

# Report to Council



**Date:** October 17, 2016  
**File:** 0705-55  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Laura Bentley, Planner II, Policy & Planning  
**Subject:** National Housing Strategy Consultation Response

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Planner II dated October 17, 2016 with respect to the National Housing Strategy consultation;

AND THAT Council direct staff to submit the written response, attached as Schedule 'B' to this report, to the Federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development as the City of Kelowna response to the National Housing Strategy consultation.

## **Purpose:**

To consider a submission to the Government of Canada's National Housing Strategy consultation.

## **Background:**

As part of the federal Minister of Families, Children and Social Development's mandate to develop a strategy to re-establish the federal government's role in supporting affordable housing, the Government of Canada is developing a new National Housing Strategy. The foundation of the Strategy affirms that all Canadians deserve access to housing that meets their needs and that they can afford.

The process includes extensive consultation in various formats with the public, stakeholders and experts. Through collaboration with the provinces, territories, and indigenous and northern communities, the Government is seeking how best to achieve positive outcomes for housing.

The Province of British Columbia is preparing a written submission and shared an update at the recent UBCM 2016 Convention. There is also a role for municipalities, and UBCM is encouraging interested municipalities to provide individual submissions. This is an important opportunity for the City of Kelowna to join the national conversation around housing policy.

## *City of Kelowna Submission*

A written submission to the National Housing Strategy has been prepared for Council's consideration based on the Strategy's proposed vision, principles, themes and outcomes (see Attachments A and B). The Strategy will focus on ensuring access to housing that meets the needs of Canadians and is affordable. The main themes are:

- Sustainability (environmental sustainability, social housing renewal, creating a better quality of life, economic growth and stability, supportive institutions and regulations)
- Affordability (affordable lands and financing, affordability pressure in cities, new and renewed rental housing, first-time home buyers)
- Inclusivity (low-income and vulnerable Canadians)
- Flexibility (use of data-based evidence, continuum of housing options)

Based on the information provided, staff support the overall direction for the National Housing Strategy. Recognizing Kelowna's context as one of the fastest growing communities in Canada and the current housing situation, staff emphasize the need for federal strategies that address housing affordability, support new affordable rental housing, meet the needs of changing demographics, and address the needs of the homeless. Suggested methods include providing rental housing tax credits and incentives, opening up surplus land for affordable housing, creating housing solutions locally, and directing funding to help homeless populations access housing and services.

Additionally, funding certainty is critical for municipalities and agencies to plan for and deliver on policies that meet housing needs and priorities. Staff suggest the Strategy include recommendations that are matched to clear targets, actions, timelines and budgets to better prioritize and coordinate local efforts with federal strategies.

The goal of the City of Kelowna Housing Strategy is to strive to ensure that every Kelowna resident has suitable housing. City funding, partnerships, and the policy and regulatory frameworks contribute to achieving this goal as staff continue to plan for growth and guide development. Stronger federal involvement in the housing sector will further support provincial and municipal efforts and investment in providing attainable housing for all residents.

### **Internal Circulation:**

Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate  
Social Development Manager, Active Living & Culture  
Communications Advisor, Community Engagement

### **Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Communications Comments:

Existing Policy:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

Personnel Implications:

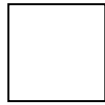
External Agency/Public Comments:

Alternate Recommendation:

Submitted by:

L. Bentley, Planner II

Approved for inclusion:



J. Moore, Acting Department Manager, Policy & Planning

cc:

Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate  
Social Development Manager

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: National Housing Strategy Vision, Principles, Themes and Outcomes

Attachment B: Proposed Submission to the National Housing Strategy