

## What We Heard - Opportunities for Improvement

Prospective and actual applicants provided feedback regarding the grant parameters and application process, including suggested changes to better support the achievement of the program's desired outcomes, and the ability of non-profit affordable housing providers to access the grant.

### Land Acquisition

The Pilot did not achieve redevelopment of highly problematic properties, such as occupied properties with ongoing complaints and crime and safety concerns. Prospective applicants noted that this was largely due to the fact that occupied problem properties were either not on the market or asking prices were too high to make redevelopment feasible, especially given that the grant did not fund property acquisition.

Right At Home Housing Society suggested that the City must include land acquisition in the grant funding for the redevelopment of active problem properties to be viable. They also suggested consideration of a rolling application intake similar to the previous secondary suites grant program, to help accommodate land acquisition processes driven by sellers who want a sale completed quickly.

Edmonton Community Development Corporation suggested both including land acquisition in grant funding as well as allowing market housing opportunities to support the financial viability of proposed developments.

### Application Process and Requirements

Applicants reported that the application requirements were very onerous even for experienced applicants, and could be unmanageable for less experienced applicants. They also noted that the cost of fulfilling these requirements was a significant deterrent to applying.

Some stated that the City's application process did not align with how they need to structure their request for proposal process, and described the requirements to provide detailed development plans and cost estimates before knowing if they would receive grant funding as "putting the cart before the horse."

They suggested that as many requirements as possible be changed to requirements prior to grant funding rather than at the time of application, to reduce the financial risk that non-profit affordable housing providers must assume before knowing if their proposed development will be approved for

grant funding. They emphasized that there are increased risks associated with the acquisition of “problem properties.”

Suggestions for application requirements to be changed to requirements prior to grant funding include:

- Detailed development plan drawings
- Detailed cost estimate (which can only be provided if a builder is selected and detailed development plans completed)
- Tax search
- Environmental Site Assessment
- Appraisal (applicants also suggested not requiring an appraisal, or requiring a land value appraisal only, for sites where existing buildings are proposed to be demolished)

The City will assume responsibility for the Adjacent Title Search application requirement.

### **Grant Funding Approach**

Right At Home Housing Society suggested that conditional funding agreements could be a potential approach to allow applicants to pre-qualify and then go through their process of approaching a number of builders to obtain designs and estimates, select a builder with the best design for the best price, and provide the City with a detailed construction budget. They noted that financial risk to the City would be mitigated by the approved budget in the conditional funding agreement.