

UPCOMING DATES

JANUARY

- 21 Barrie General Committee, 7:00 p.m.
- Brampton Council, 9:30 a.m.
- Georgina Council, 9:00 a.m.
- Halton Regional Council, 9:30 a.m.
- Hamilton Council, 9:30 a.m.
- Mississauga Council (Special), 9:30 a.m.
- Mississauga General Committee, 10:30 a.m.
- Richmond Hill Committee of the Whole, 9:30 a.m.
- Whitchurch-Stouffville Council, 1:00 p.m.
- Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Planning Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
- 22 Peel Regional Council, 9:30 a.m.
- 26 Brock Council, 6:00 p.m.
- Clarington Council, 6:30 p.m.
- Halton Hills Council, 3:00 p.m.
- Milton Council, 7:00 p.m.
- Mississauga Planning & Development Committee, 1:30 p.m.
- Oakville Council, 6:30 p.m.
- Pickering Council, 7:00 p.m.
- Scugog Council, 6:30 p.m.
- Uxbridge Council, 10:00 a.m.
- 27 Aurora Council, 7:00 p.m.
- Burlington Council, 9:30 a.m.
- Caledon Council, 3:00 p.m.



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RELEASES ONLINE TOOL TO TRACK LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' HAF PROGRESS

HOW TO KEEP HOUSING ON (THE RIGHT) TRACK



Lana Hall

Members of the public can now track individual Ontario municipalities' progress on housing starts incentivized by the **Government of Canada's** Housing Accelerator Fund. But housing experts are divided on which types of data might actually give Canadians a clear picture of the program's success to date.

Last week, the **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)** announced the launch of the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Progress Tracker, a publicly available online tool that tracks HAF progress in communities across Canada throughout the first year of the federal funding program. The HAF progress tracker is intended to provide increased transparency and accountability on the work being done by municipal governments to meet

the obligations of their HAF agreements, according to a statement from CMHC.

Within the tool, users can see how much funding each province and territory has received through the program to accelerate housing construction. They can also search by municipality to determine how much funding each city and town has received, how many HAF-incentivized units were built within the funding timeframe compared to the municipality's housing supply growth target, and what percentage of their HAF action plan target a municipality has achieved.

The tool shows that in the first year of the HAF, local governments who received funding issued a total of 160,585 residential building permits, which was 22,000 more than expected.

But not everyone is convinced tracking building permits is the best way to illustrate the HAF's impact.

"It's kind of hard to tell whether getting a building permit was the product of the Housing Accelerator Fund. Separating the wheat from the chaff is a little hard to do," says **Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON)**

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- Mike Moffatt

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HOUSING ON (THE RIGHT) TRACK

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president **Richard Lyall**. “And the other thing is, just because you get a building permit doesn’t mean you get a building.”

Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) professor emeritus **David Amborski** has similar concerns around the limits of tracking building permits, particularly because once a permit is issued, municipalities have little control over when or if a building is actually built. A better metric to track, says Amborski, would be short-term land supply, meaning assessing the quantity of land that has already been serviced and approved for development. Municipalities with a healthy short-term land supply are better equipped to handle new development, regardless of external market forces that might be impacting individual building projects, he says.

“You [would] get a truer picture of what municipalities are doing to help facilitate housing coming on stream [by tracking short-term land supply]. You could have 500 building permits, but you could have ... created the short-term land supply for five thousand lots. That’s going to drive the price down in the long term.”

Missing Middle Initiative founding director **Mike Moffatt** tells *NRU* he believes the data in the HAF progress tracker shows that the implementation of HAF-related reforms has been wildly uneven across municipalities. He questions whether the program might be stronger if HAF agreements were more consistent across municipalities, and penalties more severe for not adhering to those agreements. Last week, for example, the federal

government announced it would be slashing the **City of Toronto’s** HAF by \$10 million, based on Toronto city council’s decision to permit the development of sixplexes in only nine of 25 wards, rather than city-wide. Previously, Toronto was approved to receive \$471 million through the HAF fund for fulfilling its HAF agreements.

“If cities can refuse to implement major reforms and still get 98 per cent of the money, I just think that very much limits the effectiveness,” says Moffatt. “I think certainly the HAF was better than nothing, that we have seen municipalities put in reforms, but I think it could have been more powerful had there been consistency across these agreements, had there been better enforcement and larger penalties for violating those agreements.”

For Lyall, much of the problem with assessing any kind of housing progress across Ontario comes down to what he calls a “data problem.” He says implementing a digital,

standardized development application approval system Province-wide would provide transparency and accountability to stakeholders when tracking these types of development metrics.

“It will get an apples to apples comparison where you can say to a municipality, ‘Hey, they’re doing this in a month over there. Why is it taking you eight months to do the same work?’” A standardized system like that, Lyall says, could also make it easier to build at scale by avoiding inconsistencies in municipal processes across the province.

“We’ve got a long way to go,” Lyall says of the data collection needed to assess progress on meeting housing targets. “But there’s great opportunities.”

To view the new Housing Accelerator Fund Progress Tracker, please visit the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation website [here](#). 🌱

Screenshot showing data on the new Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Progress Tracker, released by the federal government last week. The publicly available tool tracks HAF progress in municipalities across Canada through the first year of the federal funding program. Housing experts are divided about what kinds of metrics might be most effective to measure the program’s true impact.

SOURCE: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

Community	Action Plan Progress	Total Funding	HAF Incented Units	Housing Supply Growth Target	Permitted Units to Date
Ajax	50% to 80%	\$21,976,916	584	3,613	69%
Aroland First Nation	Below 50%	\$2,414,000	34	38	74%
Barrie	50% to 80%	\$25,684,990	688	6,826	85%
Brampton	Above 80%	\$114,540,500	3,150	16,650	121%
Burlington	Above 80%	\$21,156,285	618	2,724	162%