

Affordable Rental Housing



Guidelines

Private Sector

May 2009

Canada

Newfoundland
Labrador
Housing

**Affordable Rental Housing
Private Sector
May 2009**

Guidelines

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1. Introduction and Objective

The objective of this Affordable Rental Housing Private Sector Initiative through Newfoundland Labrador Housing (Housing) is to assist in the creation of an affordable rental housing supply to benefit as many low income households as possible, at the most affordable rental rates achievable. Successful proposals from the private sector will be eligible for limited capital assistance in the form of a forgivable loan of up to \$35,000 per eligible affordable rental housing unit (\$50,000 in Labrador).

Proposals will be evaluated to identify those which demonstrate a potential for long-term sustainability, cost effectiveness and meet an identified need for a particular type of housing. This program will strive to achieve a balanced response to provincial priorities; however, as resources are limited, it may not be possible to address all of the housing needs identified in all areas of the province.

This initiative is partially funded under the Government of Canada’s Economic Action Plan. This economic stimulus plan requires that proponents begin construction on their projects within 3 months of receiving a final funding commitment.

2. Key Components

2.1 Target Population

This initiative is intended to serve low income households. A household, under this initiative, includes: independent seniors, persons with physical disabilities, single individuals, and families, and who require accessible accommodations.

Units funded through this private sector initiative must therefore be rented to households with a total annual income under the Maximum Income Limit (MIL), as set by Housing. The MIL is currently set at \$32,500, which includes the income of all household members over 18 years of age.

2.2 Rental Rates

To ensure affordability for households with low income, units funded through this initiative will have rents set at or below a Housing approved Maximum Monthly Rental Rate for private sector projects as below. These rates are established annually by Housing and are based on CMHC benchmark data. Housing reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to make adjustment in its Maximum Monthly Rental Rates. It is the responsibility of a Proponent to consider the potential for annual rental rate adjustments in making long-term financial plans for a project, as rents may at times increase or decrease.

Maximum Monthly Rental Rates

Area	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom
St. John’s CMA	\$500	\$575	\$650	\$675
Island - Other Areas	\$400	\$450	\$525	\$550
Labrador	\$450	\$525	\$575	\$625

Note: Rents do not include heat, light or hot water; however, they do include the provision of a fridge and stove.

2.3 Affordability Period

For an affordability period of 10 years, rents for affordable rental housing units approved for funding under this initiative must be set at or below the Maximum Rental Rate, as set by Housing (as indicated in 2.2).

2.4 Funding

This initiative will fund successful proposals by providing one-time limited capital assistance in the form of a forgivable loan in the amount of \$35,000 per eligible affordable rental housing unit (\$50,000 in Labrador). As funding will be limited to a portion of the capital development cost, it may be necessary for Proponents to arrange the remainder of capital funding through other sources.

Proponents must make an equity investment of at least 10% of the capital development cost of affordable housing units. Higher equity investments by a Proponent are preferred by Housing. This equity investment can include such things as cash, the current appraised value of land, or an existing building for conversion to residential use.

A Funding/Operating Agreement for each project approved under this initiative will specify and provide the terms and conditions of the forgivable loan. This agreement will include an executed mortgage in registerable form, in favour of Housing, and in the amount of the loan. This executed mortgage may take second place to any other mortgage associated with the project.

The Proponent will earn the forgivable loan by adhering to the terms and conditions of the Funding/Operating Agreement for the affordability period. The forgivable loan will be interest free, unless the Proponent breaches any term or condition of the Funding/Operating Agreement. If a breach should occur, the Proponent will be required to repay both principal and interest related to the unexpired portion of the affordability period.

Approved forgivable loan funding will be disbursed by Housing in three funding advances of 25%, 25% and 50% each, in accordance with the Funding/Operating Agreement. The first 25% of approved capital funding will be advanced upon confirmation that 25% of construction has been completed. The second 25% will be advanced upon confirmation that the project is 50% complete. The final 50% of funding will be advanced when all of the following conditions are met: the Proponent's equity contribution has been made; occupancy permit is obtained; funding from all other sources is obtained; and substantial completion of the work has been achieved.

Housing does not guarantee or warrant that all potential eligible units in a particular project will be funded under this initiative. Affordable housing funding may be limited to a maximum number of units in a given project. Housing reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to establish funding limits for proposed projects. Housing shall not be obligated to provide funding in excess of the limits it may establish in this regard.

This initiative does not provide any funding for the on-going operation of an affordable housing project. Proponents must therefore demonstrate that projects are viable and sustainable in the long-term.

2.5 Project Form

- The design of individual projects funded through this initiative must respond to the needs of the target population.
- Projects may be developed through new construction, the conversion of a non-residential building or an addition to an existing residential structure.

- Any approved project must have a minimum of four new affordable units.
- Funding will be available to a maximum of ten units per project.
- All units created through this initiative must be self-contained residential units and include private kitchen and bathroom facilities. Institutional premises and personal care homes **do not** qualify for funding from this initiative.
- In order to achieve cost effectiveness it is necessary to develop units that are modest in terms of floor area and amenities, according to Housing modesty criteria specifications (See Appendix B).
- Projects containing 10 new units or less must include at least one unit which is fully accessible, meaning designed in accordance with CAN/CSA-B651-04 “Barrier Free Design” and Buildings Accessibility Act and Regulations of Newfoundland and Labrador. The first additional unit beyond the 10th, 20th, etc., must also be fully accessible. Projects developed for individuals with physical disabilities must be fully accessible throughout, including common areas.
- Affordable Rental Housing units may be part of a larger housing project that also contains units rented at market prices. This type of mixed income project is viewed as a positive approach to increasing project viability and creating healthy, integrated communities.

3. Developing Affordable Rental Housing

3.1 Application

In this initial stage, a Proponent will:

- determine and demonstrate need for a housing project in a particular area;
- develop a project concept and submit a proposal by fully completing all of the Affordable Rental Housing Private Sector Forms and providing all required documentation; **Incomplete Proposals or Proposals which do not include completed 2009 Affordable Housing Private Sector Forms will not be evaluated.**
- select and engage appropriate professional consultants, as necessary;
- supervise and monitor the concept and design process for proposal preparation;
- provide basic drawings and design brief as outlined in Appendix B (Modesty Criteria) and Appendix C (Technical Standards).

3.2 Evaluation

Housing will evaluate proposal submissions and make recommendations for conditional funding allocations.

Evaluation and selection of proposals for funding through this initiative will generally include consideration of the following:

- Ability of Proponent to develop project in a timely manner.
- Eligibility of the Proponent and proposed project
- Proponent equity investment
- Current and long-term need and demand for such projects
- Location, design and suitability of a proposed project
- Technical feasibility
- Financial and financing feasibility, viability and long-term sustainability
- Experience and expertise of the Proponent to develop and operate the proposed project
- Affordability for target population households
- Cost-effectiveness in development and operation of the proposed project
- Community and municipal support
- Mobilization of other capital investments

During the evaluation of proposals Housing will undertake a review in order to determine basic compliance with the Affordable Rental Housing Guidelines, Modesty Criteria (Appendix B) and Technical Standards (Appendix C). Housing will not review for: compliance with codes and standards; federal, provincial or municipal legislation or by-laws; or to ensure that designs have been correctly formulated. All of these will be entirely the responsibility of the Proponent and its project design consultants. Housing assumes no liability in this regard.

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with these Guidelines, to ensure that projects recommended for Conditional Approval are those which demonstrate the best indications of achieving initiative objectives and present the most cost-effective projects, as determined by Housing.

Through this initiative, Housing will strive to achieve a balanced response to housing need; however, it may not be possible to fund all proposed projects. Housing reserves the right to recommend proposals for conditional funding allocations based on regional housing priorities and provincial social policy priorities as may from time to time exist. Recommendation of proposals is also subject to budgetary considerations and limitations.

In the event that Housing receives multiple submissions and program funding does not allow Housing to commit to all submissions received, Housing reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to proceed in a manner which Housing considers advisable and in the best interests of the Affordable Rental Housing Private Sector Initiative. No action of liability shall lie against Housing, its officers, employees or representatives as a result of the exercise of its rights in this regard. In determining whether a submission is in the best interests of the initiative or not, in furtherance of this section, Housing may properly consider any and all information, policies or preferences, it deems advisable or relevant to determine the issue. The decision of Housing is and shall be final and binding upon the parties, and Proponents acknowledge and agree to these terms.

Housing, in its sole and absolute discretion, may elect not to proceed with this initiative or not to award a conditional funding allocation to all proposals received or to any of them. Housing may cancel this initiative at any time in its sole and absolute discretion. No action shall lie against Housing for so doing.

3.3 Conditional Approval

Proposals that show the strongest indication of achieving the objectives of the initiative and are the most cost effective, may be selected for a conditional funding allocation for a specified number of units. This allocation is conditional on the Proponent satisfactorily completing and providing, among other things, the following, by a date specified by Housing:

- Copies of any contracts, letters of agreement, or other documents that establish a contractual obligation between the Proponent and members of its development team.
- Copies of documentation associated with the purchase and title to the land or non-residential building, including an appraisal to support the land value and property value amounts.
- Phase 1 Environmental Assessment and clearance for the site.
- Final and complete set of construction drawings and specifications.
- Final capital cost budget detailing the project cost breakdown and firm price contracts for 100% of the total cost of materials and labor.
- A construction management plan detailing how contract administration, project management, and quality control will be undertaken.
- A copy of a lenders mortgage loan commitment letter stating that the loan for the proposed project has met final approval.
- Copies of commitments for any capital funding to be provided by other sources.
- Final operating budget.
- Any required approvals or permits from authorities having jurisdictions.
- Any additional information or documentation that may be specifically related to a proposed project, which may be required by Housing.

Conditional allocations will be made within the limit of the budgetary allocation for this initiative for the budget year. A conditional funding allocation is not a final funding commitment. The allocation is conditional on the satisfactory completion of the major project financing and development tasks and the submission of associated documentation as outlined in this section, within an established timeframe.

A conditional funding allocation can be withdrawn by Housing, in its sole and absolute discretion, if it becomes evident that these requirements will not be met by the stated deadline.

Proponents cannot issue any publicity regarding this Affordable Rental Housing initiative without the consent of Housing. This includes any public announcements such as news releases, press conferences, advertising, signage or opening ceremony for a proposed project. Full details regarding publicity for Affordable Rental Housing will be outlined in a Funding/Operating Agreement which successful proponents will sign if a final project commitment is made.

3.4 Final Approval

Only Proponents who receive a final project commitment will sign a Funding/Operating Agreement and will complete and provide, among other things, the following:

- Perform, supervise and/or monitor contract administration, project management and documentation.
- Ensure the project is constructed in accordance with the documents submitted, within budget, and on schedule.
- Ensure quality control and correct deficiencies, if necessary.
- Perform inspections to verify progress in support of funding advance claims. Such inspections shall be completed and certified by qualified personnel being either: a Professional Engineer licensed to practice by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Newfoundland and Labrador; an Architect licensed to practice by the Newfoundland Association of Architects; a Real Estate Property Appraiser certified by the Appraisal Institute of Canada; or a Technician or Technologist certified by the Association of Engineering Technicians and Technologists of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Prepare and submit advance claims.

During the progress of construction/conversion work, the Proponent will be fully responsible for and will assume all liability for quality control; testing that may be required; assessing compliance with plans, specifications and codes; and assessing progress for submission of any advance claims. Housing reserves the right to have its representative visit the site to observe the progress of work at any time. Housing assumes no responsibility for quality control, project management or discovery or correction of deficiencies.

4. Operating Affordable Rental Housing

Projects that are funded through this initiative will be owned and operated by the Proponent. This initiative provides successful Proponents with one-time capital assistance. No on-going operating funds are available. The rental operations will be subject to the Funding/Operating Agreement between the Proponent and Housing; however, other operational responsibilities will be governed by applicable legislation and/or regulations, such as the Residential Tenancies Act, SNL2000 cR-14.1.

The Proponent is responsible for the managing and operating of the project in a responsible manner. On a regular basis, Housing will carry out a formal review of the Proponent's affordable housing operation as it relates to the Funding/Operating Agreement.

5. General

Housing may develop, modify, amend or otherwise change the Affordable Housing Program and this initiative, including any provincial priorities and/or program allocations and/or not proceed with program implementation or at all.

Housing may seek clarification on the contents of any proposal submission and/or require a Proponent to submit supplementary documentation. Any additional information received will be considered as part of the proposed submission and will be properly evaluated as part and parcel thereof.

Proponents understand and agree that submission of a proposal does not form a contract of any kind between Housing and the Proponent and/or any consultant for the Proponent whether by design, implication or operation of the law.

Proponents must declare without delay to Housing any existing or potential conflict of interest. If such a conflict of interest does exist, Housing may, at its discretion, refuse to consider the Proposals. (If Housing discovers there has been a breach of this section at any time, Housing reserves the right to disqualify the Proposal or to terminate any ensuing Agreement.)

Proponents are advised that all documents and other records in the custody of or under the control of Housing may be subject to the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, SNL2002 cA-1.1. To the extent possible and subject to the provisions of these Acts, all proposal submissions and all other documents and other records submitted by a Proponent in connection with proposal submission will be treated as confidential.

Projects which were given conditional or final funding approval under previous proposal calls are not eligible for an increase in funding under this proposal call.

6. Submission Process

Interested Proponents must review these 2009 Private Sector Guidelines and complete and submit the 2009 Affordable Rental Housing Private Sector Forms. Incomplete proposals or proposals which do not include completed 2009 Affordable Rental Housing Private Sector Forms will not be evaluated.

Housing will not consider any submission under any previous Invitation for Proposals as a submission to this 2009 Invitation for Proposals. Current submissions must be comprised of completed Private Sector Forms as well as any additional documents requested in these forms or as described in these 2009 Private Sector Guidelines.

Submissions must be enclosed in a sealed envelope or package and clearly marked: "Affordable Rental Housing Proposal - Confidential." Proposals can be submitted by courier, mail or hand delivery to:

Affordable Housing
Program Delivery Department
Newfoundland Labrador Housing
3rd Floor, Sir Brian Dunfield Building
2 Canada Drive, P.O. Box 220
St. John's, NL
A1C 5J2

Attention: Madonna Walsh, Manager, Affordable Housing

Note: Submissions by facsimile will not be considered.

Inquiries regarding Affordable Rental Housing may be directed to:

Madonna Walsh
Manager, Affordable Housing
(address as above)
Phone: 724-3059
Fax: 724-3149
e-mail: mrwalsh@nlhc.nl.ca

or

Sherry Mercer
Affordable Housing Officer
(address as above)
Phone: 724-3130
Fax: 724-3149
e-mail: srmercerc@nlhc.nl.ca

Housing will accept proposal submissions postmarked no later than June 8, 2009.

7. Innovative Proposals

Housing may consider proposals which put forward approaches for the development of affordable rental housing which do not meet the guideline requirements for this initiative. In the context of evolving affordable housing strategies, all interested parties are encouraged to contact the corporation for discussions regarding any unique approaches for the creation of affordable rental housing.

Appendix A - Definitions

The following definitions shall apply to the Affordable Rental Housing, Private Sector, Guidelines and Forms. Proponents are also asked to use this terminology in a consistent manner in project proposal submissions.

“Accessible Housing Unit” means a unit designed in accordance with CAN/CSA - B651-04 “Barrier Free Design” and the Buildings Accessibility Act and Regulations of Newfoundland and Labrador.

“Affordable Rental Housing” means housing which is modest in terms of floor area and amenities, based on household needs and community norms, and is rented at a monthly rate which is at or below average market housing rents as established by Housing.

“Affordability Period” means the minimum continuous period, from the date of occupancy, during which eligible units funded under the Affordable Housing Program Agreement are to be used for Affordable Housing purposes in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Funding/Operating Agreement between Housing and the project Proponent.

“Affordable Unit” means an eligible residential unit which is approved for capital assistance under the Affordable Rental Housing Initiative. This term can be used interchangeably with “Affordable Rental Housing Units”, and “Affordable Housing Unit.”

“Average Market Housing Rent” means the average monthly rent for comparable housing in a defined geographic area as determined by Housing.

“Bachelor Unit” means a residential dwelling consisting of one room serving as a bedroom, living room, and kitchen, with a separate bathroom.

“Capital Costs” means the costs to construct or convert a fixed capital asset, including all material, labour, land and soft costs. The capital cost of the project relates to the development costs up to the time the units are ready for occupancy. These costs may include, among other things: land acquisition and servicing; construction costs or costs to convert a non-residential building to self-contained residential units; landscaping; consulting fees; interest during construction; and, other approved costs, if applicable.

“Conditional Funding Allocation” means a reserve of capital assistance funding for a specified number of eligible units for a project, subject to specific conditions. If all conditions are satisfactorily met, a final project commitment may be made by Housing.

“Equity” means the investment in capital development costs by the Proponent. This may be cash and/or the current appraised value of land and, if applicable, an existing non-residential building situate on the land that is intended for conversion to affordable rental units.

“Final Project Commitment” means a written undertaking by Housing to approve a specified number of eligible units in an identified project for funding.

“Funding/Operating Agreement” means an agreement between Housing and the Proponent which sets out the terms and conditions on which capital assistance is to be provided to that Proponent for the development of a specified number of eligible affordable units within an approved project.

“Household” means a person or a group of persons who occupy or intend to occupy or who may have need of a housing unit and do not have a principal place of residence elsewhere in Canada.

“Income” means, for purposes of determining eligibility under this initiative, total income (i.e. before taxes), from all sources for all persons in the household 18 years of age and over.

“Market Rental Unit” means a residential unit, within an approved affordable housing project, for which no capital assistance is provided under this initiative and which is not subject to a Housing approved maximum rental rate and other operating conditions.

“Maximum Income Limit (MIL)” means the maximum annual income that a household may have in an eligible unit funded under this initiative. The MIL is calculated based on the total annual household income from all sources for all persons 18 years of age or older living in the household. The MIL for households eligible for tenancy in eligible units funded under this initiative is currently \$32,500. Housing reserves the right to alter the MIL from time to time as is necessary to reflect Housing policy in this regard.

“Maximum Monthly Rental Rate” means the maximum charge, as established by Housing in accordance with its internal policies, at which eligible units may be rented to eligible households.

“Operating Budget” means the estimate of operating costs and revenues for the project.

“Proponent” means an organization or group responsible for proposing, developing, owning and renting affordable rental housing units to eligible households. The term “Sponsor” may be used interchangeably with “Proponent.”

“Self-Contained Residential Unit” means a housing unit providing therein living, sleeping, eating, food preparation and the sanitary facilities for a household.

“Senior” means a person (“principal applicant”), who in order to be eligible for tenancy in a seniors housing project, must be at least 55 years of age on the date of application or a person who resides or will be residing with the principal applicant.

“Substantial Completion” means substantial completion as defined by the Mechanic’s Lien Act, RSNL 1990 cM-3, as amended.

“Universal Design” is the idea of making things comfortable and convenient for as many different people at as many stages in life as possible. Features of universal design would include but would not be limited to open floor plans with wide halls and doorways, vinyl or laminate floors, lever style door handles, grab bars in bathrooms, push electrical outlets verses light switches etc.

Appendix B - Modesty Criteria

The following will guide Proponents in the development of modest, affordable housing. This modesty criteria is not intended as a technical specification. Fire rating or sound attenuation requirements for walls, floors and ceilings in certain designs may require significant upgrading from the minimum specifications noted here. Proponents shall make appropriate enquiries and ensure that proper steps are taken to address these issues. All code requirements and industry standards shall apply.

Site

Landscaped areas: sodded.
Drives and parking: Asphalt (1 parking space to be provided for each apartment).
Walkways/entrances: Concrete.

Building

Floors: Sheet vinyl or vinyl composite tile in kitchens, bath entrance and utility areas.
 Low-pile carpet or laminate flooring in living, bedrooms, hallways and corridors.
Walls: Exterior - Vinyl siding (wood may be used in designated heritage areas);
 Interior - Gypsum Wallboard (12 mm min).
Roofs/Ceilings: Gypsum Board (12mm min); Pre-engineered wood trusses; Asphalt shingle
Windows: Vinyl
Doors: Exterior - Insulated steel for single units; Aluminum entrance systems for apartments.
 Interior - Hollow core within suites; Rated solid core between suites and common areas.
Plumbing: Residential grade fixtures with lever handles within suites.
Electrical: Residential grade devices within suites.

Residential Spaces

Bathrooms: Full bathroom (toilet, sink/vanity and tub with shower);
Kitchens: Stove 762mm.; Fridge 750mm. Work space min 1.3M²; No drawer less than 400mm wide
Dining Areas: Combined with livingroom or kitchen within suites
Storage Space: 3% to 6% of floor area should be allocated for closets and storage.

Maximum Unit Sizes:	<u>Bachelor</u>	<u>One-bedroom</u>	<u>Two-bedroom</u>	<u>Three Bedroom</u>
<u>Apartments</u>	28m ² to 37m ² (300ft ² to 450ft ²)	46m ² to 56m ² (500ft ² to 600ft ²)	65m ² to 74m ² (700ft ² to 800ft ²)	N/A N/A
<u>Row/Semi-detached</u>	37m ² to 42m ² (400ft ² to 450ft ²)	46m ² to 56m ² (500ft ² to 600ft ²)	65m ² to 74m ² (700ft ² to 800ft ²)	89m ² to 93m ² (950ft ² to 1000ft ²)

Note: All unit sizes are the net size of a unit, which is the area between finished walls.
 Unit sizes may be increased by 15 percent to accommodate accessibility requirements.

Common Spaces

All common space in a project should not exceed 30 percent of the building area and **may** include:

Laundry: 1600mm clear in front of appliances; One washer and one dryer for every 10 units.
Lounge: 2 m²/unit - minimum 20m²
Public Washroom: Fully accessible.
Other: Building storage; Communal Patio; Janitorial storage; Office; Outside storage; Storage shed.

All common areas must be accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

Appendix C - Technical Standards

Housing will review submissions to determine basic compliance with these Technical Standards. Compliance with industry codes or standards and/or provincial or municipal legislation or by-laws, and/or accurate design is the responsibility of the Proponent, and Housing will not be liable in this regard.

The objective of these standards is to outline the technical requirements for projects to be funded by this initiative. These standards will aid proponents in developing proposals and provide objective criteria for the evaluation process.

These Technical Standards are intended to reasonably ensure that the projects created under this initiative are:

- adaptable and flexible to respond to a broad range of current and anticipated needs.
- durable, affordable and secure housing that fosters a sense of community.
- cost effective, efficient, easy to build and easy to maintain.
- and, that the siting, building form and choice of building materials and systems consider life cycle costs in response to the site's geographical location, topography, climate and orientation.

Design Requirements

General

Codes and Standards

It is the proponents responsibility to ensure that all projects conform to latest editions of the following codes and standards, as well as others that may be applicable to a particular project:

- National Building Code of Canada
- National Plumbing Code of Canada
- National Fire Code of Canada
- Canadian Electrical Code
- The Buildings Accessibility Act, RSNL1990 cB-10, as amended
- The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, S.C. 1992, c.37, as amended

Authorities having jurisdiction

Sponsors are responsible to determine and comply with the requirements of all authorities having jurisdiction, whether federal, provincial or municipal.

Construction Safety

Construction and conversion activities must conform to the latest editions of the:

- Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act, RSNL1990 cW-11, as amended (and all relevant regulations)
- Occupational Health and Safety Act, RSNL1990 cO-3, as amended (and all relevant regulations)

Technical Professionals

Design and inspection must be completed in accordance with applicable legislation regulating professional practice, competent industry practices and any written agreements between professional associations.

Design and inspection shall be completed and certified by qualified personnel being either: a professional Engineer licensed to practice by the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Newfoundland and Labrador; an Architect licensed to practice by the Newfoundland Association of Architects; or a Technician or Technologist certified by the Association of Engineering Technicians and Technologists of Newfoundland and Labrador.

New Construction

Building Form and Layout

Typically, the building form for new construction under this program will be wood frame, row, semi-detached or apartment buildings, three stories or less in height. Kitchen and bathroom layouts should be standardized within a project, as much as possible, and care should be taken to avoid numerous small projections or recesses. Proponents are to provide simple roof designs that address the high levels of precipitation and snowfall and ensure that the roof drainage is designed to avoid ice damming and rainwater run off or snow shedding onto pedestrian pathways.

Building Envelope

The building envelope should be designed and constructed to provide quality, durable construction appropriate for the climatic conditions at the location of the project. The building envelope design should consider the typical interface details between elements of the building envelope and waterproofing membranes. All wood frame projects should adhere to CMHC's Best Practice Guide: Wood Frame Envelopes latest edition.

Accessibility

All projects, which contain 10 affordable units or less, must include one unit which is fully accessible to persons in wheelchairs, with an appropriately designed kitchen and bathroom. The first additional unit beyond the 10th, 20th, etc. must also be fully accessible.

In buildings with common areas, hallways or multi-floors, any interior or exterior common areas must be accessible to persons in wheelchairs. All self-contained residential units must provide an accessible entrance for persons in wheelchairs. Multi-floor buildings must have accessible elevators that are sufficient to accommodate the tenant's mobility needs.

In projects designed specifically for persons with physical disabilities, all self-contained residential units, common spaces and exterior areas available for tenant use must be fully accessible, i.e. with all areas and spaces appropriately designed for use by persons in wheelchairs.

Accessibility will conform to the standards of the Building Accessibility Act.

Universal Design

While all projects which contain 10 affordable housing units must include one unit which is fully accessible, proponents may also include features of universal design in the other units in their project. These features would include, but would not be limited to:

- open floor plans with wide hall and doorways (36")
- vinyl or laminate flooring
- lever style door handles
- grab bars in the bathroom
- pocket sliding doors
- push electrical outlets versus light switches

This type of design is viewed as a positive. It enhances the comfort and convenience for people at various stages of their lives.

Energy Efficiency

All projects must achieve a minimum standard of energy efficiency appropriate to the type of structure.

New low-rise housing will be designed to a minimum energy performance rating of EnerGuide 80 and Energy Star-rated products will be used instead of conventional products where available.

New larger multi-unit residential buildings will be designed to achieve a 25% reduction in energy consumption compared to an equivalent building designed to the Model National Energy Code for Buildings (MNECB). Energy Star-rated products will be used instead of conventional products where available.

Conversion of Existing Buildings

The preceding technical standards are orientated to the planning and construction of new buildings; however, the conversion of existing non-residential buildings to self-contained residential units will also be considered. Proponents must adhere to as many of the technical standards as is practical and reasonable within the constraints of available budgets and the existing design and condition of the building. Conversion proposals that comply more closely with the requirements or intent of the technical standards are preferred.

A detailed condition report will be required for all conversion projects. The condition report will indicate the current condition of the following components: siteworks and access, building envelope (exterior walls, roofs, windows, doors and foundation), building interior, mechanical and electrical systems, fire and building code compliance and environmental conditions (lead paint, asbestos, fuel tanks, PCBs, etc.). A Phase I Environmental Assessment will be required for all conversion projects and environmental clearance will be required prior to construction. Housing reserves the right to establish such terms and conditions with regard to conditional funding allocations for conversion projects.

Where it can be professionally demonstrated that an existing building and its various components are reasonably energy compliant, some of the energy efficiency requirements for new construction, as outlined in the previous section, may be waived, in whole or part, in the sole and absolute discretion of Housing. Proponents seeking such a waiver are required to submit with their proposal a request for waiver together with appropriate supporting documentation.

The following design features are mandatory components for conversion projects:

- Upgrade the structure as required by a qualified structural consultant, to meet minimum life safety requirements.
- Provide all fire and life safety measures in accordance with the National Building Code, Fire Code and other codes having application.
- All common areas must be accessible to persons in wheelchairs.
- All units must be self-contained.
- Multi-floor buildings must have accessible elevators that are sufficient to accommodate the tenant's mobility needs.

Addition to Existing Residential Structure

Additions to existing buildings will also be considered for funding. Most of the requirements outlined in the preceding section would apply to a proposed building addition. In particular, a condition assessment of the existing building would have to be completed. As well, construction drawings should detail any required fire ratings between structures.

