



**Affordable housing reboot:
Bring back federal leadership**
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<https://irpp.org/research-studies/affordable-housing-reboot/>*

The article below is from the Affordability Action Council, a new collaboration between diverse policy experts and community leaders. The Council has used a wide lens to look at the affordability and climate crisis, tackling the challenge through a package of “all-in” integrated solutions that could be put to work immediately by the federal government. The Council is a joint initiative of the IRPP, Destination Zero, the Trottier Family Foundation and the McConnell Foundation.

To provide affordable housing to those who need it most, the federal government should aim to build one million rent-geared-to-income community homes by 2030 and reboot the not-for-profit and co-operative housing sector. To align with climate-change goals and provide lasting affordability, these homes should be built near public transit and meet net-zero and climate–resilient codes and standards.

This level of ambition requires an all-hands-on-deck approach by governments and partners. Federal leadership can be the catalyst that sparks widespread action. The federal government used to play a significant role in building subsidized community housing (or public housing) and financing a once-thriving not-for-profit housing sector, including co-operatives, but no longer does so. Building more affordable housing can relieve market pressure, improving affordability for everyone.

The Affordability Action Council recommends that the federal government:

1. Acquire property near transit to build net-zero and climate-resilient community-housing infrastructure



- Expand the Federal Lands Initiative and make a front-loaded investment in property acquisition close to rapid public transit;
- Keep land in federal hands so the value of the asset reduces the budgetary impact;
- Leverage the capacity of the Canada Lands Company to co-ordinate housing developments;
- Combine low-cost leases with other federal incentives and an expanded Rapid Housing Initiative to develop innovative mixed-income housing on acquired properties;
- Leverage the investment power of the Canada Infrastructure Bank — and its mandate for green infrastructure — to ensure developments and retrofits use future-ready building and energy practices and meet net-zero and climate-resilient codes and standards.

2. Provide more attractive financing to scale the not-for-profit housing sector

- Use federal programs to reduce the financial barriers facing land trusts, co-ops, charitable housing and not-for-profit community corporations committed to providing affordable housing;
- Increase the upper limit of non-repayable contributions and guarantee a fixed low interest rate on loans for not-for-profit projects under the National Housing Co-Investment Fund;
- Allow not-for-profit housing providers to stack federal, provincial and municipal financing programs so that they can draw on multiple avenues of support;
- Provide greater financial incentives for not-for-profit projects located near rapid public transit that meet net-zero and climate-resilient codes and standards;
- Use the Housing Accelerator Fund to encourage municipalities to remove barriers, including zoning and permitting regulations, for not-for-profit housing developments near rapid transit.