

The Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development  
House of Commons Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister:

The City of Kelowna would like to thank the Government of Canada for the opportunity to provide input at this early stage in the development of the National Housing Strategy. The availability of safe, healthy and affordable housing requires involvement from all levels of government, and the National Housing Strategy is an important step in the Federal Government's renewed commitment to support affordable housing.

The City of Kelowna strives to ensure that every resident has access to suitable housing through funding, strategic partnerships, and policy and regulatory frameworks. The City of Kelowna's Housing Strategy and Official Community Plan focus on meeting diverse housing needs in the community, and promote healthy and inclusive communities with a range of housing types. The City has also committed to a Housing First model to address homelessness.

As a fast-growing community, there is a corresponding demand for new housing and affordability is increasingly becoming a concern. With upward pressure on the housing market, sale prices increased by 10 percent in 2015 and the last reported rental vacancy rate was 0.7 percent. Rising costs and declining availability of both ownership and rental housing have contributed to more demand for affordable housing, particularly for families with limited housing options. Kelowna is also experiencing significant new residential development in response to the growth, with a 75 percent increase in the number of new residential units issued building permits in the first half of 2016 over the same time last year.

A comprehensive approach to housing is critical to achieving the vision where all Canadians have access to housing that meets their needs and that they can afford. The City supports the overall National Housing Strategy vision, principles, themes and outcomes. In light of Kelowna's community profile and housing situation, we would emphasize the need for strategies that:

- Ensure housing affordability across a range of housing types and income levels;
- Support the creation of new affordable rental housing;
- Meet the needs of an aging population and changing demographics; and
- Address the needs of the vulnerable and homeless.

Possible methods to accomplish this vision include offering tax credits and incentives to both maintain existing and create new rental housing, making surplus land available for affordable housing development, and increasing local involvement in affordable housing solutions. Strategies and funding directed at supporting homeless populations and those at risk of homelessness to access stable housing and services and to integrate into the community are also needed.

The City is looking for lasting solutions that will meet diverse needs across Canadian communities. Delivery of the National Housing Strategy should include recommendations that are matched to clear targets, actions, timelines and budgets that provide assurance and

accountability to monitor the Strategy's success over time. For funding opportunities, a direct or formula-based funding model would improve certainty for municipalities and local partners that are developing and delivering housing policies and programs.

This dialogue is seen as the beginning of an ongoing federal commitment to support the creation of housing options for all Canadians. The City of Kelowna appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback on this important matter.

Yours sincerely,