

September 24, 2020



ASCHA's Response to 2020 Speech from The Throne

The 2020 Speech from The Throne highlighted a strong commitment to affordable housing programs, reiterating that housing is a fundamental human right for all Canadians. It also emphasized the importance of programs and services to support those in need of affordable housing, ensuring individuals can remain housed as they progress through the housing continuum.

ASCHA embraces the opportunities presented in this speech to leverage Federal investments and explore partnerships. We know this would be of benefit to address the very real and growing housing crisis here in Alberta. The recognition by the Federal Government that housing is a key driver in economic recovery and stability is to be applauded. Supporting Albertans in maintaining a sense of wellbeing through housing and community services alleviates pressures on a more costly healthcare system, while creating employment opportunities in multiple sectors and industries.

Investment in housing is a key driver of the economy. Construction projects create jobs and having a home is critical so people can contribute to their communities.
– 2020 Speech from The Throne

The following are key highlights of the speech, which align to ASCHA's own advocacy efforts and principled positions:

- Increased support for our most vulnerable to ensure they can live in strong and safe communities they can call home
 - Grow essential services in community
 - Expand virtual health care delivery
 - Increase access to mental health resources
- Partner to accelerate investment in housing – no one should be without a place to call home. This extends to:
 - affordable housing
 - shelters
 - transitional housing

While the commitments outlined in the Speech from The Throne are promising, we do approach them with caution – only because we have heard these promises from our Federal Government before. Now is the time for action – Albertans are depending on it. #ItsTime.

Albertans need the Provincial Government to work within the framework outlined in this speech for the common good of all Albertans – particularly those impacted by job loss and the current state of our provincial economy. As Premier Kenney stated in his response to The Throne Speech, Alberta's natural resources and Federal support for our energy sector is necessary to safeguard the investments needed in affordable housing and related services.

We are at an important crossroads in policy development for housing – the support is there Federally and municipally for affordable housing. Never before have we seen such focus on Canada's housing crisis, and we now have strategies, opportunities and shared ideas that could transform affordable housing in very real ways.

We will not see transformation realized if political divisiveness continues. To accomplish what Alberta needs most right now, it will take all layers of government – regardless of partisan loyalties – working together towards positive outcomes for people.

ASCHA calls upon the Federal Government, the Government of Alberta, and municipalities to work together to ensure that Albertans have housing that honours their dignity, serves their needs, and inspires purpose in their chosen community. ASCHA stands ready to work with committed governments and stakeholders to accomplish this!

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