

Item No. 15.1
Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee
July 19, 2018

TO: Chair and Members of the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

SUBMITTED BY: Original Signed

Kelly Denty, Director, Planning and Development

Original Signed

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 21, 2018

SUBJECT: Affordable Housing Work Plan

ORIGIN

On December 13, 2016 the following motion of Regional Council was put and passed:

THAT Halifax Regional Council

1. Approve in principle the Housing and Homelessness Partnership five-year affordable housing targets as presented in the June 24, 2016 supplementary staff report; and
2. Direct staff to develop an implementation framework to support the implementation of the Housing & Homelessness Partnership five-year affordable housing targets that fall within the municipality's mandate, including identifying specific actions, monitoring tools and any additional resources if required.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

See Attachment A.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee recommend that Regional Council:

1. Direct staff to proceed with the initiatives contained in the Affordable Housing Work Plan, as set out in Attachment B of this report.

BACKGROUND

The Housing and Homelessness Partnership (HHP) is a collaborative of nine partners from the three levels of government, the private sector and non-profit organizations in Halifax. In October 2013, Regional Council endorsed HRM's formal participation with the Partnership. The Partnership's Charter was formally signed in 2014, with the mandate to "end homelessness and housing poverty in Halifax" by addressing policy and systemic issues. The Partnership is organized around the Homelessness Working Group and Affordable Housing Working Group.

Housing that is affordable is generally defined as situations where household spending on shelter is less than 30 per cent of a household's before tax income. Affordable housing is a very broad term that can include housing provided by the private, public and non-profit sectors as well as all forms of housing tenure; rental, ownership, and co-operative ownership, as well as temporary and permanent housing. Affordable housing can be geared to both low and moderate-income levels. The HHP recognizes a range of affordability levels and defines affordable housing as housing which is modest in terms of floor area and amenities, based on household needs and community norms, is priced at or below average market housing rents or prices for comparable housing in a community or area.

Housing and Homelessness Partnership Affordable Housing 5 Year Targets

In 2015, the Affordable Housing Working Group developed a 5 Year Strategic Plan (see Attachment C) which includes 3 main strategic goals for maintaining and creating affordable housing in Halifax. Each goal includes several targets and initiatives that can be addressed by specific partners or through collaborations. Table 1 summarizes the goals and targets of the 5 Year Strategic Plan, which were established in late 2016 and are intended to be revisited in 2022.

Table 1: HHP Affordable Housing 5-Year Targets

Key Principle: Housing is a Social Determinant of Health	
Key Vulnerable Populations: Lone parent households, one- person households, recent immigrants, persons with a disability, Aboriginal-led households, youth households, and senior-led households	
AHWG Strategic Goals	Targets (5 year)
1) Increase the supply of affordable housing options that meet people's need	<p>2,750 new units built. This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,000 additional units of affordable social and non-market rental housing • 1,000 additional units of affordable private rental housing • 250 additional units of affordable home-ownership units • 500 new secondary and backyard suites • Increase the number of licensed Single Room Occupancies
2) Reduce the number of residents living in core housing need	<p>2,250 units preserved and/or rent supplements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 additional rent supplements • 2,000 units preserved or upgraded (social, non-profit and private market) through repairs and energy retrofits
3) Foster a Strong Housing Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the Number of Licensed Single Room Occupancies (SROs) • Reduce vacancy rates in Certain Neighbourhoods • Strengthen and Build capacity for increased effectiveness of the housing sector
Total	5,000 units over 5 years

In December of 2016, Regional Council endorsed the Partnership's affordable housing goals and targets and directed staff to return to Council with an implementation framework showing how the Municipality would contribute to the goals and targets within our mandate.

Federal & Provincial Partners

The federal government released the National Housing Strategy in early 2018. The Strategy lays out how the federal government will allocate funding to programs, housing research, loans and grants to maintain existing affordable housing as well as create new supply. The funding envelope for all the work under the National Housing Strategy is \$40 billion over 10 years. The support for the creation of new supply includes providing federal lands for affordable housing development and funding through the co-investment fund (\$13.15 billion) in the form of low interest loans and cash contributions. Key aspects of the fund are requirements for projects to also secure municipal or provincial contributions, either in-kind or financial, and that projects meet energy efficiency and accessibility standards. Currently, the federal and provincial government are in the process of negotiating bi-lateral funding agreements for social and affordable housing programs. This type of federal support for housing has not been seen since the 1980's and is expected to result in a spike of social and affordable housing construction across Canada

Housing Nova Scotia

Housing Nova Scotia (HNS) has been an active partner in the HHP since 2014 and a significant contributor to meeting the shared 5-Year housing targets. The information below provided by HNS outlines activity for fiscal years 16/17 and 17/18, as well as some projections related to HNS's commitment to reduce the housing wait list and the Down Payment Assistance Program.

As of March 31, 2018, HNS indicates that it has directly supported the creation or preservation of more than 2,700 affordable housing units in HRM. HNS has also committed to adding 400-500 more rent supplements over the next three years.

1. Housing Preservation
 - a. Over 2,000 affordable housing units have been preserved:
 - i. Approximately 1,650 units preserved through financial assistance to eligible homeowners and landlords, housing cooperatives.
 - ii. Over 700 units preserved through investments to public housing.
2. New Social Housing
 - a. Over 200 units created in the first two years of the plan through rent supplements (including Housing First)
 - b. HNS is committed to reducing the public housing waitlist by adding between 400-500 new rent supplements in the next three years.
3. Affordable Home Ownership
 - a. HNS launched a new Down Payment Assistance Program in 2017. Approximately 100 first time home buyers will have been assisted by March 2019.
 - b. HNS supported the construction of 6 new Habitat for Humanity homes in Spryfield
4. New Affordable Housing
 - a. more than 100 units created or preserved.

DISCUSSION

In response to Regional Council's endorsement of the 5 Year affordable housing targets, staff have developed an Affordable Housing Work Plan that outlines the purpose, progress to date, and direction of several municipal initiatives. Initiatives contained in the proposed Work Plan include:

1. implementing an incentive or bonus zoning (density bonus) program for affordable housing units;
2. investigating registration and/or licensing of rental properties;
3. removing policy and regulatory barriers to special care facilities, secondary suites and rooming houses/single room occupancies;

4. considering a municipal affordable housing funding program;
5. reviewing how municipal real estate assets can support and leverage affordable housing; and
6. developing holistic approaches to affordable housing changes in especially vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Each item is further discussed in the Affordable Housing Work Plan, provided as Attachment B.

It is important to note that the priorities provided in this Work Plan are subject to change pending potential legislative amendments to the *HRM Charter*, including enabling inclusionary zoning. Furthermore, the items listed are priorities for the Municipality and its contribution to the Partnership's five year affordable housing targets. Staff will also continue to contribute to other initiatives related to affordable housing in HRM such as the Anti-Poverty Solutions Strategy, Public Safety Strategy, and Regional Council's January 30, 2018 request to assess an increased municipal role in Provincial housing programs.

Conclusion

HRM's participation in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership is an example of how different levels of government, together with private and non-profit organizations, can work collaboratively on shared interests. The Partnership recognizes that its affordable housing goals and targets cannot be achieved by any one organization and are instead intended to be realized through the combined efforts of all members. Through the proposed Affordable Housing Work Plan, HRM is clearly showing its contribution to the 5-year affordable housing targets and its active participation in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications of this report. The proposed Affordable Housing Work Plan can be carried out with existing resources, within the approved 2018-19 budget. Through this work plan, further financial analysis will need to be conducted on the context of Municipal Funding Incentives and Surplus Municipal Lands, outlined in Attachment B. Any future findings or recommendations requiring additional resources or funding will return to Regional Council in a separate report for its consideration.

RISK CONSIDERATION

There are no significant risks associated with the recommendation of this report. Items contained within the Affordable Housing Work Plan will require additional reports to Council where potential risk will be further assessed.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In preparing this report, staff have held discussions with the Housing and Homelessness Partnership. Should Council approve the report recommendation, further consultation will be completed with affordable housing providers and stakeholders.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

ALTERNATIVES

The Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee may recommend that Regional Council may choose to:

1. Amend the Affordable Housing Work Plan by directing staff to proceed with some items and not others. This may require a supplementary report from staff.
2. Direct staff to not proceed with the Affordable Housing Work Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Legislative Authority

Attachment B - Affordable Housing Work Plan

Attachment C - Affordable Housing Working Group 5-year Strategic Plan

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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Attachment A– Legislative Authority

By-Law M-200, Standards For Residential Occupancies By-law

Municipal Government Act

Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Housing

1. Planning documents must include housing policies addressing affordable housing, special-needs housing and rental accommodation. This includes assessing the need and supply of these housing types and developing solutions appropriate to the planning area. The definition of the terms affordable housing, special-needs housing and rental housing is left to the individual municipality to define in the context of its individual situation.

Halifax Regional Municipality Charter,

Part III, Powers, including:

Sale or lease of municipal property

- 63 (1)** The Municipality may sell or lease property at a price less than market value to a non-profit organization that the Council considers to be carrying on an activity that is beneficial to the Municipality.
- (2) A resolution to sell or lease property referred to in subsection (1) at less than market value shall be passed by at least a two thirds majority of the Council present and voting.
 - (3) Where the Council proposes to sell property referred to in subsection (1) valued at more than ten thousand dollars at less than market value, the Council shall first hold a public hearing respecting the sale.
 - (4) The Council shall advertise the public hearing at least twice, in a newspaper circulating in the Municipality, the first notice to appear at least fourteen days before the hearing.
 - (5) The notice of the public hearing shall include the date, time and place of the hearing, the location of the real property or a description of the tangible personal property, the estimated value of the property and the purpose of the sale. 2008, c. 39, s. 63.

Highway, housing and trails agreements

73 The Municipality may enter into and carry out agreements

- (b) with
 - (i) the Minister of Community Services or Canada Mortgage
 - (ii) any body corporate or agency having similar objects to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation with respect to projects pursuant to the National Housing Act (Canada);

Part IV, Finance, including:

Tax exemption by-law for organizations

- 89 (1)** The Council may, by policy, exempt from taxation, to the extent and under the conditions set out in the policy
- (a) property
 - (i) of a named registered Canadian charitable organization, and
 - (ii) that is used directly and solely for a charitable purpose;
 - (b) property of a non-profit community, charitable, fraternal, educational, recreational,

religious, cultural or sporting organization if, in the opinion of the Council, the organization provides a service that might otherwise be a responsibility of the Council;

- (2) The Council may, by policy, to the extent and under the conditions set out in the policy, provide that the tax payable with respect to all or part of the taxable commercial property of any non-profit community, charitable, fraternal, educational, recreational, religious, cultural or sporting organization named in the policy be reduced to the tax that would otherwise be payable if the property were residential property, inclusive of area rates.
- (3) A tax exemption or reduction pursuant to this Section must be shown on the tax bill and accounted for by the Municipality as an expenditure.
- (4) The Council may, in its discretion, refuse to grant an exemption or reduction pursuant to this Section and a policy made pursuant to this Section extends only to properties specifically named in the policy.
- (5) An exemption given pursuant to this Section does not apply to area rates unless specified in the policy.
- (6) A policy made pursuant to this Section has effect in the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which it is published, unless the policy sets a different effective date, including an effective date retroactive to the beginning of the current fiscal year. 2008, c. 39, s. 89.

Part VIII, Planning and Development, including:

Planning documents reasonably consistent

- 214 (1)** Planning documents adopted after the adoption of a statement of provincial interest that applies within the Municipality must be reasonably consistent with the statement.

Purpose of municipal planning strategy

- 228** The purpose of a municipal planning strategy is to provide statements of policy to guide the development and management of the Municipality and, to further this purpose, to establish
- (a) policies that address problems and opportunities concerning the development of land and the effects of the development;
 - (b) policies to provide a framework for the environmental, social and economic development within the Municipality;
 - (c) policies that are reasonably consistent with the intent of statements of provincial interest; and
 - (d) specify programs and actions necessary for implementing the municipal planning strategy.

Statements of policy in planning strategy

- 229 (1)** A municipal planning strategy may include statements of policy with respect to any or all of the following:
- (a) the goals and objectives of the Municipality for its future;
 - (b) the physical, economic and social environment of the Municipality;
 - (c) the protection, use and development of lands within the Municipality, including the identification, protection, use and development of lands subject to flooding, steep slopes, lands susceptible to subsidence, erosion or other geological hazards, swamps, marshes or other environmentally sensitive areas;
 - (d) any other matter relating to the physical, social or economic environment of the Municipality.

No action inconsistent with planning strategy

- 232 (1)** The Municipality may not act in a manner that is inconsistent with a municipal planning strategy.

Content of land-use by-law

- 235 (3)** A land-use by-law may

- (k) provide for incentive or bonus zoning in the HRM by Design Downtown Plan Area and the Centre Plan Area, including requirements for incentive or bonus zoning;
- (6)** Where the land-use by-law provides for incentive or bonus zoning within the Centre Plan Area, the land-use by-law must require the inclusion of affordable housing in a development in addition to any other requirements adopted by the Council, as the contribution for any incentive or bonus zoning applicable to the development.

Incentive or bonus zoning agreements

- 245A (1)** Where a municipal planning strategy so provides, a land-use by-law may provide for incentive or bonus zoning agreements respecting the HRM by Design Downtown Plan Area and the Centre Plan Area.

- (2)** A land-use by-law that provides for incentive or bonus zoning agreements must
- (a) identify the developments that are subject to an incentive or bonus zoning agreement;
 - (b) identify the area or areas where the developments may be located;
 - (c) set out the matters that the Council may consider before approving an incentive or bonus zoning agreement; and
 - (e) set out the method to be used to determine the contribution for incentive or bonus zoning.
- (3)** An incentive or bonus zoning agreement may
- (a) include plans or maps;
 - (b) provide for the time when the conditions under which the incentive or bonus zoning agreement may be discharged with or without the concurrence of the property owner;
 - (c) provide that, upon completion of the development or phases of the development, the incentive or bonus zoning agreement, or portions of it, may be discharged by the Council;
 - (d) provide that, where the development does not commence or is not completed within the specified time in the incentive or bonus zoning agreement, the incentive or bonus zoning agreement or portions of it may be discharged by the Council without the concurrence of the property owner;
 - (e) include any terms respecting incentive or bonus zoning and the external appearance of structures.
- (4)** Where the land-use by-law provides for incentive or bonus zoning agreements within the Centre Plan Area, the land-use by-law must require the inclusion of affordable housing in a development, in addition to any other requirements adopted by the Council, as the contribution for any incentive or bonus zoning applicable to the development.
- (5)** Notwithstanding subsection (4), the land-use by-law may provide that the Council may accept money in lieu of a contribution under this Section.
- (6)** The Municipality shall use any money accepted in lieu of a contribution under this Section for the purpose for which the money was accepted.

Affordable Housing Work Plan

Planning & Development

June 2018

In December 2016, Regional Council directed staff to develop a work plan to support the Housing and Homelessness Partnership five-year affordable housing targets of creating 3,000 new affordable homes and preserving 2,000 existing affordable homes. While concerted efforts from all partners are needed to meet the agreed upon targets, the following summarizes the specific Municipal project work staff will prioritize in addition to staff's continued support for the Partnership's shared initiatives.

Note: The below priorities may be adjusted should the Province amend the HRM Charter to enable HRM to use inclusionary zoning planning tools, or implement other new approaches for supporting affordable housing developments.

1. Density Bonus

The *HRM Charter* enables the Municipality to use the density bonus planning tool to allow an increase in built area in exchange for public amenities or benefits. While originally limited to downtown Halifax, in 2014, the Province extended HRM's ability to use the density bonus tool to the Centre Plan Area. At the time, the Province also required a portion of the bonus to be provided in the form of affordable housing. In spring 2018, the Province amended the *HRM Charter* to enable the Municipality to use the density bonus tool in all areas of HRM. To date, however, the density bonus tool has not yet been used outside of downtown or in support of affordable housing due to several factors, including the lack of an administrative approach for calculating and monitoring affordable housing benefits. Currently, there are draft provisions in Package A to support density bonusing in the Centre Plan Area. The Community Design Advisory Committee (CDAC) recently discussed the density bonusing material on June 27, 2018 and a recommendation from CDAC on the density bonusing approach is expected in the coming months.

Proposed Direction

- expand the ability to implement density bonusing in key areas within the Centre Plan Area and throughout HRM growth area
- where affordable housing is provided as part of a density bonusing agreement affordable units must
 - be reasonably dispersed throughout the development
 - be of similar design to the market units, although interior amenities may differ; and
 - remain affordable for a set amount of years
- money to be used for affordable housing may be collected and retained by the Municipality
- developers will be required to provide annual reports to the Municipality showing that the unit(s) are affordable and rented to low income tenants

Support for five-year affordable housing targets

- contributes to the goal of creating 1,000 new affordable private market rental units
- possibility to contribute to the goal of creating 250 affordable home ownership units through condo developments

Support Requested from Partnership

- collaboration from Housing Nova Scotia to provide advice on how to monitor the affordability of units provided by private developers

- potential collaboration with other members of the partnership to match units with not-for-profit housing providers

Monitoring Tools

- developers may be required to provide annual reports to the Municipality showing that the unit(s) are affordable and rented to low income tenants
- staff will keep a record regarding the number of affordable units created through the program
- further monitoring tools will be discussed in a separate report to Council

Progress to date

- On December 13, 2016 Regional Council directed staff to proceed with developing a bonus zoning program
- In February, 2018 proposed density bonus policies and regulations were included in the Centre Plan draft Package A

2. Registration and/or Licensing of Residential Rental Units

Through By-law M-200, Respecting Standards for Residential Occupancies, residential buildings are required to meet minimum health, safety, and liveability standards. M-200 cases are investigated by P&D Building Officials and HRFE Fire Prevention staff. M-200 complaints are submitted by the tenants based on conditions in their own units. If violations are found they are brought to the attention of the owner to remedy. In this common scenario, the tenants' complaint is unavoidably revealed to the owner. Some tenants do not feel comfortable making a complaint under this system for fear of reproach from their landlord. Other tenants may not be aware of their rights to file a complaint. Requiring registration or licencing of residential rental units could alleviate some of these issues as it could facilitate a system of proactive inspections and would make the landlord more accountable for the state of their residential units through publicly accessible reporting. The information gained by a residential registration program would provide valuable information that could be used to support evidence based decision making for affordable housing initiatives.

Proposed Direction

- In June 2016 Regional Council directed staff to consult a variety of housing stakeholders to discuss and potentially develop a residential building licensing model. Specific direction concerning a rental licensing and its potential use in HRM will be discussed in the resulting staff report.

Support for five-year affordable housing targets

- contributes to the goal of preserving and upgrading 2,000 existing units
- contributes to goal of reducing vacancy rates in key neighbourhoods through providing a database of existing rental units

Support Requested from Partnership

- Stakeholder engagement has taken place through a consultant and the findings will be discussed in the forthcoming staff report. HRM can work independently on this initiative and may seek additional feedback from the Partnership in the future.

Monitoring Tools

- Monitoring tools will be further assessed in a separate report to Council.

Progress to date

- June 2016, Regional Council directed staff to consult a variety of housing stakeholders to discuss and potentially develop a residential building licensing model.

- February through to May 2017, Stantec Consulting Ltd completed various stakeholder interviews, focus groups and a large workshop to discuss a potential residential building licensing model for HRM.
- Staff are currently drafting a report for Council to further discuss registration and/or licencing of rental properties.

3. Policy and Regulatory Barriers

While the Regional Plan supports a diversity of housing forms, HRM's various community plans and land use by-laws are inconsistent and complex and may be creating barriers to the types of affordable housing needed by key populations. Housing forms in need of review include:

- Special Care Facilities / Supportive Housing;
- Secondary Suites; and
- Single Room Occupancies.

There is currently little consistency in how such uses are defined and permitted through the various community plans and land use by-laws. In the case of some forms of Special Care Facilities / Supportive Housing, the use is further limited through outdated regulation that requires provincial licensing.

Proposed Direction

- build on the direction contained in the Regional Plan and consider permitting Special Care Facilities / Supportive Housing, Secondary Suites and Single Room Occupancies in zones that permit residential uses
- update the definitions of each use and provide consistent definitions in each of the community plans
- complete a review of each use and update policies and remove unnecessary and outdated policy and regulatory barriers
- work in close coordination with the Centre Plan and By-law Simplification initiatives to prepare regional wide MPS and LUB amendments

Support for five-year affordable housing targets

- contributes to the goal of creating 500 new secondary units
- contributes to the goal of creating 250 affordable home ownership
- contributes to goal to increase the number of licensed Single Room Occupancies
- contributes to removing barriers to housing developments geared towards key populations in need of affordable housing, including seniors and person with disabilities

Support Requested from Partnership

- HRM can work independently on addressing the policy and regulatory barriers. However, HRM will seek input from the members of the Partnership when conducting research and preparing recommendations to Council.

Monitoring Tools

- staff will track development permit applications for permitting Special Care Facilities / Supportive Housing and Secondary Suite developments and measure any increases in such applications
- staff will track the number of newly registered Single Room Occupancy uses
- further monitoring tools will be discussed in a separate report to Council

Progress to date

- August 2017, Council initiated the process to amend planning documents to simplify, consolidate and remove barriers to the development of special care facilities. Over the fall, staff reviewed land use regulations in other jurisdictions and consulted with stakeholders. Staff are currently drafting a recommendation report for Council.
- March 2018, Council initiated the process to amend planning documents to simplify, consolidate and remove barriers to the development of secondary suites. Staff are currently reviewing land use regulations and consulting with stakeholders.
- Secondary suites permit data suggests that there have been 106 permits issued for secondary or accessory apartments from Dec 2015 to July 2018 or roughly 21% of the stated goal of 500 units by 2022.
- Staff are in the process of reviewing current regulations regarding single room occupancies and are exploring approaches to expand the uses.

4. Municipal Funding Incentives

Government funding support for affordable housing developments is one of the most effective ways to reduce housing costs and increase the supply of affordable housing. While the Federal and Provincial governments currently play the leading role in providing funding incentives, many municipalities throughout Canada have implemented their own form of funding programs, such as waiving development fees or providing grants. Given Council's commitment to the affordable housing targets, staff will explore the development of a Municipal affordable housing funding program aimed at encouraging affordable housing developments in the Municipality. A variety of approaches will be reviewed to ensure any proposed program makes the most effective use of limited Municipal resources. This will include collaboration on initiatives already underway with the Department of Finance and Asset Management.

On January 30, 2018 Regional Council requested a staff report to assess options for requesting the transfer of the responsibility to operate and deliver housing programs and services within the boundaries of Halifax on behalf of the Province. As staff prepare the above requested report, the below proposed direction to review municipal funding incentives may change as staff open discussions with the Province, conduct further analysis and respond to additional Council direction.

Proposed Direction

- assess the effectiveness of December 2017 changes to By-law B-201, the Building Bylaw, allowing the waiving of building permit fees for projects undertaken by not-for-profits with funding from Housing Nova Scotia or CMHC
- review municipal funding programs adopted by other municipalities
- review, and assess the applicability of, Section 73 of the HRM Charter for entering into agreements with the Minister of Community Services or the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to support the provision of affordable housing in the municipality
- prepare a report to Council that outlines the above research findings, discusses the financial implications and effectiveness of various approaches in the HRM context and makes recommendations concerning the feasibility of providing municipal funding incentives for affordable housing

Support for five-year affordable housing targets

- potential to contribute to all sub-targets depending on how the program is designed and implemented

Support Requested from Partnership

- collaboration with Housing Nova Scotia or CMHC will be required to explore funding agreements
- input from the whole partnership to discuss best options for financial incentives and to establish criteria

Monitoring Tools

- tools to monitor Municipal funding incentives will be further discussed in the report to Council

Progress to date

- On November 14, 2017, Regional Council considered a staff report concerning municipal funding incentives and amended the Building By-law to exempt building permit fees for developments proposed by not-for-profit organizations or charities that include affordable units.

5. Surplus Municipal Lands

High land costs are one of the main barriers to affordable housing developments. For this reason, several municipalities throughout Canada have developed programs to make municipal owned lands available for affordable housing. Making lands available for affordable housing developments in HRM could have a significant impact in promoting new affordable housing developments. This will include collaboration with initiatives already underway with the Department of Finance and Asset Management.

Proposed Direction

- ensure that members of the Partnership are aware of any surplus municipal lands
- review how other municipalities leverage affordable housing projects through surplus municipal lands and determine if any practices could be implemented by HRM
- prepare a report to Council that outlines the above research findings, discusses the financial implications and effectiveness of various approaches in the HRM context, and makes recommendations concerning the feasibility of leveraging surplus Municipal lands for affordable housing developments

Support for five-year affordable housing targets

- contributes to the goal of creating 3,000 new affordable homes
- contributes to the goal to strengthen and build capacity for increased effectiveness of the housing sector

Support Request from Partnership

- input from affordable housing providers to determine what lands would be most desirable for affordable housing projects
- input from the whole partnership to discuss best options for enabling not-for-profit affordable housing providers to access to surplus municipal lands

Monitoring Tools

- tools to monitor the effectiveness of using surplus Municipal land to leverage affordable housing projects will be further discussed in the report to Council

Progress to date

- research on practices from other Canadian municipalities

6. Vulnerable Neighbourhoods

HRM contains a number of neighbourhoods that are especially in need of affordable housing. These needs are often related to broader community and social development issues. Over the summer of 2017, two Dalhousie University School of Planning students looked at the Halifax and Dartmouth neighbourhoods and highlighted 6 vulnerable neighbourhoods. As a result of this work, in October 2017 the Housing and Homelessness Partnership agreed to focus on homelessness and housing poverty solutions in the area known as “Between the Bridges” that encompasses Dartmouth North. The Partnership will focus on developing pilot projects specifically designed to the neighbourhood. These projects will be assessed by the Partnership and if deemed successful will be tailored to other neighbourhoods throughout HRM.

Proposed Direction

- identify issues in the Dartmouth North neighbourhood that contribute to housing poverty and homelessness
- develop one or more actions plans to address the identified issues; this may include policy changes, public investments, or other community development initiatives

Support for five-year affordable housing targets

- potential to contribute to all sub-targets depending on the community’s needs and plan of action

Support Request from Partnership

- input from the whole partnership to identify issues and determine action plans and methods for implementation

Monitoring Tools

- tools to monitor programs and pilot projects will be tailored to the specific project

Progress to date

- over the summer of 2017, 6 communities in Halifax and Dartmouth were highlighted as vulnerable neighbourhoods
- October 2017, the Housing and Homelessness Partnership agreed to focus on homelessness and housing poverty solutions in the area known as “Between the Bridges” located in Dartmouth North
- the non-profit group, Between the Bridges has been operating in Dartmouth North for over two years and is currently the lead organization working with Dartmouth North as a vulnerable community
- staff continue to be engage Between the Bridges in their work along with a number of other stakeholders, including Public Health, the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and the Halifax Regional Police



FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

Affordable Housing Working Group

Revised: November 13, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Housing and Homelessness Partnership is a multi-stakeholder coalition committed to working together to put an end to homelessness and housing poverty in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Established in 2013, the Partnership brings together eight influential organizations to coordinate their efforts and bring real change. The group has one common agenda: to collectively set priorities and change the landscape for people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or living in a home they can't afford or that is not suitable for their needs.

To help achieve its ambitious goals, the Partnership has created two working groups: the Homelessness Working Group (HWG) and the Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG). The mandate of the AHWG is to put an end to housing poverty by leveraging the influence and capacity of each partner to upgrade, preserve and expand the existing stock in both market and non-market affordable housing.

This strategic plan has been developed by members of the AHWG and is based on approximately a year of research and consultation with stakeholder groups and a wide array of community members to determine key issues and housing gaps. The results are contained in two important reports:

- Housing Poverty: Putting Faces to the Numbers (2015). Affordable Housing Working Group.
- Halifax Housing Needs Assessment (2015). SHS Consulting.

The plan is intended to guide efforts of the Housing and Homelessness Partnership for the next five years with task teams developed to work on specific outcomes. It identifies key strategic priorities and measurable outcomes to address existing and expected housing gaps across the housing continuum. Priorities will be subsequently identified. It is assumed that while some actions may be carried within existing agency mandates, others may require approval through regular business planning processes.

The strategic plan may be periodically updated to reflect new information, and the Affordable Housing Working Group will provide, at minimum, annual updates to the Partnership on progress made. For more information on the goals and objectives of the Homelessness Working Group, please visit: <http://www.housingandhomelessness.ca/>

HOUSING GAPS

Members of the Housing and Homelessness Partnership are committed to providing affordable housing that meets a variety of housing needs for the residents of Halifax. The members are: Affordable Housing Association Nova Scotia; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Halifax Regional Municipality; Housing Nova Scotia; Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia; IWK Health Centre; Nova Scotia Health Authority; and United Way Halifax. The housing market can be viewed as a continuum (Fig.1) where the supply of housing responds to the range of housing demand in a community. However, due to social, economic, and geographic factors, the full range of housing needs in a community is not always met in the private housing market. This is particularly the case for individuals and families with low incomes or persons with special housing needs. Instead, the housing needs of these individuals and families are often met by non-market housing provided by the public and not-for-profit sectors.

A 2015 study by the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives and United Way Halifax established the living wage for Halifax at \$20.10 an hour to ensure a standard of living that promotes well-being and social inclusion. The study also concluded that if more affordable housing was available to families, the hourly living wage could be lower.



Figure 1: Housing Continuum

Based on the 2011 census, the Halifax housing universe accommodated a total of 165,155 dwelling units – 103,670 owned and 55,358 rented. This includes 6,097 non-market units (4% of the total). The number of dwelling units in the Municipality increased by 14.3% from 2001 to 2011 and based on population projections it is expected that over the next 10 years approximately 20,000 new housing units will be built in Halifax.

The 2015 Housing Needs Assessment describes in detail the nature of current housing supply, need, and demand in Halifax, and what need and demand will look like over the next 10 years. The study confirmed the following overall trends in population and housing need:

- Shift in residential development to urban communities;
- Shift in residential development to multi-unit dwellings and rental stock;

- Population is aging and will require appropriate housing options in addition to aging in place;
- Shift to smaller households will require smaller units;
- Demand for ownership housing is expected to continue at a lower rate;
- Need for non-market housing options will continue and is expected to increase.

The report identified the following housing gaps:

- 20% of the households in the Municipality (30,030 in 2011) earning \$29,566 or less in 2014 are not able to afford average market rent and may require non-market housing if they are to spend no more than 30% of their income on housing¹.
- Households in need of non-market housing include a high proportion of lone parent households, one-person households, recent immigrants, persons with a disability, Aboriginal-led households, youth households, and senior-led households.
- There is a need for a range of housing options throughout the Municipality but the Regional Centre has the greatest number and proportion of households facing affordability challenges.
- There is a need for a sufficient supply of rental and ownership housing options affordable to low and moderate income households (those earning \$29,567-\$52,266 per year).

Currently non-market housing units provide a safe and affordable place to live for approximately 6,000 households in Halifax: 4,184 in public housing units, 1,194 in co-operative housing units, and 566 receiving rent supplements. As stated above the need is expected to increase.

According to Metro Regional Housing Authority, there are approximately 1,181 seniors, 666 families and 386 individuals waiting for a public housing unit in Halifax. The Housing Needs Assessment indicated that approximately 20% of the region's households may require non-market housing and the need is expected to increase as average house prices and market rents increase and as the population of seniors with low, fixed incomes are pushed out of the private housing market. The following illustration depicts housing demand and supply along the continuum.

¹ Non-market housing support may include rent supplements unless the households are living in homes which are fully paid off.

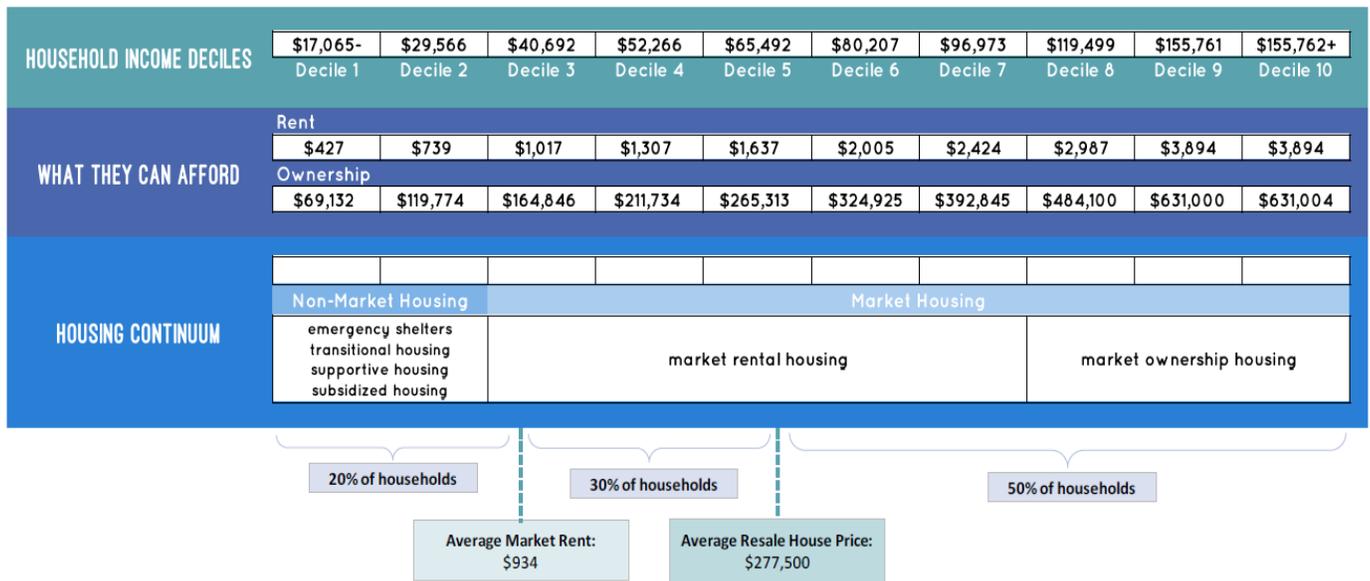


Fig.1: Income and Housing Continuum for Halifax CMA; 2014

Collective Beliefs and Commitments

This strategic plan is influenced by a set of guiding principles adopted in the Housing and Homelessness Partnership Charter:

1. The Partnership is committed to applying a social determinants of health lens to examining the issues and developing solutions.
2. We believe that working together differently for revolutionary change involves finding systemic solutions that span traditional boundaries. We see this as a prerequisite to collective success and will look at changing our respective policies and practices to enable it.
3. We will adopt outcome-oriented indicators and other measures for monitoring and reporting. We will all own each of the outcomes equally, choosing targets that mark our progress.
4. We believe that transparent communications and evidence-informed decision-making will be key to doing our work differently and gaining the trust and buy-in of all stakeholders.

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The three levels of government are members of the Housing and Homelessness Partnership. Representatives from Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), Housing Nova Scotia (HNS), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) have contributed to the development of this strategic plan and ensured its alignment with their legislated responsibilities as well as corporate strategies. The Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia (AHANS) and the Investment Property Owners Association of Nova Scotia (IPOANS) are also core members of the working group. See Appendix A for details on each organization and their authorities. The successful implementation of the Plan will depend on the engagement of all partners and of the broader community.

DEFINITIONS

Affordable Housing: The Partnership recognizes a range of affordability levels. It defines affordable housing as housing which is modest in terms of floor area and amenities, based on household needs and community norms, is priced at or below average market housing rents or prices for comparable housing in a community or area.

Core Housing Need: In Canada, it is generally accepted that households who have to spend more than 30% of their before-tax annual household income to pay median rent or alternative local accommodation and whose home is not appropriate* for their needs are in core housing need.

* **Appropriate housing:** Housing that meets standards of affordability, adequacy, and suitability:

- **Affordable** housing costs less than 30 per cent of before-tax household income. For renters, shelter costs include rent and any payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services. For owners, shelter costs include mortgage payments (principal and interest), property taxes, and any condominium fees, along with payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services.
- **Adequate** housing does not require any major repairs, according to residents.
- **Suitable** housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.

Non-market housing: is made up of temporary accommodation, which includes emergency shelters and transitional housing units, as well as permanent housing, which includes supportive or special needs housing and subsidized or public housing units. While there is always a need for temporary, emergency accommodation in a community, the future focus of non-market housing is on permanent accommodation.

Market housing: includes rental and ownership options in the private housing market. While some of these units may be affordable to lower income households, most of these units are targeted to moderate and higher income households.

Low-income household means households in the lowest 20% of the income distribution for the region.

Moderate income household means households in the 30% - 50% of the income distribution for the region.

GOALS AND TARGETS

The Affordable Housing Working Group Strategic Plan includes three main strategic goals. These goals were developed through a comprehensive planning process including: facilitated goal setting sessions; consultation with key stakeholders; and the completion of a *Housing Needs Assessment* study.

To achieve each goal, a set of critical strategic objectives was developed with their supporting key activities. To measure progress against each goal, key performance indicators (KPI) have been identified and are reflected in this plan.

Reporting on the Plan will be conducted at minimum annually, and the strategic plan may be periodically revised to reflect progress and new information.

GOAL 1: INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS THAT MEET PEOPLE’S NEEDS

As demand for affordable rental housing outstrips supply, fewer Haligonians are able to find an affordable home that meets their needs. As we’ve seen in recent cases of rooming houses, many people living in poverty are forced to choose between feeding themselves or paying rent for what are often overcrowded, unsafe, and substandard living accommodation. While subsidized housing made available through Housing Nova Scotia, co-operative housing and other non-profit housing landlords is helping thousands of families and individuals, there are still too many waiting for their next home.

Creating new market and non-market affordable housing is necessary to meet the demand of today’s and future generations. Creating more affordable housing will not only support our most vulnerable neighbours, but will also foster a healthier and more inclusive community. To provide homes that are within the reach of low-income residents, partners will work together along with key stakeholders to further invest in affordable housing through a long-term, coordinated framework.

Strategic objectives:

1.1. Reduce barriers to affordable housing development

With limited funds available for social housing, the private sector is key to any sustainable solution to address the shortage of affordable housing in Halifax. In fact, many developers have long expressed a desire to build more affordable housing but point to the many hurdles they face.

There are a number of challenges that stand in the way of attracting private development of affordable rental housing. NIMBYism (Not in my backyard), outdated planning policies, lengthy approval processes, and lack of incentives to create affordable housing are often considered the principal road blocks. The Municipality is also experiencing challenges with the licensing of its building officials. With this in mind, to help foster the creation of affordable housing, we will:

- Advance key areas of planning policy development and research to include smaller units, secondary suites, laneway housing and row housing, rooming houses and group homes.
- Develop recommendations for legislative changes required to implement density bonusing and enable inclusionary zoning and community land trust models.
- Develop a proposal for the administration of any non-market and below-market units resulting from density bonusing or inclusionary zoning.

- Involve the private sector to identify barriers and solutions
- Identify government-owned land for strategic and innovative development opportunities of mixed-income housing and supporting public amenities. Selection to be informed by the Housing Needs Assessment.
- Facilitate development process by expediting licensing of building officials.

1.2. Increase supply of non-market housing

Non-market housing is available to Halifax residents who can't afford to pay market-level rents or for whom the market doesn't always provide housing options, such as seniors on fixed-income, lone parents and persons with disabilities. These subsidized housing units have received a direct financial subsidy from government programs. In Halifax, there are 6,097 non-market housing units located throughout the city, consisting of:

- Public Housing – owned and operated by the provincial government.
- Non-Profit Housing – owned and operated by non-profit organizations.
- Co-operative Housing – owned and operated by association of residents.
- Urban Native Housing – owned and operated by non-profit organizations and targeted to aboriginal people.
- Rent Supplements – offered through the provincial government and managed by the Regional Housing Authorities.
- Ownership Housing – operated by Habitat for Humanity Nova Scotia.

As pointed out in the Halifax Housing Needs Assessment study, approximately 20% of Halifax's households require non-market housing and this need is expected to increase. A healthy supply of non-market rental housing is needed throughout the city to meet the needs of low-income citizens. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Encourage expansion of non-market housing by supporting the non profit sector.
- Explore opportunities for non-market housing to leverage their existing capital assets in order to develop additional affordable housing units.

1.3. Provide a greater diversity of housing options to match the changing demographic profile of Halifax

Households have varying housing needs that change over time. They may need various types and sizes of housing, from large single family homes to accessory suites and single-room occupancies. In some areas regulations no longer meet the housing needs of today's population. Meeting the widening range of housing needs of our aging population will call for more options and greater affordability. As proven in other jurisdictions, housing options such as secondary suites can not only increase the supply of affordable housing, they can assist the homeowner, as well, by serving as a mortgage helper. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Develop recommendations for increasing the flexibility within current land use plans and by-laws to increase housing options that meet community needs, including options for secondary suites, laneway housing, row housing and micro-units, internal conversions etc.
- Review land use policies and by-laws for inconsistent definitions and restrictions on licensed group homes.
- Review existing programs for opportunities to better serve large and culturally diverse families.
- Identify opportunities to increase housing accessibility by promoting universal design standards.
- Facilitate opportunities to increase the supply of student housing

1.4. Preserve and offset the loss of Single Room Occupancies (SROs)

Single Room Occupancies (SROs) are one of the least costly forms of transitional and permanent accommodation available to low-income Canadians, often protecting vulnerable people from homelessness. In Halifax, where many neighbourhoods are adjacent to universities and colleges, property owners may subdivide houses or build homes with multiple bedrooms to rent singly to students. The number of licensed SROs declined in HRM from 136 in 2007 to 17 in 2015. It is also known that many "quasi-rooming houses" operate without a license, some of which may not comply with land use regulations. To preserve and offset the loss of SROs we will:

- Complete research on the status and policy options for rooming houses.
- Adopt a protocol for emergencies and closures.

- Increase public and landlord education on M-100 standards and available funding programs to improve health and safety conditions.
- Review land use by-laws related to SROs.
- Register and monitor SROs.
- Explore opportunities to connect rehabilitation of rooming houses with employment and community development programs.

1.5. Preserve and offset the loss of affordable housing

While the creation of new affordable housing is important to meet the current needs, investment in increasing supply must be balanced with preservation and enhancement of existing units. This means ensuring they are well-maintained and are still serving the best purpose. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Preserve long-term viability of affordable market and non market housing.
- Address the remaining Urban Renewal Agreements and lease agreements by improving coordination between HRM, Housing Nova Scotia and CMHC.
- Develop a public database of by-law infractions.

GOAL 2: REDUCE THE NUMBER OF RESIDENTS LIVING IN CORE HOUSING NEED

Reducing the number of individuals and families who require more than 30% of their total gross household income to cover their housing costs is a key priority of the Affordable Housing Working Group. We acknowledge that successful completion of the objectives identified under Goal 1 will have a significant impact on achieving our mission. However, we believe the following strategic objectives can further help reduce the number of households in core housing need.

Strategic Objectives:

2.1. Identify revitalization opportunities in areas with highest concentration of residents in core housing need

Concentrations of low-income housing in Halifax are relatively small compared to other Canadian urban centres but they do exist. The issues are compounded by lack of employment opportunities, services and community amenities such as parks and grocery stores. While the outcomes of neighbourhood revitalization programs and mixed-income development continue to be debated, the Affordable Housing Working

Group believes that our first efforts should be focused in areas of greatest need. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Determine what role the Partnership can play to support the Province of Nova Scotia's *Between the Bridges* initiative.
- Review benefits and opportunities to implement a Circle of Care approach based on collaborative partnerships to improve community liveability and well-being.

2.2. Assist low-income residents to remain in stable housing

To prevent evictions and stabilize housing we will:

- Conduct a needs assessment study to identify the most appropriate housing solution.
- Identify opportunities to expand the rental supplement program.
- Explore solutions to prevent evictions due to short-term financial crisis.

2.3. Improve energy efficiency of older affordable housing units

Halifax residents pay twice as much as people living in Winnipeg for their electricity. Haligonians have some of the highest power rates in the country, which has a direct impact on the overall housing affordability. Obviously, houses built to conserve energy are more affordable in the long run because of lower operating costs, but what do you do when your housing stock is old and not energy efficient? Already, many initiatives exist to help reduce consumption and the overall costs of home energy. We want to see even more low-income renters paying less for utility costs and, where utility is included in rent, the expectation is that landlords make upgrades and pass on the savings to their tenants. Improving energy efficiency makes sense and that's why we will:

- Work with Efficiency Nova Scotia and other partners to create a plan to reduce the burden of growing utility costs on low-income tenants and homeowners, including a monitoring program to ensure affordability.

2.4. Help seniors live independently in their own homes longer

There are many benefits of aging in place. For seniors, being able to live safely and

comfortably in their own Halifax homes allows them to maintain a familiar environment and valuable social networks. It also promotes physical and mental well-being as seniors can remain active longer. The fiscal reality of the province and growing demand for elder care means that government will continue to shift its focus on in-home care. Making sure seniors can continue to afford living in their home or pay their rent is a key priority of this group. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Review existing programs to make sure they meet the demand.
- Create more awareness around existing assistance for seniors, in particular among diverse communities.

2.5. Increase support to low-income households

It is widely recognized that housing is a key determinant of health. When safe, affordable and accessible housing is supported by health, justice and community services, individuals and families often benefit from a better quality of life. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Examine the Circle of Care approach of collaborative partnerships to improve community liveability and well-being.

GOAL 3: FOSTER A STRONG HOUSING SECTOR

Members of the Housing and Homelessness Partnership believe in the strength of collaboration. The size and urgency of the problem means that government cannot solve it alone. To make a real difference in our community, we must join forces – citizens, community, businesses and government. This means being more effective in targeting help to the most vulnerable in our communities and finding sustainable solutions. We believe that the achievement of our ambitious goal of eliminating housing poverty in Halifax can only be done by fostering a strong housing sector and working effectively together.

Strategic Objectives:

3.1. Strengthen and build capacity for increased effectiveness in the housing sector

Non-profit housing providers play a vital role in meeting the growing housing need of low-income households in Halifax. Like their government counterpart, non-profit housing providers are operating in an environment of limited resources. Ensuring the long-term viability of these organizations and supporting their efforts to increase their efficiency and effectiveness have been identified by the Affordable Housing Working Group as a key priority. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Engage housing sector stakeholders in a dialogue on potential solutions and systemic changes, including planning for the end of social housing agreements.
- Review best practices and make recommendations to improve and strengthen the social housing system.
- Develop and implement capacity-building opportunities based on identified needs.
- Review CHRA’s “Sector Transformation Initiative” and get a better understanding on how it can benefit Halifax social housing providers.
- Develop opportunities to increase cultural competency in the housing sector.

3.2. Facilitate better knowledge sharing among housing sector participants

Successful implementation of the housing strategies required to achieve the goals and objectives of this strategic plan can only occur with effective housing sector participation. Governments, businesses and non-profit organizations each possess a wealth of experience and knowledge that allow them to meet their own strategic objectives. Imagine how much more we could do if that information was shared and used towards a common goal? To start building more capacity and learning within the housing sector, we will:

- Increase consultation and information exchange among all levels of government, non-profit and private sectors.

3.3 Collect better information to inform decision-makers and policy developers

To inform and improve its capacity to put an end to housing poverty in Halifax, the Affordable Housing Working Group requires the best available evidence from research, practice and experience. CMHC, Housing Nova Scotia and HRM collect a wealth of information related to the local housing market and latest research, but information gaps do exist. It is a priority to collect all the data relevant to the work of the working group now and in the future. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Monitor progress of housing need, including types of housing, priority populations and geographic areas.

3.4 Implement a recognition program to encourage and promote accomplishments in the housing sector

The Affordable Housing Working Group understands the urgency of housing need as well as the incredible contribution that well-designed and well-built housing can make to building walkable, beautiful and sustainable communities. We would like to promote and recognize approaches to housing development and re-development that integrates social (including heritage), environmental and economic considerations. As with all of our initiatives, we know that it is only through collaboration that we can create a more sustainable future. To achieve this objective, we will:

- Implement an awards program to recognize innovation and excellence in affordable residential developments and associated programs that integrates social, environmental and economic considerations.
- Host ideas competitions to help implement recommendations of the Affordable Housing Working Group.

APPENDIX A

The following table demonstrates each organization and their authorities:

Government/ Key Agency	Legislated Authority	Mandate	Key Authorities
Federal – CMHC	National Housing Act CMHC Act http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/N-11/	Purpose in relation to financing for housing, is to promote housing affordability and choice, to facilitate access to, and competition and efficiency in the provision of, housing finance, to protect the availability of adequate funding for housing at low cost, and generally to contribute to the well-being of the housing sector in the national economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing loan insurance, guarantee and protection; • Rental housing; • Land assembly; land acquisition and leasing; • Repair, rehabilitation and conversion of housing; • Home ownership; • Housing research; • Loans for student housing; public housing; new community development.
Provincial – Housing Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Housing Act (Housing Act. R.S., c. 211, s. 1). http://nslegislature.ca/legc/statutes/housing.htm	The purpose of the Act is to improve and increase the affordable housing stock of the Province	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter into agreements with the Government of Canada, the government of a province or a municipality or an agency of any of them, or any person for the purpose of this Act; • Municipal agreements and funding; • Acquisition, administration and sale of property (including expropriation); • Borrowing; broad powers to undertake housing studies, establish, operate and maintain housing and urban renewal projects; • Establish housing authorities, developing regulations (including respecting limitation of municipal taxes by municipalities in respect of property owned by a company or corporation established for the purposes of this Act); • Plan, design, build, own, maintain, manage and operate housing projects etc; encourage and promote the development of a variety of housing projects.
Municipal – HRM Planning & Development	Halifax Charter http://nslegislature.ca/legc/sol/sol.htm	Develop and maintain safe and viable communities, provide land use planning and set tax rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary responsibility for land use planning, development charges, density and bonus zoning; • Property taxation; • Enforcement of Building Code; • Regulation of minimum standards; • Acquire and sale property (including less than market value); • Acquire a property that contains a vacant building if the building is boarded up for a period of time that exceeds the length of time that it may be boarded up under a by-law); • May issue community grants and provide tax exemptions to non-profit organizations; • May provide tax exemptions to low-income property owners; • May enter into agreements the Minister of Community Services or Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation with

AHANS		<p>AHANS was established in the mid-1980's and registered as a non-profit society in 1990. AHANS is directly involved in building affordable housing and in upgrading, protecting and better utilizing the province's existing stock. Under the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) AHANS is the community-based advisory board (CAB) for HRM and for rural Nova Scotia (the RRAB).</p>	<p>respect to housing projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding, through our management of the Federal Government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy; • Advice, counseling and experience regarding systemic problem solving.
IPOANS		<p>IPOANS is an organization dedicated to representing the interests of private residential property owners/managers and developers in the province and providing members with services of substantial benefit. IPOANS is focused on legislative lobbying and advocacy work and has established itself as the "voice" of rental property owners in Nova Scotia.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing access to existing rental apartments and supportive property owners; • Providing insight and expertise regarding property management, operations and development.
United Way		<p>United Way is an influential voice for change through public policy and courageous leadership. With a proven track record that extends beyond funding, it is a valued partner on homelessness and affordable housing and a catalyst for neighborhood renewal. It is at the centre of a cultural shift toward healthy, active lifestyles. Founded in 1925, United Way works with community partners to build sustainable solutions for the future while also supporting services to improve lives today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner, Convener, Advocate, Funder and Researcher relative to innovative housing programs so that our community has a range of supportive and affordable housing in all areas; • Effective, appropriate advocacy and flexible funding capabilities focused on outcomes.
Nova Scotia Health Authority		<p>The Nova Scotia Health Authority partners with the IWK Health Centre to plan and deliver primary care, community health, and acute care. They also provide the highest level of specialized services to residents from other parts of the Atlantic region. Their work extends beyond hospitals and health centres, and clinics. You can find their health teams in schools, downtown cores, and other community settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing access to appropriate clinical support services; • Access to expertise for program evaluation.