

ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS



ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS

SECURING OUR RIGHTFUL PLACE
STRENGTHENING OUR FUTURE

AFFIRMER NOTRE PLACE LÉGITIME
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SPECIAL CHIEFS
ASSEMBLY

GATINEAU, QUEBEC - DECEMBER 14-16, 2010

ASSEMBLÉE
EXTRAORDINAIRE DES CHEFS
GATINEAU (QUÉBEC) - DU 14 AU 16 DÉCEMBRE 2010

Current AFN Housing Focus

- Guided by AFN Resolution #81/2008 - to be engaged in GoC Housing Policy Evaluation
- Guided by AFN Resolution #14/2007 – to develop a comprehensive approach to a balanced Housing Framework
- Participation in Bill C-304, an Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for all Canadians
- Assisted by an emerging partnership between the AFN and the Holmes Group, BRE United Kingdom and Greenbuild USA LEED Standard



AFN Resolution #81/2008

Housing Policy Evaluation

- Evaluation process must respect First Nations as the “Authority Having Jurisdiction”
- Engaging First Nations and their duly mandated Representatives and Organizations
- Active participation of the AFN Chiefs Committee and Technical Working Group
- Regional, territorial and local FN viewpoints
- AFN actively engaged at all stages



Evaluation Included

- All current Government of Canada (INAC & CMHC) housing policy, programs, activities and initiatives following the 1996 On Reserve Housing Policy
- Reviewing the key features of new housing, renovations and lot servicing through minor capital allocations
- Support for TC's to provide technical support and capacity building measures
- Function and effectiveness of Shelter Allowances and Ministerial Loan Guarantee's
- Recommendations and Observations of the Office of the Auditor General
- CMHC On Reserve Housing Programs and their effectiveness or their lack thereof.



Evaluation Methodology

- Multiple lines of evidence including:
- Key Informant Interviews
- Case Studies
- Literature Review
- Review of Administrative Data



Vaguely Defined Objectives

- First Nation control and accountability
- Shared responsibility for housing
- Capacity building
- Private financing

What did those Objectives mean?

- A new First Nation institutional housing framework?
- Clarifying different roles of GoC and of First Nations?
- Building First Nation capacity to build more and better new homes and repair existing substandard units?
- Moving away from social obligations and the perceived treaty right to housing?



Evaluation Findings

- The early stages of the evaluation process revealed that there was no 1996 On Reserve Housing Policy, at least not one that was defined, articulated, published or communicated to First Nations!
- Shared responsibility came to mean imposed rental regimes or the threat of lost shelter allowances for social housing.
- Capacity development took place to deliver programs activities and initiatives by INAC and CMHC.
- Little attempt was made to assist in building a FN Institutional Framework or ensure the transfer of jurisdiction or control of programs, activities or initiatives.



Evaluation Findings cont'd

- There is consensus that the role of INAC and CMHC is, and should be, primarily that of a funder.
- First Nations expect support in building capacity to take complete control over management of housing
- INAC capacity building support has lacked strategic preparation, clear vision of needs, and without a strategy
- Any implementation was compromised by the lack of a clear and communicated policy, flexible operational guidelines, and appropriate capacities
- Improvements are required to housing design, planning processes, capacity development, and to communications and knowledge transfer



Evaluation Recommendations

- Inac, working with First Nations, develop a new policy statement that defines objectives that meet the variety of needs of First Nation communities
- Work to clarify roles and responsibilities and strengthen accountabilities of all parties
- Advance First Nation capacity building initiatives to better manage housing stock, advance local First Nation operational control, and to achieve standards of the NBCode to ensure durability
- Work to address overcrowding and premature housing deterioration while maximizing the use of limited resources
- INAC's Community Infrastructure Branch is in agreement with these recommendations!



Next Steps to Policy Revitalization

- Ensure that there is meaningful consultation with duly mandated First Nation representatives at all levels, National, Regional, Territorial and local.
- These consultations should be, at a minimum, trilateral tables of dialogue and not bilateral ones that exclude First Nation viewpoints.
- Determine the obstacles and impediments to the current policy objectives
- Identify the means to achieving the transfer and control of First Nation housing responsibilities into First Nation mechanisms of delivery



AFN Resolution No. 14/2007

- Resolution No. 14/2007 calls for a comprehensive approach that includes all aspects of housing, from social housing and the care and control of band owned housing assets to individual home ownership.
- The Chiefs in Assembly directed the AFN to advocate for a balanced Housing Framework that maintains the ability of FN communities to move forward with local, territorial and regional housing strategies.
- Work towards replacing external GoC controls and interventions by creating and implementing internal First Nation solutions that provide new options and opportunities.



Developing a Regulatory Environment

- First Nation regulatory environments at the local level that are based on good governance
- Provision of capacity development measures that assist in creating all of the key features necessary for independent operational control of a housing portfolio
- Ensure a system of advisory support for the development of housing authorities that will act as an operational control of the housing portfolio within the regulatory environment
- Strategic Framework Agreements with various housing and infrastructure technical service providers such as housing managers, financial officers, land managers, building officers, firefighters, etc...



What Will it Look Like

- Sound and Comprehensive Housing Policy – current and at work
- System of land tenure and lot servicing
- Appropriate codes, standards and by-laws
- Compliance and enforcement measures
- Quality assurance and performance measures
- Predictable and sustainable financial practices
- Defines the parameters that an independent housing authority functions
- Developed collaboratively and ratified by community consensus



Model Housing Policy Guidelines

- Governance structure and operational controls
- Housing program options
- Construction procedures and guidelines
- Application and selection process
- Occupancy regulations and responsibilities
- Financial management and administration
- Oversight and appeals mechanisms



Operational Control of Housing

- Working within a mandate from Chief and Council but operating the housing portfolio independently.
- The housing portfolio operates within the parameters of the predetermined and ratified regulatory environment.
- Independent governance and decision making process endorsed by Chief and Council.
- Set aside finance and funding mechanisms.
- Sustainable management and administrative practices removed from band administration.
- Professional capacities for construction management, operations and portfolio asset maintenance.



Support for Bill C-304

- An Act to ensure secure, adequate, accessible and affordable housing for all Canadians
- Requiring CMHC to undertake the establishment of a National Housing Strategy in consultation with Provinces, Municipalities, First Nation-Metis-Inuit Peoples, non profit and private sector housing providers and civil society organizations.
- AFN presented as a Witness to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities
- Bill C-304 has passed through second reading and has been is being prepared for third reading and vote by the House of Commons.



Partnership with Holmes Group

- This new relationship will see the development of a Pilot Project in Ontario Region that will collectively utilize systems that encourage and accelerate the adoption of sustainable green building and development practices through the creation and implementation of accepted tools and performance practices.

It will focus on:

- sustainable site development
- water efficiency
- energy efficiency
- materials selection
- indoor environmental quality



Pilot Project Dynamics

- Sustainable Funding and Financial Development
- Installing an advanced communication network
- Utilize green technologies and micro generation power
- Energy efficient and durable industrial, institutional, commercial and residential construction practices
- Comprehensive skills development and capacity building
- Development of a green and sustainable community design process
- Create a Community Planning Model for use by all First Nations
- Develop a Centre of Excellence for Green and Sustainable First Nation Communities



Pilot Activity – Green Standard

- Revitalize and upgrade the technical standards of the OFN Illustrated Housing Code
- New upfront chapter that introduces elements of Environmental Stewardship and Assessment
- Another that defines what each First Nation needs to consider when developing a Regulatory Environment and the means of Operational Control of housing as a business
- Each specification chapter will include prescriptive performance measures, building science notes, better building practices , and working grade illustrations.
- Each specification chapter will be highlighted with heightened energy efficiency, durability, green and sustainable measures.

