

Blueprint for Action
on Housing

Summary Report of Round One Engagement Sessions

Nunavut Housing Corporation

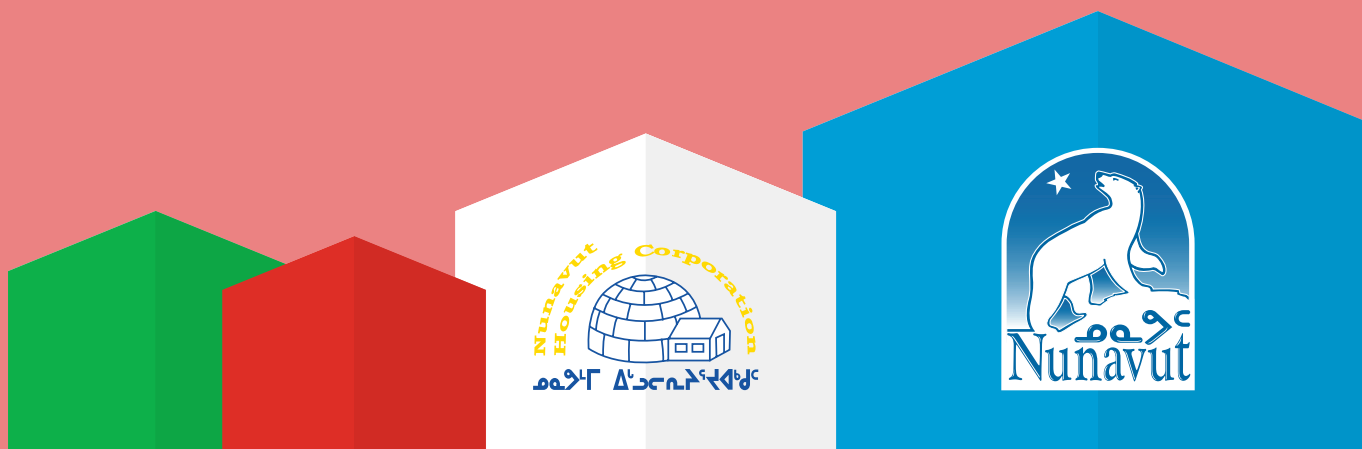


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Executive Summary

The Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) is leading the development of an Action Plan to address Nunavut's housing crisis – the Blueprint for Action on Housing (BPAOH). The BPAOH will serve as a strategic action plan to be implemented over the next ten years. The Action Plan is a GN-wide perspective on the issues, solutions, and actions required to address housing challenges in Nunavut.

This Report provides a summary of work completed to-date by the Nunavut Housing Corporation and contracted consultants, DPRA Canada, in developing the BPAOH. To inform the development of the BPAOH, the NHC is currently hosting engagement sessions with Nunavut government and interagency stakeholders – supplemented by interviews and focus groups. This report provides a summary of feedback received from the first round of engagement sessions.

In preparations for these engagement sessions, a number of tasks were completed such as a review of background documents and produced consultation materials including: Agendas (see Appendix B); a PowerPoint Presentation (see Appendix C); and Topic Primers (see Appendix D)

Engagement sessions were structured according to the four (4) main goals and nine (9) key topics of discussion that address these goals. The goals were outlined in the *Government of Nunavut's Long Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy* (2013). Each of these goals and topics will be addressed through the development of actions and commitments that will contribute greatly to addressing Nunavut's housing crisis. These 4 goals and 9 topics are as follows:

Goal 1: Removing Barriers to the Supply of Housing

1. Topic: Land Development
2. Topic: Capital Planning/Infrastructure Coordination

Goal 2: Reducing the Costs of Housing

3. Topic: Workforce Development
4. Topic: Technological Innovation
5. Topic: Municipal Financing

Goal 3: Increasing Investment in Housing

6. Topic: Investment/Building a Stronger Business Case

Goal 4: Defining Housing Demand Factors

7. Topic: Care/Supportive Housing
8. Topic: Affordability Options
9. Topic: Meeting the Housing Needs of GN Employees

The first round of engagement was very successful with high levels of participation from over 100 representatives from the GN and interagency organizations. There is considerable intersectionality across these housing topics and strong desire to encourage greater collaboration to address these housing issues. As a result, a number of participants attended more than one of these sessions. (Appendix A provides a full list of participants.)

A high-level summary of what was said at each of the engagement session regarding Nunavut's current housing needs, challenges and possible solutions is provided in Section 3 of the Report. This section does not provide an analysis of findings, but rather a descriptive summary of the key points that were raised.

Next steps include confirmation and validation of what participants shared in round one and a further refinement of potential solutions for each topic along with associated action items. These will be identified and verified through additional engagement sessions planned by the NHC.

1.0 Introduction

The Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) is leading the development of an Action Plan to address Nunavut's housing crisis – the Blueprint for Action on Housing (BPAOH). In April 2016, the NHC contracted DPRCA Canada to assist with this work.

The BPAOH will serve as a strategic action plan to be implemented over the next ten years. The Action Plan is a GN-wide perspective on the issues, solutions, and future actions required to address housing challenges in Nunavut.

1.1 Purpose of this Report

This Report provides a summary of work completed to-date by the Nunavut Housing Corporation regarding the first round of engagement sessions for the BPAOH. Specifically, the report summarizes feedback received from the first round of engagement sessions with Nunavut government and interagency stakeholders.

1.2 Background to the BPAOH

The BPAOH is the third component of the NHC's three-part approach to addressing Nunavut's housing needs. The BPAOH will build on the groundwork laid in the *Framework for the Government of Nunavut's Long-term Comprehensive Housing and Homeless Strategy* (2012) and on the four strategic goals identified in the *Government of Nunavut's Long Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy* (2013) ("the Strategy").

The Action Plan will draw upon the goals and objectives of the Strategy and be comprised of realistic, achievable and holistic actions brought forward by multiple government and agency stakeholders to respond to Nunavut's housing challenges.

1.3 Structure of the report

The following sections of this report will present an overview of the NHC's approach to the development of the Blueprint for Action on Housing, as well as a summary of the recently completed first round of engagement sessions.

The Report is structured as follows:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Approach to Developing the BPAOH
- 3.0 Report on the Round One Engagement Sessions
- 4.0 Next Steps to Develop the BPAOH

2.0 Approach to Developing the BPAOH

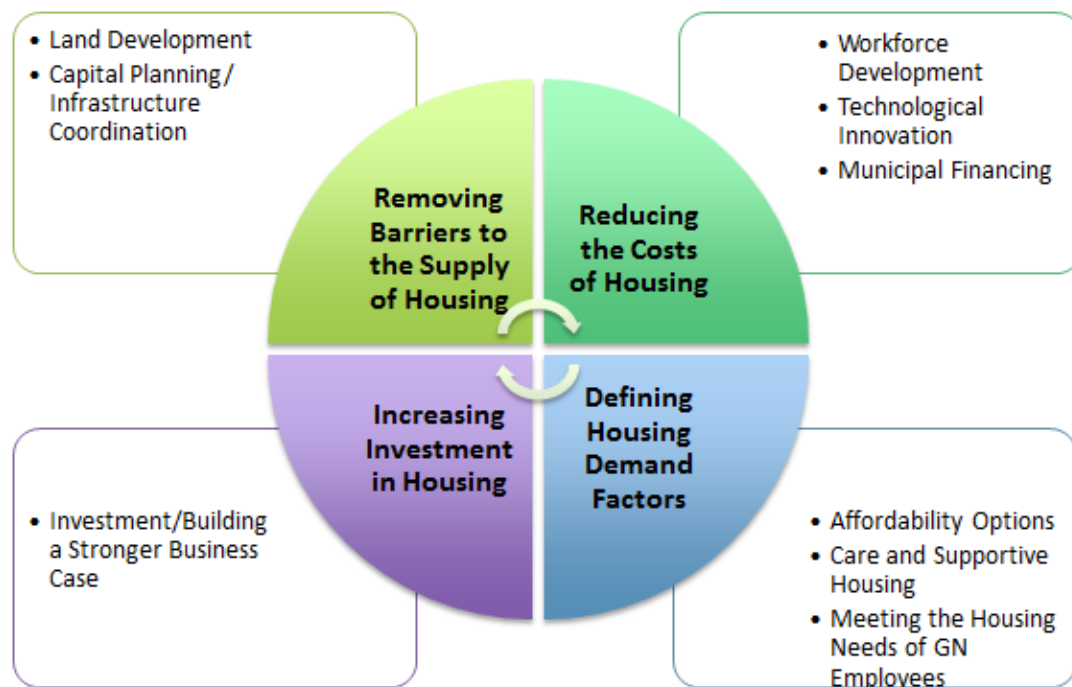
Development of the BPAOH will take a whole-of-government perspective on the issues, solutions and future actions required to address housing challenges in Nunavut. The NHC is using a multi-stakeholder engagement session approach to realize this objective.

To inform the development of the BPAOH, the NHC has planned to host engagement sessions – supplemented by interviews and small focus groups – in May and June 2016 involving participants with the departments of the Government of Nunavut (GN) and various interagency partners. Feedback from participants on housing issues, challenges, and possible solutions with respect to each of these topics will inform the development of the BPAOH’s actions and commitments.

The engagement sessions were structured according to the four (4) main goals outlined in the Strategy. Each goal is associated with one or more key topics of discussion that, if addressed, will contribute greatly to addressing Nunavut’s housing crisis.

The four goals of the Strategy, as well as the 9 associated topics of discussion, are presented in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Strategy Goals and BPAOH Engagement Discussion Topics



2.1 Round One Engagement Sessions Process

This section outlines the process the NHC followed in preparation for the first round of engagement, completed in early May, 2016.

2.1.1 Pre-engagement interviews

Prior to the first round of engagement sessions the NHC undertook a series of pre-engagement interviews with departments and agencies to inform the objectives of the upcoming sessions, clarify expectations, and provide additional information as necessary. These groups were also asked to confirm participants from a preliminary list developed by the NHC.

2.1.2 Background Document Review

DPRa conducted a review of background materials provided by the NHC and obtained through desktop research. These materials included GN strategic plans and policies, discussion papers, business cases and other research reports on housing needs and solutions for Northern Canada.

2.1.2 Development of Engagement Topic Primers

In the week leading up to the sessions, participants received comprehensive topic summaries that provided contextual information on the various topics of discussion. DPRa developed a topic summary for each of the four goals of the Strategy, as well as for the topic of *Meeting the Housing Needs of GN Staff*¹. Topic summaries identified connections between the topics of discussion, priorities from departmental business plans, and relevant GN Strategies in order to promote discussion and find linkages between department initiatives. The topic summaries are included in Appendix D of this report.

2.1.3 Preparations for the Engagement Sessions

Participation in each of the nine sessions was confirmed by way of electronic meeting invitations, with certain participants being invited to multiple sessions. Follow-up phone calls were completed with those individuals who did not respond electronically. Working with NHC staff, DPRa developed other consultation materials such as PowerPoint presentations for the engagement sessions.

¹ As shown in Figure 1, this topic speaks to the Strategy goal of “defining housing demand factors”, but was reserved for a special and separate discussion on the final day of the engagement sessions.

2.1.4 Multi-Stakeholder Engagement Sessions: May 2nd – May 6th, Iqaluit

From May 2nd– 6th, 2016, the NHC undertook the first round of engagement, hosting a total nine (9) half-day engagement sessions in Iqaluit – one for each of the 9 topics of discussion. The primary objectives of the first round of engagement sessions on the BPOAH were to:

- i. Identify the needs and issues underpinning/specific to the nine topics of discussion; and
- ii. Identify potential options and/or solutions to the issues identified.

Each session was approximately 2.5 to 3 hours in duration and began with an introductory presentation provided by the NHC to set the context of Nunavut's housing crisis (refer to Appendix B for a sample agenda from the engagement sessions and Appendix C for a sample slide deck from the engagement sessions).

Interactive discussions were held and guided by the discussion questions provided in the topic primers. Participants were asked to focus on the primary issues underpinning the topic of discussion before shifting to focus on potential solutions. DPRA recorded participant feedback on flipchart notes which were then synthesized to inform the summary presented in the following section.

3.0 Report on the Round One Engagement Sessions

On the whole, participation from representatives during all nine sessions was considered by the NHC to be meaningful and fulsome, with high levels of participation from the various stakeholders. Over 100 representatives from multiple departments and/or agencies participated in the first round of engagement. A complete list of participants is included in Appendix A of this report.

Below is a summary of the discussion from these engagement sessions.

3.1 A Summary of What We Heard in Round One

This section provides a high-level summary of what was said at the engagement sessions regarding Nunavut's current housing landscape and possible solutions to address housing issues and barriers. This is not an analysis of findings, but rather a summary of the key points that were raised.

Summaries for each of the nine sessions are organized as follows:

- a. **Issues:** Provides context and identifies the underlying need explored by participants as it relates to the strategy goal and the specific topic at hand.
- b. **Challenges:** Examines the challenges that currently limit successful action to address these needs.
- c. **Potential Solutions:** Proposed solutions or potential approaches to address housing challenges, including identified stakeholders and opportunities for interlinkages with other GN / Nunavut initiatives.

3.1.1 Removing Barriers to the Supply of Housing

Topic 1: Land Development

a. Issues

The Strategy recognized that the unavailability of developed land is a barrier to the provision of housing in Nunavut. However, the high cost of land development and the infrastructure necessary to support it prevents proactive lot development and neighbourhood planning in most communities.

Addressing the issue of land development requires policies that promote land availability, strengthen municipal capacity, coordinate strategic and community planning, and develop effective private market incentives.

b. Challenges

The development of lands, including municipal services to support land development, currently presents a **financial road block** to housing development; municipalities cannot afford to develop or expand land development required to meet housing needs. This limits the supply of housing, and **high land development prices** hamper the development of the private housing market.

Lack of investment limits the ability to develop lands and sporadic funding from federal sources limits the effectiveness of forecasting for housing development projects. In addition, there is a **lack of data** such as complete land registry information needed to support community planning and land development processes.

There are also a number of **capacity issues** at the community level such as staff turnover and lack of training that limit planning processes, the ability to

implement community plans, and provision of O&M services.

These challenges combine to render the current land planning and development process as “**reactive rather than a proactive**”, limiting growth in the supply of housing.

c. Potential Solutions

Over the immediate and short term, it was suggested that **greater collaboration within the GN**, and between the GN and community governments, is required to better understand priorities and coordinate land development. **Hamlets, the NHC and CGS** should work together in the community planning process through formalized channels with defined roles and responsibilities. These stakeholders should also work together to source and develop more robust **community-specific information** (e.g., inventory) to support planning and land development over the short, medium and long-term.

There is a need for **multi-stakeholder strategic planning of neighbourhoods** across various levels of government. Participants noted that specific questions need to be asked around the **type of tenure** (e.g., mixed vs. residential) and size of lots required to meet current and long-term housing (as well as other building) needs. This information is essential to plan and coordinate the various stages of infrastructure development (from land planning through to building construction).

Participants offered that short-term **community plans** (2 – 5 years) need to include more details on the various components required in the planning process such as granular materials and connecting infrastructure e.g., roads. These components are essential to accompany the lands administration process in order to develop lots that are responsive to community housing needs.

Over the medium and longer term, it was desired that the GN encourage land availability and construction by creating **incentive policies** in order to develop additional residential land, stimulate construction, and help grow the private market.

Participants raised **training and retention** strategies as important additional incentives. Participants also stated that **investments in GN staff** in areas such as land administration, logistics, and financing should be strengthened in order to make planning process more efficient and effective.

Further opportunities were discussed to better utilize existing lots and infrastructure by integrating **innovative approaches to housing design** that maximise irregular / small lots and abandoned buildings.

Topic 2: Capital Planning/Infrastructure Coordination

a. Issues

GN capital funding is spread across a variety of service areas based on prioritized needs and political mandates. Departments and agencies must **compete for the same resources each year** when seeking to develop or maintain capital infrastructure. The GN needs to find opportunities for internal collaboration to maximize existing resources for alleviating pressures to housing.

b. Challenges

Participants identified a number of challenges regarding the capital planning process and its limited ability to address major social issues. The GN recognizes that housing is a priority, however funds are not being put into housing. There is an emphasis on maximizing capital, with **limited focus on community needs or impact to communities**. There is a **lack of a holistic approach** to infrastructure development; currently it is *ad hoc* and based on the political sentiment of the day. There is **no ranking/prioritization** process that the GN is currently following. There are inherent trade-offs to community infrastructure development which must be examined relative to what each community needs most.

Participants stated that capital plans are **influenced by political will** (uncertain; short-term projects that satisfy political promises). The ICCP is inherently competitive and is founded on departmental interests rather than GN interests. Participants argued that the ICCP needs a leader to guide discussion of options and to direct holistic/need-based capital planning.

Sporadic federal funding makes it difficult for the GN to justify long-term consistent funding to a certain department because that department may receive a large federal investment. **Lack of available land** on which to build infrastructure is another significant barrier to effective capital planning.

c. Potential Solutions

Participants discussed **increased collaboration** between departments and

agencies as a means to provide greater understanding of capital needs and develop a more efficient approach to the prioritization of government funds. Participants suggested the formation of a **strategic capital planning sub-committee** that would include all departments including NHC, for dealing with federal investments (incorporate lessons learned from NHC).

Participants noted it is important to determine what communities really need. This could include exploring ways of **clearly identifying departmental roles and responsibilities** when it comes to community-based infrastructure requirements. Further, **ICSPs** can be better utilized in order to determine community infrastructure needs.

A formalized, holistic and organized approach to coordinate **infrastructure projects, land development, capital planning processes** could be pursued as these planning processes are mutually dependent. One potential option participants articulated under this approach is development **cross-departmental capital projects**. Participants further suggested a strategic direction to **coordinate government action over longer-term planning horizons** could include expansion of the capital planning process to include development **of 5-, 10-, 20-year capital plans** to guide GN capital projects, (rather than just 5-year plans). In relation to the development of capital plans, participants agreed on the need for the **ICCP** to consider an overall GN priority, not just at the departmental level.

Participants suggested having a **“champion”, or advocate, for the housing crisis** (project management office/NHC). Work under this role could include **life cycle assessment** and rationalization of investment in housing (i.e., a business case) to alleviate other social pressures.

Participants stressed the need for **capital spending restructuring** to focus on increasing Nunavut’s housing stock. They also noted a need to better coordinate between O&M and Capital funds (to incentivize O&M spending by reinvestment in capital). Lastly, participants suggesting **looking to other jurisdictions**, for example, Northern Quebec, for programs such as lease-to own or “construction camps”.

3.1.2 Reducing the Costs of Housing

Topic 3: Workforce Development

a. Issues

Housing construction costs in Nunavut are very high – on average, they are 3 times higher than construction costs in the Greater Toronto Area.² In part, housing and infrastructure costs in Nunavut are high due to the **geographic remoteness** of communities and a **short building season**. But housing and infrastructure construction, maintenance and administration costs are further inflated by a **lack of skilled workers across the territory**.

There is a strong need to grow Nunavut's skilled workforce in order to reduce the costs of housing. A strong local workforce will enable the GN to build and maintain housing more efficiently and therefore reduce these costs. **Increased local employment would also benefit the economy and contribute to self-reliance.**

On one hand, there is need for skilled labour in housing construction, maintenance and administration. There is a need for more programs that **prepare Nunavummiut for employment in construction and related trades**. There is also a complimentary need for job development and retention across the territory so as to increase the self-reliance of Nunavummiut and reduce the demand for social housing, which currently accounts for more than half (57.5%)³ of all housing Nunavut.

b. Challenges

Nunavut's short construction season limits opportunities for integrating **apprenticeship opportunities**. There are few incentives for contractors to fulfill local workforce development obligations. Communities have **limited capacity** to provide the resources required (e.g., equipment) to support on-the-job training.

There are few **education and training opportunities** in most communities and most programs are located in regional centres, requiring people to leave their homes and families. A lack of available housing, incentives, and related supports for non-residents to pursue programs outside their community

2 NHC – BPAOH. "Reducing the Costs of Housing" Topic Primer. (Provided in Appendix D).

3 Nunavut Housing Corporation. 2013. The GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy (Igluliuqatigiilauqta: "Let's Build a Home Together").

present further **barriers in accessing education and training opportunities**.

The **K-12 school system** is challenged to prepare students for higher education and employment opportunities. High truancy rates coupled with low graduation, **numeracy and literacy levels** limit the preparedness of youth for employment.

A significant constraint to the effectiveness of workforce planning and workforce development initiatives is the **lack of labour market information (LMI) and analysis**. Missing or incomplete labour market information (LMI) representing the capacities and needs of both the **private sector** and **government** prevents an accurate picture of the employment, training and education gaps across the territory. This limits effective planning and resource allocation for programs and services to address these gaps.

There are also a number of social challenges stemming from Nunavut's history with **residential schools** that prevent more Inuit from accessing education opportunities.

c. Potential Solutions

Identification of **opportunities for partnerships and better coordination** between departments involved in local workforce development (e.g., DFS, EDT, NAC, EDU) is key to strengthening Nunavut's capacity to meet the demands for housing and associated infrastructure.

Participants proposed the development of a **comprehensive training continuum** that outlines all existing programs and spending that support, or could be used to support and sustain ongoing training and skills development. The continuum would align with adult education, career development, income support, etc., and would help **identify training gaps** through tools such as **surveys**. This continuum should integrate a **single point of access** for incoming trainees, workers and employers to manage their progress and **avoid duplication of efforts** by multiple departments and agencies.

Participants stated there is need to decentralize training and trades opportunities by **establishing more training initiatives / programs** across the territory, such as **mobile apprenticeship/training programs**. These programs should be **Nunavut-specific and flexible** to meet the needs of participants and employers. A number of incentive approaches exist such as **wage subsidies** and **job grants**.

Participants noted that **community partnerships** with RIAs, LHOs and other

local/regional organizations should be established to enhance **municipal training programs** to build hamlet capacity in a number of needed areas such as infrastructure financing and maintenance.

It was suggested that NAC and NHC continue to work together to enhance program opportunities across communities, through **work-readiness initiatives** such as the **G.R.E.A.T.** program. In-high school co-op and “college foundation” programs can foster skills to better prepare students for trades entrance exams and post-secondary education.

Approaches to enhancing the availability and usability of **LMI** were suggested by participants. One recommended option is to establish a formal **inter-departmental forum** with a mandate and workplan of tasks to address gaps in LMI, including: collection of data; housing data in a central accessible place; and analysis of these data to uncover and report on trends, gaps, and actions needed to promote workforce development. It was also noted that a review of **LMI initiatives in other jurisdictions** may help to inform Nunavut’s path forward.

Another identified approach was the establishment of **“career pathways”** as a planning tool to both i) outline the education and training requirements for careers in demand and ii) to guide program offerings through NAC, DFS, EDU and other key stakeholders. It was suggested that DFS has done some work to create a **Career Development Framework** that may add value to this approach.

Participants raised dedication of more resources to community-based **career development / liaison officers** as an opportunity to help connect more graduates to potential employers. These staff can also fulfill a role in collecting **community-level data** to help reduce labour market information gaps and focus marketing and human resource efforts on **“in demand” careers** within the territory.

Government **partnerships with the private sector** (e.g., mining companies/contractors) were another suggested approach to further plan for and extend training and employment opportunities to develop local and regional workforces. For example, **changes to procurement and project planning processes** may encourage **increased local hiring and retention** of labour for housing development.

Topic 4: Technological Innovation

a. Issues

As noted, the costs of housing in Nunavut are significantly higher relative to the rest of Canada. There is a need to explore how technological innovation can help reduce the costs associated with building and maintaining housing. Given the high cost of utilities across the territories, more **energy efficient homes** and more sustainable energy solutions could have large impacts on the costs of housing over the long-term.

b. Challenges

Participants noted that across the territory, there is a **shortage of skilled maintenance workers** and **lack of training** and other resources needed to take advantage of current technologies.

There is a **lack of understanding of the purpose and utility of certain housing technologies** (e.g., air exchange systems, digital thermostats) and why they are important. There can be a reluctance to use and challenges with maintaining existing or new technologies, which adds to the wear and tear on housing and ends up perpetuating O&M costs.

Session participants strongly agreed that any new technology requires **tenant / owner buy-in** to be effective. That is, the occupant of the house must understand the importance of basic home repair, maintenance, energy savings, etc. in order for the technology or tool to be effective. **Insufficient data** on technological requirements further perpetuates needs and costs.

c. Potential Solutions

Greater collaboration between GN departments and agencies on potential projects will enable more economical construction and maintenance options. Key suggested players include NHC, NAC, CGS, and QEC. As an example, it was discussed that NHC should collaborate with other departments in order to obtain more accurate and complete data on maintenance costs, among other factors.

It was suggested that **partnerships with the private sector** should be encouraged in order to achieve energy efficiencies.

Participants further recommended that **analysis of best practices and potential standards** from other jurisdictions be undertaken to help determine alternatives to build and maintain housing more efficiently. Any technological improvements proposed should be **piloted** first to test their applicability in the North and Nunavut, specifically. The **benefits, risks and costs** (construction and O&M), of specific technologies would require further analysis, using measureable data.

It was also suggested by participants that focus be directed on first improving current technological tools before turning to adopt other newer technologies that must be integrated and managed. Important questions to ask are: **“Is the technology ‘doable’ for Nunavut?” “Is it ‘learnable?” “Is (use of) the technology ‘maintainable?”**

For example, it was suggested that **“passive” technologies** which require minimal maintenance, follow-up or training may be applicable to housing in Nunavut. **Incentives** may also be productive to encourage owner/ tenant “buy-in” or support such as offering rewards to energy efficient households based on **utility (heat and water) household consumption monitoring**. In addition, it was noted that **consultation with communities (e.g., Elders Advisory Committee)** on the **cultural relevance and usability** of any new technology would inform decision-making and steps required for implementation.

Other innovative products such as quick assembly and high **energy efficiency** doors, windows, lighting, and structural insulated panel (SIP) prefabricated components may be worth piloting. To build territorial skill capacities to implement and maintain technologies, participants suggested **training and specialized courses / programs** such as maintenance, carpentry, and oil burner mechanics.

Lastly, participants raised an interest in further exploration of **alternative energy sources**, and technologies to foster **climate change adaptation**. QEC for example, is looking into the use of solar panels, and suggested harnessing waste heat in all communities and a forthcoming net-metering policy as opportunities for NHC and small IPPS.

Topic 5: Municipal Financing

a. Issues

The municipal financing structure affects the cost of housing in Nunavut. Financial assistance to municipalities has not increased since 1994. The operation and maintenance costs for social housing are significant and

increasing year over year. Operating costs are mostly attributed to water, power, and sewage services, with only a small percentage of these costs being recovered through rental revenues.

According to the NHC, water and sewage costs account for nearly a third (\$42.1 million) of all public housing costs annually.⁴

b. Challenges

There are challenges in planning for municipal financing that are unique to each community. Expenditures are categorized and included in community sustainability plans but it **difficult to determine priorities** for the effective and equitable allocation of funding across the 25 communities. A **lack of coordination and oversight** results in high costs to the NHC for municipal services that support housing. For example, there is a lack of **clear service delivery standards** available from municipalities on issues such as spillage and overfilling. NHC requires this information in order to adjust the design of housing units.

Capacity issues at the community level due to low recruitment, high turnover and lack of training impacts service delivery effectiveness and efficiency. Issues with maintenance, infrastructure, qualified staff, and scheduling at the community level affect GN departments such as CGS who are responsible for supporting municipal planning processes.

c. Potential Solutions

Participants proposed **examining the existing municipal financing structure** and the role of utility charges in reconciling municipal budgets. Investigating the level and appropriateness of control given to municipalities in regulating and determining the costs of municipal services and land development was also identified, as well as **exploring potential alternative financing models, including increased investment from the GN.**

The session participants discussed potential opportunity to investigate ways of **increasing private ownership** to alleviate pressures on NHC. It was suggested that there be **multiple partners (government and private)** to offset costs, including collaboration with RIAs for services on Inuit owned lands as one possible option.

Participants suggested that **profiling demographics** will help to identify gaps and areas to focus to encourage **expansion of the private market / market rents.** Large communities where demand and costs are highest make

4 NHC – BPAOH. “Reducing the Costs of Housing” Topic Primer. (Provided in Appendix D).

sense to target first. It is possible that different housing tenures (e.g., young professionals, individuals enrolled in home ownership programs) will lend themselves to market rental structures more easily.

It was suggested that **more efficient delivery of services** will potentially reduce high housing service delivery costs to Hamlets and the NHC. **Greater oversight of rate charges and operating costs** may provide transparency on hidden subsidies and true costs to NHC and others. For example, recalibration of water meters may be one mechanism worth piloting.

The participants shared that **municipalities** also need to come forward and identify **challenges with current financing models** they experience and **specific training needs** with currently operating forums to provide a platform to discuss these opportunities.

Participants agreed that **borrowing best practices** from communities that have been successful in managing their budgets will help other communities to become more efficient.

Lastly, a program review of the **Water Sewer Service Subsidy Policy (WSSP)** was conducted in November 2015 to better understand how the transparency of the subsidy and its allocation can be improved. CGS' subsidy for infrastructure has increased based on need (population) and there is an impetus to review the criteria for determining subsidy levels and rates charged to NHC. A working group composed of municipal, CGS, and NHC staff will be established to begin the implementation of these recommendations. It was suggested that this working group and the recommendations it will implement will assist in providing a solution to this challenge.

3.1.4 Increasing Investment in Housing

Topic 6: Investment/Building a Stronger Business Case

a. Issues

There is a need to develop a strong and successful business case in the Territory to increase investment for housing in Nunavut. Greater investment leads to an increase in housing stock and provides a diversity of housing options for Nunavummiut. In order to do this, a review of projected needs and financial resources available to meet those needs was recommended, as well as regular and **increased capital investment**.

b. Challenges

Session participants identified **'competing priorities'**, both at the department level and Cabinet level, as a major challenge in Nunavut. Whether the need for housing in the Territory is being portrayed "strongly enough" was questioned.

Participants suggested that GN departments issuing RFP and community planning processes do not take into account or consider the impacts and demands those proposals and/or projects have on related social issues (i.e., lack of housing).

Some participants noted that many GN departments **work in silos**, while policies are created in isolation of each other – impacting, either directly or indirectly, housing in the Territory. For example, new health positions are created in the Department of Health without consideration of adequate housing for new hires.

c. Potential Solutions

Review Nunavut statistics and identify the gaps in housing was suggested as a possible approach to take in making the business case stronger for increased investment. Participants noted that it is important to quantitatively demonstrate existing gaps, identify what is needed to remedy the gaps, and show the potential results from proper investment in housing that would address those gaps. The group noted one way to do this is by illustrating why Nunavut does not currently meet the National Occupancy Requirements and demonstrating what is needed to rectify it.

It was suggested that this further presents an opportunity to **coordinate and partner** with Bureau of Statistics and Statistics Canada, for example, to **qualify the positive and beneficial impacts investment on housing** would have for all of Nunavut. For example, participants noted that increased investment would lead to lower crime rates and poverty levels, lower health care costs, offset social issues, and increase education opportunities for all Nunavummiut.

Participants noted that it is important to **continue lobbying efforts** and demonstrate the Government of Nunavut's commitment to housing and building a better and stronger business model that would grab the attention of the Federal government to provide necessary funding. The current **debt cap on capital housing investment** is a noted barrier in this respect that requires closer examination.

In terms of planning, it was recommended that the GN establish more **long-term planning processes** in areas such as construction and land development to ensure housing allocations match needs and capacities as communities grow.

It was further suggested a **coordinated capital planning approach** across GN departments is needed and should be demonstrated. A coordinated approach to capital planning would help **reduce competing priorities across GN departments**.

3.1.5 Defining Housing Demand Factors

Topic 7: Care/Supportive Housing

a. Issues

The Strategy recognized that Nunavut's care and supportive housing requirements are lacking. For those individuals with underlying social, mental or physical health issues, or who are homeless for more complex reasons than simply lack of available shelter, targeted housing options outside of public housing will be necessary.

More research is required to determine what the specific housing needs of vulnerable populations are, and how these fit into a Nunavut-specific continuum of care. A collaborative, shared approach will assist the GN in meeting the social and health needs of the territory.

b. Challenges

Participants noted significant **gaps in Nunavut's housing continuum related to care** and a need to better understand and define gaps in the housing continuum related to care. Some of these challenges include:

- Lack of options within care/support housing categories - e.g. continuing care: home care, retirement home, etc.
- Lack of affordable options for young people, creates burden, social/ other issues within overcrowded houses

- Housing situation linked to life circumstances - if this changes than housing might change too (ex. Staff housing, public housing) and falling through gaps (ex. Transition out of BCC, out of territory treatment)

There was agreement among participants that understanding the needs of various populations requiring care/support **requires research**, quantifying, and defining the needs and gaps. To date the GN has not been in a position to determine the full range of supportive housing required to accommodate the population with mental wellness issues, physical disabilities, and seniors' needs. Furthermore, there is a need to understand the underlying factors contributing to homelessness such as overcrowding.

Participants indicated that there exists **a role for the non-profit sector** in the delivery of care and supportive housing, however, work is needed to understand exactly what role and where the GN should focus its efforts in attracting partnerships.

Another challenge identified in this regard was the overall low financial literacy of the population and the resulting ability of non-profit organizations to manage the financial and reporting requirements of operating non-profit organizations.

The responsibility for addressing challenges, and the design and delivery of supportive housing rests with multiple government departments, but the GN has been challenged to overcome systemic barriers to service delivery.

c. **Potential Solutions**

Participants identified **partnerships with the not-for-profit sector** for the provision of housing and services as a potential solution. It was suggested that the GN investigate ways for non-profit organizations, banks and other financial / private institutions to support i) delivery of services to Nunavut's varied markets, and ii) **alternative financing models** for care/supportive housing. To aid this approach, the GN would need to research how NGO's could help to support the current GN service delivery models and where appropriate, replace government.

Other actions that participants identified to build up the not for profit sector include:

- Capacity building for NGO's
- Grants and contributions from GN

- Regular information sharing mechanism (e.g. key stakeholder committees and regular meetings)

A need exists to research **best practices / options** for attracting and supporting national organizations in the delivery of care services and affordable housing opportunities (ex. YMCA women's shelters; Habitat for Humanity). At the same time, participants noted a need to balance between local and national NGOs.

A **family by family approach** to addressing care and supportive housing needs was a recurring theme of the discussion for this engagement session. Nunavut's small population presents an opportunity for the GN to take an approach where the needs of communities, families and individuals could be assessed on a case basis by a multidepartment/ multidisciplinary working group (such as DFS / DOH complex care working group) that included care needs and housing needs. A family by family approach would necessitate increased GN departmental collaboration on protocols and process as well as additional research and data collection.

Ultimately, discussions led to a consensus on the need for much greater collaboration between GN departments. Some of the approaches identified in this regard include:

- Set up dedicated working group/committee to focus on whole of GN approach to infrastructure development.
- Strong leadership/direction to shift philosophy and incentive departments to work together
- Creation of 'check-list' for every new building. Refine process - include in capital substation sheets (that go to FIN) to direct department attention to these factors.
- Creating profiles / case examples to anticipate the needs of different populations and better plan ahead for needs:
 - To meet the housing needs of elders, children and people with disabilities
 - Individuals returning from out of territory residential care
 - Options for individuals who may lose housing tied to employment (e.g. seasonal / short term contract work).

Topic 8: Affordability Options

a. Issues

Under the current housing regime, options to transition from public or subsidized housing tenancy to home ownership are limited by a lack of affordable housing. These gaps perpetuate a cycle of insufficient and inadequate housing, deteriorating social conditions, and a deepening dependence on government housing.

There is a need to identify gaps in the continuum of housing options, research the demand pressures for specific types of housing, and examine the costs and opportunities for transitions between these housing types.

b. Challenges

There are a number of barriers that limit the affordability of housing in Nunavut. **Investments** in housing simply do not match population growth and **demand**. Affordability looks different to different Nunavummiut and this is a reflection of the large **disparity in incomes** across the territory, particularly between unemployed or underemployed individuals and those earning comparably high salaries within the public sector.

The **high costs of building and maintenance** (including lot development, transportation of goods, contractor costs and non-competitive bidding processes) inflate the costs of housing, creating an artificial market that makes **home ownership unattainable** to most Nunavummiut. It is difficult to manage the high risks associated with owning a home.

There are limited affordable housing options available for **singles** and **young people** in particular. It is also a challenge that **local labour** does not qualify for **staff housing**. It was noted that demographic groups capable of transitioning out of public housing should be identified and that approaches to “nudge” them out of public housing be explored.

Further, **access to education, training and economic development programs are limited** by factors such as overcrowding and social issues such as high costs of living that prevent tenants from accessing opportunities **that would foster self-reliance** and help them transition out of social housing.

c. Potential Solutions

Engagement session participants shared that ensuring sufficient affordable housing in each community requires a range and diversity of housing options – a **continuum of housing**. The first step to developing this continuum is a **needs assessment** to scope out specific housing needs and demographics ('demand pressures'). By this approach, **costs and opportunities** associated with transitions between housing types can be identified, and this information will shape the options selected to address these variable needs.

Participants cited making **investments in education** and **developing a professional workforce** in order to address socio-economic disparity and systemic issues of poverty. Further, specific programs aimed at **improving financial literacy** with respect to saving and budgeting will benefit household affordability.

Some participants stated the need for a **business case** to federal government for increased, steady investment in housing. But overall, discussions pointed to **best practices** in similar jurisdictions and home-grown solutions rather than a reliance on federal investment. These focused on **job development, addressing systemic social issues, and raising the base income support amount** across the territory.

It was suggested that **staff housing**, currently made available to out-of-territory hires, potentially be **extended to local hires**. Participants offered that private **home ownership program supports** could be developed and expanded. Examples include provision of technical and financial knowledge related to home ownership and construction (e.g., mortgages, contracting suppliers, etc.).

The discussion pointed to the following affordable housing options and incentives which NHC can explore providing:

- **Fixed rent;**
- **Lease to purchase;**
- **Resale of public housing units;** and
- **Subsidized housing.**

These options may be feasible for NHC insofar as they **reduce capital costs** and enable **piloting of multiple social housing models** to test their efficacy.

It was further suggested that **partnerships with the private sector** (e.g., mining companies) may help identify housing solutions to meet the needs of Nunavut's growing mining workforce, and the impacts on housing in communities closest to operating mines.

Another identified approach is for the NHC to work with stakeholder partners such as CGS to lead community **consultations to identify community housing values, needs and wants**.

Topic 9: Meeting the Housing Needs of GN Staff

a. Issues

The current GN Staff Housing program cannot meet the housing needs of all employees, as there is not enough staff housing stock to meet existing employee demand and is therefore not sustainable. The cost to build and maintain staff housing stock is a growing burden to the GN.

There is a deepening dependence on government-subsidized housing to attract and retain government employees and movement to homeownership or private market rental remains limited. However, GN employees may be discouraged from transitioning out of subsidized staff housing due to limited options for housing in Nunavut.

It is important to try to find ways to more effectively promote transition out of staff housing and into homeownership or private market rental.

b. Challenges

Capital planning occurs in a linear and not in a coordinated fashion. There is a lack of communication across GN Departments on this issue. That is, there is **not a holistic approach** to infrastructure planning and funds are not being used as effectively to address different but related aspects.

There is little incentive to transition out of staff housing and for many, GN salaries are not enough to afford market rent.

Several HR challenges contribute to this issue. The development of GN positions continues with limited concentrated focus on housing requirements. However, staff housing is tied to an individual's ongoing employment with the GN. If people are required to leave staff housing then there is a **risk of losing capable workers**.

Participants expressed that existing **GN policies create barriers** for people transitioning out of staff housing. Priorities are predetermined to an extent in terms of *who* can access staff housing – for example, Justice, Health and Education are granted priority – which leaves other departments without options when housing stock is limited.

c. Potential Solutions

Participants all agreed there is a need for **greater collaboration, coordination, communication**. This includes inter-departmental collaboration (for example, holistic capital planning and an approach to infrastructure development) but also with NTI for housing and policy development. There needs to be better coordination between the NHC and respective departments in matching positions with available and suitable staff housing stock.

It was suggested that **ICCP be used more effectively** to assist with a whole-of-government approach. Participants further noted that there should be a coordinated process for both ICSPs and Economic Development Plans to promote sustainable community growth and development.

Participants recommended an **evaluation** of GN policies – namely, the **Staff Housing Policy** – which may be hindering the process. Examination of the **Staff Housing Program** could assist with better defining its purpose/objectives and the Program's role over the long-term, as well as to determine how to increase the capacity of existing stock to meet staff needs. The current GN Staff Housing program attempts to address both staff recruitment and retention. Participants offered that an evaluation of the recruitment and retention strategy could **shift the focus more to recruitment** and away from using it as a retention tool.

Session participants notes that the development of a **zoned approach for the delivery of housing programs** should proceed, including the modification of existing programs and the creation of new programs with a focus on **affordability and suitability** for beneficiaries and generating new construction. This approach may take better advantage of decentralized structures by targeting programming according to zone, and potentially could increase the mixture of housing type in emerging private markets/longer leases prioritized over construction.

Ultimately, it was recommended that any selected approach to developing housing stock adopt a **community-by-community approach** to planning, to identify trade-offs, and infrastructure requirements.

Participants pointed to the need for **creative solutions** such a long-term rental **lease-to-own model**, by leveraging the ability of employees to borrow/ invest or require public/private partnership. One approach may be to assign a cap to the number of years an employee stays in staff housing, but **strategies** are needed to phase into the private market.

There is need to strengthen programs and initiatives that encourage people to **invest their own capital** into the private housing market. It was suggested that **improved planning and coordination** of hiring and **human resource processes** can allow for better long-term forecasting of Staff Housing demand. A review of GN housing allowances could help to identify ways to promote / **incentivize transition out of staff housing** to homeownership and private rental. Lastly, discussions pointed to **increasing self-reliance of Nunavummiut** in order to reduce dependence on government or an employer for housing.

4.0 Next Steps to Develop a BPAOH

Next steps include confirmation and validation of what we heard in round one during a second round of engagement sessions (round 2) scheduled for May 16th to 20th, 2016. A final round of engagement planned for May 30th to July 3rd will further synthesize findings with a focus on building upon and refining proposed solutions and developing implementable action items over the next ten years (immediate, short, medium and long-term).

