Affordable Housing
Advisory Board
A City of St. Albert Board

Research Summary

Municipal Housing Offices

Summary of the structure and responsibilities of Canadian municipal housing offices

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THE CITY OF St. Albert
Planning and Development

Disclaimer

The contents of this research summary are for informational purposes only, and do not reflect the official policy or position of either the City of St. Albert or the St. Albert Affordable Housing Advisory Board.

Municipal Housing Offices

Overview

Many municipalities in Canada have an office dealing with the issue of housing. These offices are mandated with responsibilities ranging from the management of housing units and funds, to public education, advocacy, and research on housing issues. This research summary examines how ten municipalities have structured their housing offices, what they are responsible for, and if the offices are connected to other municipal agencies. The municipalities examined include:

- Toronto, Ontario,
- Calgary, Alberta,
- Ottawa, Ontario,
- York Region, Ontario,
- Edmonton, Alberta,
- Vancouver, British Columbia,
- Hamilton, Ontario,
- London, Ontario,
- Windsor, Ontario, and,
- Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Summary of Findings

All ten municipal housing offices are mandated with the following functions:

- the creation of plans and initiatives for affordable and social housing development,
- the administration of funds for public, private, and non-profit housing development,
- research into innovative housing solutions, models, and methods of implementation, and,
- the cultivation of partnerships with housing developers and community agencies for housing development and the creation of public awareness programs.

Six municipal manage affordable housing units through the ownership of a housing corporation. These cities include Toronto, Calgary, Ottawa, York Region, Edmonton, and Hamilton.

All of the Ontario municipalities offer long-term care housing and support services in addition to the provision of social and affordable housing units, a function that is unique to these cities.

The majority of the municipal housing offices were established as a business unit under a community or social services department. Only two cities placed their housing offices elsewhere: Calgary, which placed housing in the Asset Management and Capital Works Department, and London, in the Planning and Development Department. Edmonton's municipal housing corporation is also placed as part of that city's Asset Management and Public Works Department.

Applicability to St. Albert

Although St. Albert is significantly smaller than the municipalities examined, a housing office may prove to be useful for encouraging affordable housing development. A housing office would be able to dedicate itself to exploring and implementing new and innovative programs and initiatives for housing development, and to act authoritatively as the City's voice on housing issues.

A City of St. Albert housing office could be placed in one of three business units:

- Family and Community Support Services, which would coordinate with its social planning and community development functions,
- Planning and Development, which would align with its long-range planning role, and,
- Economic Development, to develop workforce housing with local commercial interests.

Attachment 1

Municipal Housing Organizational Charts for Ten Canadian Municipalities