

Re: Item No. 10.1

HALIFAX

Options for Increased Municipal Support and Partnerships for Provincial Housing Program Delivery

Regional Council
November 23, 2021

Affordable Housing Overview

“Affordable Housing” means housing that meets the needs of a variety of households in the low to moderate income range

Core Housing Need an indicator for housing precarity that considers:

- *Suitability* – meets size and composition of the household's residents.
- *Adequateness* – does not require major repairs
- *Affordability* – shelter costs are less than or equal to 30% of a household's income.





HEALTHY HOUSING ECOSYSTEM

*/ˈhelTHē ˈhouziNG ˈēkō ,sistəm/
(noun)*

A housing environment where there are housing options that are the right size, location and price for everyone. A healthy housing ecosystem includes a balanced mix of temporary shelters, housing with supports, home ownership, rental units and subsidized housing.

Image Source: Evergreen

Municipal Role in Housing

- Land Use Regulation
- Incentive or Bonus Zoning
- Financial Support
- Surplus Land
- Partnerships

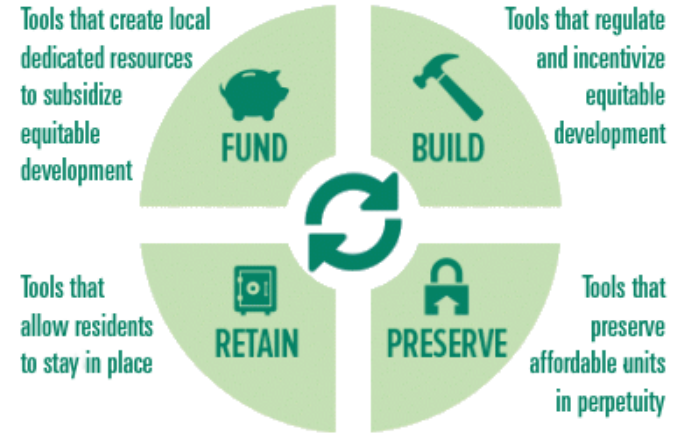


Image Source: Habitat for Humanity

Recent Provincial Housing Initiatives

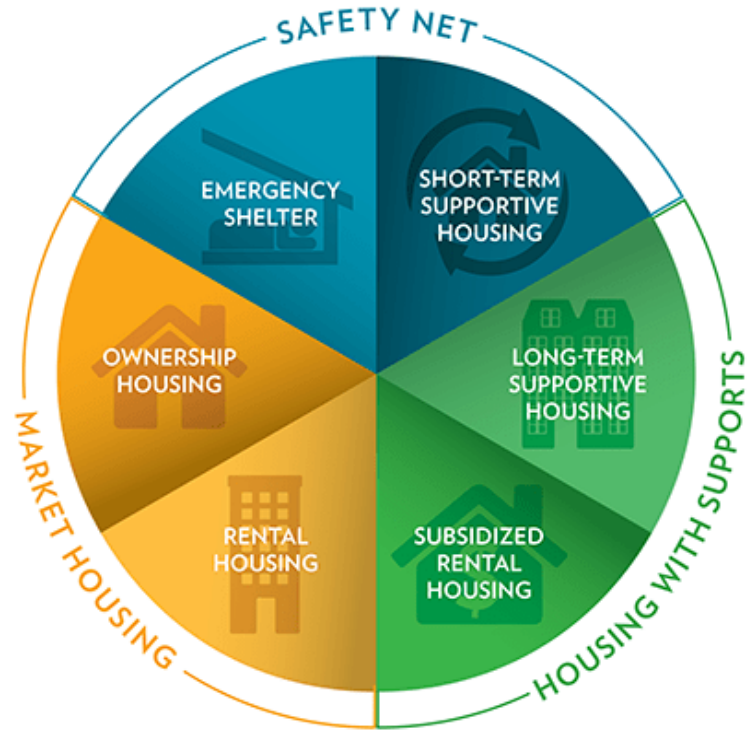
- Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission
 - *Charting a New Course for Affordable Housing in Nova Scotia*
- Provincial Housing Strategy
 - *Bill 30 – Residential Tenancies Act*
 - *Bill 32 – Municipal Government Act and Halifax Regional Charter*
 - *Bill 61 – Joint Regional Transportation Agency Act*
 - *Bill 63 – Executive Panel on Housing in HRM*



Image Source: Province of Nova Scotia

HNS Programs and Services

- Provincially-owned and managed rental units (public housing);
- Grant and loan programs to support home repairs and adaptations;
- Assistance to landlords who rent to low-income households (repairs and/or adaptations);
- Capital contributions to affordable housing developers (new rental housing).



Public Housing Portfolio | Financial Risks

Social housing programs face serious cost-risks associated with the following:

- mortgages – interest rates may increase;
- capital repair costs exceed envelope;
- climbing operating costs;
- federal program step-out; and
- Insufficient/stagnant rent revenues.



Ontario's Downloading Experience

As documented by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario in its social and affordable housing audit (2017):

- largest social housing wait list in the country;
- lengthy and growing wait lists;
- applicants on wait lists face affordability challenges;
- affordability challenges increasing as agreements expire;
- thousands of units are unused (poor condition);
- development not being encouraged;
- stock (largely) built decades ago; and
- few units being built.



Office of the
Auditor General of Ontario

HALIFAX

Housing Organization | Role

Typically perform one or more of the following functions:

- Develop and/or manage (affordable) rental housing;
- Hold/manage affordable housing units (density bonus program, inclusionary zoning or a housing fund);
- Develop and sell price-restricted housing;
- Research affordable housing needs;
- Act as a resource centre (information and strategies);
- Facilitate private sector housing development; and/or
- Establish applications, qualifications, wait-lists.



Image Source: Epic Capital
Wealth Management

Housing Organization | Governance & Financing

- May operate as arms-length entities or municipal business unit;
- Varying degrees of Board autonomy (from municipality);
- Municipalities usually sole shareholders (as represented by Council).
- Require seed money, but may mandate self-sustaining business models.
- Vary considerably in terms of mandate, portfolio size and budget.



Image Source: UniGov

Municipal Housing Corporation | Next Steps

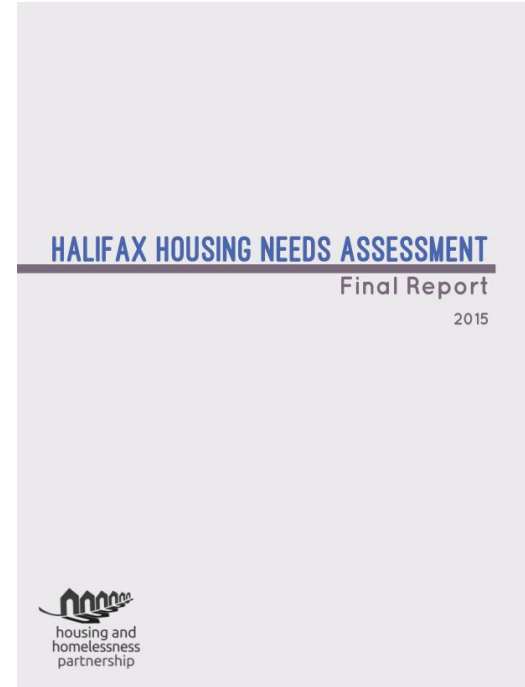
- Recent RHI experience in HRM shows our capacity in housing sphere;
- MHC could expand HRM's role and help focus municipal resources and assets;
- Likely merit in forming MHC despite independent PHC (per NSAHC recommendation);
- Anticipate work with Province to align MHC and PHC;
- Legal capacity issues remain unclear (role dependant).



Image Source: Ajax
Municipal Housing
Corporation

Housing Needs Assessment | Next Steps

- 2015 Housing Needs Assessment
 - Housing and Homelessness Partnership Affordable Housing Strategic Plan
 - 2018 Affordable Housing Work Plan
- Housing Needs Assessment needs to be updated
 - Majority of data is from the 2011 Census
 - HRM experiencing substantial increase in population since 2015
- Recommend updating the Housing Needs Assessment on a 5 Year Cycle



Affordable Housing Strategy | Next Steps

- Assess Success of Current Initiatives
- Explore Additional Initiatives
- Compliment Work Related to Provincial Housing Strategy



Image Source: City of St. John's 10-Year Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028

Recommendations

1. Support a comprehensive update of the HRM housing needs assessment to be undertaken every 5 years, as further outlined in this report;
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to develop an Affordable Housing Strategy that will include:
 - a) a review of the effectiveness of existing programs; and
 - b) an implementation framework to broaden municipal support for affordable housing including identifying specific actions, monitoring tools and additional resources or amendments to the HRM Charter if required.
3. Direct the CAO to prepare a report exploring municipal housing organization models, as further outlined in this report, including an overview of financial implications, legal authorities, best practices and the scope for implementation.
4. Direct the CAO to enter into discussions with the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding actions outlined in the Ministerial Mandate Letter dated September 14, 2021.

Thank You