

# Homes for the CF

## Canadian Forces Housing Agency Strategic Plan 2005–2009

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**CANADIAN FORCES HOUSING AGENCY STRATEGIC PLAN 2005–2009**

It gives me great pleasure to present you with the Canadian Forces Housing Agency (CFHA) Strategic Plan for 2005–2009. I trust this plan will clarify the key strategic objectives of the Agency, and demonstrate our continuing commitment to supporting the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces (CF).

Since its inception, CFHA has benefited from the strong support and dedication of numerous individuals. The energy and commitment demonstrated by personnel and stakeholders alike have allowed CFHA to provide increasingly better residential accommodation services to CF members.

The partnership between CFHA and Bases and Wings is of utmost importance to our joint success, and in the coming months, every opportunity will be taken to reinforce this relationship. Additionally, it is essential that we display more prominently the fairness of our dealings with occupants and the high quality of our service.

It is upon this solid foundation that we position ourselves today for the implementation of several initiatives to take us further on the road to becoming the Department's *agent of excellence* in all residential housing matters.

Alain Bastarache  
Chief Executive Officer

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# 1. Introduction

CFHA has developed a new customer-centered strategic plan to help establish stability and continuity within the context of an evolving mandate. Who we are and what we do is inextricably linked to this foundation document, which drives all current and future organizational priorities, commitments and activities. It will guide us in achieving the corporate qualities, values and performance levels necessary to meet the housing needs of the Department of National Defence (DND) and the members of the Canadian Forces (CF) and align with future departmental transformation requirements.

This Strategic Plan lays out CFHA's objectives and priorities for the next five years. Fulfilling these commitments will enable the Agency to become an *agent of excellence* in the provision of Crown-controlled residential housing. As CFHA's mandate will continue to evolve with a changing force structure, it is essential that a solid foundation be provided to ensure stability and continuity. This document will guide us in achieving the corporate qualities, values and performance levels necessary to meet the housing needs of the DND and members of the CF and align with future departmental transformational requirements.

The CFHA Leadership Team has developed this challenging yet achievable plan that will result in a strengthened focus on the following key themes:

- The needs of our customers, clients, stakeholders and partners
- The development of a viable life cycle asset management plan
- The recognition of being a workplace of choice for our employees
- Our adherence to sound management practices

This document is organized under the following headings:

- Background (policy framework and current environment)
- Critical issues and risks
- Our mandate
- Our mission
- Our vision
- Our values
- Balancing our improvement agenda with our ongoing agenda
- Achieving the vision: Long-term objectives and short-term priorities
- Implementing the strategic direction: Our action plan

## **2. Background**

### **The early days of military housing in Canada**

In Canada, the residential housing portfolio for military families was originally built following the Second World War. The building program was terminated at the end of the 1950s because of changing military demands, private housing availability and government policy.

Most decisions regarding housing were made at the base or wing level, by Base and Wing Commanders (B/W Comds) themselves. Budgetary constraints, competition with operational priorities and the lack of comprehensive policy and standards contributed to the deterioration of the housing stock. Some bases experienced serious problems with municipal-type infrastructure, causing sewer back-ups and water quality problems in some cases. There was no program to update the homes, nor was there an effort to reduce the housing inventory in response to the military's changing requirements, largely due to the reduction in size of the Canadian Forces (CF). The lack of an integrated financial system, and the lack of an integrated approach to planning, made it difficult to meet the contemporary needs of military families and resulted in the housing units falling into disrepair.

### **Establishing a National Program for CF Housing**

In 1995, CFHA was created as a provisional special operating agency within the DND. CFHA was created for two reasons: first, to bring good financial management to the stewardship of the CF family housing portfolio; and second, to improve the quality of housing and related services. At the time, the vast majority of housing units were well below the housing standards that existed in Canadian communities, in terms of size and amenities. Considerable renovation work was needed to bring the houses back to a reasonable maintenance standard.

On 1 April 1996, CFHA began its management of the DND family housing portfolio. Initially, nine Housing Management Offices managed one-third of the Department's total housing units. One year later, an additional 18 Housing Management Offices were established to manage the full portfolio of some 22,000 dwellings, located in over 35 sites across the country.

At CFHA Head Office, business systems were developed and implemented in order to establish for the first time a national management structure for CF residential housing and a more transparent relationship between housing expenses and revenues. In conjunction with efforts being made at CFHA, a new series of hearings on social and economic conditions in the CF, directed by the Standing Committee on National Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA), brought forward a range of issues affecting the quality of life in the military, including housing. The difficulties faced by military families in finding suitable, affordable housing both on and off base were made clear. The Committee recognized that housing must remain a high priority for the Department, and that solutions would have to be site-specific.

In its March 1999 response to SCNDVA recommendations, the Government supported supplementary funding to CFHA for health, safety, security and repairs. Government also reiterated its commitment to ensuring that in the future, CFHA would have appropriate authorities and funding to meet its mandate. At the same time, a dedicated accommodation policy capacity within the Quality of Life Project Management Office was established. This clarified the Agency's role as the operational arm of DND housing matters: CFHA's role was to provide expert advice to the Department on housing options, and to deliver housing solutions based on sound business principles and in accordance with departmental policy.

## **Preparing the groundwork**

In response to the evolving policy framework governing accommodation, CFHA turned its attention to defining standards for contemporary housing solutions. Consultants from five different regions conducted studies of the housing requirement in 37 different locales, providing baseline estimates of the number of units needed. In addition, four large urban markets were studied independently. There was a collaborative effort between CFHA Housing Managers, the Capital Development Division at CFHA Head Office, and B/W Comds. Additional departmental funding for health and safety initiatives led to an accelerated program of repairs and maintenance to existing housing.

In 2000-01 the Department started enforcing the Government's policy of providing Crown-owned housing only when the private market cannot meet the demand. Individual CF members were encouraged to take responsibility for their own housing arrangements. Under the pilot Integrated Relocation Program, members who were relocating could seek reimbursement for fees charged by rental-find firms at the new location or for the legal costs and disbursements associated with purchasing a home.

In order to restore equity between CF families living in Crown-owned housing and CF families living on the private market, rents for military residential units started being phased up to reflect market rents. The issue of housing affordability was addressed by the Director General Compensation and Benefits, who introduced the Post Living Differential allowance as a means to stabilize the cost of living for CF families posted to areas in Canada where the cost of living is higher than the weighted average for CF locations in Canada.

In light of this evolving policy framework, CFHA assessed the various housing markets in Canada where the CF were present. The Agency used this assessment to make plans for addressing the issue of surplus housing in some communities, and for updating the housing stock in others.

Work continued on defining the Agency's role within the Department with respect to the necessary programs, authorities and budget required to meet CF housing needs in future years. The DND Accommodation Board was created to provide advice to CFHA and other DND accommodation providers regarding operational activities, to establish and review the accommodation goals for CFHA, to represent the interests of the chain of command in accommodation matters, and finally, to recommend approval of accommodation policies, plans, programs and projects.

Considerable efforts were made to find new and better ways to work. There was a focus in every area to continuously improve overall customer service while reducing costs.

## **Phase II: Becoming an *agent of excellence***

CFHA reached a major turning point in 2004, when the Treasury Board of Canada approved its permanent special operating agency status within DND. The Treasury Board also lifted a moratorium on new construction that had been in place since the 1960s, enabling CFHA to better “rightsized” the portfolio according to site-specific needs—in other words, to have the right units in the right numbers and the right locations.

CFHA is now positioning itself to become the departmental *agent of excellence* in the provision of all residential rental accommodation and related support programs. The Accommodation Board expects that CFHA’s mandate will continue to expand, and that the Agency will become the primary implementation agent of the residential component outlined in Accommodation in support of the Canadian Forces: A Vision for 2020, a DND direction document. CFHA’s goal is to become a single-window accommodation service provider to all CF members, whether they live as singles or as part of a family, and whether they live on or off base. The Agency aims to provide effective and efficient service delivery that can be measured in both financial and non-financial ways. CFHA will focus on the continuous improvement of key processes and programs that will meet the needs of CF members and their families. The fundamental policy principles of suitability, availability and affordability will shape both the housing solutions offered to CF members and the expert advice provided to the Department on residential accommodation issues.

## **3. Critical issues**

In order to advance this Strategic Plan, we believe that we must address the following critical issues:

- The strategic direction for CFHA must be articulated well, and must benefit from the understanding and support of all stakeholders. We need a five-year plan that outlines concrete objectives and the annual priorities that will enable us to achieve these objectives. We need a business model that allows us to consider a range of options in meeting the housing needs of the CF, which can include partnerships with the private sector to find innovative ways to meet the housing needs of CF members.
- We must agree upon and develop a sustainable Life Cycle Asset Management Plan. This plan must integrate both maintenance and recapitalization of our assets, and provide a sustainable approach to contemporary housing for CF members.
- We must raise the level of acceptance and confidence of our clients, customers, stakeholders and partners with regard to our becoming the single-window service provider for meeting the residential housing needs of the CF. We need to preserve our positive relationship with key stakeholders, such as the Assistant Deputy Minister (Infrastructure and Environment) (ADM[IE]), the Assistant Deputy

Minister (Human Resources – Military) (ADM[HR-Mil]), the Assistant Deputy Minister (Finance and Corporate Services)(ADM[Fin CS]), the Assistant Deputy Minister (Human Resources – Civilian) (ADM[HR-Civ]) and B/W Comds. We need to work closely with Director General Realty Policy and Plans (DGRPP), the departmental functional authority on realty policy, standards or guidelines issues, and with partners, such as Defence Construction Canada, Public Works and Government Services Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and other central agencies. The efficient internal processes used to manage and enhance the national housing program must support the CFHA Business Plan and all interaction with stakeholders.

- We must establish for CFHA the capacity to become the organizational *agent of excellence*. We need to reinforce our policy capacity, strengthen our management skills, develop our people, implement results-based management, and commit to a continuous improvement plan that will bring about a holistic, beneficial change.

## 4. Our mandate: Why we exist

CFHA provides a single-window for rental residential accommodation services to CF members, whether or not they live in Crown-controlled housing. While we focus on individual members, we also provide a service to B/W Comds by helping them meet their responsibilities toward CF members. By providing housing services and managing the residential housing portfolio in line with the overall national program, CFHA forms a partnership with B/W Comds: we are dependent on each other for our success. We value this key partnership and recognize the importance of maintaining a dialogue with B/W Comds so we may understand and respond to their needs.

In specific terms, the mandate of CFHA is:

- To manage Crown-controlled residential accommodation to ensure available assets are maintained to a suitable standard; and
- To develop and implement plans to meet the future residential needs of the CF.

CFHA is accountable for:

- Operating and maintaining suitable housing;
- Determining future housing needs based on consultation with key Level 1 organizations, who must define their requirements;
- Developing contemporary housing solutions; and
- Implementing the DND housing accommodation policy.

The challenges related to our mandate are:

- To be more specific in our definition of “single-window service provider;”
- To develop a viable business model; and
- To develop a sustainable Life Cycle Asset Management Plan.



## 5. Our mission: What we do

The CFHA mission statement is as follows:

CFHA ensures that CF members and their families have access to rental residential accommodation suitable to their personal circumstances in a timely fashion and at any location where duty demands.

## 6. Our vision: Being an *agent of excellence*

Our vision is the picture of how we see ourselves in the future, and how we want others to see us. It is what we want to be within five years: an *agent of excellence*.

The CFHA vision statement is as follows:

All CF members recognize CFHA as the *agent of excellence* in meeting their housing needs.

## 7. Our values: The way we do business

The organizational culture and values of CFHA are embodied in the way its leaders and employees conduct themselves in their day-to-day business dealings with internal and external customers, stakeholders, partners and suppliers, and with each other.

Our values are as follows:

- **Teamwork:** Working effectively together to share responsibility, expertise and knowledge in a climate of mutual trust, goodwill and open-mindedness.
- **Open communication:** Enabling staff to interact in a way that promotes mutual understanding and trust.
- **Respect:** Treating others in a way that encourages feelings of being valued, trusted and supported.
- **Consultative management style.**
- **Empowered personnel:** Staff are empowered to work in innovative and creative ways focussed on meeting client and customer needs.
- **Shared responsibility:** Managers and employees share the responsibility for creating a healthy workplace where there is:
  - Values-based management;

- Balance between the demands of home, work and reflection;
- A work environment free of harassment;
- Equal opportunities for all employees to advance; and
- A culture in which people treat others as they would want to be treated themselves.

## **8. Balancing our improvement agenda with our ongoing agenda**

CFHA has minimal resources to deliver on the maintenance and service components of its mandate, and to develop a sustainable Life Cycle Asset Management Plan. With this Strategic Plan, we are concentrating on the improvements required to become an *agent of excellence*. It will be necessary for us to balance our ongoing workload and the additional workload required by our goals for improvement so as not to impose too great a burden on our personnel. We kept this in mind while identifying our strategic priorities.

## **9. Achieving the vision: Long-term objectives and short-term priorities**

Our five-year strategic objectives cover the areas in which we will devote special effort on our journey to become the *agent of excellence* in providing residential housing to CF members. Our short-term priorities are activities that will enable us to meet the long-term objectives. We will review our strategic plan on a regular basis to be ready and responsive to a changing environment and an evolving mandate. The strategic objectives outlined below focus on:

- a) our customers, clients, stakeholders and partners;
- b) key processes and outputs of the Life Cycle Asset Management Plan;
- c) our people; and
- d) our management practices.

### **Strategic Objective No. 1: To provide excellent services to customers, clients and stakeholders**

CFHA exists to serve the residential rental accommodation needs of CF members and their families. We need to understand their requirements fully and to provide easy access to the services they value. This is our primary strategic objective, and it drives the other three. We will conduct surveys to ensure that we properly define the current and future needs of the CF. We will provide easier access to users of our web-based services through a significantly enhanced website outside the DND firewall. We will ensure that the

occupants of our homes have a clear understanding of the basis for their rent calculation and that CFHA distributes timely communication about any new or existing housing services.

CFHA will identify the requirements of all stakeholders and partners in order to develop internal processes that will be responsive to their needs. As these processes are transferred to day-to-day operations, our employees will be provided with the necessary tools and training to become individual *agents of excellence*. Given that our services are provided mainly at the Base or Wing level, our Housing Managers and their personnel must be empowered to respond quickly and to do what needs to be done. The Leadership Team will be proactive in supporting front-line employees across the country. We want our people to know that each one of them is an integral part of the whole. What each person does, and how he or she represents CFHA, is key to meeting our organizational objectives.

### **Priorities for Strategic Objective No. 1**

- Nurture relationships with our customers, stakeholders, and partners.
- Seek feedback and conduct appropriate surveys to hear directly from our customers and understand their specific needs.
- Empower the Housing Management Offices through providing:
  - Clear guidelines on custodianship issues pertaining to on-base housing;
  - Effective and efficient operational systems, processes and service delivery;
  - A comprehensive electronic Manual of Instruction and Guidance with links to applicable departmental policies for clarity and consistency of service; and
  - Quality services that give CF members the choice of homes, if choice is available.
- Provide customer-focussed services based on service standards that strive to meet or exceed the expectations of CF members.
- Obtain approval for the development of an online CFHA “Homes for the CF” website that will put potential renters in touch with available homes to rent.
- Improve the transparency of the methodology used for calculating fair market rents and the occupants’ understanding of this method by providing Housing Managers with user-friendly information on rent-setting processes and results.

## **Strategic Objective No. 2: To be the *agent of excellence* in the provision of housing services**

Canadians, DND and CF members have high expectations for the quality of life of CF members, who place themselves at risk on behalf of Canada. A major aspect of this quality of life is to have contemporary, comfortable housing at a fair price. CFHA must ensure that CF members have access to residential rental accommodation, suitable to their personal circumstances, in a timely fashion and at any location where duty demands. Being an *agent of excellence* is not simply about improving the quality of service. In the final analysis, it is about contributing to the quality of life of CF members and their families. To achieve this we are focussing on understanding and being responsive to our policy context, and participation in policy development that affects developing a viable Life Cycle Asset Management Plan, leveraging our services into private sector solutions and, finally, developing a public affairs strategy and action plan to keep everyone fully informed.

### **Priorities for Strategic Objective No. 2**

- Engage in the development of policies affecting CFHA by drawing on our expertise in managing residential housing:
  - Establish policy oversight, coordination, and interpretation to more clearly define CFHA's overall policy position. Although the Department's primary policy advisor is ADM (HR Mil), the role of CFHA will become one of leading the Department through a change in vision about the provision of DND accommodations.
  - Influence government policy, being the largest housing manager in government.
  - Complete and implement a stakeholder consultation strategy.
  - Develop and assess internal operational processes and their ownership, with clear linkage to the applicable CFHA responsibility centre, and identify process deficiencies and any corrective action to be taken.
  - Ensure ADM(IE), the Minister of National Defence, and the Deputy Minister and Chief of the Defence Staff are kept informed and briefed on all such issues in a timely manner.
- Strengthen CFHA's integration within the Department through increased policy alignment and policy coordination with departmental functional authorities, such as realty asset management, environmental policy, administrative processes, and information, financial, and human resources management.
- Life Cycle Asset Management Plan (LCAMP):
  - Develop a viable 25-year recapitalization strategy for our housing portfolio, including a maintenance plan, which aligns with Departmental Master Realty Asset Development Plans. This overall strategy will be the result of a baseline

- assessment and will factor in strategic site plans, the determination of current and future housing requirements, expert design guidance for residential housing and priority technical standards.
- Develop an environmental management strategy, with environmental policy guidelines on such matters as asbestos, mould, lead-based paint, halocarbons and pest management.
  - Private sector housing options:
    - More clearly define the housing expectations and requirements of CF members and look for ways in which CFHA programs can explore the involvement of private industry, as set out in Vision 2020.
  - Develop and implement a full public affairs strategy to promote our strategic plan and any programs or services available to our customers, clients, stakeholders and partners.

### **Strategic Objective No. 3: To build a vibrant, competent organization in a healthy work environment**

Where the culture is defined by:

- An understanding that employee wellness and well-being is an integral part of being an agent of excellence;
- Being a workplace of choice;
- Empowerment and involvement of our people;
- A place in which to grow;
- Trust among people and management;
- Transparency and a factual approach to decision making; and
- Opportunities for creativity and innovation.

Our success in becoming an *agent of excellence* is totally dependent on our people and the involvement of our leadership. Our values are embodied in the way our leaders and employees conduct themselves. It is essential that managers be provided with the necessary tools and advice to ensure the effective recruitment, retention and well-being of employees at CFHA. As CFHA's mandate evolves, we must be prepared to meet any future program requirements by ensuring that we possess the capacity, skills and competencies necessary to adapt to a continuously changing environment. A holistic and healthy work environment will be fostered through the priorities set out below.

### **Priorities for Strategic Objective No. 3**

- Complete a workplace assessment and develop an action plan based on its results.
- Update the comprehensive Human Resource Strategy in the following ways:
  - Integrate the workplace assessment action plan, once completed;
  - Develop competency-based management tools to better support our managers;
  - Implement a recognition and awards program based on employee structure and functions; and
  - Provide human resource operations awareness training geared to all levels of employees and managers to help them gain a better understanding of all human resource processes.
- Develop a clear, accurate, accessible and timely internal communications plan using as many venues as possible:
  - Promote the use of the Employee Corner intranet site to keep people informed and further develop useful, informative web tools.
- Define requirements, and then develop and implement corporate functional training.

### **Strategic Objective No. 4: To ensure sound management practices and stewardship of resources**

Providing our clients and stakeholders with the best possible policy, programs and services will not happen without a commitment to management excellence and continuous improvement. We intend to systematically strengthen our focus on achieving excellence through the implementation of:

- a) results-based management, as represented by the Treasury Board Secretariat Management Accountability Framework, a key priority for the modern management agenda of the Government of Canada;
- b) a continuous improvement action plan, using a proven business excellence framework of principle-driven criteria that will be implemented in incremental and measurable steps;
- c) the reinforcement of internal and ADM(IE) oversight functions; and
- d) the development of a viable business model for CFHA.

### **Priorities for Strategic Objective No. 4**

- Implement results-based management:

- Demonstrate CFHA's commitment to excellence and its progress in meeting the objectives of each of the reporting elements of the Treasury Board's federal Management Accountability Framework. We will integrate them into a customized business excellence framework that translates our vision and strategic plan into a set of management expectations. This approach will have an organizational and an individual dimension that will guide us in determining expectations, planning and making commitments, taking action and reporting performance.
- Submit evidence to the Treasury Board of a working performance measurement system.
- Implement a continuous improvement action plan using the National Quality Institute Progressive Excellence Program (NQI PEP)<sup>®</sup> for Federal Public Servants<sup>1</sup>, an assessment and implementation tool, which will help to meet the outcome objectives of the Treasury Board Secretariat modern management frameworks, such as Modern Comptrollership, Toward Management Excellence, and Management Accountability Framework.
- Measure the effectiveness of our efforts in meeting the four strategic objectives.
- Strengthen our prevention-based management and oversight functions by:
  - Developing a framework for the integration and strengthening of oversight and performance measurement activities across all CFHA internal processes, with ADM(IE) oversight;
  - Keeping ADM(IE) informed more proactively on a range of issues; and
  - Coordinating audit and evaluation activities with DND Chief of Review Services and with the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.
- Audited CFHA financial statements:
  - Review current accounting and financial policies and procedures in preparation for a possible audit by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.
- Viability of the business model:

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<sup>1</sup> The structure of the NQI PEP<sup>®</sup> is based on internationally renowned business excellence frameworks developed for public and private sector organizations. The four levels of the NQI PEP<sup>®</sup> are progressive in scope, and designed to ensure that departments and agencies are able to implement and sustain a continuous improvement focus and quality culture in a manageable and practical manner. DND holds a corporate NQI membership through the Director General Strategic Change.

- Review the CFHA business model, including financing, to develop a long-term plan for operations, thus ensuring its continuing viability. This assessment will include a review of the present housing portfolio recapitalization plan, the Life Cycle Asset Maintenance Plan and routine maintenance plan, as well as consideration of financing options.

## 10. Implementing the strategic direction: Our action plan

To clearly set out the way ahead for CFHA in our commitment to better serve our customers, our Business Plan will be revised to align with the strategic objectives and priorities outlined in this Strategic Plan. Managers will formalize their Business Plan commitments in their personal performance management agreements. A cooperative, team-based approach will be used to define and implement corporate priorities across the Agency's various divisions. Our Strategic Plan and the subsequent results of its implementation, showing how well we are performing and whether or not we are meeting our objectives, will be communicated to all CFHA staff, customers and stakeholders and to the Minister of National Defence, the Deputy Minister and the Chief of the Defence Staff, ADM(HR-Mil) and ADM(IE).

Evidence of our success in meeting the long-term objectives of this Strategic Plan will be reflected in the achievement of Level 3 Certification for both quality and workplace excellence, as set out in the National Quality Institute's Progressive Excellence Program for the Federal Public Service outlined in the priorities established to achieve the fourth strategic objective. Demonstrating that we have met the key requirements of each of the framework drivers listed below will show that we have wide implementation of a strategic focus on excellence with positive results in key areas. The drivers guiding our operational and strategic focus will include the following categories:

- Leadership
- Planning
- Customer/Citizen/Client focus
- People focus
- Process Management
- Supplier/Partner focus

We will move steadily forward and work on both our sustaining and change agendas by taking incremental, manageable steps. By 2009, we will have completed our five-year plan and attained our vision to be an *agent of excellence* in providing residential rental accommodation and services for DND and CF members. By 2010, with a track record of demonstrated achievements, we want to show that we are world class in providing residential housing to our military.



**Our strategic approach will not be program driven; it will be “the way we are.” We trust that we can build with all our stakeholders an environment of mutual support that will focus on the needs and expectations of CF members and their families.**