

CITY OF BURNABY

COMMUNITY PLANNING & HOUSING COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

**RE: NEW FEDERAL - PROVINCIAL HOUSING PROGRAM: OPTIONS FOR
FUNDING SENIORS HOUSING**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** Council authorize staff to arrange a meeting with appropriate federal and provincial representatives at an appropriate time to discuss the particulars of Burnaby's affordable housing needs.

R E P O R T

The Community Planning and Housing Committee, at its Open meeting held on 2002 January 22, received and adopted the *attached* report advising that on 2001 December 18 the Governments of Canada and British Columbia announced the signing of an Affordable Housing Agreement which will provide \$177.4 million over the next five years to help increase the supply of affordable housing in the province. Federal funding of \$88.7 million will be matched by a provincial contribution of at least an equal value.

The Committee advised that the program is still in the early stages of development. Further details will be provided to Council as they become available.

Arising from discussion, the Committee requested that Council authorize staff to arrange a meeting with appropriate federal and provincial representatives at an appropriate time to discuss the particulars of Burnaby's affordable housing needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor C. Redman
Chair

Councillor G. Begin
Member

Councillor D. Johnston
Member

: COPY - CITY MANAGER
- DIRECTOR FINANCE
- DIR. PLNG. & BLDG.

TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS 2002 JANUARY 18
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING OUR FILE: 12.000

SUBJECT: NEW FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL HOUSING PROGRAM:
OPTIONS FOR FUNDING SENIORS HOUSING

PURPOSE: To provide information regarding a new Federal-Provincial Affordable Housing Program.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** the Community Planning and Housing Committee recommend that Council receive this report for information.

R E P O R T

1.0 BACKGROUND

At its meeting of 2001 December 18, the Community Planning and Housing Committee discussed the following item that was REFERRED to the Committee by Council at its meeting of 2001 December 03:

“THAT staff co-ordinate a meeting involving the Minister of State for Community Charter to gain clarification of what will be available and to develop some interim sources of funding for Abbeyfield; and also include in the list of meeting participants, the Minister of State for Intermediate, Long Term Care and Home Care, the Minister for Health Services, the Minister for Health Planning and the Minister for Public Safety and Solicitor General.”

Council requested, that, as a first step, the Community Planning and Housing Committee consider initiating a meeting of federal and provincial representatives for the purpose of determining if, in fact, they are intending to create affordable housing projects in Burnaby and possibly explore funding options.

The purpose of this report is to provide a response to Council's request, and provide new information regarding a recently announced Federal/Provincial Housing Agreement to fund affordable housing.

2.0 ABBEYFIELD HOUSING FOR SENIORS

Abbeyfield housing for seniors is a small scale form of supportive housing that provides bed-sitting rooms for residents with the provision of meals, social supports and recreational services in a common area. Abbeyfield houses are staffed 24 hours a day by a co-ordinator who provides services and supports but not medical care and are typically developed by non-profit groups.

Abbeyfield houses have been developed outside of senior government housing programs that provide affordable housing for low and moderate income senior citizens that cannot afford housing in the private market. The purpose of Abbeyfield is to provide housing for seniors that has support services, rather than to provide affordable housing on a subsidized basis per se. The Provincial Government, through the Homes BC program has preferred to fund affordable supportive housing that has greater flexibility in design (for example, one bedroom units rather than bed-sitting rooms) so that a wider variety of needs can be met in the longer term. Senior levels of government, through their social housing program designs, have not identified Abbeyfield housing as a priority to fund.

In the last month the federal government has announced a new federal-provincial affordable housing program where the Province has identified supportive housing and assisted living for seniors as a priority. While the details of the program are still in the early stages of development, it appears that funding will be available to fund affordable housing that will be targeted to low and moderate income seniors who can live independently but require some level of support. At this time, it is too early to speculate whether Abbeyfield housing projects will be eligible for funding under this initiative. However, given past experience, this is not considered a likely scenario.

3.0 THE FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING AGREEMENT

On December 18, 2001, the Governments of Canada and British Columbia announced the signing of an Affordable Housing Agreement which will provide \$177.4 million over the next five years to help increase the supply of affordable housing in the province. Federal funding of \$88.7 million will be matched by a provincial contribution of at least an equal value. This Affordable Housing Program was announced in the Speech from the Throne in January 2001 as a federal response to the affordable housing situation in Canada, and the \$680 million in federal funding was confirmed in the 2001 federal budget on December 10, 2001. This funding commitment was significant in that it represented the re-entry of the federal government into the role of funding affordable housing after an absence of ten years.

The framework for the federal-provincial agreement includes the following:

- Provinces and territories have the primary responsibility for design and housing program delivery;
- Provinces and territories require flexible programs to address their housing needs;
- The initiative needs to create affordable housing for low to moderate income households;
- Units funded will remain affordable for a minimum of 10 years, and;
- Provinces and territories will be required to match federal contributions overall.

The maximum federal contribution to an affordable housing project is \$25,000 per unit.

3.1 The Priorities for British Columbia

The Affordable Housing Program will be delivered through the Province, with BC Housing acting as the lead agency. The Province has indicated that their priorities include affordable, supportive and assisted living for seniors and making the existing social housing programs more sustainable.

Staff from the Planning Department contacted BC Housing's Co-ordinator, Program and Implementation to obtain further information. Recognizing that the program is in the initial stages of design, the Co-ordinator noted that a major element of the affordable housing program will be meeting the Province's "New Era Document" commitment to create an additional 5,000 intermediate care/long term care beds/units by 2006. The new supportive and assisted living units for seniors created under the new affordable housing program are considered to meet this requirement. As well, some of the Homes BC units that were placed "on hold" pending the outcome of the Province's core review may receive some assistance through the affordable housing program.

3.2 Implementation of the Federal-Provincial Affordable Housing Program

The Co-ordinator, Program and Implementation from BC Housing noted that the first step of the program implementation process will involve BC Housing consulting with the Ministries of Health Planning and Health Services to identify resources and determine priorities for housing types, followed by consultation with service providers and Health Regions to determine priorities for locations.

It is expected that the process for choosing projects will be substantially different from the Homes BC program in that a key part of awarding a project will be the ability of the sponsor to deliver, in the long term, the needed support or services

required for supportive housing and assisted living for seniors. It is probable that some projects that have been put in abeyance (such as the New Vista assisted living project) may receive some funding under the Federal-Provincial program.

Consultation with sponsors and other stakeholders is not expected to occur until the spring, when the official “roll out” of the program would occur. Other than funding for assisted living projects that are currently in abeyance, it is anticipated that there will be a geographically targeted Request for Proposal process for seniors supported and assisted living housing in the late summer or early fall. In addition, Homes BC projects in abeyance that may benefit from the new program will still need to wait the outcome of the Province’s core review in the spring. In all cases, the Province has indicated an interest in creating “partnerships” to fund and develop the housing. Potential partners such as local governments, non-profit societies and the private sector will be asked to participate in projects by offering, for example, equity, discounted land, reduced fees and bonus density.

4.0 CONCLUSION

For the first time in ten years, the federal government has indicated an commitment to assist with the funding of affordable housing in Canada. This has resulted in the launch of a new Affordable Housing Program, and the signing of an agreement with the Province of BC to deliver the program.

Acknowledging that the development of the Federal-Provincial Affordable Housing Program is in its earliest stages, the Province has indicated that it wished to develop supportive housing/assisted living for seniors as a priority for this cost-shared program. As well, some projects that have been placed “on hold” pending the outcome of the core review will potentially benefit by the new funds.

Abbeyfield houses for seniors are considered a small scale form of supported living. Residents are provided with bed sitting rooms with meals, social supports and recreational activities are provided in common areas. Abbeyfield houses have been developed by non-profit groups outside of senior government programs as they are not considered to meet affordable housing criteria or program criteria that encourages housing units with some future flexibility in case the needs of the residents change. Although supportive housing and assisted living for seniors is an identified priority, details of the program, and the eligibility of Abbeyfield projects for funding, are unknown at this time. Considering past experience, it is unlikely that Abbeyfield houses, in their current form, would be eligible for funding.

BC Housing staff emphasized that the development of the framework for the Affordable Housing Program is in the earliest stages and, as such, it is difficult for BC Housing to commence discussions at this time regarding the details of the program and its

implementation. BC Housing, along with the Ministries of Health Planning and Health Services, will be inviting input from stakeholders (such as local government and potential sponsors) as soon as a preliminary framework for the program is ready for discussion.

Staff from the Planning Department will remain in close contact with BC Housing staff and report the progress of the development of the Affordable Housing Program to the Community Planning and Housing Committee. At the appropriate time, the Community Planning and Housing Committee may wish to consider initiating a meeting with the appropriate federal and provincial representatives to discuss the particulars of Burnaby's affordable housing needs.



J.S. Belhouse, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

BG:sa

cc: City Manager
Director Finance

R:\Long Range Clerical\DOCS\BEV\Reports\SENIROSHSGNOTE.wpd