

## Background

In March 2017 the Minister of Housing announced that \$100 Million over the next two (2) years for housing and support services would be available. The Ministry of Housing invited Service Managers across the Province to submit an expression of interest to define the supportive housing needs in their community, to inform the Ministry about the Service Manager's ability to deliver housing assistance and support services, and to identify potential community partners to deliver supportive housing services. This was the first funding opportunity that Service Managers have had the capacity to request both operating and capital funding. Operating costs could be used for either housing assistance such as rent supplement or support services such as counseling, case management, life skills training, etc. Additionally, there was capital funding for a total of 400 units (same funding formula as Affordable Housing Program – 75% of unit cost up to a maximum of \$150,000 per unit).

Eligible capital projects need to be one of the following: new construction, including additions and extension; acquisition and/or rehabilitation of existing residential buildings to maintain or increase the affordable rental housing stock; or conversion of non-residential buildings or units to purpose-built rental buildings/units. Capital funding could be used to increase the supply of physical supportive housing units, which could be in either transitional or long term supportive housing projects. Rental units must also be linked to housing assistance and support services, funded through program operating dollars.

Approved capital projects must remain affordable for a minimum period of twenty (20) years. Affordability is defined as having rents for the project that are at or below 80% of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Average Market Rent (AMR) at the time of occupancy. Capital funding would be provided based on affordability payments. This involves the Ministry of Housing advancing payments over a twenty (20) year period, as opposed to the one time lump sum payments during the construction phase.

The Ministry of Housing indicated an interest in supporting Service Managers across the Province to collaborate with other sector organizations (housing, health, community services, and children and youth sectors) to develop a coordinated supportive housing system with flexible approaches to meet resident's changing needs, and to assist individuals to obtain and retain safe, affordable, and adequate housing with the appropriate level and type of support services. The Home for Good (HFG) Program has a direct link to the Province's Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update issued in 2016 and supports the Ministry's goal to end chronic homelessness by 2025.

Funding would be provided to Service Managers to assist recipients who fall within one or more of the four (4) targeted provincial priority homelessness areas: chronic homelessness, youth homelessness, indigenous homelessness, and homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems (i.e. hospitals and prisons).

The Home for Good Program strives to ensure that recipients with complex needs avoid homelessness and remain stably housed over time, and the Province has committed to funds being utilized for a variety of housing models.

The proposal must demonstrate capacity to deliver all aspects of the proposal (housing assistance, support services, and capital projects (as applicable)), which included a list of potential partners. Preference would be given to submissions that can successfully highlight key partnerships that would be leveraged to maximize the benefits of the proposal and provide stronger service integration, and include a variety of new and enhanced arrangements that cover areas such as financial or in-kind contributions, capacity building, or training in addition to service delivery.

As with all provincial allocations and consistent with government accounting requirements, annual funding allocations under HFG would be provided on a “use it or lose it” basis. Any funding not committed by the required timelines would need to be returned to the Province.

### **Expression of Interest Submission**

At the May 30, 2017 meeting of City of Greater Sudbury Council, through Resolution CC2017-140, the City of Greater Sudbury endorsed the municipality’s submission of the Ministry of Housing Home for Good (HFG) Funding Expression of Interest.

An Expression of Interest was submitted requesting a combination of capital and operating funds to support locally relevant and community-driven solutions to chronic homelessness in Sudbury. The goal of the proposal was to ensure the provision of assistance along a continuum of housing supports from the greatest level of need (congregate care) to decreasing levels of assistance through supportive housing and rent supplements; each level is dependent on the abilities and choice of individual clients.

The Government of Ontario’s *Realizing Our Potential* strategy recognized that moving clients from homelessness to housing must include a continuum of supports. Greater Sudbury adopted a Housing First philosophy for the delivery of homelessness programming, which aligns directly with the goals of the province. The proposed projects within the expression of interest closed the gap of the service continuum by providing safe, affordable and supportive options for people either living or discharged

into homelessness. The proposed services included in the expression of interest do not duplicate, compete or replace existing assistance in the community.

The target populations identified in the Expression of Interest included three (3) provincial priorities: chronic homelessness, homelessness following transitions from provincially-funded institutions, and Indigenous homelessness. All programs and services would be available in both official languages to adults over the age of eighteen (18). It is expected, based on past experience that participants assessed as chronically homeless may also have a host of serious issues, which the services are prepared to address.

The expression of interest is divided into two components, Year 1 and Year 2 funding.

### **Year 1 Funding**

Funding focused on 200 Larch Street and the renovations required to renovate the building to set up a Community Hub model of services for homeless.

The partnership will be between the City of Greater Sudbury, the Canadian Mental Health Association Sudbury/Manitoulin, and the NE LHIN.

### **Community Hub Model**

The goal of the community hub program is to keep clients safe, stabilize and improve their overall health status and support the clients to transition to other services and affordable housing within the community.

Programs such as the City of Greater Sudbury's "Off the Street" Low Barrier Emergency Shelter Program would operate at 200 Larch Street. The second floor would host a fifteen (15) bed congregate care residential managed alcohol program. This section would be considered transitional housing. Residents would have the capacity to access support services that are offered on the main floor. Once the residents are stabilized, employees would assist residents to access permanent affordable housing.

The goal of the Year 1 proposal ensured the provision of assistance along a continuum of housing support from the greatest level of need (congregate care) to decreasing levels of assistance through supportive housing and rent supplements; each level is dependent on the abilities and choice of individual clients.

Operational funding requested included housing allowances, tenancy support, and support services incorporated into the community hub model. Capital funding requested included the conversion of the non residential building into 15 congregate care units.

## **Year 2 Funding (Supportive Home for Good Rental Units)**

Year 2 funding moves the housing continuum forward by consolidating the partners to achieve permanent housing for graduates of the programs instituted at 200 Larch Street.

The goal of the proposed Supportive Home for Good apartment building was to decrease hospital stays/visits, and assist individuals in finding permanent housing; increase supportive housing options for individuals returning/remaining in the community, and maintain stabilized affordable housing.

A four (4) storey 38 unit supportive housing apartment building was proposed. The target population for this building would be the chronically homeless, indigenous homeless and homeless following transitions from provincially-funded institutions and service systems. A community consultation process including Council approval would be required to determine site selection for this project.

In the proposal, the first floor would host a common space for residents to utilize for social gatherings, a six (6) bedroom pod congregate care dorm style supportive housing program and office space. The second floor would host an additional two (2) six (6) bedroom pod congregate care transitional housing for individuals who want to be housed from the shelter, correctional facility, or chronically homeless. Floors three (3) and four (4) would be a mix of twenty (20) one bedrooms and bachelor apartments providing permanent housing. Support would be minimal however if individuals require support they can access services through floors one (1) and two (2). All residents are required to be eighteen (18) years of age or older.

Operational funding for the rental units is pending and is a second stage request within the Ministry of Housing Guidelines. The operational allocation would be geared towards the support services required to operate the necessary programs within the Phase 2 development.

Greater Sudbury is a community with a network of agencies that work cooperatively. As such, the priorities within the proposal continue to be the most important to the community – they are the gaps in the service continuum. With the inclusion of the proposed supports, clients would be able to move seamlessly from homelessness to affordable housing with the most appropriate level and type of support services based on their changing needs over time.

## **Summary of Ministry of Housing Requirements**

There are several requirements that need to be endorsed by Council as of October 31, 2017. They are as follows:

- That the City of Greater Sudbury endorse the municipality's participation in the Ministry of Housing HFG Funding Program;
- That the Manager of Housing Services be authorized to sign the HFG Funding Agreements and Take-Up Plans with the Ministry of Housing and with program participants, including the request for operational funding for Phase 2;
- That the Manager of Housing Services be authorized to distribute the HFG funding in order to deliver the HFG Funding Program;
- That the Manager of Housing Services continue to be authorized to allocate funding received under the Province's Delivering Opportunities for Ontario Renters Program (DOORS) to supplement the various affordable housing programs funding as needed;
- That all Ministry of Housing reporting requirements be endorsed through the Community Services Committee meetings;
- That the City of Greater Sudbury authorize the Manager of Housing Services to adjust the required Ministry documentation (PDFP's, PIF's, etc.) to reflect any changes and/or recommendations required by the Ministry of Housing; and
- That the appropriate by-law be prepared.

## **Next Steps**

Reports to Community Services will be brought forward to indicate the work being completed with the community partners to ensure the project meets all of the Province's funding criteria and milestones to begin Year 1 renovations. Quarterly Ministry updates are required to be vetted through the Community Services Committee. A report to Council in 2018 will also be prepared containing information regarding community consultations and potential site locations for Year 2 capital funding for Council's consideration.

## References

Ministry of Housing, A Stronger Supportive Housing System for ON,  
<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page13793.aspx>

Council Report, May 30, 2017, Harm Reduction Program/Managed Alcohol Program –  
200 Larch Street,  
<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1128&itemid=13139&lang=en>