

### Indigenous Housing Survey - Summary of Key Findings

This attachment highlights the key findings from an online survey distributed to 34 municipalities across Canada that asked for information on approaches to developing Indigenous housing. Administration used data from Statistics Canada to identify municipalities that were comparable to Edmonton by population and/or percentage of urban Indigenous peoples. Fourteen municipalities responded to the survey and one municipality identified that it did not have enough experience with the subject to answer the survey.

Five common themes emerged from answers provided by the 14 respondents related to land and/or funding, policy, staffing, data, and barriers.

#### Provision of Land and/or Funding for Project Development

Seven municipalities support the development of Indigenous housing through the distribution of grants, capital funds, and land (leases and sales) through both formal and informal ways. In many cases, municipal policies and strategies identified Indigenous housing development as a priority, however there is a lack of consistent designated funding programs specifically for Indigenous housing. Instead, many municipalities prioritized Indigenous projects, both formally and informally, within their capital funding programs for affordable housing. Some examples include:

- The City of Winnipeg employs a Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve, which provides \$200,000 per year to Indigenous housing providers which is mostly for enhancements and repairs to existing properties.
- City of Vancouver projects that are owned and/or operated by non-profit Indigenous housing providers by having them score higher in evaluation because they align with City's reconciliation objectives. It also has an expedited planning process and a program called "SHORT" which prioritizes non-profit owned social housing projects.
- The City of Hamilton prioritizes housing projects that are owned or operated by Indigenous groups or allocate a number of units for Indigenous households. This is done through an evaluation matrix.
- The City of Montreal prioritizes Indigenous housing developments through its commitment to being a Reconciliation City.

#### Policies and Strategies

The majority of cities cited having policies that promote Indigenous housing, nested under strategies related to affordable housing and homelessness, reconciliation, and urban Indigenous peoples. Based on the survey responses, the most comprehensive strategies included tangible actions specifically related

to developing housing, affordable housing targets for Indigenous peoples, and a tie to other city-wide initiatives. For example, the City of Toronto sets a target of approving some 5,000 affordable and supportive homes for Indigenous communities to be delivered by Indigenous agencies through the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan and they are currently working to co-create a Toronto-specific Indigenous Housing Strategy recognizing that many Indigenous Canadians live in urban centres. Similarly, the City of Vancouver works with the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council to set Indigenous housing development goals which support Indigenous affordable housing through its Housing Vancouver Strategy and the City of Reconciliation Framework.

The City of Calgary and the City of Hamilton are currently exploring ways to formalize the prioritization of Indigenous housing in their funding and partnership decisions. Both cities have policies that aim to foster partnerships with Indigenous organizations and increase the supply of Indigenous housing.

In the survey, cities were asked if their municipality considered developing an Urban Indigenous Housing Strategy which prompted a range of responses; most focused on the role of external partnerships and existing policy frameworks related to housing and reconciliation. The majority of cities identified that a more thorough understanding of housing needs data as it related to urban Indigenous communities would be beneficial in developing future strategies.

### Staffing Context and Resources

There are a variety of different ways municipalities support Indigenous housing through staffing resourcing. For example, many municipalities have Indigenous relations offices or sections within intergovernmental affairs areas or the Office of the City Manager. In several cities, staff provide support within their land development sections in addition to providing expedited approval processes. The City of Montreal and the City of Calgary both have staff to assist with land acquisition, applications, and leveraging funding and ensuring alignment, as well as communications and advocacy efforts for Indigenous housing. A systems navigator type role exists in several municipalities including Montreal, Calgary, Winnipeg, New Westminster, however, additional information is needed on duties and scope in each jurisdiction.

### Data on Indigenous Housing

On the survey municipalities were asked what indicators or research they have that highlights the need for Indigenous specific housing. Responses ranged from community driven research on Indigenous demographic trends, Homelessness Partnering Strategies, Affordable Housing and Homelessness plans (provincial requirements), as well as research related to reconciliation. Five municipalities mentioned the Homeless Count and four mentioned the Bynames List or the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System or waitlist data. One

municipality mentioned there had been no formal research highlighting a need for indigeneous specific housing.

### Barriers Related to the Development of Indigenous Housing

Municipalities were asked what barriers they faced in addressing Indigenous housing needs. Four themes emerged in the responses: lack of capital and operating funding, a lack of data, systemic barriers and racism, and understanding, desire and capacity of Indigenous organizations to build and/or operate housing.

Over half of the municipalities cited a lack of funding as the primary barrier to developing Indigenous housing. The cost of land, lack of capital funding and land availability and lack of resources including staff support were barriers. Many municipalities noted current funding models approaches do not meet the needs of Indigenous organizations; specifically, there is a lack of alignment between capital funding streams and operational funding streams needed to sustain affordable housing projects and deliver culturally appropriate services. Additionally, the depth of understanding of local Indigenous housing needs varies across municipalities. Often a lack of centralized and consistent data at a municipal level makes it challenging to develop effective policies and strategies in spurring the right kind of housing developments.

Systemic barriers were also cited by several municipalities. Experiences with racism and community push back against projects are ongoing challenges. Several municipalities discussed systemic racism and the assumptions of western norms present through the building code, zoning process, housing design, and tenant regulations. For example, cities mentioned the need for larger homes and multigenerational housing, ventilation requirements for smudging, zoning requirements for sweat lodges on a property, and issues around bedroom occupancy regulations.

Due to the barriers highlighted above, many cities indicated that there are few Indigenous community organizations prepared to venture into developing and managing affordable housing. One municipality stated “There are few indigenous community organizations that are ready to venture into developing (and managing) housing projects. This stems, in part, from the difficulty to secure financing for operation costs linked to support services which would be essential to many projects.”