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# CITY OF KELOWNA

## MEMORANDUM

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DATE: October 24, 2001  
FILE: 5040-20

TO: City Manager

FROM: Community Planning Manager

RE: National Housing Policy Options Team - Resolution for Meeting of Housing Ministers, November 28-30, Quebec City

REPORT PREPARED BY: Theresa Eichler

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### RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council pass the following resolution and forward it for presentation at the November 28-30<sup>th</sup>, 2001 meeting of housing Ministers in Quebec City, by the National Housing Policy Options Team, through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and to Minister George Abbott, Minister of Community Aboriginal and Women's Services:

**Whereas:** The federal government has proposed a capital grants program for affordable housing, with a federal contribution of \$680 million over four years, to be matched by provincial and territorial contributions;

**Whereas:** the federal government, provinces and territories agreed at their meeting in London Ontario, August 2001 to negotiate on the terms of participation of each jurisdiction and report on their progress in November;

**And whereas:** the lack of affordable housing has reached epidemic proportions across Canada;

**Be it resolved that:** The City of Kelowna urges the province of British Columbia and the federal government to join in funding a capital grants program for affordable housing by sharing in the cost of that program;

**Be it further resolved that:** the parameters of the program must be sufficiently flexible to allow funding of units for low income households, who cannot afford the low end of local market rent; and

**Be it further resolved that:** the province of British Columbia be urged to continue to devote funds for affordable housing, and, as soon as possible, contribute significant new funds, not currently allocated to a related measure, to the program;

**Be it further resolved that:** the federal and provincial/territorial governments should involve municipal governments in designing and implementing the program locally.

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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to continue Kelowna's role as a member of the National Housing Policy Options Team by:

- forwarding a resolution to be received at a meeting of federal, provincial and territorial housing ministers taking place November 28-30 in Quebec City to discuss the proposed federal affordable rental housing program, and partnerships to deliver the program;
- and by forwarding this same resolution to Minister Abbott.

REPORT

Kelowna joined the National Housing Policy Options Team (NHPOT) in 2000 to have a voice in this coalition of municipal representatives from across Canada that is working to ensure that the federal and provincial government acknowledge and address the needs for low income housing in Canadian cities. NHPOT meets by telephone conference at regular intervals throughout the year to determine appropriate actions that will ensure there is a municipal voice in the decision-making process for affordable housing. A recent example of work resulting from these efforts is the on-going work of the Kelowna Homelessness Steering Committee to properly allocate about \$1.3 million that is administered by Human Resources and Development Canada to address homelessness under the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative.

NHPOT last met on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001 to discuss the impending meeting of provincial, territorial and federal housing ministers that is to take place in Quebec City from November 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001. At this meeting provincial and territorial ministers will be asked to match \$680 million of federal funds over a four year period to address affordable housing needs across the country. NHPOT wants to ensure that money allocated goes towards those who need it most, that is low income households who cannot afford the low end of market rent. It also wants to pressure provincial and territorial ministers to seriously address this need by financial partnering with the federal government. The proposed resolution is intended to address these concerns and express them to the provincial housing ministers, as well as present them to the Quebec City meeting. It asks that municipalities forward the resolution to provincial ministers and copy it to the Team, through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), to take to the Quebec meeting.

During this same time period, it is known that BC Housing is being subjected to a core review and that part of this review will be to identify ways to cut spending. There is an added urgency and concern that B.C. recognize the need to continue its housing programs that target low-income households. Although we are fortunate to be one of only two provinces that actually have a housing program, needs for low-income housing are more critical than ever and the province must be urged to not only maintain, but budget for an increase in spending to assist these low-income households. It is a difficult message to convey. However, if municipalities do not express the importance of senior level government funding for low income housing, the impact will be felt locally, and increased pressure will be placed on the City to spend funds that it does not have to address local housing needs.

Due to the timing of the core review of BC Housing, Council also dealt with a separate resolution to forward a letter to Minister Abbott at its meeting of October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001. The letter was sent in accordance with the resolution.

The City's Community Housing Needs Committee met on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001 and passed a motion to recommend that the City forward the resolution, as provided by NHPOT, with wording changes to recognize the current core review of BC Housing that is underway.

SUMMARY

Kelowna has been a member of the National Housing Policy Options Team for more than a year now. In order to be an effective member, it is important to participate in the actions that are determined necessary by the Team. The more municipalities available to convey the urgency of

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addressing the needs for low-income housing, the better the chance that senior governments will allocate funds and resources to address this issue. Without continual pressure from municipalities, abdication of housing responsibilities by provincial and federal government will only result in increased severity of local housing problems and pressure for municipalities to address these problems with no resources. This report asks Council to forward a resolution in time for a meeting of housing ministers scheduled for November 28-30<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in Quebec City. The meeting is to discuss provincial and territorial buy-in to the proposed \$680 million, four year affordable housing program being proposed by the federal government. The report also recognizes that BC Housing is presently subjected to a core review and the proposed resolution has been re-worded to recognize this. The City's Community Housing Needs Committee has reviewed this issue at its meeting of October 23, 2001, and recommends that Council pass and forward the resolution, as stated.

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Theresa Eichler, MCIP  
Community Planning Manager

Approved for Inclusion

R.L. (Ron) Mattiussi, ACP, MCIP  
Director of Planning & Development Services

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References:

The October, 2000 "A National Affordable Housing Strategy" is available from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Web Site <http://www.fcm.ca> from the "most requested documents" area. Other news items can be found on the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association page, in the Newsletter <http://www.chra-achru.ca/htmlE/publications.html> and from the Human Resources and Development Canada web site [http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/nsh-snsa/homepage\\_e.html](http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/nsh-snsa/homepage_e.html) .