

COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

From: Administration

Date: March 6, 2023

Subject: Housing – Rapid Housing Initiative

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council receives this report for information.

BACKGROUND:

At the Regular Council Meeting of January 9, 2023 Council asked staff to bring back a report on the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) funding program.

The RHI provides funding to facilitate the rapid construction of new permanent affordable housing units for people and populations who are in severe housing need.

This initiative was originally announced on September 21, 2020, with a budget of \$1 billion. Round 2 was announced on June 30, 2021, for an additional \$1.5 billion. To date, over 10,000 affordable housing units have been funded. Through Budget 2022, the Government of Canada is investing an additional \$1.5 billion over two years, starting in 2022–23, to extend the Rapid Housing Initiative.

Eligible applicants are provincial, territorial, and municipal governments as well as indigenous governing bodies and non-profit organizations. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation will contribute up to 100% of capital contribution funding to cover eligible residential project costs.

When submitting as a level of government, you are expected to cover operating and support/ wrap-around services for a minimum of 20 years or the duration of the affordability commitment, whichever is greater.

Eligible Types of Housing

New Construction

RHI funding will support the new construction of single, scattered units up to larger multi-unit rental projects, which can include the acquisition of land. Traditional construction methods and

modular housing will be accepted if the units can be delivered within the timelines that apply to the projects' location.

Conversions/Rehabilitations

RHI funding will support the acquisition of land and buildings for the purpose of conversion of non-residential to affordable housing. RHI funding will support the acquisition of land and buildings in disrepair or abandoned, for the rehabilitation to affordable housing. Rehabilitation of units is defined as units that are in disrepair and/or abandoned, and in both cases are uninhabitable or have been lost from the housing stock.

Eligible property types:

- Standard rental
- Transitional housing
- Permanent supportive housing
- Single room occupancy
- Seniors housing (excludes delivery of healthcare)

Project Eligibility

All units must serve and be affordable (household is paying less than 30% of their before-tax income on housing costs or the shelter component of any provincial or territorial income assistance as an equivalent) to targeted people and populations who are vulnerable and who are also, or otherwise would be, in severe housing need or people experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. Affordability must be maintained for a minimum of 20 years.

A household in severe housing need is a subset of core housing need where a household pays 50% or more of their before-tax income for their current dwelling. A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability, or suitability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards).

Target Populations for RHI Intake #3

All units must be dedicated to people and populations that are vulnerable, and in severe housing need including:

- Women and children fleeing violence
- Seniors
- Young adults
- Indigenous peoples

- People with disabilities
- People dealing with mental health and addiction issues
- Veterans
- 2SLGBTQIA+
- Racialized groups, including Black Canadians
- Recent immigrants, especially refugees
- People experiencing or at risk of homelessness

Minimum Project Requirements:

- Located in Canada
- Available for year-round occupancy
- Long term tenancy (3 months or more)
- Primary use is residential
- For rehabilitation funding, the project must be vacant, uninhabitable, and lost from the housing stock
- Minimum of five units or beds* (units and beds are interchangeable and are based on project type)
- Minimum contribution request of \$1M*

District's Housing Needs Assessment Report

In 2018, the Province of BC adopted the Local Government Statutes (Housing Needs Reports) Amendment Act, 2018, which requires local governments, at least every five years to:

- Collect information necessary to identify current and projected housing needs;
- Use that information to prepare and publish a housing needs report, showing current and projected housing needs for the next 5 years;
- Consider the most recently collected information and housing needs report when amending community and regional plans.

The last housing needs assessment was undertaken by MNP LLP in 2019. The assessment identified the following needs in the community:

- 1. Housing for Seniors and Accessible Housing.** Given the growing proportion of seniors and a lack of accessible housing in Mackenzie, future housing needs include units suitable for seniors and persons with mobility challenges.
- 2. Smaller Households.** With an average household size of 2.3 persons and shift to non-family households, there is emerging housing demand for one- and two-bedroom units to accommodate smaller households.

- 3. Adequate Housing.** The share of dwellings requiring major repairs has increased since 2006 and is higher than the proportion observed in BC and Prince George. Consequently, future housing needs include the repair, renovation or update to existing housing stock.

The development of a new housing needs assessment is on the District's 2024 workplan.

Provincial Leadership

The Ministry of Housing is responsible for providing British Columbians access to more affordable, safe and appropriate housing through policy and programs, technical codes and standards, and services for landlords and tenants. Current conversations with BC Housing indicate that there is currently a surplus of affordable housing units in Mackenzie with no waiting list.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

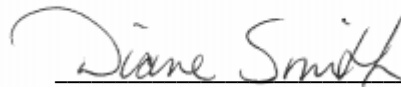
Community and Social Development

- Our investment in the municipality's services and infrastructure, our commitment to principles of social equity and well-being, and our belief in the value of resident engagement, creates a healthy community in which everyone feels valued and enjoys a high quality of life.

Respectfully Submitted,



Emily Kaehn
Director of Corporate Services



Approved for Submission to Council