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Lay of the Land

Introduction

We are still in a housing crisis, one that no single government department or organization can address alone. We know that housing is crucial for the health and well-being of our communities and families.

Since 2012, we have taken deliberate steps to rise to this challenge through a whole-of-government approach. In 2020, these efforts culminated in our first-ever Status of Housing Report. Now, we are following up with this Status of Housing Snapshot. As intended, this will be a shorter, more succinct look at our efforts since then.

Unique challenges in construction

From March 2020 to March 2022, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's construction program has completed 226 public housing units. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent rise in construction costs have proven unprecedented obstacles, forcing the Nunavut Housing Corporation to look for alternate methods of procurement to address the housing crisis in Nunavut.

Travel restrictions required construction workers from outside of Nunavut to remain in isolation hubs for a period of 14-days during the height of the pandemic. In response, the Department of Community and Government Services and the Nunavut Housing Corporation worked together to help cover these costs so planned and existing construction projects could continue unimpeded. The 2020-21 construction season proceeded with 106 public units and 10 staff housing units – 24 more units than the previous year. No new construction housing projects were cancelled in 2020-21 as a result of COVID-19.

The 2021-22 construction season resulted in tenders for 26 public housing units and five staff housing units being cancelled due to budget shortfalls in relation to high bid prices. However, that same year, construction proceeded for 70 public housing units and four staff housing units.

In the 2022-23 construction tender season, the Nunavut Housing Corporation cancelled all tenders due to high prices in relation to approved budgets. The cancellation of tenders has an adverse impact on Nunavummiut, who desperately need housing units. NHC has undertaken a strategic review of its project delivery and will pursue its Nunavut 3000 plan to support the delivery of 3000 new housing units by 2030.

Our Steps Forward

We have also progressed in key areas outlined in the Iglulliuqatigillauqta: "Let's Build a Home Together" Framework (2012). In the coming pages, we will note what these accomplishments are and where they fall under

the following four priorities:

Nunavut's Housing Priorities

Strategic directions from the Igluliuqatigiillauqta: "Let's Build a Home Together" Framework (2012)



Nunavut's Housing Action Plan

Objectives from The Blueprint for Action on Housing (2016)



Housing priority: Increase Nunavut's housing supply



Step forward: Securing federal funding



Step forward: Making land available for housing

- The Nunavut Housing Corporation has successfully advocated for almost \$50 million in additional federal funding through the Rapid Housing Initiative.
- One application for \$45 million was approved to help fund the construction of 101 affordable housing units in Iqaluit, Sanirajak, Kimmirut, Naujaat, Kugaaruk and Pond Inlet.
- A previous application for \$4.9 million in funding was approved to help fund another 15 public housing units in Kugluktuk and Gjoa Haven
- The Department of Community and Government Services continues to improve land development and administration in municipalities.
- In 2020-22, C&GS conducted eight residential survey projects, updated satellite imagery to update community base maps, and approved 66 land plans across the territory.
- The availability of developed land is essential to housing construction.
- The Nunavut Housing Corporation is also working on redeveloping older units and vacant land within municipalities to reduce the demand for newly developed lots.



Step forward: Ensuring a capable workforce

- Nunavut Arctic College students took the lead in building a new public housing unit in Rankin Inlet in the summer of 2022, supported by the Department of Family Services.
- This is part of an effort for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to work with the college to provide educational opportunities for construction trades apprentices. This allows Nunavummiut apprentices to gain the skills and indentured hours needed to bridge the gap from graduation to employment.



Step forward: Building public housing units

- The Nunavut Housing Corporation completed 226 public housing units between March 31, 2020 and March 31, 2022.
- The communities in which these homes were built include Arctic Bay, Arviat, Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, Sanirajak, Igloolik, Iqaluit, Kimmirut, Kugaaruk, Kugluktuk, Naujaat, Pangnirtung, Pond Inlet, Rankin Inlet and Taloyoak.

Housing priority: Improve collaboration among housing partners



Step forward: Better maintenance through co-operation

- The Tenant Education Program facilitator guide and participant manual have been completed.
- This is aimed at people having successful tenancies, improving relations between tenants, their local housing organization, NHC and one another while reducing maintenance costs.
- Working with the Department of Family Services, Iilitaqsinig – the Nunavut Literacy Council and the Rent Smart Education & Support Society, the Nunavut Housing Corporation consulted its partners through working groups in Cambridge Bay and Arviat to ensure this program will meet the needs of Local Housing Organizations and the tenants they serve.



Step forward: Working together to save home energy costs

- The Renewable Energy Support Program, developed and funded by the Department of Environment, was introduced in November 2021 and is administered by the Nunavut Housing Corporation through the Renewable Energy Homeowner Grant Program.
- In 2021-22 the program supported 4 applicants for a total funding contribution of \$66,830



Step Forward: Pushing through global pandemic together

- The Department of Community and Government Services and Nunavut Housing Corporation worked together to advance capital projects with minimal delays due to COVID-19. No new construction housing projects in 2020-21 were cancelled due to the global pandemic, and construction on previous projects continued.



Step forward: Finding funding with municipal government

- The City of Iqaluit has successfully secured \$12.2 million for an affordable housing project to be turned over to the Nunavut Housing Corporation.
- This funding comes from two federal sources, including \$5 million through CMHC's Rapid Housing Initiative and nearly \$7.2 million through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's National Co-Investment Fund.
- This ensured an additional 18 new affordable housing units in Nunavut's most critical housing community.

Housing priority: Provide options to meet different housing needs



Step forward: Supporting students

- The Department of Education has incorporated additional support for housing into its Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program in collaboration with Nunavut Arctic College and the Department of Family Services.
- This includes increasing the basic grant maximum and a new housing supplement in the 2020-21 budget to help rent costs for students leaving their home communities to attend post-secondary education.



Step forward: Enhancing and expanding existing transitional housing efforts

- The Department of Family Services is completing a transitional housing needs and design study to support future renovations and services for housing vulnerable people in Iqaluit.
- This also provides a model to support other community efforts to establish transitional housing initiatives.
- The Department of Family Services is currently working with communities that have expressed an interest in opening family safety or homeless shelters, including Gjoa Haven, Baker Lake, Rankin Inlet, Pangnirtung and Pond Inlet.



Step forward: More assistance for most vulnerable in Kitikmeot

- The Department of Family Services is funding a transitional housing program in Cambridge Bay.
- The pilot run by the Kitikmeot Friendship Society is intended to aid women facing homelessness and domestic violence.



Step forward: Additional help for mental health

- The Cambridge Bay Mental Health Transitional Housing program was initiated by the Department of Health to support people experiencing chronic and persistent mental illness.
- This program can serve up to five clients at any time. A three-year lease agreement for the residential unit and a Memorandum of Understanding with Nunavut Housing Corporation was signed in November 2020.

Housing priority: Promote self-determination and self-reliance



Step forward: Finding funding to fill in gaps

- The Nunavut Housing Corporation worked alongside the Department of Family Services to negotiate with the federal government for the Canadian Housing Benefit worth \$9 million to be delivered over nine years.
- Nunavut will use this funding for temporary relief in crisis situations that result from the gaps in Nunavut's housing continuum, particularly the lack of transitional housing.



Step forward: Finding homegrown solutions

- Nunavut Arctic College students took the lead in building a new public housing unit in Rankin Inlet in the summer of 2022, supported by the Department of Family Services.
- This is part of an effort for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to work with the college to provide educational opportunities for construction trades apprentices. This allows Nunavummiut apprentices to gain the skills and indentured hours needed to bridge the gap from graduation to employment.



Step forward: Being more energy efficient

- The Nunavut Housing Corporation has successfully applied for funding to complete energy efficiency retrofits to more than 500 public housing units using \$6 million from the federal Low Carbon Economy Fund.
- Contracts have been awarded for retrofitting 576 public housing units in Baker Lake, Grise Fiord, Kugluktuk, Pond Inlet, Rankin Inlet, Taloyoak, Arviat, Igloolik, Sanirajak, Sanikiluaq and Iqaluit. Installations began in the fiscal year 2019-20 and will continue until 2023-24.
- Energy efficiency is key to ensuring that we can keep utility costs low for our housing units as our supply increases.



Step forward: Technology-aided maintenance

- Tasked with improving public housing maintenance systems and processes, NHC developed technology that is currently aiding all Local Housing Organizations.
- This Housing Inspection Program tracks maintenance projects and more effectively develops work plans. NHC IT and Maintenance staff continues their support for Local Housing Organizations in using this new technology.



ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) was created in 2000 through the Nunavut Legislature by the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (Nunavut) Act. Our mandate as a public agency of the Government of Nunavut (GN) is to create, coordinate and administer housing programs so that we may provide fair access to a range of affordable housing options to families and individuals in Nunavut.