



— **OBCM** —  
Ontario's Big City Mayors

June 20, 2023

The Honourable Dominic LeBlanc  
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure and Communities  
[Dominic.Leblanc@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Dominic.Leblanc@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister LeBlanc,

On Friday, June 16th, Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM) met with Ontario Cabinet Ministers, including the Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, to discuss OBCM's key priorities of housing, addressing the mental health, addictions and homelessness crisis facing our cities, and the need for municipal financing reform which included a conversation on the importance of a long-term sustainable infrastructure funding program.

Municipalities own and manage the majority of Ontario's public infrastructure including roads, bridges, water systems, transit, buildings and recreational facilities. As you are aware, Ontario municipalities have been mandated to develop and maintain asset management plans which are used to assess the state of good repair of these infrastructure assets and to help make the best possible investment decisions for them. Now that there is a consistent standard being applied across the province, the estimated dollar amount required to bring aging infrastructure into a state of good repair and eliminate the municipal infrastructure backlog is staggering.

A 2021 Review of Ontario's Municipal Infrastructure and an Assessment of the State of Repair, issued by the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario (FAO) estimated the cost to be approximately \$52 billion. Recently we have heard from the City of Toronto that the cost to the Toronto alone is over \$9 billion.

These numbers will continue to grow as municipalities do not have the tools to manage this infrastructure deficit on our own, nor do we have the funding to manage the significant cost overruns in projects currently underway. Now that we are trying to balance deteriorating infrastructure, inflationary and cost escalation pressures with a significant increase in spending to build the critical infrastructure required to meet our growth and housing targets, it is clear that Ontario cities need an urgent and permanent solution.

We are grateful for the partnership formed between the Province of Ontario and the Federal Government to put in place the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP), as well as with the critical funding provided through Safe Restart and other Covid related supports. And municipalities are currently busy working through applications for the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) in hopes of

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receiving support to build, and support the build of, the market-rate and affordable housing our cities need.

However, now that ICIP funding is fully allocated and no other infrastructure program has been introduced in its place, OBCM is writing today in support of Minister Surma's call to encourage the federal government to support the sustainability and growth of critical infrastructure in Ontario through a new round of flexible federal-provincial infrastructure funding through:

- **Protecting communities:** Continuing investments in critical underground infrastructure, including drinking water distribution systems, sewage and wastewater pipelines, along with stormwater management systems, to ensure the safety of our cities, protect from flooding and also support the growth of new development.
- **Supporting communities:** The cost of previously approved projects in Ontario continue to escalate and municipalities do not have the funds to complete these necessary projects, let alone to invest in new ones. To get these projects done, Ontario communities need continued support in the face of rising costs.
- **Building communities:** Critical infrastructure investments to address the housing supply crisis, including truly affordable housing.

The health, well-being and economic success of our communities is largely dependent upon the state of a city's critical infrastructure. We look forward to working with your government, and the government of Ontario to support a safe and thriving Ontario.

Sincerely,

Marianne Meed Ward, Mayor of Burlington  
Chair of Ontario's Big City Mayors (OBCM)

- cc. Hon. Premier Doug Ford  
Hon. Minister Steve Clark  
Hon. Minister Kinga Surma  
Hon. Minister Victor Fedeli  
Mayor Scott Pearce, President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)  
Councillor Colin Best, President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)