

# Background and Previous Council Direction

## *Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI)*

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) announced the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) on 2020 September 21 aiming to “address urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians by rapidly creating new affordable housing.” RHI was designed to deliver \$1 billion in capital contributions to create 3,000 new units and help address the urgent housing needs of people and populations who are vulnerable. CMHC publicly released the criteria for RHI on 2020 October 26 which focuses on vulnerable people in severe housing need specifically people at risk of or experiencing homelessness or living in temporary shelters because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RHI provides funding to expedite the delivery of affordable housing to vulnerable people and populations targeted under the National Housing Strategy (NHS), especially those affected by COVID-19. Funding is available through two separate streams and is targeting the delivery of units within 12 months and aims to prioritize 30% of projects targeting women and 15% of projects for urban Indigenous peoples. RHI is delivered through two funding streams: Major Cities Stream which will flow directly to municipalities to ensure funds are directed to areas where chronic homelessness is most prevalent and; Projects Stream which will prioritize applications received from Provinces, Territories, municipalities, Indigenous governing bodies and organizations and non-profits based on the overall strength of the application. All funds must be used before 31 March 2021 to provide long-term, permanently affordable housing. Projects funded under the RHI are intended to serve vulnerable populations and operate for a minimum of 20 years, which may require support beyond what is provided through RHI and what municipalities can cover. Projects funded under the RHI may require ongoing operational and programmatic funding which is not included in the RHI program.

RHI funding can cover the construction of modular housing, acquisition of land, and the conversion/rehabilitation of existing buildings into affordable housing upon execution of a funding agreement with The City of Calgary. In addition to meeting mandatory minimum requirements noted above, the RHI further prioritizes projects based on the following criteria:

- Located in areas of highest need (Including Indigenous Land, Northern Housing and projects located in remote communities).
- Incremental scoring provided for confirmed subsidy from a Municipality/Province or Territory or Indigenous governing body.
- Funding or waivers that lower the construction budget and/or funding required from the RHI.
- Land that is either owned in fee simple or leasehold interest where the lease term is greater than 20 years or land that is under an agreement of purchase and sale.
- Modular projects that exceed the energy efficiency standards as set out in the 2015 National Energy Code for Buildings (NECB) or local/regional standard whichever is higher.
- Modular projects that exceed the local accessibility requirements in their jurisdiction (by percentage of additional accessible units).

## Context

Calgary has more than 50% of Alberta's homeless population with almost 3,000 people experiencing homelessness on any given night. As a response to the health, social and economic crisis in Calgary, a committee of 65 individuals from 42 organizations from private, non-profit, and government housing sectors, representing more than 45,000 homes in Calgary came together to create a COVID-19 Community Housing Advocacy Plan (the Advocacy Plan) to create 5,400 homes in the non-market housing sector including 600 units for Calgarians experiencing homelessness. The plan collectively ends functional homelessness, increases the supply of non-market housing, and invests in vulnerable Calgarians so they have a community to call home. The COVID-19 Housing Provider's Committee, which includes the Community Housing Affordability Collective (CHAC), considered the following when creating the Advocacy Plan: generating economic stimulus via construction of new affordable homes; repurposing vacant hotels due to decreased tourism; and capitalizing on private rental vacancy. The Advocacy Plan was approved by Intergovernmental Affairs on 2020 July 23 and submitted to both the federal and provincial governments advocating for funds to create more affordable housing in Calgary.

Under the Major Cities stream of RHI, CMHC approved \$24.6M for Calgary to create a minimum of 116 new units of permanent affordable housing. This grant-based funding allows for funding of up to 100% of a capital project and does not require matching. Given CMHC's funding criteria for the RHI and the focus on deep levels of affordability for persons experiencing vulnerabilities including homelessness, the projects in Calgary will be led by non-profits housing providers and not by The City or Calgary Housing Company.

## Previous Council Direction

On 2020 November 12, Calgary Housing attended Intergovernmental Affairs Committee and provided an information update on the Advocacy Plan and, specifically, the opportunity to receive a minimum of \$24.6M in funding allocated to The City through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI).

## Bylaws, Regulations, Council Policies

A City goal, as per the Corporate Affordable Housing Strategy (CAHS), is to increase the supply of affordable housing to ensure people at all income levels can live and work in every neighbourhood of our city. This work also includes supporting and removing barriers for the non-market housing sector to create new homes.

The \$1B RHI program has the objective to create 3,000 units across the country and directly supports the CAHS and the Advocacy Plan by providing much-needed, grant-based capital investment.

**COVID-19 Community Affordable Housing Advocacy Plan & Rapid Housing Initiative Previous Council Briefings & Direction**

