

City of Kelowna

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 15, 2005
FILE: 5040-20

TO: City Manager

FROM: Community Planning Manager

RE: Council Resolution Recommended by National Housing Policy Options Team (NHPOT) of FCM regarding Bill C-48 – Affordable Housing

REPORT PREPARED BY: Theresa Eichler

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council pass the attached resolution advocating for Bill C-48 to be passed by the House of Commons to initiate \$1.6 billion of federal spending on affordable housing; and forward this resolution to Members of Parliament;

PURPOSE:

To request that council pass and forward a resolution drafted by the National Housing Policy Options Team of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), to support the passing of Bill C-48, which proposes \$1.6 billion of federal spending towards affordable housing for low-income Canadians.

REPORT:

The City joined the NHPOT in 2000 and has since participated in national telephone conferences, meetings at FCM conventions and activities initiated through NHPOT towards augmenting federal and provincial spending on affordable housing to address the needs of low income Canadians, including the homeless. Most recently City representatives attended the NHPOT meeting at the FCM conference this month. These actions have helped precipitate the National Homelessness Initiative, which resulted in nearly \$4 million worth of projects to help the homeless in Kelowna and the Premier's Task Force on Homelessness, Mental Illness and Addictions, which has announced more than \$5 million worth of spending in Kelowna in various areas including a soon-to-be-announced 30-unit housing project for people at risk of homelessness in Kelowna. In addition, the work of NHPOT helped to precipitate the present \$160 million (\$80 million federal and \$80 million) housing agreement that was signed between the federal and B.C. provincial government in the last 3 years. This funding supported the Independent Living Program administered through BC Housing and the Health Authorities, which generated supportive housing units in Kelowna, as well as the more recent Premier's Task Force.

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Bill C-48 is now before the House of Commons for approval. This Bill proposes \$1.6 billion of federal spending to address housing needs of low income Canadians. Cities across the country are anxiously supporting the passing of this Bill. As a member of NHPOT, the City of Kelowna can help by forwarding a resolution of support to our MPs. The wording of the resolution for Council's approval is attached to this report. A speech by Minister Joe Fontana, explaining the nature of Bill C-48, is also attached for information.

Theresa Eichler, MCIP
Community Planning Manager

Approved for Inclusion

David Shipclark
Manager, Community Development & Real Estate

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DRAFT MOTION IN SUPPORT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROVISIONS IN BILL C-48 AND SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION THEREOF

WHEREAS in 1999 the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), its members seeing first hand the depth of misery in their communities due to homelessness and the widespread shortage of decent affordable housing, declared a national state of disaster in housing and homelessness;

WHEREAS since that declaration, the situation has not improved significantly, despite the laudable steps taken by the Government of Canada and some Provinces and Territories to engage on this issue;

WHEREAS Bill C-48 will earmark \$1.6 billion in new money for affordable housing over two years;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Kelowna calls on their MPs to allow speedy passage of and vote for Bill C-48;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT that the City of Kelowna urges the Government of Canada, following passage of Bill-C48, to work with FCM to ensure an efficient and speedy roll-out of the new funding, with the Provinces and Territories wherever possible, and directly with municipalities where Provincial/Territorial involvement is not possible or immediately forthcoming; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City of Kelowna urges the Government of Canada to work with FCM to secure an effective long term national housing strategy.

Minister of Labour and Housing



Ministre du Travail et du Logement

May 18, 2005

Dear Friends:

I am writing to you today for three reasons. First, I want to share with you a copy of the speech I delivered in the House of Commons last Tuesday as part of the debate on Bill C-48. Attached you will find the official Hansard transcript.

Second, I want to ensure that you, as the federal government's primary housing and homelessness partners, understand our Government's commitment to renewing the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). I have repeatedly confirmed in public that once these programs expire in 2006 our Government will renew them. My statements are in addition to the ones the Honourable Ralph Goodale, Minister of Finance, made during and following his presentation of Budget 2005.

The renewal of these key federal programs is an integral part of the new Canadian Housing Framework, which departmental officials are currently finalizing. I highlight this because in recent weeks I have received calls and have met with groups who have expressed concerns about the renewal of SCPI and RRAP. Not only will our Government renew these programs, we will also enhance them, so that they better reflect the housing realities in communities today, and bridge some of the gaps in the housing continuum.

With regards to the request of some communities that the federal government provide an administrative extension to the current phase of SCPI by one year,

I am pleased to inform you that our Government will make it possible for those communities to continue to spend their current allocations until March 2007.

Finally, I want to update you on the budget allocation for an additional \$1.6 billion that is currently being debated in the House of Commons. Though not completed yet, I can tell you the following:

- Our original commitment was to invest \$1.5 billion over the next five years towards new housing initiatives. The commitment has now been accelerated to two years, and given the agreement with the New Democratic Party, we now have an additional \$100 million for housing, bringing it to a total of \$1.6 billion.
- These new federal investments will not require matching funds from other levels of government. However, our hope is that we will be able to leverage additional dollars to make our investments go farther.
- It is our intention to use some of the funds towards the development of an Aboriginal housing system to support both on- and off-reserve Aboriginal Canadians.
- This money will be used to support new and innovative neighbourhood revitalization initiatives and community capacity building in neighbourhoods and communities which face enormous challenges for

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example; Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Toronto's Regent Park, Regina North-Central, Montreal's Benny Farm in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, and across Atlantic Canada, where the housing stock is the oldest in North America.

Almost one year after my appointment as Minister of Housing, I am very proud of the work we have achieved together. We have witnessed improvements to the housing system throughout the country. I know that the work has not always been easy or fast. But we have demonstrated real progress and momentum, and that is because our work has been based on partnership, trust and willingness to try new approaches.

However, this progress is at-risk. Not only the work of the past 11 months, but our achievements over the last 6 years, since our Government responded to the homelessness crisis facing our communities.

Our Government has built a strong network of care and support in our communities through the SCPI. We must continue to support our local partners, so that the safety net is sustainable.

Our Government is committed to delivering on what matters most, and by continuing to work with all levels of government and our other partners, I believe that one day all Canadians will have a safe, affordable place to call home.

I look forward to working with you as we finalize the details of the Canadian Housing Framework, which will serve as the plan for these new investments.

The Honourable Joe Fontana, P.C., M.P.
L'honorable Joe Fontana, C.P., député

Enclosure: 1

Pièce jointe : 1