

## Descriptions of Housing Role Categories

### Data Gathering, Monitoring and Sharing

Collect, analyze, and share community-based information which may include the following:

- **Population Growth Metrics** – The number of births and deaths in a community, municipality, or region.
- **Point in Time Homelessness Count** – An estimate of individuals experiencing homelessness in a community within a specified time-period.
- **HIFIS** (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System) is a web-enabled Homelessness Management System (HMS) that allows multiple service providers from the same geographic area to document client-level service transactions, plan for and coordinate access to a broad range of services and other providers. HIFIS includes several new Coordinated Access functionalities to support communities shift towards real time, data driven decision making.<sup>1</sup>
- **Income Monitoring** (Core Housing Need) – Core Housing Need is when a household is below one or more of the following standards<sup>2</sup>:
  - Adequacy – Housing is considered adequate when it isn't in need of major repairs including defective plumbing, electrical wiring, or structural repairs.
  - Suitability – Housing is considered suitable when there are enough bedrooms for the size of the family.
  - Affordable Housing is considered affordable when the cost is 30% or less of before tax income.
- **Housing Needs Assessment** – Describes current and anticipated housing needs in a community by collecting data, analyzing trends and communications with community members/groups. May include but not limited to:
  - Affordable housing deficit by income category, household size, and priority populations;
  - Ongoing net loss of affordable housing over time; and
  - Population growth and change.
- **Encampment and Enforcement Monitoring**  
Fire inspectors approach 'active' encampments referencing a 'process map' to communicate concern for safety and connect the individual(s) to the appropriate services (i.e., housing agency, income assistance, medical assistance, temporary shelter).

<sup>1</sup> <https://homelessnesslearninghub.ca/learning-materials/homeless-individuals-and-families-information-system-hifis/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research/housing-research/core-housing-need/identifying-core-housing-need>

## **Land Use Planning**

The City's Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw provides policy framework for facilitating growth and development by designating land, amending land use designations and providing community-based standards. The following planning tools could be used to assist the development of 'non-market' housing developments across the housing continuum:

- **Land Pre-Designation** - identifies suitable sites for entry-level, affordable ownership and purpose-built rental housing designed to ensure these housing types are included within all neighbourhoods. These pre-designated sites are then offered to land developers through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process.<sup>3</sup>
- **Zoning Regulations and Amendments** - to allow increased density for affordable housing, or other regulatory changes to support affordable developments.
- **Pre-Zoning for Supportive Housing** - provides greater certainty for builders and affordable housing providers and helps to make development timelier.
- **Explore or pursue Inclusionary Zoning** - new residential developments would be required to set aside a certain percentage of 'affordable' housing units or a cash payment toward the provision of permanent affordable housing units.
- **Other Land Use policies to explore:**
  - As of right development regulations for non-profits and affordable housing projects (may require legislative change).
  - Reducing or removing parking requirements.
  - Requiring a minimum number of bedrooms.

## **Facilities Operator/Owner**

Examine options to utilize City owned facilities for emergency and short-term housing:

- **Establish Emergency Facilities in Existing City Facilities** – Collaborate with the Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) to temporarily activate Emergency Shelter Facilities (i.e., similar to forest fire evacuations).
- **Develop Mixed Use Facilities** – identifying opportunities for mixed use buildings or sites in connection with a planned civic facility. Examples such as housing units built above a fire hall have been seen in other communities.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.saskatoon.ca/sites/default/files/documents/community-services/planning-development/neighbourhood-planning/housing/City%20of%20Saskatoon%20Housing%20Business%20Plan%202013%20-2022.pdf>

## **Financial Incentives**

Financial incentives the City could provide to assist non-profit housing providers and builders may include but not be limited to:

- **Permit and application fee rebates** - alleviates some of the costs associated with development.
- **Waive Development Charges/Off-Site Levies** - reduces overall development costs to individual projects.
- **Tax Abatements** – helps with ongoing operating costs for housing projects that do not have an ongoing government subsidy. It can also help offset rental costs for individuals and families.
- **Direct Sale/Lease of Land** - provided for free, at low cost or leased for free to non-profit or affordable housing providers.
- **Streamline Program Application Requirements**
- **Federal Funding Disbursements** – administering and managing incoming federal funding and projects similar to the current Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI), which dedicates funding for urgent housing needs and is allocated directly to municipalities to help build local units within a 12-month period.
- **Acquire and/or Assemble Land** – acquire and hold land in perpetuity (i.e., Community Land Trust) to be used towards affordable housing as a need and not a commodity.
- **Capital grants (renovation, conversion, or new construction)** – direct grant contributions, quick approval processes needed, straightforward funding calculations that do not need significant resources from the non-profit or administration (streamline with other levels of government).

## **Advocacy to Other Levels of Government or Intergovernmental Cooperation**

The Provincial and Federal Governments regulate municipal actions such as zoning regulations and overseeing funding allocations. Advocacy for changes might be needed in some cases to address local issues and could include:

- **Legislative Changes** needed to enable more regulatory tools or additional roles for the City.
- **Increased Financial Support** from provincial and federal counterparts for particular programs or areas of need.

## **Housing Expertise/Training Support**

Create/Explore new models such as:

- **Community Land Trust** – Non-Profit organization that owns land on behalf of a group and promotes affordability.

- **Cooperative Housing<sup>4</sup>** – A member-owned and controlled housing group.
- **Grant writing support** – Support through City or community entity.
- **Develop programs to support non-profit housing organizations**

### **Community Convenor**

There are various agencies and organizations working to prevent and end homelessness in the city. The Social Housing sector would benefit from a coordinated response. The City could be the convener of agencies and organizations devoted to preventing and ending homelessness. In this role, the City would directly participate in problem solving and the development of evidence-led solutions.

- **Information sharing networks**
- **Education and awareness events and publications**
- **Establish working groups** – The coordination of housing working groups would improve dialogue and allow for information sharing and collaboration.
- **Re-engage on the Community Homelessness Action Plan**

### **Development Support**

Extended approval timelines can cause affordable housing projects to delay financing and potentially miss a funding deadline or lose an opportunity to lock in a lower interest rate, adding costs and uncertainty. Ways to alleviate issues may include:

- **Streamline application process**
  - Creating similar application forms for funding assistance to other levels of government or simplifying application processes.
  - Streamlining complex review processes.
- **Develop “not in my backyard” (NIMBY)/“yes, in my backyard” (YIMBY) toolkit** – provide proactive tips for affordable housing providers and builders.
- **Assistance through development process** – some municipalities have Affordable Housing Agencies (i.e., Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency<sup>5</sup>) - independent organizations that work with private and public partners to secure funding, build and operate affordable housing.

### **Housing Operations**

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/professionals/industry-innovation-and-leadership/industry-expertise/affordable-housing/co-operative-housing-guide>

<sup>5</sup> <https://vaha.ca/about/>

Options for the City to have a supportive role:

- **Own and operate housing units**

Example - the City of Calgary has the Calgary Housing Company which is a wholly owned subsidiary of the City which works with citizens, governmental, non-profit, and private sector partners<sup>6</sup>

- **Maintain/renovate/renew housing units**

- **Provide operational funding for Housing**

Example - the City of Regina has a Permanent Supportive Housing Operating Grant program<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://calgaryhousingcompany.org/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.regina.ca/home-property/housing/#outline-housing-incentives-programs>