

Canadian Housing Framework

Aboriginal Housing Roundtable

Event Report

Montréal – April 24-25, 2005

Introduction

In January and February 2005, the National Secretariat on Homelessness, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) conducted a series of consultations to seek the contribution of stakeholders in the development of a new Canadian Housing Framework – a strategy to ensure that all Canadians have access to a safe, affordable place to call home. HRSDC and CMHC traveled to every province and to one territory to seek the input of stakeholders in a series of eleven community consultations, five expert roundtables and a roundtable on urban Aboriginal homelessness. One of the suggestions coming out of the roundtable on urban Aboriginal homelessness was that further discussion on non-reserve housing for Aboriginal people was warranted.

In responding to this suggestion, HRSDC and CMHC asked George Devine, Executive Director, National Aboriginal Housing Association, Wayne Helgason, Executive Director, Winnipeg Social Planning Council and Peter Dinsdale, Executive Director, The National Association of Friendship Centres, to provide advice on the themes for discussion and the design of the agenda.

This report summarizes the outcomes from the Aboriginal Housing Roundtable that was held in Montréal on April 24 and 25, 2005. There were three themes identified for discussion – building community, strengthening capacity and fostering shared responsibility. Practical solutions related to local service delivery, partnerships, collaboration, and sustaining financial and human resources were also explored. Although there was an effort to ensure all views were heard, understood and respected, it was made clear that consensus was not required in order for views or recommendations to be carried forward from the consultations.

Approach to Consultation

Opening Dinner

Early in the evening of April 24, 2005, at the opening dinner, Elder Annie Smith from the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation blessed the food. Following the blessing, Bayla Kolk, Associate Assistant Deputy Minister of Housing and Homelessness, HRSDC and Deborah Taylor, Director, Assisted Housing Division, CMHC welcomed the participants to the meeting. Ms. Kolk introduced Senator Shirley Maheu who provided introductory remarks on behalf of the Government of Canada. Senator Maheu explained how this roundtable discussion was part of the government's broader initiative to develop a national housing strategy. She emphasized how important it was to ensure that all Canadians, including Aboriginal persons, have a safe, secure and healthy place to live. She recognized the essential role that people involved in service delivery play in raising awareness and understanding about the needs in their communities as well as advocating for support.

Introductions

Over dinner, the participants were asked to discuss two questions with the others at their table:

- Based on experience, what does it take to make a difference in your community?
- What do you see as the most critical barrier that must be overcome to meet the housing needs of Aboriginal persons?

At the end of the meal, each participant in turn was asked to introduce their “neighbour” including sharing their neighbours’ view on specific questions. Although there were a range of views expressed (see Appendix 2 – Ice-breaker Session) there were some common threads.

With respect to what makes a difference, it was thought that:

- Adequate, longer-term, stable funding;
- Training and education to build capacity within the Aboriginal community to administer all aspects of housing in a holistic manner; and
- Goodwill and interest from the community as a whole to take action;

were key.

The most critical barriers identified included:

- The lack of Aboriginal involvement in decision-making related to program design and resources;
- The need for education and training to build the capacity within a community to become self-sufficient; and
- The inflexibility of program design and the administrative burden of accessing and accounting for funds.

Vision 2020

“Let us put our minds together, and see what life we will make for our children” Sitting Bull

A “vision for the future” was introduced as a meaningful description of a desired situation at a time in the future. It was characterized as:

- A story or a picture;
- A description of a place or point in time, not the process for getting there;
- An expression of relationships, results, resources and interactions;
- Unlimited by existing constraints or realities; and
- A shared understanding that enables and motivates individuals and organizations to innovate and take initiative.

The importance of sharing and communicating was emphasized with research that shows people remember much more of what they discuss, experience or share and communicate to others. It was observed that this was substantiated by the strength of the oral tradition within Aboriginal communities. A number of visions were offered (Appendix B) including the following that capture many of the common ideas:

A Canada “where every Aboriginal person – from the youngest to the eldest – has safe, decent and affordable shelter, and the wherewithal to care for themselves and their loved ones in an environment that is conducive to their health, happiness and well-being, including education.”

“A Canada where the Aboriginal people are organized ... from the grass roots to the national level where the true needs of the people can be heard and responded to so that people may develop full and meaningful lives growing to their potential, taking responsibility for themselves and their families and friends.”

“A Canada that would have the full spectrum of housing, from homeless [shelter] to home ownership, with ... Aboriginal organizations at all points supported by social programs, to ensure that Aboriginal people, regardless of where they start or might fall, will have support throughout the spectrum, to ensure they live to their fullest potential without fear or loss of hope or life.”

“Canada and its partners see the value of all people, and what they can contribute to make Canada a better place.”

The evening session wrapped up with a sense of common purpose and a realization that safe, secure and affordable housing was directly linked to the well-being of individuals, families and their communities.

Traditional Ceremony

The morning of April 26, Elder Annie Smith once again welcomed the participants from across Canada to the Aboriginal Housing Roundtable in Montréal. She conducted a traditional “smudge” ceremony with the participants. She encouraged the participants to leave their other concerns behind and take full advantage of this opportunity to focus on ways to help ensure that people of Aboriginal heritage have safe and healthy homes in which to live and raise their families. The traditional ceremony and blessing set a positive and constructive tone for the discussions that followed.

Opening Remarks

Bayla Kolk provided introductory remarks to position the Aboriginal Housing Roundtable in the context of the development of a new Canadian Housing Framework. Ms. Kolk signaled that important interests are converging that provide an opportunity to think about longer-term enabling models and support a holistic approach to Aboriginal housing. While acknowledging the need to continue supporting shelters, she highlighted the need to move beyond these and adopt a transformative approach in dealing with homelessness. She also reminded the participants that one of the benefits of a roundtable session such as this was networking amongst some of the leading service providers from across the country as well as the opportunity to share experiences and explore best practices.

Charles Chenard, General Manager, Québec Business Centre, CMHC, thanked Elder Smith for offering a traditional blessing that would serve as inspiration for the meeting. He indicated that CMHC was interested in hearing and learning how existing housing programs could be improved. He recognized that demographic trends mean that housing needs may take on different dimensions depending on the community.

Questions were invited from the participants. Ms. Kolk was asked how the current session would be reflected in the broader discussions on housing that are expected to lead to a First Ministers

Meeting on Aboriginal issues. As well, she was reminded of the history and the underlying issues that have contributed to the difficulties related to providing Aboriginal housing. With more than 110 urban native housing groups, administering more than 11,000 units, it was emphasized that the overall process must recognize these organizations as the key non-reserve delivery organizations. It was also stated that representatives of these organizations (e.g. National Aboriginal Housing Association (NAHA) and the urban Aboriginal Friendship Centres) must be invited to participate in the broader discussions to ensure that transformative change is achieved.

In response, Ms. Kolk indicated that recently HRSDC and CMHC had been asked to be more closely involved in preparations leading up to the anticipated First Ministers Meeting. She encouraged the participants to use this opportunity to move the agenda forward and to consider the kinds of transformative change that might be required to meet the housing needs of Aboriginal people and address the situation of homeless Aboriginal people. Future work by HRSDC and CMHC would reflect input from this meeting. She acknowledged that the Government of Canada had been called upon to play a leadership role, but asked that participants reflect the collaboration that will be required amongst all levels of government, communities and individuals. She encouraged participants to think about models that enable and empower organizations and governments to work together.

Expert Paper

The “expert paper” on *Non-reserve Aboriginal Housing Challenges & Considerations* that had been prepared as background for the Aboriginal Housing Roundtable by Dr. Ryan Walker was referenced. Linkages were made to the last evenings’ discussions. It was recognized that all of the participants are in fact “champions” in their communities. As well, the importance of strengthening capacity and fostering shared responsibility was noted.

Working Group Sessions

Following the conclusion of the formal remarks, participants were asked to break into assigned working group sessions to discuss the three themes that had been identified for the Aboriginal Housing Roundtable.

- Building community;
- Strengthening capacity; and
- Fostering shared responsibility

The highlights of the working group discussions were reported back by one of each groups’ participants to the plenary.

The afternoon working group session focused on the practical, organizational challenges facing non-reserve Aboriginal housing service providers. Each group had a different area for discussion:

- Individual-focused, local service delivery based on need, irrespective of status;
- Partnerships and collaboration amongst Aboriginal organizations
- Sustaining financial and human resources.

Once again the highlights of the working group discussions were reported by one of each groups' participants to the plenary.

Summary Remarks

Charles Chenard offered his observations on behalf of CMHC. He recognized that trust and respect is critical to building long-term sustainable relationships. As well, he noted that there are a number of complex issues that need a multi-faceted approach. Based on what he heard in the discussions, it was clear to him that the Aboriginal housing service providers felt that CMHC could do more to meet current needs and undertook to bring this message back to CMHC's Management Committee. He noted the participants interest in having federal departments work more cooperatively. Mr. Chenard also provided copies of a recent announcement of reductions in mortgage loan insurance premiums that will benefit first time home owners and affordable housing projects.

Yves St-Onge, Director, Partnerships, HRSDC thanked Elder Smith for the opening ceremony that encouraged trust and respect amongst all participants. There were a number of consistent messages that he had heard throughout the discussions including:

- The importance of long-term funding and administrative flexibility;
- The need to build capacity and facilitate entrepreneurial spirit
- The significant role of champions that have a clear vision;
- The benefit of local service delivery; and
- The need to distinguish rights from social issues

Closing Ceremony

Elder Smith led the traditional closing ceremony. She shared some personal observations on the courage that it takes to continue to move forward in our daily lives to build healthy communities.

Overview of Discussion

As with the recent forum on Aboriginal homelessness, the participants believed that local Aboriginal control and authority over program decision-making and spending was important. Participants felt that Aboriginal people are best positioned to deliver services to their community, and that there was ample evidence of this.

As well, participants called for increased, stable, predictable, multi-year funding that would allow Aboriginal organizations to build their capacity to effectively address the multi-faceted needs of the many Aboriginal people they serve. They expressed frustration with the growing administrative burden when staff are already stretched to meet the needs of the community.

There was some concern expressed about the role that service delivery organizations will play in decision-making related to meeting the housing needs of non-reserve Aboriginal population given the high profile discussions taking place between the large national political Aboriginal organizations and the government.

Challenges and Opportunities

Building Community

It was suggested that “a community is defined by the things that people share in common.” Although there are often geographic characteristics that define a community, it was recognized that people sometimes come together as a community based on interests, values, heritage or economic status. Clearly, there can be communities within communities and it was felt that efforts must be made to be as inclusive as possible. It was also seen as important that the differences between communities and the diversity of needs within a community be reflected.

Safe, secure and affordable housing is fundamental to the health of individuals and the communities in which they live. Housing is a basis for vibrant communities. Stable and adequate housing was thought to contribute to the well-being of children and families and was viewed as key to an individual’s capacity to pursue educational and economic activities and become more independent. In order to maximize the socio-economic benefits associated with Aboriginal housing programs, training was seen as important to developing local Aboriginal skilled labour and small business capacity, particularly in the construction trades and property management.

In spite of the importance placed on housing, it was recognized that a holistic approach to addressing the challenges facing Aboriginal individuals in a community context was needed. This holistic approach would require partnerships amongst providers of different services within a community. Effective planning across organizations was seen as key to achieving a seamless service delivery to community members at a local level.

It was recognized that there needed to be greater engagement of the broader non-Aboriginal community to build understanding about the issues facing Aboriginal people locally as well as to identify opportunities to pursue initiatives of mutual benefit. This was especially true in communities where responsibility for housing had been downloaded to municipalities.

There were a number of financial pressures identified including:

- Capital funding for new units and renovation of existing stock;
- Increased operating costs for utilities and insurance that were forcing some organizations into “survival” mode and “crisis management”;
- Funding for life skills and basic home maintenance training and tenant counseling services;
- Competitive wages and benefits to help recruit and retain qualified staff; and
- Complementary resources to ensure holistic approach to serving community.

Strengthening Capacity

Strengthening capacity related to housing within the Aboriginal community was viewed from three perspectives:

- Meeting the physical accommodation needs of the Aboriginal community;
- Providing the required health, social and community services; and
- Developing the skills and experience of Aboriginal persons and organizations to provide housing related services.

With respect to meeting the housing needs within the non-reserve Aboriginal community, in addition to a significant incremental investment in capital and operating costs, it was recognized that predictability and flexibility were required to allow organizations to optimize the housing stock that they owned and managed. As well, there should be mechanisms or incentives to encourage good management practices over the longer-term such as allowing organizations to retain and invest savings, and reducing the frequency of government audits (relying on the professional external audits that are conducted regularly).

It was recognized that some communities may need external resources initially to ensure that the housing stock is being maintained and managed properly. As well, there may be situations where additional technical expertise is required to identify and remedy deficiencies in the existing housing stock to ensure they are safe and operating efficiently. It was suggested that a national “resource center” would enable the sharing of expertise and provide a “jump start” for organizations trying to enhance their service delivery. It was also proposed that government officials could be seconded to Aboriginal service organizations on a regular basis and vice versa to support the transfer of expertise and to build understanding of the “on-the-ground” challenges.

In order to focus resources most effectively, it was recognized that housing organizations could not be “all things to all people”. Instead, close collaboration with other service providers was seen as key to meeting the range of needs of Aboriginal people living in the community. This coordination of services was also needed to reflect the changing needs of an individual over time. An example cited as a success story was when a homeless individual moved from requiring shelter and addiction counseling, to subsidized housing and participation in an adult education program, then to job training and employment search support over a period of several years. In many communities, especially in specialized housing situations such as those serving the elderly, it was thought that the appropriate support services were severely lacking.

There were several good examples of how the management of an Aboriginal organizations’ housing portfolio had led to employment and business opportunities for Aboriginal persons.

In terms of leveraging financial resources, it was suggested that a variety of financial instruments could be used to encourage:

- investment by the private sector in Aboriginal housing (e.g. accelerated capital cost allowance and tax credits)
- the donation of supplies and services (e.g. GST rebates)
- acquisition of newer units with lower operating costs (e.g. transferability of rent subsidies);
- housing procurement strategies to enable the participation of Aboriginal businesses;
- incentives to lending institutions to provide funding for Aboriginal housing (e.g. loan guarantees);and
- flexibility in provincial participation thresholds for existing housing programs.

Fostering Shared Responsibility

There are a number of attributes that encourage sharing of responsibility including:

- a history of good work (reputation);
- physical resources (contribution); and
- political commitment (network).

Conflicting interests are sometimes related to:

- community resistance;
- competition for scarce resources;
- confusion about availability of different funding sources;
- poor relationships or lack of understanding amongst service providers and/or government officials; and
- jurisdictional issues.

It was felt that the federal government could play a leadership role in fostering shared responsibility for Aboriginal housing and that they could ensure that housing service providers were well-represented (e.g. NAHA) in any policy development discussions in addition to Aboriginal political organizations.



In the context of local service delivery of non-reserve housing, it was suggested that community-based decision-making without the involvement of political organizations would be most effective.

It was also suggested that the federal government should support the transfer of best practices and success stories where mutually beneficial partnerships were realized. There are some good examples of inclusive, comprehensive and community-wide decision-making and service delivery with the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCPI) and Urban Aboriginal Homelessness (UAH) program.

The participants recommended that the government revisit the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples recommendations related to housing and to build on other work that has already been done. They cautioned that there are no “quick fixes” and that addressing the housing needs of Aboriginal peoples requires long-term commitment from all partners, including all levels of government.

Local Service Delivery

There were a number of organizational and structural barriers identified that are believed to limit the ability of local service delivery organizations to meet the housing needs of local Aboriginal persons including:

- federal government jurisdiction based on fiduciary responsibility leaves out Métis and non-status Aboriginal people;
- priority given to views of Aboriginal political organizations above service delivery organizations does not reflect the experience in serving the non-reserve Aboriginal population;
- offloading of responsibilities for non-reserve Aboriginal population to Aboriginal political organizations will not enhance the ability of service providers to meet the needs in an inclusive, status-blind manner;
- need for recognition of overall effectiveness of service delivery by Aboriginal organizations to Aboriginal persons;

It was suggested that the following practical approaches would assist local service delivery organizations:

- overall integrated and inclusive community-based planning to avoid gaps and overlaps in service delivery;
- increased availability of multi-year funding;
- reduced administrative requirements and streamlining of decision-making processes;
- getting all parties together at the same table; and
- coordination between agencies providing funding.

There were several factors identified that interfere with the adoption of best practices including:

- needs in the community are so large relative to the available resources that organizations compete against each other for much needed resources;
- restrictions within existing programs and/or operating agreements that restrict ability to adopt new practices and provide little incentive to make improvements;
- lack of communication amongst organizations due in part to limited resources to document, report or share best practices; and
- differing requirements and priorities from community to community limit applicability of best practices if applied in a “cookie cutter” manner.

It was suggested that increased resources (human and financial) were required to overcome some of the problems that had been identified. Resources to support research and communications were viewed as important. It was thought that there was a lot of capacity locally but that additional funding was key to getting the job done. As well, more flexibility within contribution agreements and budgets that would allow funds to be moved from one priority/line item to another with appropriate justification.

Partnerships and Accountability

The Government of Canada was seen as the only real partner in the development of a housing strategy for urban Aboriginal persons. Participants emphasized that the federal government needs to recognize its historical role and responsibility to urban Aboriginal persons. It was suggested that Aboriginal organizations that have worked with non-reserve Aboriginal persons over the years are best positioned to participate in the development of such a strategy and need to be “at the table.”

There was limited experience with successful partnerships between Aboriginal service providers and non-Aboriginal organizations. One example that was cited as a “best practice” in long-term, sustainable cooperation and partnership was between the local chapter of NAHA and the BC Women’s Hospital in Vancouver.

The political jurisdictional tension between the larger, national Aboriginal organizations was perceived to be the most problematic issue that needed to be addressed in order to successfully develop and implement a comprehensive housing strategy for non-reserve Aboriginal persons.

Sustaining Financial and Human Resources

There was a general consensus that Aboriginal organizations needed to be involved in decision-making related to priorities and allocation of resources. Transparency in these decision-making processes would help Aboriginal organizations understand the needs as perceived by others including governments. It was suggested that a neutral body could play a role at the community level in avoiding “small p” politics that sometimes gets in the way of the best decisions.

It was noted that assisted housing is an important step on the “housing continuum” in meeting the needs of many individuals and that a sustained long-term commitment is needed if Aboriginal homelessness is to be addressed. It was recognized that the information available on Aboriginal housing needs was much better than that on homelessness, indicating a need for some further information gathering on the issue of homelessness.

An observation was made that homeless individuals may have a number of other needs other than housing that should be addressed. This linkage between housing capital and the social and medical needs of tenants was seen as critical. It was also raised that there are important linkages between housing and training and employment programs. With the right policies and program design, it was suggested that there could be a “double bang for the buck.”

A sense of “personal investment” and involvement in the community was viewed as an important factor in maintaining housing properties in good condition. Training of tenants/home owners in basic household maintenance was seen as an important step. Even in shelters for homeless persons, the residents are encouraged to participate in the maintenance of the facilities.

It was pointed out that the government needs to be careful about a strategy based solely on large urban centres as there are a large number of Aboriginal individuals and families in smaller communities who also need services. It was suggested that the availability of support services may be problematic in many rural communities and that the cost of meeting the housing needs of Aboriginal persons in these areas may be greater. There were some suggestions on how pooling of resources, experience and expertise may help to alleviate these pressures.

More flexibility in the level of provincial participation for housing programs was viewed as a way to get more housing investment in some provinces where the priority and funding to date has been limited.

With respect to sustaining the human resources that are essential to the delivery of Aboriginal housing services, it was suggested that more people needed to be recruited and trained to reduce the stress on current service providers. As well, the government was encouraged to reflect the costs of appropriate salary and benefit packages that are needed to attract and retain good staff in funding allocations.

Solutions to Challenges

The three working groups developed a number of recommendations on how to better address the non-reserve housing needs of Aboriginal people. Participants had been encouraged to build on their experiences and where appropriate, to recommend changes that would transform the way services are delivered in any aspects of the housing continuum from homelessness to home ownership. The recommendations made by the participants were related to seven areas for action as described below. For the most part, they parallel the recommendations made at the earlier Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Roundtable in Regina.

Level and Term of Funding Available Directly to Aboriginal Organizations

It was recommended that the federal government increase the level and commitment period of funding available directly to Aboriginal organizations providing services to Aboriginal people living off-reserve. It was recommended that the Minister of Housing and Labour help to secure more funds from new sources recognizing the long-term economic benefit for Canada as a whole.

One-Window Approvals Process

It was recommended that the federal government, in coordination with other levels of government, provide a “one-window” application and approvals process that would encompass all related programs to reduce the administrative burden placed on service delivery organizations and to ensure that approvals and funds are received more quickly.

National Aboriginal Housing Policy

It was recommended that the federal government, in cooperation with other governments, develop a holistic, national Aboriginal housing policy to address the needs of all Aboriginal persons irrespective of status. This policy should reflect the linkages to social, medical and transitional services that may be required by individuals. This policy development process should ensure that Aboriginal service providers are recognized as key participants along with Aboriginal political organizations.

Flexibility and Integration

It was recommended that the federal government provide more flexibility in the delivery of programs and services to ensure that client needs are met in an integrated and holistic manner.

Capacity Building

It was recommended that the federal government work with Aboriginal service providers to identify job and business opportunities related to housing development and maintenance and to provide the required skills training and work experience. An Aboriginal “resource centre” was mentioned as a possibility in this regard.

Public Understanding and Support

It was recommended that the federal government support the efforts of Aboriginal organizations to build support and understanding within their broader communities about the needs and services offered to the Aboriginal persons within their community.

Leveraging of Experience and Expertise

It was recommended that the federal government support the establishment of a “technical resource centre” to facilitate the transfer of expertise and best practices amongst Aboriginal housing service providers.

Next Steps

Participants had requested copies of the flip chart notes as a reminder of the discussion. There was a commitment made by government representatives to take the views and recommendations presented at the Aboriginal Housing Roundtable forward into the federal discussions leading to the anticipated First Ministers Meeting on Aboriginal issues. As well, there was an undertaking to provide all participants with a report on this Roundtable.

Appendix 1

Participants and Observers

Denis	Arsenault	Policy Development Officer, National Secretariat on Homelessness, HRSDC
Angie	Barrados	Sr. Policy Advisor, National Secretariat on Homelessness, HRSDC
Fatima	Barros	Manager, Program Administration, CMHC
Doug	Bartlett	Project Executive Coordinator, Winnipeg Housing & Homelessness
Ashique	Biswas	Director, Policy, National Secretariat on Homelessness, HRSDC
Linda	Boyer	Métis Urban Housing Association
Lucille	Bruce	Native Womens' Transition Center
Carol	Crowe	Facilitator, GPC Public Affairs
Charles	Chenard	General Manager, Québec Regional Business Centre, CMHC
George	Devine	Exec Director, National Aboriginal Housing Association
Peter	Dinsdale	National Association of Friendship Centres
Gary	Gould	Skigin-Elnoog Housing Corp
Ray	Hamilton	Métis Urban Housing Association of Saskatchewan
Wayne	Helgason	Social Planning Council of Winnipeg
Charlie	Hill	National Aboriginal Housing Association
John	Hill	Facilitator, GPC Public Affairs
Leigh	Howell	Director, Socio-Economic Research, CMHC
Dave	Jackson	Tipi Moza
Doug	Janoff	Policy Advisor, National Secretariat on Homelessness, HRSDC
Cec	Jones	Edmonton Amisk Housing Association
Ray	Jones	Muks Kum Oi Housing
Bayla	Kolk	Assoc. Assistant Deputy Minister, National Secretariat on Homelessness, HRSDC
Jim	Lanigan	President, Gignul Non-Profit Housing Corporation
Heather	Levecque	Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centers
Darla Jean	Lindstrom	Manager, Grey Mountain Housing
Gary	Lister	Sto lo Nation
Shirley	Maheu	Senator, Government of Canada
Marc	Maracle	Gignul Housing
Ella	Mayer	Exec Director, Manitoba Association of Friendship Centers
Louise D.	Mayo	Montréal Native Friendship Center
Don	McBain	Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services
Marileen	McCormick	Exec Director, Center for Aboriginal Human Resource Development
Ronda	McCorrison	Director, Aboriginal Peoples' College
Thelma	Meade	Aboriginal Sr Resource Coordinator, Kekinan Seniors Center
Janet	Neves	Senior Policy Analyst, CMHC
Sid	Peters	Nova Scotia/Labrador - Housing
Lawrence	Poirer	Kinew Housing Inc.
Staci	Poirier	Assistant Director, Alberta Native Friendship Centers Association
Greg	Rogers	Na-Me-Res/Tumivut
Linda	Ross	CEO, Aboriginal Housing Management Association
Annie	Smith	Elder, Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation
Darlene	Solomon	Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
Yves	St.-Onge	Director, Partnerships, National Secretariat on Homelessness, HRSDC
Marcel	Swain	Lu'Ma Native Housing
Deborah	Taylor	Director, Assisted Housing, CMHC
Ed	Tanner	Manitoba Urban Native Housing Association & Kanata Housing Corp
Laura	Tupper	Facilitator, GPC Public Affairs
Larry	Wucherer	Neeginan Development Corporation
Leonard	Young	Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan

Appendix 2

Ice Breaker

During dinner, participants had the opportunity to network, exchange views, and share ideas. The ice-breaker involved participants introducing one another and sharing views on two questions.

Based on experience, what does it take to make a difference in your community?

- Work directly with the people.
- Traditional practice/elected officials/do not impose taxes
- Training in languages
- A commitment to build affordable housing
- New ideas, stop being judgmental
- Healthy community based on a holistic approach
- A supply of new suitable safe affordable housing
- Paying attention to the needs of our people and providing funding for meeting those needs in a non judgmental passion
- More affordable housing - waiting 1410 families and many are homeless.
- Adequate, stable, funding
- Close working relationships, partnerships
- Ongoing Dialogue & making partnerships/strong local commitment
- Goodwill and interest from the community as a whole to take action.
- Technical assistance to support and follow-up to sustain existing and new initiatives.
- Got to be there, participate in the community
- Empowerment - Co-op housing as a resident and management board
- Involvement from everyone in the community – matching funds
- Persistence & developing an ability to keep up on the jargon
- Control and ownership of the local activity and the process
- Long-term sustainable funding (not project to project) 5-10 years continuum, long term programs
- Political will, adequate resources
- Holistic support to assist people in education and training so they can develop, engage in family & community
- Self-sustainability
- Education & training – building individual capacity to provide housing for their families
- Handful of absolutely committed people supported by society at large (private, public/government provincial, federal, municipal)
- Continuous hard work to ensure community concerns are heard
- Listening and partnerships
- Collective action and working together as diverse groups on common issues
- Listening and learning from the community
- Provide the community with the capacity to administer all aspects of their housing
- Having a better understanding of needs and issues
- Full, broad, community input needed and involvement and core funding
- Wholistic approach
- Commitment
- Belief
- When all people in a community come together to address an issue

What do you see as the most critical barrier that must be overcome to meet the housing needs of Aboriginal persons?

- Quebec – Partnerships (lack of commitment) there are no strategies in Quebec.
- Insufficient resources
- Program design
- Understanding that it is not just a housing issue but multi-faceted social issues, understand the complexity of it.
- Take people - not just bricks & mortar
- An urban Aboriginal housing program re-established
- Lack of government willingness to provide funding for new units
- Besides lack of funding, too many loops, too much policy. Homeless \$'s a bandage solution but appreciated. Need to address issues in all communities.
- Reinstate urban native (fed) or put another program in place – homeless \$'s bandage.
- Province/city won't provide social housing.
- Lack of affordable housing program.
- Too many hoops
- Long term funding
- Working together to avoid gaps and not duplicate efforts
- Low Income/poverty
- Overcoming government policy that deals with Aboriginal people
- Believing that you can actually accomplish and make a difference
- Overcoming the feeling of hopelessness – product of frustration
- Elected council
- Access to resource money – program design responsible to aboriginal needs
- Self-Confidence and trust in structures, systems we are trying to establish
- Capacity of the community; education, training & social-development
- A National aboriginal social housing program to meet the needs of ever growing aboriginal population in Manitoba. Homelessness-large population/large issue
- Without protocol or agreement for resources
- Barrier for homelessness is the bureaucracy time it takes to process proposals, local of control of delivery dollars and where they go.
- Lack of resources/lack of trust, unwillingness to allow us to make mistakes
- Education & training, a capacity a community to be self-sufficient.
- Housing is required to support families and individually as they get an education
- Education-training-long-term individual development
- Develop individual, develops community
- Long-term sustainable resources
- Reconciling identity into need or balancing issues of identity into need
- \$'s serve those with needs regardless of identity
- Delivery by Aboriginal people to the Aboriginal community
- Lack of inclusiveness of Aboriginal people in decision-making
- For government to hand jurisdiction and control of housing to aboriginal service providers as well as long-term funding \$'s.
- Transfer the learning into action
- Creative new programs – more units - new policy – community ownership

- Funding – lack of and what funding there is to ensure it is allocated to meet the communities priorities
- Keeping Aboriginal absolute homelessness a priority nationally and locally
- Make enough \$'s to buy a house – low wages – taxation rights
- The federal government needs to understand that there needs to be a specific urban aboriginal housing program
- Inflexibility given approaches to funding
- Lack of ongoing funding

Appendix 3

Visions of Aboriginal Housing in 2020

Every Aboriginal person will have resources to provide their own house.

Every program and department is there for youth, elders, and others to address their spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental needs (“the cube system”).

Deplorable housing conditions are eradicated from all Aboriginal communities.

Every Aboriginal person – from the youngest to the eldest – has safe, decent and affordable shelter, and the wherewithal to care for themselves and their loved ones in an environment that is conducive to their health, happiness and well-being, including education.

Affordable housing for all Aboriginal people without all the obstacles they have to face

Safe housing without mold

A place where politicians keep their promises

Housing that reflects an individual’s choice

A log shack along the road allowance somewhere close to heaven

Living in a home that their parents own that is safe and healthy

A Canada where Aboriginal people are organized in a manner that there is a logical parameters of organizational structure from the grass root to the national level; where the true needs of the people may be heard and responded to so that people may develop full and meaningful lives growing to their potential, taking responsibility for themselves and their families and friends.

Aboriginal persons are proud and have self-esteem, not taking a back seat to anyone.

Officials stay to hear our comments.

A Canada that would have the full spectrum of housing, from homeless [shelter] to home ownership, with ... Aboriginal organizations at all points supported by social programs, to ensure that Aboriginal people, regardless of where they start or might fall, will have support throughout the spectrum, to ensure they live to their fullest potential without fear or loss of hope or life.

Canada and its partners see the value of all people, and what they can contribute to make Canada a better place.