

Municipal Housing Strategies: Best Practices and Common Themes

Ongoing research, including a municipal scan as well as one-on-one conversations with municipal Housing teams from across Canada, have identified the following best practices and common themes:

- The duration of municipal housing strategies is decreasing, from an average of 10- to 20-year plans to an average of five-year plans. Certain Provinces mandate municipal housing strategies to be updated every five years;
- Collaboration and program alignment with Provincial and Federal levels of Government significantly increases project success;
- Land Acquisition Programs that donate or sell appropriately zoned land, sometimes at below market value, for the development of affordable and mixed market affordable housing, are effective and common;
- Many municipal housing programs have involved the creation of a housing and affordability task force or advisory group that make recommendations on municipal actions related to housing;
- Several plans have included an increased focus on Indigenous housing strategies and/or specific Indigenous housing incentive programs and objectives;
- Having achievable targets and measures for success built into municipal housing programs is crucial;
- Many municipalities are in the process of investigating or introducing Rent-to-Own programs;
- Interest in Community Land Trusts is increasing throughout Canada, where land and housing is removed from the real estate market through either purchase or donation and perpetually held in a trust to preserve the affordability of that land and housing asset;
- There is increased focus on the rehabilitation of existing housing stock as well as investment and funding to support innovative housing pilot projects;
- The development of Housing Needs Assessments is becoming more standardized across Canada;
- Many municipalities are experiencing a lack of non-profit housing providers; and
- Some municipalities are introducing policies that provide enhanced zoning or building permissions for developments of affordable housing projects.

Research and conversations with municipalities will continue during the creation of a Housing Strategy and updated information and findings will be provided in future reporting. These best practices will be used to inform the Housing Strategy for the City of Saskatoon.