified buyers can better access a mortgage."[49] Mike Collins-Williams indicated that in times where interest rates are very low, the stress test is an appropriate tool. However, in an environment with higher interest rates, this should be re-examined, given "so many well-qualified buyers are potentially being unnecessarily excluded," suppressing housing starts.[50] Brad Jones argued for broader flexibility for banks to determine what risk they would be willing to take relating to mortgage policy, referring to amortization length as one option.[51]

For its part, the CMHC indicated mortgage loan insurance generates the most housing starts per dollar invested: "Last year, our mortgage loan insurance products facilitated the financing of more than 360,000 homes. More than 30% of these were new units. Many developers have told us that without these products, their projects would not have been built."[52]

The committee also heard about other options to better support buyers, including:

- Changing the foreign buyers' tax to allow foreign purchasers to buy new housing, but not existing housing (resales), to help stimulate construction of new housing.[53]

- Allowing parents to contribute to their children's registered accounts, either their First Home Savings Account, or registered retirement plans (towards leveraging the Home Buyers Plan). The First Home Savings Account provides a buyer a dedicated registered savings account, and the Home Buyers Plan allows them to withdraw from a registered retirement savings plan, to buy or build a new home.

- Reinstating the First-Time Home Buyer Incentive (an expired initiative that offered a grant of up to 10% of a home's purchase price to put towards a down payment) with more flexible eligibility criteria and

48 Government of Canada, *Mortgage Qualifier Tool*.

49 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550 (Lee). See also HUMA, *Brief*, National Apartment Council.

50 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0845 (Collins-Williams).

51 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1740 (Jones).

52 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1615 (Coleen Volk, President and Chief Executive Officer, CMHC).

53 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1740 (Jones).

revised repayment provisions (specifically, excluding increases in property value added by certain renovations).[54]

Considering this testimony, the committee recommends the following:

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada collaborate with provinces and territories to further implement measures to reduce taxes on new homes, similar to the GST/HST New Housing Rebate and GST/HST new residential rental property rebate.

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada implement additional measures to assist home buyers, including by adjusting mortgage requirements.

Other Barriers to Building

Witnesses discussed other barriers to housing starts, which Mike Moffat referred to as "a combination of both economic and regulatory factors." He noted that "[b]uilders and developers won't build things unless it's sufficiently profitable."[55] In particular, witnesses focused on labour shortages in the construction industry, and a lack of predictability in the housing market.

Labour Shortages

Multiple witnesses linked falling housing starts and risks of future labour shortages in the residential construction sector. With the sector in what Mike Collins-Williams called "the most significant downturn in the industry in a generation,"[56] some warned that job losses now may result in skilled workers leaving the sector permanently, and that limited opportunities for new skilled trades graduates could lead them to careers in other industries.[57] Witnesses highlighted the potential of federal investments to make a difference, citing Build Canada Homes, as well as the commitment in the Spring

54 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0920 (Demers); HUMA, *Brief*, Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec. For more information on this program, see CMHC, *First-Time Home Buyer Incentive*.

55 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1625 (Moffatt).

56 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0905 (Collins-Williams); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0910 (Keesmaat).

57 Ibid.; HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1655 (Moffatt).

Economic Update 2026 to recruit, train, and hire up to 100,000 new Red Seal skilled trades workers.[58]

Witnesses recommended developing a strategy to retain existing skilled workers in the industry, bringing in specific types of foreign workers, and supporting workers in the residential construction industry who are not targeted by the Spring Economic Update 2026 announcements (notably, those who are not unionized and not in Red Seal trades).[59] In addition, Sean Baird, President and Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, identified labour mobility driven by housing construction as a factor that could have positive impacts on the economy.[60]

Market Uncertainty

The committee heard about consumer and builder uncertainty and lack of confidence, resulting in slower housing starts. Kevin Lee discussed the "trade war" with the United States, its resulting job losses, and the overall impacts on the market, describing how this is preventing people from making large purchases, such as homes.[61] Michael Brooks described the "immigration whipsaw," referring to the recent significant decrease in the number of immigrants arriving in Canada compared to previous years, alongside the drop in temporary workers and international students.[62] Jennifer Keesmaat clarified the risks this carries for builders, who may hesitate to start new housing projects given the unknowns about the demand.[63] Mike Moffat told the committee the industry needs more certainty, particularly around "the future path of both permanent and non-permanent residency," to allow builders and developers to better plan.[64]

58 See for example HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0910 (Keesmaat); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1650 (Lee). See also Government of Canada, *Canada Strong For All*, Spring Economic Update 2026, p. 90.

59 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1655 (Moffatt); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1650, 1655 (Lee).

60 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1745 (Sean Baird, President and Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Community Housing Corporation).

61 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1630 (Lee). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0935 (Whitzman).

62 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1655 (Brooks).

63 Ibid., 1710; HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0840 (Keesmaat).

64 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1620 (Moffatt). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0830 (Keesmaat).

FEDERAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

Moving Forward with the National Housing Strategy

Canada's National Housing Strategy (NHS), a 10-year plan to "give more Canadians a place to call home," is due to conclude in 2028.[65] The committee heard from a variety of witnesses about specific NHS programs, including impacts and opportunities for improvement; future priorities for the NHS; and recommendations on federal housing targets. Overall, many stressed that the federal government cannot solve the housing crisis alone, and that it requires significant coordination and collaboration with provinces, territories and municipalities, with Raymond Sullivan indicating: "Intergovernmental coordination is absolutely key."[66]

National Housing Strategy Programs

Apartment Construction Loan Program

The Apartment Construction Loan Program (ACLP), initially launched under the National Housing Strategy as the Rental Construction Financing Initiative,[67] provides low-cost loans for the construction of standard rental housing, seniors rental housing and student housing.[68] Coleen Volk, President and Chief Executive Officer of CMHC, described the ACLP as the "flagship program" within the housing program side of the CMHC's mandate.[69] The committee heard about the importance of this program with regard to housing starts: in its brief, Woodgreen Community Services noted that the ACLP, along with the CMHC's MLI Select program,[70] has "played a critical role in enabling non-profit and community housing development to advance mixed-income projects."[71] David Goulet, Economic Director, Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec, noted the popularity of the ACLP with developers and stated

65 Government of Canada, *Canada's National Housing Strategy*.

66 See for example, HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0950 (Richter); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1625 (Lee); HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0950 (Raymond Sullivan, Executive Director, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0820 (Collins-Williams).

67 CMHC, *Canada's National Housing Strategy: A Place to Call Home*, November 2017, p. 37.

68 CMHC, *Apartment Construction Loan Program*.

69 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1640 (Volk).

70 The MLI Select program provides reduced multi-unit mortgage insurance premiums and longer amortization periods based on commitments to affordability, energy efficiency and accessibility. CMHC, *MLI Select*.

71 HUMA, *Brief*, WoodGreen Community Services. See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0930 (Irwin); HUMA, *Brief*, National Apartment Council.

that it "keeps project financing costs from getting too high, because CMHC provides funding during the riskiest phases for lenders."[72] Tony Irwin supported this program, including the commitment in the Spring Economic Update 2026 to accelerate access to its funds.[73]

However, David Goulet highlighted challenges with long-term predictability under the ACLP, "because for many contractors, it's very hard to know whether they're going to qualify or what they need to do to qualify."[74] Further, Carolyn Whitzman, Senior Housing Researcher, University of Toronto School of Cities, appearing as an individual, pointed out that only 3% of rental homes completed through the ACLP "were affordable to low-income households most likely to be in housing need, and these were mostly studio apartments unsuitable to couples and families."[75]

Affordable Housing Fund

The committee also heard about the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF), which provides low-interest and forgivable loans and contributions for new affordable and community housing. The AHF is no longer open for applications due to its budget having been fully committed.[76] In its brief, Woodgreen Community Services stressed that many non-profit developers will still require grants to deliver housing that is genuinely affordable, recommending that the federal government and Build Canada Homes introduce a similar program to replace the AHF.[77] For its part, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities acknowledged that the AHF "supported the creation of over 56,000 new affordable units and the repair and renewal of more than 174,000 community housing units," but stated that it "did not have a significant impact on improving the non-market housing share of the national housing stock," given that it represented only a very small proportion of

72 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0940 (David Goulet, Economic Director, Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0920 (Demers); HUMA, *Brief*, Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec.

73 HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0930 (Irwin). For more on the commitment, see Department of Finance Canada, *Canada Strong For All*, Spring Economic Update 2026, p. 98.

74 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0940 (Goulet).

75 HUMA, *Brief*, Carolyn Whitzman.

76 CMHC, *Affordable Housing Fund;* Prime Minister of Canada, *Building more homes, faster*, News release, 17 March 2023.

77 HUMA, *Brief*, WoodGreen Community Services.

annual new builds and that "Canada has been losing approximately nine naturally occurring affordable rentals for every affordable home created by the NHS."[78]

Housing Accelerator Fund

Both the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the CMHC discussed the impacts of the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), introduced in 2023 to provide federal funding to municipalities that committed to make specific changes (e.g., zoning changes) to speed up housing construction.[79] In its brief, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities supported investment in the HAF, along with the Rapid Housing Initiative, and the Community Stream of the Build Communities Strong Fund, noting that these programs empower municipalities. Coleen Volk commented that it can take time to see results of a program like this, given the time it takes to build, and that "[w]e're in the part of the program now at which you're starting to see the acceleration of units. We are seeing some great successes with that program."[80]

Priorities for National Housing Strategy Renewal

With the NHS due to end in 2028, witnesses discussed opportunities for future programming, including the future of the strategy, and which aspects should be prioritized going forward.

Witnesses such as Tim Richter, as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, discussed the NHS as an important area for federal leadership and federal-provincial-territorial cooperation. According to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "National Housing Strategy renewal presents an important opportunity for all three orders of government to work together to refine existing programs and new initiatives, like Build Canada Homes, to deliver housing outcomes for Canadians."[81]

Witnesses also commented about the aspects of the housing market the NHS should focus on. Kevin Lee told the committee: "The one thing that was missing from the national housing strategy was dealing with the rest of the market—as we say, the 95% of the market where the rest of Canadians live and want to be able to afford a home

78 HUMA, *Brief*, Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

79 CMHC, *Housing Accelerator Fund*.

80 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1710 (Volk).

81 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1000 (Richter); HUMA, *Brief*, Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

without subsidies." He stated a need for the NHS to address the full housing continuum and called for a comprehensive housing plan that includes ownership.[82]

On the other hand, Carolyn Whitzman recommended the next NHS limit its financing to projects affordable to most Canadians, noting that "[v]ery low to median income Canadians are 60% of households." To achieve this, she suggested that "[h]ousing costs affordable to moderate-and median-income households can be delivered on a cost-recovery basis by non-market providers on government land using a long-term revolving low-rate financing product such as a Canada Housing Bond." She also proposed ongoing rent subsidies for low-income affordability, "targeted towards non-market and limited dividend housing providers whose rents stay stable over time."[83]

In its brief, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities recommended that the government "consider balancing investments across new construction, preservation, and long-term affordability" as part of an NHS renewal strategy.[84]

Finally, Whitzman mentioned the importance of keeping an intersectional lens in the NHS, to consider various needs of diverse groups of individuals, referring to women fleeing violence, highlighting the importance of having a safe place to live, including emergency shelters or transition homes.[85]

Federal Housing Targets

Multiple witnesses stressed the need for clear national housing targets, with Tim Richter stating:

> The expiry of the national housing strategy and the upcoming federal budget create an opportunity for the federal government to stop and take a beat to be clear about the outcomes they want to achieve, to set clear priorities and to design the new national housing strategy and related housing programs around the outcomes they want to achieve.[86]

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82 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1635 (Lee).

83 HUMA, *Brief,* Carolyn Whitzman; HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0930, 1005 (Whitzman). Under the *National Housing Act, (*R.S.C., 1985, c. N-11), s. 2*,* a "limited-dividend housing company" is "a company incorporated to construct, hold and manage a low-rental housing project, the dividends payable by which are limited by the terms of its charter or instrument of incorporation to five per cent per annum or less."

84 HUMA, *Brief,* Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

85 HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 1005 (Whitzman).

86 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0925 (Richter). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 1010 (Lyall).

Similarly, the committee heard the federal housing plan should have "a clear goal, a reasonable time frame and a set of quantifiable objectives."[87] More and Better Housing Canada called for a goal that is "clear, specific and time-bound."[88] Richard Lyall stressed the need for a plan to reach targets that are set, stating, "[w]e set these targets without any real plans and without a measurable prospect of actually hitting them."[89]

Witnesses suggested that the federal government's targets for the NHS, or for housing more broadly, should consider factors beyond the number of housing starts, such as the type of housing (including the prioritization of missing middle housing, such as townhomes and low-rise apartments, and the idea that a simple numerical goal does not capture the size, location or type of the housing needed);[90] market slack, or "a sufficient surplus of homes relative to households;"[91] and affordability of new housing.[92] Many stressed the need for affordability- related targets, such as:

- "[A] housing affordability target where that ratio of housing cost to income shouldn't exceed a certain level;"[93]
- Targets for affordable market and non-market housing completions;[94]
- A legislated non-market housing target;[95]
- A target of "200,000 new or acquired affordable non-market homes being developed per year, with half of these to be deeply affordable for very low-and low-income households, towards an eventual goal of 20% of all housing stock being non-market;"[96]

87 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550 (Moffatt).

88 HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada.

89 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0955 (Lyall).

90 HUMA, *Brief*, CREA; HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550 (Moffatt).

91 HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada.

92 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550 (Moffatt).

93 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0950 (Lyall).

94 HUMA, *Brief*, Carolyn Whitzman; HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0925 (Whitzman).

95 HUMA, *Brief*, Calgary Housing Company.

96 HUMA, *Brief*, Carolyn Whitzman.

- A target to at least double the share of non-market housing.[97]

Witnesses also made recommendations on how affordability should be defined. Isabelle Demers highlighted challenges with the use of different definitions of affordability between various orders of government, noting "that we have cases where projects would struggle to qualify because we are not using the same definition," and suggested definitions should be harmonized.[98] Carolyn Whitzman identified that under the NHS, CMHC used "at least six different definitions of affordable housing in programs."[99] Raymond Sullivan, Executive Director, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, stated: "Without a definition, the word 'affordability' is meaningless."[100]

Sullivan stressed that affordability should be defined based on income, specifically median and moderate income in a given community.[101] Similarly, Carolyn Whitzman called for a single definition of "affordable housing" for all NHS programs, based on "no more than 30% of before tax household income" and "area median household income bands."[102]

Other Federal Programs

Build Canada Homes

Launched as a special operating agency under Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada in September 2025, and established as a Crown corporation in 2026, Build Canada Homes (BCH) aims to support the construction of affordable housing by "leverag[ing] public lands, offer[ing] flexible financial incentives, attract[ing] private capital, facilitat[ing] large portfolio projects, and support[ing]t modern manufacturers."[103] BCH collaborates with provinces, territories, municipalities and Indigenous governments, as well as private and non-profit organizations.[104] The

97 HUMA, *Brief,* Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

98 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0945 (Demers). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0925 (Whitzman).

99 HUMA, *Brief,* Carolyn Whitzman.

100 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0950 (Sullivan).

101 Ibid., 1010.

102 HUMA, *Brief,* Carolyn Whitzman.

103 HICC, *Build Canada Homes;* Prime Minister of Canada, *Prime Minister Carney launches Build Canada Homes to supercharge homebuilding across the country*, News release, 14 September 2025; HICC, *Government of Canada marks Royal Assent of the* Build Canada Homes Act, News release, 19 June 2026.

104 Build Canada Homes, *Investment Policy Framework*.

committee heard that while CMHC was previously tasked with delivering a range of federal housing programs, BCH is now the federal lead on creating non-market and deeply affordable housing, with CMHC focused mainly on market housing.[105] Further, BCH "will have flexibilities beyond an individual program" with a single set of rules – instead, it "is being established with a pool of capital that its representatives can deploy."[106]

Many witnesses supported the objectives of BCH, including its potential to "unlock affordable homes."[107] Witnesses made a range of recommendations regarding BCH – for example, that it link capital investments with "the service infrastructure required to help vulnerable tenants remain successfully housed over the long term;"[108] that it address structural barriers to housing supply;[109] that it dedicate 1% of its funding to advancing technologies in the construction industry such as prefabricated building components;[110] and that it include a framework allowing for projects to co-stack investments, in order to incentivize non-profit and private developers to jointly build mixed-income affordable housing.[111] On this topic, Coleen Volk emphasized that CMHC and BCH will work together on mixed housing projects.[112] Tim Richter also noted that the "federal government clearly can't do this alone. Build Canada Homes can't do it alone," indicating there needs to be agreement between levels of government to build affordable housing.[113]

Witnesses also stressed the importance of key performance indicators for BCH. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities raised concerns with BCH's lack of a target on improving the share of non-market housing nationally,[114] also suggesting that based on projections, BCH will not create a sufficient number of units affordable for low-income

105 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1615, 1640 (Volk). Deeply affordable typically refers to being affordable for low or very low income households, or those that are 50% or less of the median household income. See HICC, *Build Canada Homes – Housing affordability by income level*.

106 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1640 (Volk).

107 See for example, HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0945 (Irwin); HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1005 (Richter); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0850 (Keesmaat); HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1700 (Baird).

108 HUMA, *Brief*, WoodGreen Community Services.

109 HUMA, *Brief*, National Apartment Council.

110 HUMA, *Brief*, Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec.

111 HUMA, *Brief*, WoodGreen Community Services.

112 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1640 (Volk).

113 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0950 (Richter).

114 HUMA, *Brief*, Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

households.[115] Mike Moffat noted the importance of performance indicators such as how many housing starts BCH will contribute over what time frame, broken down by price points, and how many will be market vs. non-market rate.[116] Raymond Sullivan echoed this, indicating the need for BCH to set targets on the number of homes it will create, by income band, and with a focus on homes for people with low and very low incomes.[117]

Similarly, in its brief, More and Better Housing Canada asserted that "Build Canada Homes should be required to publish, on an annual basis, key performance indicators explicitly linked to housing outcomes, disaggregated by income band, and including projected annual contribution to housing starts."[118] Richard Lyall recommended that BCH be given measurable accountability through "a defined annual contribution to starts, published [key performance indicators] and clear reporting to this committee."[119] Tim Richter suggested that BCH "can play a really important role if it's clear what it's designed to achieve."[120]

Mathieu Laberge indicated that CMHC, for its part, exchanges information with BCH and is "holding discussions to gain access to certain information in order to improve our data on housing starts and market activity."[121]

MLI Select

The committee also heard about the need to update the criteria for the multi-unit mortgage loan insurance program (MLI select).[122] For example, the Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec indicated the affordability

115 Ibid. The Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer estimated that in December 2025 that Build Canada Homes had sufficient funding to create approximately 26,000 new housing units over five years, including 13,000 that are affordable for low-income households. Ben Segel-Brown, *Build Canada Homes and the Outlook for Housing Programs under Budget 2025*, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 2 December 2025.

116 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550, 1645 (Moffatt).

117 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0935, 0950 (Sullivan). Build Canada Homes has published income bands, including "very low," "low," "moderate," and "median," which adjust for median before-tax household income by census subdivision, and family size. See Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, *Build Canada Homes – Housing affordability by income level*.

118 HUMA, *Brief,* More and Better Housing Canada.

119 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0925 (Lyall).

120 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1005 (Richter).

121 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1645 (Laberge).

122 HUMA, *Brief,* Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec.

thresholds are too restrictive. The Canadian Senior Living Association recommended that the program include greater flexibility for purpose-built senior living residences – notably "adjustments to the minimum 50-suite threshold and occupancy achievement timelines," given that these developments "often require phased lease-up periods and serve markets where smaller-scale projects are necessary to meet community needs."[123] Relatedly, Tony Irwin discussed options for mortgage insurance reforms for builders, that would provide "financing for three- to eight-unit housing, including smaller-scale rental."[124] In their brief, Hotels Canada noted mortgage insurance should be made available for mixed-use projects with 50% residential capacity (with the remainder of capacity for hotel use).[125]

First Nations Housing

In a brief submitted to the committee, Gail Maiangowi made recommendations related to First Nations housing. Currently, federal funding supporting on- and off-reserve housing for First Nations individuals is provided across multiple programs and institutions, such as CMHC and Indigenous Services Canada.[126] Gail Maiangowi recommended integrated, multi-year funding envelopes for First Nations housing instead of fragmented and episodic funding streams; that this funding should cover capital, operations and maintenance, and major repairs; that funding allocations prioritize remote and high-need communities; and further, that all federal housing programs have "fiduciary and substantive-equality-standards" embedded into their design, with their criteria "tested against their ability to eliminate chronic overcrowding and unsafe conditions." The brief also recommended that any changes to housing programs affecting First Nations include meaningful First Nations participation.[127]

Preserving Affordable Housing

Witnesses discussed the need to preserve the existing housing stock, particularly, through renovation, with Isabelle Demers reminding "[t]he most affordable building is the one that already exists."[128] Sean Baird urged: "We have solved this problem once

123 HUMA, *Brief*, Canadian Senior Living Association.

124 HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0930 (Irwin).

125 HUMA, *Brief*, Hotels Canada.

126 See, for example, CMHC, *Funding for Indigenous Housing* and Indigenous Services Canada, *First Nations housing*.

127 HUMA, *Brief*, Gail Maiangowi.

128 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0920 (Demers).

before. In 2019, the federal government committed $1.34 billion in funding under the national housing strategy, and together we reset the life cycle of thousands of homes to newbuild levels."[129] The committee heard the government should continue programs that fund acquisition and preservation, including the Canada Rental Protection Fund.[130]

Funding Predictability

Witnesses highlighted a need for better stability and predictability in federal programs that support the housing sector. Of note, they discussed establishing programs that extend over a longer term, with criteria staying consistent.

Certain witnesses mentioned there is insufficient information for builders on what to expect when the National Housing Strategy expires.[131] Carolyn Whitzman added: "The lack of continuity has been an issue, and the fact is that the federal government are the last folks in instead of the first folks in." She further stressed the importance of long-term funding making meaningful impact, particularly, long-term, low-rate financing.[132]

Jennifer Keesmaat discussed the challenge of programs changing frequently, commenting that "we become too quick to replace them with something new."[133] Further, Kevin Lee critiqued some of the CMHC programs that have had funding run out or parts of the program change as funding is depleted, stating that bringing clarity and predictability would "help more projects move forward."[134] The committee heard what is needed is "simplification," with the federal government having an "overall picture" on how each program impacts others, including coordinating with provincial and municipal programs.[135]

Considering this testimony, the committee recommends:

129 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1700 (Baird).

130 Ibid.; HUMA, *Brief,* Calgary Housing Company.

131 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0950 (Sullivan).

132 HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0940, 1015 (Whitzman).

133 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0815 (Keesmaat).

134 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1640 (Lee).

135 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0935 (Demers). See also HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1640 (Moffatt).

Recommendation 5

That the Government of Canada publish clear, measurable targets for Build Canada Homes and other federal housing programs, relating to the number of units created or preserved, as well as the type of housing and the level of affordability; and that, across programs, this be based on a consistent definition of affordability.

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada, across federal housing programs, make efforts to increase predictability for funding recipients, including by providing longer program durations and stable program criteria.

MEASUREMENT, DATA AND REPORTING

Housing Starts as a Measure of Progress

Mathieu Laberge explained CMHC's methodology for measuring housing starts. Specifically, they are measured "based on the spread footing, or the basic foundation being poured," with the following rationale:

> It's because, once the foundation has been poured, we have clear confirmation that a building will indeed be built there and that it will follow the established plan for the residential units. It's also because, as long as the project isn't at the excavation stage, it could still be revised or the land use could change.
>
> Generally, once the foundation is poured, 99% of the units are built and delivered to the market. So this is a stage where we really have a high degree of certainty that the units promised in the building permit will actually become housing comprising the planned number and size of units.[136]

Coleen Volk stated that housing starts are an important indicator, given that they are strongly correlated with completion. Further, historical data is available, allowing trends to be observed over many years.[137]

At the same time, witnesses highlighted the drawbacks of CMHC's current approach to measuring housing starts, especially regarding taller buildings. For example, when it comes to "high-rise units that have underground parking garages, the CMHC doesn't count that as a start until the entire underground parking garage is built. That could be

136 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1625 (Laberge).

137 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1700 (Volk).

four, five or six layers and then the parking garage basically hits level ground."[138] Collins-Williams and Jones noted that this process alone can take up to two years.[139]

Many argued that housing starts are not the best indicator of the health of the housing sector. They described it as a lagging indicator that, when used to assess the current state of the sector, can be misleading.[140] For example, Michael Brooks told the committee,

> What I would say about housing starts generally is that they're a trailing indicator of economic activity. A housing start represents a decision made two, four or five years ago based on a budget that the developer hoped would come to fruition.[141]

Similarly, Coleen Volk explained:

> By the time the foundation is being poured, a project has probably been in the works for several years, given the permitting, event permits, zoning and all the steps that have to be taken before they actually pour the foundation. A lot has happened. Housing starts are a good indicator of what will be completed, but right at this moment, they're not necessarily a good indicator of what's going to be completed three years from now.[142]

Brad Jones told the committee that when the current housing start measurement is used as real-time data, "it leads to misinformed policy action or inaction," asserting that "[w]e cannot effectively manage a housing crisis using data that reflects where the market was 12 to 24 months ago rather than where it stands today."[143]

Mike Moffat noted that housing starts are measured differently in various countries: "Australia and the United States define it as when the excavation starts on site. That counts as a housing start. In the U.K., it is when they start pouring the foundation."[144]

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138 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1555 (Moffatt); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1600 (Lee).

139 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0835 (Collins-Williams); HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1705 (Jones).

140 For example, see HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550 (Moffatt); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1600 (Lee); HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0930 (Sullivan); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0835 (Collins-Williams); HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1010 (Richter).

141 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1655 (Brooks).

142 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1645 (Volk).

143 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1705 (Jones).

144 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550 (Moffatt).

Additional Indicators of Progress

Witnesses discussed a range of additional indicators that could be considered for measuring progress on meeting Canada's housing needs.

For example, the committee heard that, beyond the number of starts, the composition of these starts is important.[145] CREA stated that "starts can look healthy in the aggregate while concealing serious dysfunction at the typology level." It asserted that "Canada has been building housing, but it has not been building the right housing – and understanding why requires a systems view of the housing continuum."[146]

Multiple witnesses recommended tracking excavations,[147] with Mike Moffat indicating that this would "provide a better real-time indicator of new construction activity."[148] Mathieu Laberge noted that CMHC is working to obtain comparable data on excavations between different urban centres, noting that while excavations serve as an alternative way to measure housing starts, current excavation permit data is fragmented and not comparable across municipalities.[149]

In addition, Coleen Volk explained that data on permits, such as excavation permits, serve as important early indicators of sentiment, which is not captured by housing starts. She stated that this data gives a "good indication of what's on people's minds now and whether the sentiment is increasing or decreasing in terms of how much builders would like to build."[150] However, she warned that permits do not correlate perfectly with housing starts, as progress can be impacted by factors such as rising construction costs or interest rates, or local opposition, further stating that "until the moment it starts, a project could be abandoned, changed or delayed."[151] CMHC is also "releasing new data on the time it takes to move from a building permit to a housing start," with Mathieu Laberge indicating that if this length of time increases, it can signify market strain.[152]

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145 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0820 (Collins-Williams); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1545 (Lee).

146 HUMA, *Brief*, CREA.

147 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1600 (Lee); HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1725 (Jones); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0925 (Lyall).

148 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 May 2026, 1550 (Moffatt).

149 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1625 (Laberge).

150 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1645 (Volk).

151 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1615, 1620 (Volk).

152 Ibid., 1615; HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1625 (Laberge).

Volk also raised unemployment and mortgage arrears as indicators of sentiment, specifically in the homeowner market.[153] Laberge noted that arrears have been increasing in certain centres such as southwestern Ontario, Toronto, and to a certain extent Vancouver.[154]

Several witnesses recommended sales, including pre-sales or new for-sale housing, as indicators, with David Wilkes noting: "If sales are declining, as they currently have, you're going to have a problem in two to three years of starts, and you need to address that proactively."[155] CMHC is working with industry to obtain data on pre-sales and rental market building intentions.[156]

Multiple witnesses also raised housing completions as an indicator, given "people can't live in a construction site and there are too many stalled projects in Canada."[157] Volk stated that, through its Modernizing Housing Data Initiative, CMHC reports on housing completions for all urban centres.[158]

The committee heard about the need to focus on affordability, with Tim Richter recommending that this be measured by income quintiles, and Sean Baird asking that success be measured "by [affordable] units preserved, by depth of affordability and by the number of Canadians paying no more than 30% of their income for housing."[159] Steve Pomeroy indicated the government should report on indicators such as total affordable housing stock, new non-market units completed annually, preservation of existing non-market units, households assisted, rent-to-income affordability levels, target populations, and change in core housing need.[160] Tim Richter suggested it is "critical" to get clarity on whether "affordability has improved for the people you're trying to improve it for."[161] In addition, Sullivan pointed out that high housing starts do

153 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1705 (Volk).

154 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1705 (Laberge).

155 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1015 (Wilkes); HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1655, 1720 (Brooks); HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1725, 1735 (Jones); HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0825 (Collins-Williams).

156 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1625 (Laberge).

157 HUMA, *Evidence*, 11 June 2026, 0925 (Whitzman); HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1010 (Richter); HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1755 (Jones); HUMA, *Brief*, Carolyn Whitzman; HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada.

158 HUMA, *Evidence*, 8 June 2026, 1615 (Volk).

159 HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada; HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1010 (Richter); HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1700 (Baird).

160 HUMA, *Brief*, Steve Pomeroy.

161 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1010 (Richter).

not necessarily indicate affordability, stating that recently, "[h]igher rents and higher purchase prices fuelled more construction."[162]

David Wilkes and More and Better Housing Canada both suggested housing inventory levels[163] as an indicator, noting that rising inventories could signify an affordability problem and that "as inventories increase, you have to have those absorbed in order to have starts down the road."[164]

Other indicators that were mentioned included rental projects (including commitments to build purpose-built rentals through CMHC loan programs), household formation rates, vacancy rates, homeowner prices, rent costs, occupation of housing, attainability of housing, and program efficiency (that is, cost per unit and cost per household assisted).[165]

Finally, Jennifer Keesmaat suggested that a variety of indicators throughout the housing process should be tracked, and that the appropriate indicator depends on the outcome being measured.[166] Brad Jones told the committee that if housing is tracked like a system, rather than relying on housing starts alone, "you have quite a good sense, over a period of time, of what went into the system, what came out of it and what the outcomes were."[167]

Considering this testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 7

That the Government of Canada, when assessing housing market health and determining housing policy, consider a variety of indicators in addition to housing starts, including but not limited to early indicators like permits and excavations; as well as the composition of housing starts, housing completions, housing inventory levels, and affordability.

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162 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 0930 (Sullivan).

163 The CMHC defines the inventory of housing units as "a snapshot of the level of completed and unsold (or unabsorbed) units at a specific time. A unit is defined as 'absorbed' when an agreement is made to buy the dwelling." CMHC, *Methodologies for the Housing Market Assessment (HMA)*.

164 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1015 (Wilkes); HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada.

165 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1735 (Jones); HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1655 (Brooks); HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada; HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1010 (Richter); HUMA, *Brief*, Steve Pomeroy.

166 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0845 (Keesmaat).

167 HUMA, *Evidence*, 25 May 2026, 1755 (Jones).

Need for Improved Data and Reporting

Data Collection

Many witnesses called for improved data collection to gain a "better understanding of the housing market across the country."[168] David Wilkes reminded the committee it would be a mistake to believe "that Canada has a single monolithic housing market;" rather, more information is needed to support solutions that are "tailored to market conditions and needs for specific geographies."[169] Further, in a brief, Gail Maiangowi indicated a need for First Nation "community-level data on housing starts, repairs, backlogs, and funding allocations," relative to non-Indigenous communities.[170] More and Better Housing Canada recommended that Indigenous housing data be collected and monitored in a way that is consistent with Indigenous data sovereignty.[171]

Witnesses also highlighted particular data sources. In a brief, the Canadian Senior Living Association recommended the reinstatement of CMHC's Seniors Housing Survey to provide data on supply, demand, and affordability in the senior housing sector. It recommended ensuring that data on vacancy rates, rental costs and new developments are part of the survey.[172] CREA pointed to the importance of housing data from the 2026 Census in informing housing policy decisions in the coming years, including the next National Housing Strategy.[173] Steve Pomeroy suggested the government strengthen data collection as part of the Social and Affordable Housing Survey, noting this "should become the authoritative national inventory of social and affordable housing."[174]

More and Better Housing Canada recommended "developing detailed annual population forecasts at the municipal level as the basis for housing targets at each order of

168 HUMA, *Evidence*, 7 May 2026, 1015 (Wilkes).

169 Ibid., 0920. The Spring Economic Statement 2026 committed to "modernise how housing data is collected, tracked, monitored, and shared across the country." Department of Finance, *Canada Strong For All*, Spring Economic Update 2026, p. 98.

170 HUMA, *Brief*, Gail Maiangowi.

171 HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada.

172 HUMA, *Brief*, Canadian Senior Living Association. See also CMHC, *Methodology for Seniors' Housing Survey*. The web page notes: "As part of a recent review of our surveys and publications, we have decided to discontinue data collection for rents, vacancies and services for the Seniors' Housing Survey. This data will no longer be available going forward."

173 HUMA, *Brief*, CREA.

174 HUMA, *Brief*, Steve Pomeroy; CMHC, *Social and Affordable Housing Survey — Rental Structures (SAHS-RS)*.

government."[175] In addition, it recommended supporting intergovernmental data-sharing agreements and strengthening CMHC's housing markets, data and research capacity.[176]

Reporting and Accountability

Witnesses also highlighted the need for improved reporting on the federal government's housing investments. In a brief, Steve Pomeroy suggested that enhanced reporting would improve accountability, support better policy decisions, enable independent evaluations, and increase public confidence.[177]

Multiple witnesses highlighted the need to link housing spending to outcomes. For example, Jennifer Keesmaat indicated that information is lacking on the role that federal programs are playing in delivering housing.[178] She asserted: "We should be measuring homes delivered and housing starts enabled, not simply dollars spent or committed," and then scaling what works.[179] Calgary Housing Company echoed this and recommended that federal housing programs be required to report against a binding target for non-market housing.[180]

Steve Pomeroy made a range of other recommendations to enhance reporting on housing investments. For example, that the federal government reinstate affordable housing reporting in housing starts and completions data; that it introduce unique project identifiers to address double counting and better track projects and outcomes; and that federal and provincial governments create a shared national affordable housing inventory.[181] He recommended annual public reporting on a range of housing indicators be made available and "curated and maintained in the Statistics Canada university-based Research Data Centres" to enable access to researchers.[182]

Similarly, More and Better Housing Canada recommended that CMHC be mandated to develop a comprehensive housing data repository, a "centralized, publicly accessible

175 HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada.

176 HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada.

177 HUMA, *Brief*, Steve Pomeroy.

178 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0825 (Keesmaat).

179 Ibid., 0815. See also HUMA, *Brief*, Steve Pomeroy.

180 HUMA, *Brief*, Calgary Housing Company.

181 HUMA, *Brief*, Steve Pomeroy.

182 Ibid.

platform" that would include "a full inventory of all rental units and their prices alongside housing-related administrative data collected by governments."[183]

As part of an accountability framework for federal housing policy, More and Better Housing Canada also recommended establishing a working group across orders of government that would "track housing reform progress, commission research, and propose policy adjustments;" and develop an "annual review protocol incorporating feedback from all housing stakeholders."[184]

Finally, Richard Lyall identified the need for a housing affordability index with a similar level of importance to the Bank of Canada's inflation index.[185]

Considering this testimony, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada enhance accountability for federal housing programs by focusing reporting on concrete outcomes, including relating to affordability levels.

CONCLUSION

During this study, the committee heard that while housing starts have been on the rise over recent years, this is not the case for all types of housing Canadians need, and further, that housing starts are only one of many indicators of the state of the housing market. The committee acknowledges the importance of considering additional indicators when assessing housing market health and determining housing policy.

In addition to suggestions on a range of indicators that provide a more complete picture of the housing sector, the committee heard about ways to address barriers that builders and buyers face. While witnesses spoke to the importance of measures taken by the federal government to date, including GST/HST rebates and initiatives to address development charges, further action is needed to incentivize shorter building permit timelines, simplify regulations and building codes, and assist home buyers. The committee also heard about priorities for federal housing programming, including the National Housing Strategy, and makes recommendations to the federal government on

183 HUMA, *Brief*, More and Better Housing Canada.

184 Ibid.

185 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 June 2026, 0950 (Lyall).

the need to increase predictability for funding recipients, publish clear targets for federal housing programs, and enhance reporting on concrete outcomes.

APPENDIX A:
LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee's webpage for this study.

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Canadian Home Builders' Association Kevin Lee, Chief Executive Officer	2026/05/04	35
Missing Middle Initiative Mike Moffatt, Founding Director	2026/05/04	35
Building Industry and Land Development Association David Wilkes, President and Chief Executive Officer	2026/05/07	36
Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Tim Richter, President and Chief Executive Officer	2026/05/07	36
Canadian Housing and Renewal Association Raymond Sullivan, Executive Director	2026/05/07	36
Real Property Association of Canada Michael Brooks, Chief Executive Officer	2026/05/25	37
Toronto Community Housing Corporation Sean Baird, President and Chief Executive Officer	2026/05/25	37
Wesgroup Properties Brad Jones, Chief Development Officer	2026/05/25	37
Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec Isabelle Demers, Vice-President, Strategic Development, Public Affairs and Innovation David Goulet, Economic Director	2026/06/04	40
Residential Construction Council of Ontario Richard Lyall, President	2026/06/04	40

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
The Keesmaat Group	2026/06/04	40
Jennifer Keesmaat, President and Chief Executive Officer		
West End Home Builders' Association	2026/06/04	40
Mike Collins-Williams, Chief Executive Officer		
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	2026/06/08	41
Mathieu Laberge, Chief Economist and Senior Vice-President, Housing Insights		
Coleen Volk, President and Chief Executive Officer		
As an individual	2026/06/11	42
Dr. Carolyn Whitzman, Senior Housing Researcher, University of Toronto School of Cities		
Rental Housing Canada	2026/06/11	42
Tony Irwin, President and Chief Executive Officer		

APPENDIX B:
LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's webpage for this study.

Association des professionnels de la construction et de l'habitation du Québec

Calgary Housing Company

Canadian Real Estate Association

Canadian Senior Living Association

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Hotels Canada

Maiangowi, Gail

More and Better Housing Canada

National Apartment Council

Pomeroy, Steve

Whitzman, Carolyn

WoodGreen Community Services

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* (Meetings Nos. 35 to 37, 40 to 43, 45 and 49) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Morrissey
Chair

Supplementary Opinion of the Bloc Québécois

Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills Development, Social Development, and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA) — [Housing Starts]

Oct. 27, 2026

Introduction

The Bloc Québécois thanks the witnesses who participated in the Committee's study on housing starts, as well as the Committee's analysts and staff.

The Bloc Québécois supports all eight recommendations in the report. The housing crisis is hitting families, young people, seniors, and Quebec's regions hard, and any measure that allows for faster and more cost-effective construction deserves support.

This support, however, comes with one non-negotiable condition: housing, land use planning, zoning, and urban planning fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of Quebec and its municipalities. On October 9, 2019, the National Assembly unanimously demanded that Ottawa transfer, without any additional conditions, the federal funds earmarked for housing to Quebec's programs, so that Quebec can use them according to its own priorities.

This supplementary opinion outlines the Bloc Québécois' interpretation of each of the recommendations and proposes concrete solutions to take further action.

1. Build Faster, While Respecting Quebec's Jurisdiction (Recommendations 1 and 2)

Recommendation 1 — Permit Processing Times and Development Fees

The Bloc Québécois shares the objective of this recommendation: every month of waiting for a permit and every dollar in fees adds to the final cost of a home. However, it is important to remember who holds the reins. The issuance of building permits and the setting of development fees are municipal responsibilities, governed by Quebec law. It is Quebec and its municipalities who oversee these matters. Ottawa's role is not to dictate these choices, but to provide Quebec with the funds it is entitled to so that it can support its municipalities as it sees fit.

Recommendation 2 — Regulatory Simplification and the National Building Code

The Bloc Québécois supports regulatory simplification and the elimination of redundancies. However, Quebec has its own Building Code, administered by the Régie du bâtiment du Québec. Any harmonization must therefore take place at Quebec's initiative, at its own pace, and according to its priorities.

Above all, simplification must not serve as a pretext for a carrot-and-stick policy. Making federal funds conditional on the adoption of zoning or urban planning rules constitutes outright interference, and every additional condition results in months of negotiations during which nothing gets built. Recent experience has shown this to be the case. Quebec had to negotiate a separate agreement to ensure that funds from the Housing Construction Acceleration Fund would flow through it, and the agreement on the Canadian Housing Infrastructure Fund was not finalized until January 2026, whereas the other provinces had signed it as early as 2024.

That is why the Bloc Québécois is calling for the unconditional transfer to Quebec of all federal funds invested in housing. Until then, we believe it is essential to streamline federal programs and align them with Quebec's programs.

2. Reduce the tax burden and address intergenerational inequality (recommendations 3 and 4)

Recommendation 3 — Reduction of taxes on new homes

The Bloc Québécois supports this recommendation. It welcomes the elimination of the GST for first-time buyers of new homes valued at up to $1 million, as confirmed in the 2025 budget—a measure it had previously supported. We must now go further by eliminating the GST for first-time homebuyers on services related to the purchase of a property, such as notary, building inspector, and land surveyor services. These costs add up at precisely the time when a young household's budget is tightest, and they apply equally to the purchase of an existing home as to a new one.

Recommendation 4 — Assistance for Homebuyers

The Bloc Québécois supports the recommendation but believes that the effort must first target first-time homebuyers. Younger generations face a glaring inequity. Their parents were able to become homeowners with just a few years of savings, whereas today, saving up for a down payment can take more than a decade.

Mortgage criteria have already been relaxed: as of December 15, 2024, first-time homebuyers have access to 30-year amortization, and the ceiling for insured loans has risen from $1 million to $1.5 million. These measures reduce monthly payments but do not address the main obstacle, which remains the down payment. The Bloc

Québécois therefore proposes significant federal assistance for first-time buyers of reasonably priced homes to help them complete the purchase.

At the same time, we must curb the speculation that is driving up prices. Since 2023, profits from the resale of a residential property held for less than 12 months have been taxed as business income. The Bloc Québécois proposes extending to two years the period during which a homeowner must hold a property to qualify for the capital gains exemption on profits from the sale, while maintaining existing exceptions, to further crack down on real estate "flips."

3. Federal Programs: Targets, Predictability, and Results (Recommendations 5 through 8)

Recommendation 5 — Clear Targets for Build Canada Homes

The Bloc Québécois fully supports this recommendation. Launched on September 14, 2025, with initial funding of $13 billion, Build Canada Homes has, above all, made a series of announcements: six pilot projects for direct construction on federal land, expected to generate approximately 4,000 housing units, followed, in Quebec, by a memorandum of understanding signed in January 2026 and the joint announcement of approximately 865 affordable housing units in April. So far, the results have been a failure. There are no public, measurable targets to assess what taxpayers are getting for their money.

A uniform definition of affordability is also essential. It must reflect households' actual ability to pay based on regional differences, rather than a percentage of the median market rent, which excludes the most vulnerable households.

Recommendation 6 — Program Predictability

Predictability is paramount. Developers, nonprofits, cooperatives, and housing authorities plan their projects over several years. In practice, a nonprofit organizing a community housing project often must combine multiple federal and Quebec funding sources whose timelines and criteria do not align. If one of these sources changes or ends along the way, the entire financial structure collapses—and the construction project with it. The Bloc Québécois therefore supports extending the duration of programs and ensuring the stability of eligibility criteria.

Recommendation 7 — A Comprehensive View of the Market

The Bloc Québécois welcomes this holistic approach. Housing starts say nothing about the quality or affordability of the units built, nor about the condition of the existing housing stock. Yet this stock includes, in particular, aging public housing

units. The Bloc Québécois proposes increasing and indexing the threshold for allowable renovation costs per unit for public housing under agreement, so that major renovations can be carried out over time and projects can become self-sustaining by the end of the agreement.

Recommendation 8 — Results-Based Accountability

Clear and effective indicators are essential for assessing the effectiveness of programs. Simply announcing billions is not enough: we must be able to say how many households have been housed at a cost they can afford. The Bloc Québécois calls for federal reports to measure, among other things, the proportion of off-market housing units created and the distribution of investments by province.

4. Going Further: The Bloc Québécois' Proposals

Beyond the Committee's recommendations, the Bloc Québécois believes that the private market alone will not resolve the crisis. It proposes substantially increasing—through unconditional federal transfers—the proportion of off-market housing to at least 20 percent of the housing stock.

Ottawa must also facilitate the transfer of federal land and buildings below market value. Building Homes Canada already relies on federal land for its own projects, but it is often smaller, community-rooted organizations that are best positioned to develop these sites. They must be allowed to acquire them.

Student housing is another lever for reducing pressure on the rental housing stock. The Bloc Québécois calls on Ottawa to provide unconditional financial support for any Quebec initiative related to student housing, particularly in the regions and those spearheaded by CEGEPs and universities.

Finally, no housing can be inhabited without water, sewer, or electricity. Ottawa has created the Building Strong Communities Fund, with $51 billion in funding, and has reached an agreement with Quebec worth nearly $1 billion for housing-related infrastructure. However, these funds are still negotiated on a case-by-case basis, program by program. The Bloc Québécois proposes that every federal investment in housing be automatically accompanied by increased funding for the necessary municipal infrastructure, such as wastewater treatment and electricity.

Conclusion

The Bloc Québécois supports the Committee's recommendations because they are a step in the right direction: reducing delays and costs, helping first-time homebuyers, setting targets, and ensuring accountability. But the most effective

solution remains the simplest: for Ottawa to transfer to Quebec, unconditionally, the funds to which it is entitled. Quebec knows its needs, already has its own tools, and is best positioned to provide housing for its population.