

Submission to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development: ***Toward a Comprehensive, Sustainable National Housing Strategy***

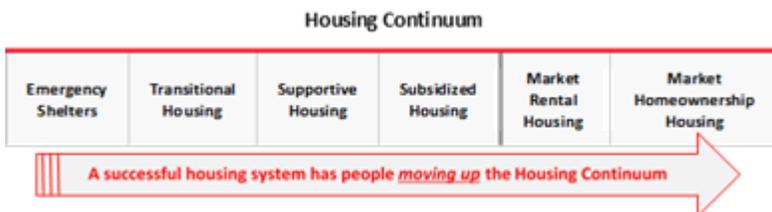
Purpose

Members of the Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) develop, build, redevelop and renovate Canada's residential communities and houses. They produce low-rise and high-rise forms, and both ownership and rental developments. These range across the spectrum from shelters to social housing to custom-built homes to complete mixed-use communities. As a result, the industry has deep, evidence-based insights into Canada's housing situation and housing market dynamics, including challenges, successes and future opportunities.

This brief puts forward policy and partnership proposals relating to the federal government's development of a National Housing Strategy. Establishing such a Strategy represents a major opportunity to consider how best to support all Canadians, from those with special needs, to those with limited ability to access to market-based housing, but also those who could potentially be shut out of market-based participation in the future.

Proposed Scope of a National Housing Strategy

A complete and comprehensive National Housing Strategy must address the full housing continuum, from social housing to market homeownership and everything in between. It should focus on the challenge of creating a housing system where people can move up the housing continuum towards increased independence and self-sufficiency.



Such a comprehensive strategy will support access to housing people can afford along with the basic services they require, through the following:

About CHBA

The Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA) is the voice of Canada's residential construction industry.

Our 8,500 member companies include new home builders, developers, renovators, service providers, trades and more, engaged in residential land development, construction and renovation of housing as well as associated community amenities. They supply through development-related taxes in the order of \$4.5 billion annually toward costs of building municipal infrastructure.

CHBA's members are deeply committed to ensuring that Canadians can achieve their housing aspirations. Through a variety of avenues, they also regularly "give back" to their local communities.

- While addressing social housing needs in a robust way, a true national housing strategy must address all aspects of the housing spectrum. It must address both affordable (social) housing requirements, and market-based housing. Indeed, demand for social housing cannot be alleviated unless market housing affordability is also addressed. Not fixing market housing affordability will send more people the wrong way on the continuum.
- Investment in social housing will continue to be key. However, given the very high costs of constructing, maintaining, upgrading and operating social housing, innovative solutions that leverage more capital and innovative financing from more players, and that enable people to transition out of social housing units into market-based housing (subsidized or otherwise), will be key to an effective and sustainable solution.
- CHBA has several specific recommendations regarding innovative solutions for social housing, housing allowances or benefits, market rental housing options, and homeownership assistance.
- It is important that governments not give the impression that supporting social housing will solve the affordability problem. These are two important but separate issues. Providing more options and solutions for those in housing need is essential, but this will in no way resolve affordability. Addressing market based affordability in and of itself is essential, and doing so will also reduce demand on the social housing system.

In this wider context, it is important that the strategy concern itself with whether young Canadians and new Canadians can buy or rent their first home. Improving affordability of market-based housing must be a key element of a National Housing Strategy. ([A detailed assessment of housing affordability and CHBA's recommended solutions](#) has also been submitted to the National Housing Strategy.) Over 94% of Canadian households currently live in privately-owned homes of different tenures. To facilitate Canadians moving up the housing continuum rather than falling back into need for public subsidies, it is essential to address market rental and homeownership affordability issues in our communities.

The strategy should also recognize the desire of existing home owners to maintain the value of their largest single investment. Housing accounts for more than \$4 trillion in equity and savings in the national economy, in addition to its primary function of providing shelter.

In brief, to fully address Canada's housing challenges, a National Housing Strategy should facilitate both market-based solutions as well as offer income support and social housing options to those who most urgently need them. In the simplest terms, it is not feasible to "fix" the conditions of the minority of households in core housing need without also acting on overall affordability—otherwise governments will face increasing demands from more and more households in need.

From a national economy perspective, the housing sector has continued to fare well through turbulent economic times since 2008. It is a critical element of Canada's economy and job market in every community large and small, representing over one million direct and indirect jobs across the country in 2015. In all regions, the health of the broader economy depends on Canadians having access to the housing they need, in stable, secure markets. The primary objective of federal housing policy therefore should be to support stability and predictability in Canada's housing markets and in the housing finance system. Recognizing the macro-economic elements of the sector and impacts associated with different measures should therefore also be included in the strategy.



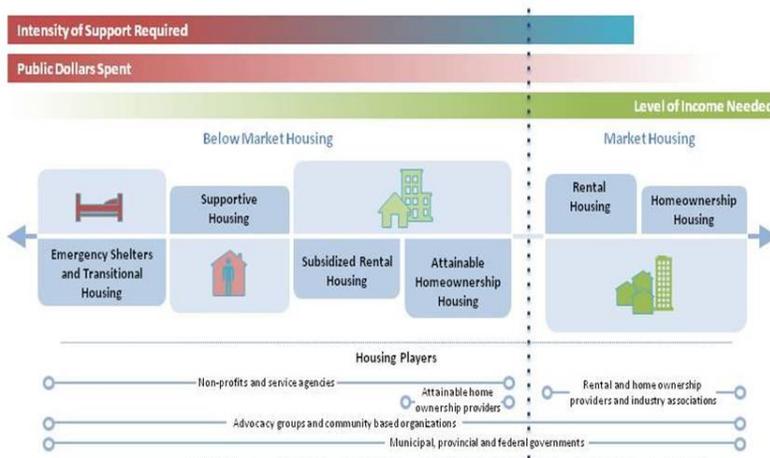
The federal initiative to develop a National Housing Strategy is very welcome and holds much positive potential. To be effective, it is essential for all concerned to communicate exactly the main objectives of such a Strategy should entail. For CHBA, it means:

- Harnessing and focusing available resources on solutions that address the largest and most urgent issues facing Canada’s housing system as a whole;
- Bringing the diverse participants in the Canadian housing system “onto the same page” and helping them to operate in coordinated fashion;
- Creating common goals, measuring progress and reporting on tangible results so that actions by governments, non-profit and private sectors can be assessed;
- Establishing a vision of innovative housing and community development that is unencumbered by the legacy of the past and not limited by existing ways of doing things; and,
- Recognizing that diverse problems require diverse solutions.

The Housing System: Facilitating a Spectrum of Choices and Responses

The National Housing Strategy should address challenges across the housing system, from special needs and social housing to market rental and homeownership and everything in between. It should focus on creating a policy environment that facilitates movement of households up through the housing system, and in general toward greater self-reliance, choice of housing, and community engagement.

THE HOUSING SYSTEM



Source: <http://www.calgary.ca/CS/OLSH/Pages/Affordable-housing/Sunnyside-Affordable-Housing.aspx?redirect=/sunnyside-triangle>

Reflecting this strategic approach, CHBA has advanced a number of positions over the past months to stimulate debate on new solutions and help achieve a comprehensive strategy. There have been dozens of interactions with other national housing organizations and experts, and extensive internal research and analysis.

Based on these, a synthesis of what CHBA has called “the new fundamentals of housing markets” and an “inclusive development perspective” on housing policy has emerged. This is outlined here, together with proposed elements of a comprehensive and sustainable National Housing Strategy that flow from it.

To CHBA members and others who will be engaged in delivering housing solutions for all Canadians, the following are the priority considerations:

- The Strategy must address widespread public concerns about today’s diverging housing markets in ways that anticipate future demand and needs. There is a broad consensus that the main challenges today are twofold. They are: **affordability of housing in fast-growing regions**; and **housing as a contributor to poverty reduction and greater social equality** in many different communities. The latter include those of Indigenous people, the North, lower-income areas of cities, and slow-growth or declining rural areas. The Strategy should respond to these challenges with well-defined and demonstrably effective actions.
- Focusing on **affordability in Canada’s fast-growing regions**, three factors are essential for priority federal attention:
 - **Housing affordability for first-time buyers**, including especially struggling Millennials, immigrants and families with young children, due mainly to chronic lack of supply of well-located family-oriented accommodation and competition from those possessing substantial equity stakes. This situation has a range of potential knock-on effects, from decreased financial security for those affected, to increased competition for available rental housing.
 - **Neighbourhood opposition to new inclusive developments** that would provide moderately-priced ownership and rental housing and accommodation for those with special needs, using a combination of planning, aesthetic, and other rationales to oppose much-needed intensification.
 - **Lagging infrastructure investment and “single-purpose” approaches** to building infrastructure, which fails to support multiple land uses and diverse development types. Transit-oriented development is a particularly large and pressing challenge for the next 15 years. The likelihood is that, without such development, there will be significant losses of existing stock that meets affordability criteria through both demolition for transit construction and purchase in advance of redevelopment.

Concerns about these factors are widely shared by both private sector and social development advocates, although the solutions they advance may differ somewhat.

- Regarding **greater equity of housing outcomes as a contributor to poverty reduction and social equality**, a further three priorities need concerted federal responses:
 - The **lack of substantial progress in reducing Core Housing Need**, especially among those who simply lack the income to afford their current accommodation. It is important to remember that the majority of Canadians in core housing need do not have a “housing problem” but an income problem, and new programming solutions should address this. About 715,000 households fell into this category according to the most recent data, and they live in all types and sizes of communities.

- The need to **consolidate and link further the range of housing solutions and services** to those who are already homeless or who are at risk of homelessness. Proven approaches now adopted on a pilot scale include “Housing First” coupled with effective interagency cooperation to produce a “no-wrong-door” result in serving those requiring assistance.
- The need to **diversify and increase the income-mix and land-use diversity of older single-purpose social housing projects** in order to improve their financial and social viability, and to increase their linkages to wider employment and other opportunities for residents of these long-standing communities.

Again, there appears to be a consensus on all of these points among the majority of poverty-reduction advocates, leaders in addressing homelessness, social housing providers, and the private sector industry. As the Annex to this brief indicates, significant joint ventures are already underway reflecting this consensus. These initiatives need to be scaled-up based on both innovative financing techniques and the practical lessons learned to date.

If a National Housing Strategy can engage and mobilize resources from all participants around such points of consensus, it can be transformative in its outcomes. In support of this potential, it is essential to have a “whole housing system” approach that links demand, supply, and housing-related services, expertise, and information dissemination.

Specific CHBA Proposals for Encouraging Market Rental Production

Market rental housing that people can afford is a key element within the housing system. Rental properties that people can afford facilitates moving up out of social housing and provides an essential housing solution for lower-income Canadians, as well as an important housing option for Canadians at all income levels who prefer to rent. Affordable market rental properties can also facilitate saving for homeownership — the housing preference of some 70 percent of Canadian households.

CHBA has two types of market-rental innovations to propose:

- **Below-market interest financing** –Three specific techniques can be applied by the federal government under its recently-announced Affordable Rental Innovation Fund. These are: loans at the federal borrowing rate; interest-free financing subject to rental-rate criteria; and “extended construction financing” options. Early results can determine which of these are most promising to scale up in the future.
- **Equity in the form of Shared Appreciation Mortgages** – Shared Appreciation Mortgages (SAMs) are a financing mechanism whereby a third party provides a substantial portion of the downpayment and gets its capital back with appreciation upon the resale of the property. SAMs offer significant potential in the new reality of Canada’s housing markets, and would complete a set of complementary mechanisms that separately, or in combination with financing mechanisms above, would encourage development of new rental housing with rents in the intermediate market range.

In addition, CHBA recommends modest revisions to the federal GST regime around purpose-built rentals:

- **Elimination of current “self-supply” rules** for determining GST applied to new accessory suites such as granny flats and laneway housing that discriminate in favour of those with family ties to the owners of the main units. As municipalities seek to encourage accessory streets as part of their inclusive community redevelopment, it is important that federal tax policy not conflict with these good directions.

- **Revision of rules for appraising new rental property values upon which to base GST** which also discriminate against new “purpose-built” rental developments, so that valuations are based on actual project costs plus profit at the option of the proponent. Improving the tax regime around purpose-built rentals will improve the business proposition and support more purpose-built rental development.

Specific CHBA Proposals for Increasing Access to Home Ownership in a Responsible Manner

Affordability has dramatically deteriorated for first-time homebuyers, particularly young Canadians and new Canadians, and this challenge must be addressed as an integral part of a National Housing Strategy. Homeownership affordability, particularly for first-time home buyers, is essential to underpin stable housing markets, and is a cornerstone to financial success and security for middle-class Canadians and those aspiring to join it.

Several measures have a proven track record, stretching back decades, in supporting access to home ownership by well-qualified first-time home buyers. Indeed, the main public policy purpose of federal mortgage loan insurance since World War II has been to facilitate access to housing credit by middle-class Canadian households.

It is essential to strike a balance between appropriate rules and oversight to protect taxpayers against macroprudential risks, and restrictions so extensive that they completely lock out first-time home buyers. The latter cannot be sacrificed in an effort to address broader global economic uncertainties. Those working hard to join the middle-class and achieve home ownership are essential to healthy housing markets over the longer term.

In this context, it will be essential both to fine-tune the mortgage insurance and related measures announced by the Minister of Finance on October 3, and also to consider mitigation measures targeted to well-qualified first-time buyers. It will also be important to gain access to better data and comprehensively assess the comparative risks and mitigation measures associated with first-time homebuyers in relation to other age groups. Indeed, the vast majority of younger first-time home buyers are no more risky than are other borrowers, and perhaps less so, according to some sources. Reflecting this, locking young Canadians out of homeownership through more restrictive mortgage rules may be much more harmful economically than mitigating the associated risks by other means.

In previous pre-Budget submissions, CHBA has advocated specific non-subsidy measures that can be implemented without generating undue risks or costs to taxpayers. These have included indexing support via the Home Buyers Plan, continuing to offer insured mortgages based on low down-payments (i.e., 5%) for entry-level housing, and returning to 30-year amortization periods for well-qualified first-time buyers of homes priced under \$500,000. Without implementing such measures to help first-time homebuyers, pressure on the rental stock increases, and there potentially and probably arise additional need for more costly subsidy or quasi-subsidy alternatives, whether for would-be owners or renters.

A key consideration for entry-level homeownership is that in Canada today there are 130,000 plus households that could handle homeownership based on their incomes, but simply lack sufficient equity for a downpayment. Accordingly, one approach would be to help those seeking to join the middle class by expanding federal methods of offering a “hand-up” to those who are willing and able, but who would otherwise be permanently locked out of ownership. Proven models are already in use on a pilot scale by some 40 different organizations in conjunction with home builders in various parts of Canada; these should be deployed more widely and actively. Such methods include shared-appreciation mortgages; loan insurance for joint mortgages; rent-to-own arrangements, and more.

CHBA recommends that mortgage insurance rules be carefully scrutinized in the context of all socio-economic factors and that they be adjusted if/as necessary to ensure responsible access for well-qualified first-time homebuyers is available moving forward.

CHBA also proposes that there be federal leadership in assembling and offering a comprehensive public-private package to facilitate markets access by first-time buyers, focusing on Millennial and immigrant families with children or expecting them.

Specific CHBA Proposal for Promoting More Inclusive Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood opposition to new developments is primarily a challenge faced by elected municipal officials as well as provincial governments responsible for planning policies and processes. However, there are many well-established precedents for federal support to social marketing campaigns designed to promote public health, as well as social, economic and cultural inclusion.

Mixed-use, mixed-income communities need to be more than policy goals – they need to be accepted by established communities and implemented by municipal governments if Canada's cities are to evolve to meet their full potential. Established and approved smart community plans are often overridden at the time of implementation by local interest groups and municipal politics. Governments in Canada have a key role to play in communicating the vision of Canada's communities of the future and supporting efforts to overcome NIMBYism (NIMBY = not in my back yard).

Addressing social exclusion in cities is a significant and growing human rights issue in Canada. Current market dynamics are leading inevitably to less socio-economic diversity of neighbourhoods and indeed, of whole communities since rising prices act as barriers to household mobility from smaller and rural to larger centres.

CHBA proposes that there be federal leadership in a sustained national campaign to promote more inclusive neighbourhoods. At a minimum, an initiative along the lines of Affordability and Choice Today to promote best practices should be revived as part of a National Housing Strategy.

Specific CHBA Proposals for Transit-Oriented Development

Nearly \$80 billion worth of public transit projects are currently either underway or being planned across Canada. To these, the federal government has either already committed or signalled its future commitment of \$20 billion in funding contributions. In addition, it has offered federal lands as part of residential developments, and the capital and services of Public-Private Partnerships Canada, and the Canada Lands Company.

To maximize the socio-economic and environmental benefits of these investments (and avoid wasted or ineffective expenditures), it is critical that Canada's governments link housing and infrastructure investment policies together by making smart investments in Transit-Oriented Development. Transit-oriented development means building mixed-income, mixed-use (i.e. residential and commercial) complete communities along transit lines and around or over transit stations. Without such a policy, transit-focused land acquisition will actually have significant negative impacts on affordability, as pointed out by several mayors.

CHBA estimates that as many as one million units of transit-oriented development could be built in this urban context over the next two decades, based on the public transit projects being constructed and commissioned. Resulting GHG emission reductions could reach 1.4 million tonnes annually along with substantially increased daily ridership (2.5 million), farebox revenues (\$2.7 billion a year), capturing property taxes on increased land values (\$1.9 billion in municipal revenues) and 600,000 direct jobs.

Accordingly, linking the Federal Government's infrastructure investment to key transit-oriented development indicators, measurement and reporting will be key.

CHBA has developed tools and metrics that can guide and track infrastructure investment to support transit-oriented development and success. CHBA will be pleased to collaborate with the Federal Government to inform the infrastructure investment process using these tools to guide proper transit-oriented development.

A specific mechanism to encourage adoption of such a policy is federal support for land write-downs to ensure a housing tenure and price-point mix.

CHBA proposes that there be federal leadership in adopting a multi-governmental policy leading to widespread application of transit-oriented development (TOD) in Canada, with a target of building a million units at transit stations and along transit lines over the next twenty years.

Specific CHBA Proposals to Reduce Numbers of Households in Core Housing Need

In its recent work as an active member of the National Housing Collaborative, CHBA has been discussing the current and potential effectiveness of different housing assistance techniques for those in Core Housing Need. The most recently available Core Housing Need data indicate that approximately 715,000 households across Canada are reasonably housed from condition and space perspectives but lack sufficient income to afford their rent. Of immediate interest as part of a National Housing Strategy, therefore, is the comparative cost per household of reducing or eliminating the numbers of those in Core Need from an income perspective alone.

In general, attempting to reduce these numbers via social housing construction would be immensely costly, and also very slow-acting. It would take up to 24 years (and \$3.9 billion annually) at the highest rate proposed by some advocates, and over 70 years (and \$1.3 billion annually) at rates envisaged by others.

The per-unit subsidy amount typically applied via the Investment in Affordable Housing program is \$130,000 per unit. More recently, some advocates have proposed a subsidy of \$180,000 per unit. Recent British Columbia government announcements appear to envisage \$172,400 per unit. These prospective subsidy costs seem much too high to cover all those in need simply through construction of new units. They potentially amount to over 18 years' worth of income-transfer benefits to the same household.

Accordingly, CHBA recommends that **housing benefits -- income transfers geared to paying shelter costs -- should be a principal means of alleviating poverty and reducing Core Housing Need in Canada. This should be phased in over time to mitigate market impacts and coupled with low-cost and equity-based rental supply and housing stock retention measures.**

There certainly are specific target groups for whom new housing construction is the main response needed, e.g., crowded Indigenous communities, and housing adapted specifically with those with special needs. Federal subsidy funds should go to them as a priority, since their physical and health needs are greatest.

Specific CHBA Proposals for Preventing and Responding to Homelessness

When the federal government first introduced its homelessness partnering strategy in 1999, responses to this challenge across the country were both fragmented and underfunded. Moreover, they were geared to keeping a shelter-based existence going, which is inherently unsustainable for most human beings.

With substantial federal funding and research support over the intervening seventeen years, much has been accomplished. A more robust network of service agencies has been knitted together, and a “Housing First” strategy widely adopted. There is also a movement toward a “no-wrong-door” approach, meaning an effort to offer universal access to homelessness prevention and housing assistance. CHBA member associations such as that in the Calgary have actively and directly contributed to these efforts.

CHBA pledges its own best efforts to contribute to local Housing First strategies and actions. It also advocates -- in conjunction with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities -- a federal tax credit for sales of existing private rental housing assets to non-profit and charitable groups offering permanent homes on scattered sites.

Specific CHBA Proposals to Work with Social Housing Providers Leveraging Their Assets

There have been increasing and very positive collaborations between members of the social housing sector and the residential construction industry over the past several years. In the course of these activities, a key challenge the providers currently face has become evident to the industry. Not only are operating agreements ending, the very terms of these agreements currently inhibit most providers in devising creative pathways into the future.

Talk of “leveraging social housing assets” is of limited value in such a context: there are too many barriers to entrepreneurial action, arising from a combination of long-standing Canada Revenue Agency and CMHC-imposed rules.

To be sure, there have been a few major successes in individual cases to date, such as the joint social-housing/industry redevelopment of Regent Park and Alexandra Park in Toronto. However, these are likely to remain isolated successes without revisions to terms of operating agreements and related restrictions that both recognize the maturation of the social housing sector, and facilitate consolidation of portfolios of assets and their redevelopment and regeneration on appropriate terms.

CHBA recommends federal and provincial changes to operating agreements and non-profit status rules be adopted by the relevant agencies to make “leveraging assets” feasible. Based on a new, more entrepreneurial model of social housing organizations that this would engender, CHBA would pledge to work actively to engage the talents, expertise, and resources of its member companies in joint ventures with social housing providers on mutually-beneficial terms.

Specific CHBA Proposals to Address Climate Change

Addressing climate change without reducing housing affordability will be key to successfully meeting Canada’s climate change objectives while addressing Canadians’ housing needs. Canada’s housing sector is an energy efficiency and GHG success story, with new housing 37% more efficient than it was in 1990, and even with 38% more housing stock, overall emissions from the sector are down 11%.

New housing will continue to improve on a voluntary basis, as it has in the past, and any additional code and regulatory requirements must follow proven technology innovation to ensure that their implementation does not reduce affordability. Further, the real opportunity to address GHG emissions in housing, and to improve the housing stock in related beneficial ways such as comfort and health, is through the energy retrofitting of the existing housing stock (both social housing and market housing)—this is where the bulk of efforts should be made.

Related to climate change mitigation at the community level, the residential construction industry is at the forefront of participants in Canada’s housing system calling for innovation in community planning and land-use regulation. Examples include calling for innovation in relation to both accessory suites such as laneway housing, and mid-rise housing forms geared to urban families with children. Transit-oriented development, as explained previously, is also a key to sustainable growth.

Details on CHBA’s recommendations for climate change actions for housing are included in [CHBA’s submission to the Climate Change Plan](#).

CHBA Proposal for an Integrated System of Metrics for Tracking Results of a National Housing Strategy

The Minister responsible for CMHC and the Corporation itself have demonstrated their active interest in an integrated system of metrics for tracking the results achieved by a National Housing Strategy in the course of their “Let’s Talk Housing” consultations.

Ongoing measurement of improvement in Canada’s housing and living conditions will be very important to track success and opportunities for improvement. In this context, CHBA recommends the establishment of an independent, not-for-profit organization that provides, collects, tracks and analyzes essential information on Canada’s housing and urban systems. Topics would include housing affordability, transit-oriented development, environmental performance of residential communities and more.

One possibility would be a “Canadian Institute for Housing and Urban Information (CIHUI)” akin to the health sector’s Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). Such an entity would provide stakeholders with a broad range of databases, indicators, and data-collection standards, together with evidence-based reports and analyses, to support day-to-day decision-making.

It would play an integral role in providing relevant and reliable data and analyses to policy-makers across Canada’s housing and urban development system, while remaining neutral, objective and independent from all three levels of government in fulfilling its mandate

Conclusion: Synergies Among Measures in a National Housing Strategy to Facilitate Affordability on Two Tracks

The main value of a National Housing Strategy, as compared with a series of disjointed programs and initiatives, is that synergies can be obtained through combined efforts among governments, between the public and private sectors, and to have improvements in one portion of the housing continuum benefit the others.

Here are some key examples of potential synergies among the elements of a strategy presented above:

- To the extent that Millennials and immigrants with solid employment and career prospects can be facilitated to enter the homeownership market, the operation of “vacancy chains” will free up additional units – often of better quality -- affordable with little or no subsidy support by those with lower incomes.
- To the extent that widespread and affordability-killing opposition to properly-designed new developments can be reduced or mitigated, the dynamics of increasing neighbourhood division according to socio-economic status can be blunted, and true inclusive community development and redevelopment becomes possible.
- To the extent that the legacy stock of social housing can be rejuvenated and redeveloped as mixed-income, mixed-tenure, complete communities, this huge stock of more than \$30 billion worth of potential assets can be converted from being net liabilities to governments.

The private sector residential construction industry stands ready and able to contribute to positive solutions on all of these fronts, based on its demonstrated capabilities, talents, and expertise.

ANNEX: EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN HOME BUILDERS, SOCIAL HOUSING, AND MUNICIPAL AGENCIES

Calgary Development Industry Leads \$120 Million RESOLVE Campaign to Address Homelessness

The RESOLVE fundraising effort led by the residential development industry is committed to ending homelessness in the Calgary region. Their goal is to bank about \$120 million to pay off existing debt and build homes. According to the campaign Chair: “The goal is to give people a hand up, to get a roof over their heads. If they can get a roof over their heads, it’s much easier, then, to deal with other challenges. We’ll build the product that most addresses the various needs in the community.”

The nine homeless serving agencies involved in the 10-year challenge will select the properties they feel are best suited for the needs of their clients — likely in established communities with access to transit and nearby amenities, what style of housing will best work for the site, and will deal with getting the required permits from the City of Calgary. The builders will act as general contractors.



New Mustard Seed CEO Dr. Stephen Wile in front of the organization's new 1010 Centre low income apartment building in Calgary's beltline

Adapted from: Marty Hope, “Hope at large – Hope for the homeless”, in New Home Living, August 1, 2013. See: <http://www.newhomelivingonline.com/calgary/articles/5036/hope-at-large-hope-for-the-homeless>.

Non-Profit Corporation an Integral Part of Proposed New Ottawa Development

About 25 per cent of the RendezVous proposal for developing LeBreton Flats near downtown Ottawa envisages approximately 1,100 units of affordable housing. Units would be sprinkled throughout five proposed neighbourhoods. They would be developed by the non-profit Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corp. (CCOC), one of the RendezVous partners.



About half of those would pay “modest market rents,” with the rest getting rent subsidies, including a significant number of rent-geared-to-income units. There would likely be some modestly priced units available for sale, as well.

The 42-year-old CCOC, which has 1,595 units in its portfolio, would finance, build and operate RendezVous LeBreton Group’s affordable rental housing component.

Adapted from Don Butler, “LeBreton Flats housing: A look inside the two competing plans”, *Ottawa Citizen*, February 5, 2016. See: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/lebreton-flats-housing-a-closer-look-at-the-two-plans>.

The New Regent Park



Rosita Bilas arrived in Canada from the Philippines in 1990, and a few years later took up residence in a three-storey public housing apartment in Toronto's Regent Park, east of the city's downtown. She's worked as a caregiver while raising two sons. Recently, however, Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) officials told Bilas that her apartment building, a deteriorating walk-up, would soon be demolished as part of a sweeping redevelopment of the 28-hectare public housing complex. The agency said it would offer her a replacement unit until a new one is completed.

Bilas had a couple of options, the officials added. She could apply to live in one of the new TCHC apartments, where rents are tied to the occupants' income. Or, if Bilas could muster the down payment, she could buy one of the condos that would be built within Regent Park as part of the agency's strategy to increase density and bring a broader mix of residents into the area. At the time, Bilas's income had been rising, so she was paying the maximum rent – about \$1,100 per month. "I said to myself, I'm paying more rent so why not move to the new condo?" For Bilas, who has never owned a home, it will be a big move in every way. If a tenant's income drops due to illness or job loss, TCHC will reduce the rent accordingly. But mortgage lenders are not so forgiving. "Because I'm a first-time buyer, I'm nervous," she says. "I pray I always have a job and good health. It's a big responsibility."

As it happened, the Daniels Corporation, the developer founded by John Daniels (BArch 1950) that was chosen to lead the \$1-billion redevelopment, had helped create a financing program for Regent Park tenants who almost have the savings and income to make the move from renting to owning – but aren't quite there yet. Through the "Foundation Program," buyers can borrow up to 35 per cent of the purchase price of their condo or townhome, but the loan is structured so that the owner only has to pay it off with the proceeds of the eventual sale of the unit. Bilas applied, and qualified for, a loan towards a unit in a condo due to be finished next year.

Excerpted from: John Lorinc, *U of T Magazine*, Spring, 2013. See: <http://magazine.utoronto.ca/feature/new-regent-park-toronto-community-housing-john-lorinc/>.



Metro Vancouver Plan to Link Affordable Rental Housing to Transit

Diane MacDonald's livelihood depends on transit. As a film production assistant, MacDonald never knows where she'll be working from one day to the next. But it's usually too far to walk or bike from her Vancouver apartment. MacDonald doesn't have a car, so she relies on transit to make early morning set calls. Fortunately for Ms. MacDonald, who will make about \$25,000 this year, she has an affordable apartment near transit. But for many working people in her income bracket, affordable housing in those prized locations is endangered -- though pressure is growing on municipalities to increase residential density near main transit lines.

As a recent report to the Metro Vancouver Board notes: "The high cost of housing is a major concern for regional residents and local governments in Metro Vancouver. Recognizing this, and after consultation with municipal members and private and non-profit stakeholders, the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy was adopted by the GVRD Board. It will guide Metro Vancouver actions on housing affordability in the coming years. It also provides recommended actions for municipal members, and other key stakeholders like the provincial and federal governments, as improving regional housing affordability requires actions from many different actors."

The Strategy includes among its five goals: "Increase the rental housing supply along the Frequent Transit Network."

Adapted from Katie Hyslop, "One Big Idea to Tie Affordable Housing to Accessible Transit", December 8, 2015, *The Tyee*: <http://thetyee.ca/News/2015/12/08/Affordable-Housing-Accessible-Transit/>, and from: "Regional Affordable Housing Strategy", Metro Vancouver Website: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/housing-affordability/strategy/Pages/default.aspx>.