



**CITY OF HAMILTON**  
**COMMUNITY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**Housing Services Division**

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	October 24, 2016
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	City Comments Regarding the National Housing Strategy Consultation (CES16051) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Kirstin Maxwell 905-546-2424 ext. 3846
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Julie Western Set Director, Housing Services Community & Emergency Services Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

**RECOMMENDATION**

- (a) That the City of Hamilton’s submission regarding the consultation on a national housing strategy, attached as Appendix A to Report CES16051, be endorsed; and,
- (b) That the Mayor correspond with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, requesting that they take full consideration of the City of Hamilton’s position on the national housing strategy.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The federal government is consulting on the development of a national housing strategy. This follows a federal commitment for additional funds for housing in the 2016 budget. After systematic disengagement and a long hiatus, the federal government is now re-engaging in housing issues. Given that advocating for the creation of a national housing strategy is the first strategy in the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, this is welcome news for Hamilton. With renewed provincial commitment to housing issues, this means that for the first time in a long time, all three levels of government are committed to working together to address housing issues.

This report outlines the framework for the national housing strategy and proposes a City submission to the consultation. The submission is provided in Appendix A to Report CES16051 and is structured to follow the consultation questions provided.

There are four main themes proposed for the national housing strategy:

- Sustainability
- Affordability

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- Inclusivity
- Flexibility

The strategy will work towards greater sustainability of Canada's housing system, affordability improvements, inclusivity for all, greater flexibility and greater choice for Canadians. It will foster self-reliance of individuals and organizations, and will be evidence-based. The strategy will better coordinate housing programs, legislation, and institutions between all levels of government. What has been proposed to date indicates that this will be a comprehensive strategy.

Hamilton's submission for national housing strategy focuses on:

- The need for increased financial commitment;
- The need for better supports to enable people to remain housed, and better coordination between programs that improve supply or affordability, and those that provide supports;
- Improved coordination of legislation, programs, and services between all levels of government. This is particularly important in light of the provincial housing system changes that are underway and proposed;
- The need for new affordable rental development; and,
- Specific programmatic responses to Canada's housing issues, such as Housing First to address homelessness.

The attached submission was informed by the extensive consultation process in the development of the City's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, consultation conducted by the Housing Services Division since adoption of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan, and specific consultations for the purposes of the national housing strategy.

***Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable***

**FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Financial: There are no financial implications of Report CES16051.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications of Report CES16051.

Legal: There are no legal implications of Report CES16051.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Since the 1990's, the federal government has progressively withdrawn its role in housing and its support of housing programs. Coupled with a similar provincial withdrawal, this has left municipalities struggling to meet the housing needs of their

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citizens, and has reduced the ability of the Canadian housing system to meet the needs of Canadians. While there has recently been a greater federal financial contribution to housing in the 2016 federal budget, the federal government is still allowing some of its financial commitments to social housing lapse. Page 4 of the submission (attached as Appendix A to Report CES16051) further details the impacts of the end of operating agreements.

The federal government is now in the process of developing a national housing strategy. Coupled with its recent financial commitment to housing, this indicates that the federal government is now re-engaging in housing issues. This re-engagement is welcome news for Hamilton. With the renewed provincial commitment to housing issues, this means that for the first time in a long time, all three levels of government are committed to working together to address housing issues.

In 2013, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities ran the Fix the Housing Crunch Campaign to advocate for a funded national housing strategy and to raise awareness of other housing issues. On December 11, 2013, Council passed as part of a motion,

*“That Council endorse the Federation of Municipalities’ (FCM) housing campaign and urge the Minister of Employment and Social Development to develop a long term plan for housing that puts core investments on solid ground, increases predictability, protects Canadians from the planned expiry of \$1.7 billion in social housing agreements and ensures a healthy stock of affordable rental housing for Canadians.”*

At that same meeting, Council endorsed the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for Hamilton (Report CS11017(c)). This was the culmination of three years of work in collaboration with community partners to develop outcomes, targets, strategies and actions to address affordable housing needs and homelessness in the community. The first strategy of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is to advocate for a national housing strategy.

The federal government is in the process of developing a national housing strategy. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) began consultation on the strategy in the early summer.

Comments on the national housing strategy consultation were due October 21. Staff prepared comments based on the strategies and principles set out in the Action Plan and confirmed by consultation with the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group. Council’s endorsement of the submission will be forwarded separately.

Results of the consultation are expected to be released for National Housing Day, which takes place on November 22, 2016.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS**

None

## **RELEVANT CONSULTATION**

The Housing and Homelessness Planning Group is a group of community partners who were brought together to provide advice on the development of the City's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. The group continues to provide direction regarding implementation of the plan. They represent a wide range of housing-related sectors in the community, including but not limited to: food banks, emergency shelters, social housing providers, aboriginal community, newcomers, tenants and landlord associations. This group also includes City staff representing the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the Planning and Economic Development Department.

The Housing and Homelessness Planning Group was consulted in the development of the submission attached as Appendix A to Report CES16051 and all members were encouraged to contribute follow-up comments. Further, this submission was derived from discussions of the Planning Group over several years of meetings.

Staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department were consulted on the National housing Strategy discussion questions.

Staff from the Public Health Department were consulted on the section regarding bed bugs.

## **ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION**

CMHC has proposed some elements of the national housing strategy. These include a vision, key principles, as well as key themes and subthemes as follows:

### **Vision**

All Canadians have access to housing that meets their needs and they can afford. Housing is the cornerstone of building sustainable, inclusive communities and a strong Canadian economy where we can prosper and thrive.

### **Ten Core Principles**

#### *Results-based*

- **Environmentally sustainable:** we want housing to contribute to a cleaner environment and support a greener tomorrow
- **Performance tied to results:** we measure our performance; evaluate our outcomes; and base our decisions on the best evidence of what works

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*OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.*

*OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.*

*OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.*

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- **Self-reliance:** we seek to support greater self-reliance for individuals, families and housing providers, where possible
- **Fiscally responsible:** we seek fiscally responsible housing responses and leverage support from others
- **Flexibility:** we recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to addressing housing needs
- **Community-centred:** we believe housing should be community-based and consider access to public transit, proximity to work, amenities and services
- **Economic stability:** we want a stronger housing system that supports stability in the Canadian economy and helps withstand fluctuations in the economic cycle

### *Process-based*

- **Innovation:** we encourage innovative new approaches
- **People-centred:** we remember that people are at the heart of all housing solutions
- **Collaboration:** we value collaboration and build respectful relationships

### **Themes**

The federal government has put forward the following themes and subthemes for discussion:

### *Sustainability*

- Environmentally sustainable and resilient homes that contribute to Canada's climate change goals
- Building a stronger affordable housing sector
- Housing is the foundation for a better quality of life
- A stronger housing system that contributes to economic growth and financial stability
- Supportive institutional and regulatory frameworks

### *Affordability*

- Affordable financing and access to affordable lands for rental housing
- Affordability pressures in Canada's largest cities and certain areas
- New affordable rental supply, including through increased private sector involvement and maintenance/preservation of existing stock
- Access to housing for first-time homebuyers

### *Inclusivity*

- Distinct housing needs of low-income and vulnerable Canadians, such as seniors, newcomers, people with disabilities and homeless people
- Social housing renewal and socially-inclusive communities

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*Flexibility*

- Use of data and best evidence to achieve desired outcomes
- A continuum of housing options to address different housing needs and markets across Canada

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION**

None

**ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**Community Engagement & Participation**

*Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.*

**Healthy and Safe Communities**

*Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.*

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix A to Report CES16051: City of Hamilton Submission for the Long Term National Housing Strategy Consultation