



➤ **Local Implications of a
National Housing Strategy:
The Case of Toronto**

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OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS & PUBLIC POLICY





➤ **Today's Talk**

What is the National Housing Strategy (NHS)?

How is it different? Federal Metagovernance (Bradford 2014)

Why does it matter? Implications for Municipalities

Where to go? Recommendations

The NHS: An Introduction

- \$40 billion dollars over ~10 years (since expanded)
 - 15% increase over previous ten-year average
- Three significant focuses:
 - Federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) agreements - \$13.7 billion (down ~12%)
 - Combatting homelessness - \$2.2 billion (up 62%; recently increased to ~ \$4.7 billion)
 - Direct support for building and renovations - \$6.8 billion (new; recently increased to ~\$16.8 billion)

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What Changes?

- In terms of mechanisms? *A lot*
- Nobody works alone
- Long-term contracts and provincial partnerships down; flexible, 'steerable' arrangements are prioritized
- New, 'place-based' policy

How To Interpret the New Federal Role?

- Ottawa is working as a *metagovernor* (Bradford 2014)
- Managing the ongoing work of governments and society, rather than complementing it
- Using financial leverage to empower local communities and ‘co-steer’ affordable housing policy

Example #1: Reaching Home

- Ottawa selects a local Community Entity, and tasks it with funding distribution
 - Here? The City of Toronto
- A separate Community Advisory Board oversees spending
 - Here? The Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH)
 - Together? The Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service Planning Forum (THHSPF)
- Ottawa sets goals and guidelines

Example #2: Housing Development

- Most programs invite applications; some require governmental partners
- Program design incentivizes beyond-minimum affordability commitments
- Ottawa influences location, affordability, and ownership of tens of thousands of units, with minimal commitment

What Does It Look Like In Practice?



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What Does It Look Like in Practice?

- What do new mechanisms, new building funds, and new homelessness funds mean for Toronto?



First: A Newly Available Role

- Most programs invite municipal applications
- \$1.34 billion for Toronto Community Housing came through the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (previous photo)
- Cities like Toronto can build or rebuild ambitiously, but must *opt-in*
- *There's no backup coming!*

Second: A New *Partnership* Role

- Most non-FPT programs either require additional governmental partners, or score co-partnered applications more highly



Third: A (Quiet) Federal-Municipal Relationship

- Some programs invite (or require!) direct intergovernmental coordination between Ottawa and municipalities
- Reaching Home: An *available* relationship
- Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI): a *mandatory* relationship



Three Implications

- A new role as an *applicant*
- A new role as a *partner*
- A new role in *delivering federal policy*
- How to respond?

Recommendations: Be *Entrepreneurial*

- Billions of dollars are available
- Get out there and *get them*
- Enormous advantages built into NHS programs for municipalities

Recommendation: Be the *Leader*

- Dozens of local groups seeking these funds
- Who understands government? *You do*
- Who is an invited partner? *You are*
- Who can *plan* and *coordinate*? *You can*
- *Be a metagovernor*

Recommendation: Be a Housing *Nexus*

- Housing funds and planning have to be coordinated vertically (between governments) and horizontally (between developers)
- Cities need *institutional capacity* to leverage their position
- A ‘one-stop shop’ for affordable housing
- Look to Shelter Services and the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness

Conclusion

- Canada has its first ‘National’ Housing Strategy, but most of it is *local*
- No panacea: not much change in spending, but a big shift in *mechanisms*
- Cities will have to *rise to the occasion* (or at least delegate effectively)
- *Informal* powers are still *real* powers, and can get a lot done without even having to *think* the word ‘negotiation’

Thanks!

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