

Framework for Action 2008-2011



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Appendix A – Framework for Action Status Report

Minister's Message

Housing is a fundamental part of the Government of the Northwest Territories' efforts to reduce the cost of living, to create sustainable and vibrant communities, and to secure our future. The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation has devoted the past 34 years to ensuring that residents of the Northwest Territories have access to adequate, suitable and affordable housing. While much has been accomplished in this respect, much remains to be done if we are to maximize the opportunities that lay before us.

In traveling throughout our territory, two fundamental facts are clear. Given the role that housing plays in improving health and education and reducing social problems, and the challenges faced in delivering housing in northern communities, there is wide recognition that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation plays a pivotal role in the development of our communities. Through the delivery of homeownership and repair programs, the Corporation's partnership with ECE in delivering subsidized rental housing, and the economic benefits that housing activity has created, it is safe to say that the majority of households in the Northwest Territories have benefited from the work of the NWT HC.

Secondly, it is also clear that the NWT HC will play an important role in the future of our territory. While housing conditions have improved greatly in recent years, the NWT continues to face housing challenges not faced by many of its neighbours in Southern Canada. Our efforts to catch up with other provinces and territories have been hampered by the rising costs of material and labour, coupled with continuing reductions in social housing funding being provided by the Government of Canada.

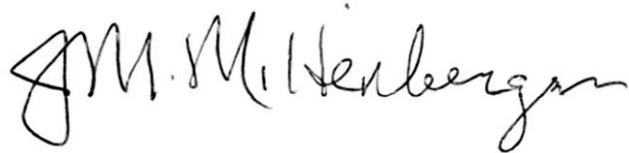
The delivery of housing is also greatly impacted by the unique climate and geography of our territory, which poses significant challenges. The harshness of our winter requires that special attention be paid to the quality of the building envelope and heating systems, while our geographic and transportation challenges make it extremely difficult to construct affordable housing in many communities. The continuing changes to our climate have furthered the need to maximize the energy efficiency of our units while paying attention to the environmental impact of our operations.

Now more than ever, housing solutions in the NWT must be developed at the community level. In recent years, local tailor-made projects such as Bailey House in Yellowknife and Whispering Willows in Hay River have exemplified the contribution that communities can make in providing their own housing solutions. As we implement many of the activities outlined in this Framework for Action, the NWT HC will rely heavily on the support and participation of its regional staff, Local Housing Organizations, NGOs, and members of the general public in order to ensure success.

This Framework for Action has been developed to:

- renew and refocus the time and money spent on these initiatives;
- inform and engage members of the public, and partners in all levels of government, to become better informed of these initiatives in order to assist them in their involvement, and;
- build on the NWT HC's mandate to ensure that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing in all communities.

The Framework for Action is the roadmap that will chart our progress over the next four years in meeting the housing goals of the NWT HC, and contribute to securing the future of the NWT. The involvement and support of all residents of the NWT is critical to ensure that the NWT HC is meeting its responsibilities and that all residents have a clear understanding of how affordable housing contributes to building a strong and independent North. I encourage all residents of the NWT to read this document and to continue to work with officials at the NWT HC to improve housing conditions help to build sustainable and vibrant communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J. Michael Miltenberger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J" and "M".

J. Michael Miltenberger
Minister Responsible for the NWT HC

Introduction

The Northwest Territories is in the midst of significant changes to its economy. Current and planned activity in the diamond and natural gas industries has resulted in an economy that led Canada in growth between 1999 and 2006. The potential development of the Mackenzie Gas Project, along with further activity in the mining sector, places the NWT on the brink of tremendous economic opportunities.

While these developments have been positive for the NWT's economy, this activity has brought with it numerous challenges related to social conditions. Nowhere are these challenges more evident than in the provision of affordable shelter for residents. In ***A Northern Vision: A Stronger North and a Better Canada***, the three Territorial Premiers recognized northern housing as a key contributor to building sustainable communities and strengthening Canada's sovereignty.

Despite the strength of the economy, the Northwest Territories continues to face housing challenges greater than those faced in most of Canada. Recent data released by Statistics Canada demonstrates that the percentage of households that are either overcrowded or in need of major repairs is more than double that of the rest of Canada.

The challenge of improving these conditions is compounded by the lack of long-term Federal funding for new social housing, the continuing decline in funding to operate and maintain existing social housing, and a labour shortage that has seriously impacted the availability of workers to complete housing construction and repair projects.

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation (NWTHC) is mandated to "*ensure, where appropriate and necessary, that there is a sufficient supply of affordable, adequate and suitable housing stock to meet the housing needs of Northwest Territories residents.*" Within the context of this mandate, the NWTHC serves the interests of the NWT through programs, construction and repair activities. It also provides property project management services for its partners in the public and not-for-profit sectors.

The NWTHC's "Framework for Action 2008-2011" identifies the strategic actions required over the next three years to deliver on its mandate and to address the housing expectations of the GNWT and all residents.

Why an Action Plan?

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation is committed to strengthening its management practices. In recent months, two key processes have been initiated to better manage the Corporation and ensure that programs and services are delivered within a sound public policy framework. The NWT HC is in the midst of a major renewal of its programs, policies and procedures. As well, the NWT HC has embarked on a strategic planning process designed to focus the Corporation's efforts on setting goals and objectives, and devising actions and deliverables through which they can be achieved. Framework for Action 2008-2011 is the first product resulting from these efforts.

In March of 2006, an inter-departmental committee to review the mandate of the NWT Housing Corporation was established to review the draft mandate that was prepared by the NWT HC and receive further input from key stakeholders. The committee conducted a territory-wide consultation and also utilized written and on-line responses.

The comments received about the NWT HC and the mandate document reflected that people were generally supportive of the direction of the NWT HC but there were some key priorities and issues that needed to be reflected in the mandate. While the new mandate captures the general feeling of stakeholders on the direction the NWT HC should take, other comments and issues require attention by the NWT HC in considering programs and policies and how housing is delivered in NWT communities

Members of the 16th Legislative Assembly have developed a strategic plan that focuses on strong individuals, families and communities sharing the benefits and responsibilities of a unified, environmentally sustainable and prosperous Northwest Territories. In "*Northerners Working Together*", the GNWT outlined its vision and goals for the next 4 years and set broad direction for its operations through clearly defined priorities and specific actions.

The 16th Legislative Assembly has identified the following priority actions:

- A strong and independent north built on partnerships
- An environment that will sustain present and future generations
- Healthy, educated people
- A diversified economy that provides all communities and regions with opportunities and choices
- Sustainable, vibrant, safe communities
- Effective and efficient government

The GNWT's strategic plan sets Government-wide priorities for action. Currently, the NWT HC is engaged in a number of initiatives and programs that contribute to its mandate. In order to effectively meet its mandate and the goals and actions set out in the 16th Assembly's Strategic Plan, this Framework for Action outlines broad Corporate initiatives and activities and identifies actions that meet both the broad vision and goals of the 16th Assembly, as well as the input received during the consultations on the NWT HC Mandate held in the Spring of 2006.

There are a number of challenges facing the NWT HC in the delivery of affordable housing for NWT residents, including:

- Increasing cost to purchase or construct houses;
- Increasing cost of operation and maintenance cost;
- Climate change;
- Homelessness;
- Rapid changes in technology and innovation around the globe;
- Increasing shortage of federal funding;
- Health concerns arising out of unsuitable accommodation/overcrowding;
- The need to treat residents fairly and equitably;
- Shortage of readily available developed land;
- The evolution of governance resulting from land claims and self-government agreements;
- The need to work in partnership with various community groups;
- Shortage of trained and qualified persons with experience in the housing industry.

Auditor General of Canada's Performance Audit

In 2008, The Auditor General of Canada released the results of a performance audit of the NWT HC in 2006-2008. The Performance Audit highlighted three general areas of concern:

- *The Corporation does not monitor the activities of LHOs sufficiently to determine whether they follow its policies and procedures when evaluating applicants for public housing and allocating rental units. Our review of a sample of applications showed that 21 out of 74 applicants had not been assessed properly. Nor does the Corporation adequately monitor the inspection of rental units and the rating of their condition by LHOs. In addition, the Corporation needs to work with those LHOs that are having difficulty collecting rent from their tenants, or that have accumulated deficits, and help them resolve their difficulties.*
- *The Corporation does not evaluate its homeownership programs on a regular basis to ensure that they are achieving their stated objectives in a cost-effective manner. The Corporation has also had difficulty collecting mortgage payments—*

in January 2007 it reported that 81 percent of its mortgages were in arrears. The Corporation also does not carry out regular monitoring of its district offices to determine whether they allocate homeownership assistance in accordance with its policies and procedures.

- *The Corporation does not have a strategic plan in place that clearly describes how it plans to meet the housing needs of all NWT residents over the long term. Further, the Corporation needs to ensure that it identifies and mitigates all significant risks it faces. Improvements can also be made in the Corporation's measurement of performance and reporting on results to provide a more comprehensive and balanced assessment of its performance. It also needs to report regularly on progress toward its target for reducing the number of NWT households in core need of housing assistance.*

Framework for Action 2008-2011 has been designed to reflect specifically on how the NWT HC will move forward in response to the Performance Audit. Actions, deliverables, and timelines included in the report are set out in a manner that places a higher priority on those actions that will directly target the issues highlighted in the Audit.

Specific action items that respond to the Auditor General's finding include:

- 1.3 Arrears Strategy**
- 1.4 Policy Renewal and Program Delivery**
- 2.1 NWT HC Maintenance Strategy**
- 2.2 Public Housing Replacement and Repair**
- 4.4 NWT HC Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan**
- 5.5 Appeals Process**

Guiding Principles

The actions outlined in the Framework for Action are guided by the following principles. The Framework is intended to be a living document. In consideration of this, it is clear that the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation must continue to consult with clients, stakeholders, and all residents to ensure that our guiding principles are adjusted to meet changing needs.

- ***All residents of the Northwest Territories should have access to housing that they can afford, that is of suitable quality, and that is adequate to meet their individual shelter needs.***
- ***Housing should be a key component in the development of safe, healthy and sustainable Northern communities.***
- ***Programs and services delivered by the NWT HC should provide easy access for clients and promote greater personal responsibility for housing through community based training and support.***
- ***Public funds designated for housing should be used in a manner that ensures the security of investments made, maximizes available resources, and balances affordability with the utilization of local labour and materials.***
- ***Housing should be constructed in a manner which meets all national and territorial construction standards, maximizes energy efficiency, minimizes environmental impact, and contributes to lowering the cost of living.***
- ***The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation should clearly communicate with stakeholders, and ensure that the input and views of stakeholders are heard and are acted upon.***

Plans for Action

The provision of housing in the Northwest Territories is a shared responsibility. The NWT HC engages in activities with the hope that one day every resident of the Northwest Territories will contribute to their shelter to the greatest extent possible. While it is not realistic to envision a time when every resident is a homeowner, the activities of the NWT HC are designed to ensure support is available throughout all stages of the housing continuum. Together with partners at the Federal, Territorial, and local government level, communities, the not-for-profit and private sector, and individual residents, the NWT HC is striving to maximize the availability of appropriate housing for all residents – recognizing factors such as age, sex, community income, social status, and special needs.

“Framework for Action 2008-2011” is intended to reflect how the NWT HC will move forward to fulfill its mandate. It includes actions, deliverables, and timelines for completion. The eight Plans for Action are designed based on the Corporate responsibilities contained in the *Northwest Territories Housing Corporation Act*, the broad principles outlined above, and the actions recommended through the Mandate consultation. This Framework for Action is ultimately guided by the Vision and Goals of the 16th Legislative Assembly, and as such it is a living document that will continue to change to meet the needs of residents of the NWT.

1.0 Providing Access to Affordable, Adequate and Suitable Housing

The provision of affordable housing in communities is the focus of the NWTHC's mandate. Over its 34 year history, the Corporation has been the primary provider of shelter in many communities in the NWT. The Corporation's contribution is evident in the rapid and significant improvement in housing conditions that coincided with the creation of the NWTHC in the 1970s, and continues to this day through projects such as the Affordable Housing Initiative. The AHI, funded equally by the Government of Canada through the Northern Housing Trust and an equal contribution from the GNWT, will make available approximately 500 affordable homes in communities across the NWT by 2009.

The challenges associated with providing further affordable housing are clear. Northern Housing Trust funds are scheduled to sunset on April 1, 2009, along with other Federal funds for new construction, renovation assistance and homelessness projects. The Government of Canada has not yet committed to provide additional funding for affordable housing beyond this date. The NWTHC's ability to complete any significant construction activity without Federal support is limited. Canada, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), has been an essential partner in ensuring that the housing needs of Northerners are met. It is anticipated that this partnership will continue to be critical as the Corporation strives to meet housing needs and continues to support the development and evolution of NWT communities.

While the NWT continues to improve its processes and means to assist residents, it is clear that the GNWT and the NWTHC cannot do it on their own. The Corporation must pursue every opportunity to find funding, including leveraging funds through community partnerships and by increasing its efforts to collect mortgage and rental arrears.

The lack of available funding is further compounded by the escalating cost of construction across the NWT. A strong economy in provinces such as Alberta has both attracted much of the skilled labour across the country, and created increases in the cost of materials and shipping. Additionally, construction and mineral development activity in the NWT's major regional centres has put a strain on the availability of contractors and materials. This problem is greater in small communities where limited capacity and extremely high costs of land and shipping of materials has made it extremely difficult to construct housing in an affordable manner.

Actions to be Undertaken

1.1 Funding for New Affordable Housing

- 1.1.1 Complete the three year scheduled delivery of AHI Allocation.
- 1.1.2 Complete an evaluation of the AHI following delivery, and complete progress reports on construction, repair and renovation activities on a yearly basis.
- 1.1.3 Develop a 10 year needs assessment and formal funding request paper for submission to the Government of Canada.
- 1.1.4 Convene regular meetings of CMHC and officials from the NWT, Nunavut, and Yukon Housing Corporations.
- 1.1.5 Promote Northern Housing Issues at meetings of P/T and F/P/T Housing Forum.
- 1.1.6 Develop partnerships with the private and not-for-profit sector to leverage funding for specific projects.

1.2 Improved Capital Planning

- 1.2.1 Improve the integration of capital planning processes within the NWT HC.
- 1.2.2 Enhance coordination of capital projects with key contracting departments (PWS, DOT, MACA).
- 1.2.3 Develop new needs assessment criteria for housing delivery.
- 1.2.4 Improve monitoring of LHO inspections and condition ratings.
- 1.2.5 Undertake Housing Needs Assessment through the NWT Community Survey.

1.3 Arrears Strategy

- 1.3.1 Ensure that clients address their arrears and are offered options for repayment.
- 1.3.2 Selection of options by all clients in arrears.
- 1.3.3 Provide quarterly reports on arrears collection progress.
- 1.3.4. Bring mortgage and rent collection rates up to the 90%+ threshold by 2011.
- 1.3.5 Re-investment of funds collected into housing programs.

1.4 Policy Renewal and Program Delivery

- 1.4.1 Undertake an evaluation of the *Housing Choices* Program.
- 1.4.2 Expand delivery of educational modules delivered under STEP.
- 1.4.3 Implement a communications campaign to inform residents of NWT HC program offerings.
- 1.4.4 Through the work of the NWT HC's Policy Review Committee, renew and adjust all Housing Corporation policies and procedures to ensure they reflect the Corporation's strategic direction.

2.0 Ensuring the Long-Term Sustainability of the Existing Stock

The Federal government's decision to phase out capital, operating and maintenance funding for public housing in the early 1990s required the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to refocus its limited resources on the delivery of capital projects. One area that was neglected as a result of this refocusing was the maintenance of public housing assets.

The current condition of the public housing stock is a major concern for the Corporation. At the national level, the long term sustainability of public housing is one of the primary issues being discussed by provinces and territories. In the NWT, as with the rest of Canada, it is crucial that existing units be maintained, and that new units are designed and constructed in a manner that ensures their longevity.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) provides an ongoing subsidy to pay a portion of the operating and amortization costs of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT's) public housing portfolio. The current terms of the subsidy agreements provide that federal funding needed to help operate the units expires once the individual mortgages are paid. Over the years 2003/04 to 2037/38, the GNWT/NWTHC will face a total shortfall in O&M funding of over \$340 million.

In response to the concerns expressed by residents and community leaders during consultations on the NWTHC's mandate, the Corporation will enhance its efforts to maintain existing housing units. Although public housing is considered to be a program of last resort, those residing in public housing still have a right to modest accommodations that are safe and well-maintained. Applicants for NWTHC homeownership and repair programs are now required to take courses designed to provide them with a basic level of understanding in home maintenance to prepare them for the requirements of homeownership.

Actions to Be Undertaken

2.1 NWTHC Maintenance Strategy

- 2.1.1 Increase and improve the maintenance performed on the public housing stock.
- 2.1.2 Provide quarterly updates on maintenance completed on the public housing stock on a community-by-community basis.

2.2 Public Housing Replacement and Repair

- 2.2.1 Complete an inventory of dwellings that are currently decommissioned or in poor condition.
- 2.2.2 Replace, repair or dispose of public housing identified as decommissioned or in poor condition.
- 2.2.3 Provide quarterly updates on the progress of the replacement and repair of public housing.

2.2.4 Replace any single detached units that are identified for replacement with energy-efficient multi-unit dwellings.

2.3 Home Maintenance Education and Counseling

2.3.1 Expand delivery of home maintenance education and counseling to offer courses to future clients and interested members of the general public.

3.0 Improving Energy Efficiency and Reducing Environmental Impacts

Energy efficiency will be a key component of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's business over the coming years. Electricity and heating fuel must be used more efficiently in public housing in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce utility costs.

The NWT HC supports the efficient use of utilities to reduce operating costs and impacts on the environment. Most of the Corporation's efforts towards the reduction of utility consumption have been in support of reducing costs and the mitigation of environmental impacts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition, new design technology in the areas of building envelopes and heating systems provide an important opportunity to the NWT HC to improve the energy consumption of homes, as well as making shelter more affordable through the reduction of energy costs.

Actions to be Undertaken

3.1 Climate Change Mitigation through Adaptation

- 3.1.1 Develop a strategy outlining means by which the NWT HC can modify building designs and utilize new technologies to mitigate the affects of climate change on new and existing housing.

3.2 Energy Consumption in Public Housing

- 3.2.1 Complete repairs and modifications identified during Phase I of the NWT HC's Public Housing Energy Consumption Survey.
- 3.2.2 Implement Phase II of the Public Housing Energy Consumption Survey.
- 3.2.3 Following completion of Phase II, complete energy related improvements to dwelling identified.

3.3 Testing New Technologies

- 3.3.1 Identify new housing technologies and building designs being used locally, nationally, and internationally.
- 3.3.2 Complete pilot testing of technologies identified through the RFP.
- 3.3.3 Construct and test model homes using new building designs in at least three communities, including one in the High Arctic.

3.4 NWT HC Energy Consumption Strategy

- 3.4.1 Complete a review of the current energy consumption of the NWT HC, identifying areas for improvement.
- 3.4.2 Implement new policies designed to lower the NWT HC's environmental impact and respond to issues identified in the review.

3.5 Fuel Tank Replacement Strategy

- 3.5.1 Implement plan to replace fuel tanks on public housing units that have been in use for more than 20 years.
- 3.5.2 In partnership with ENR, create a strategy to improve awareness and provide incentives for homeowners to replace fuel tanks more than 20 years old.

4.0 Securing and Protecting Our Investments

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation encourages homeownership as the best option to allow residents to become more self-reliant in the provision of housing. To ensure that residents receiving homeownership assistance from the NWT HC receive the full benefits of homeownership, the NWT HC places a strong emphasis on land tenure.

From a Corporate management perspective, secure land tenure is important in ensuring that the Corporation remains financially sound, able to administer and retain control over its housing portfolio, and able to enforce tenancy and homeownership agreements.

The NWT HC has determined that it will only deliver housing assistance on land that is properly tenured as fee simple title or leasehold. This decision requires the NWT HC to work in consultation with MACA, aboriginal and community governments to acquire properly tenured building lots. The need for new housing in all communities is clear. In order for the NWT HC to successfully deliver this much needed housing, the requirement for, and benefits of, land tenure must be understood and supported by everybody involved in the provision of affordable housing.

Actions to be Undertaken

4.1 NWT HC-MACA Affordable Housing Strategy

- 4.1.1 In partnership with MACA, acquire a land inventory in all communities for current and future delivery of affordable housing.

4.2 Land Inventory Database

- 4.2.1 Develop, in conjunction with the capital planning process, projected land requirements for future housing delivery.
- 4.2.2 Create and administer a database of existing and required land.

4.3 Land Partnerships – Federal/Territorial/Aboriginal/Community Governments

- 4.3.1 In partnership with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, negotiate with Federal and Aboriginal Governments to ensure that appropriate tenure instruments are in place for Indian Affairs Branch lands.
- 4.3.2 Consult with Aboriginal governments, bands, organizations, and DAAIR to identify and select lands for future affordable housing development.

4.4 NWTHC Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

4.4.1 Develop an emergency preparedness and response plan for the NWTHC's Headquarters, District Offices, and Local Housing Organizations.

5.0 Contributing to Safe, Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Given the role that housing plays in improving health, education and preventing social problems, and the challenges faced in delivering housing in northern communities, the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation's programs remain important pieces of the GNWT's efforts to improve quality of life in our territory. Over its history, the NWT HC has responded to the distinct needs of individuals, regions, and special interests by creating programs targeted at specific needs. As the Corporation goes forward into a new era of housing delivery, we must ensure that our programs continue to meet these needs in a manner that is flexible and easily accessible for residents.

As the Northwest Territories continues to evolve, the Corporation remains committed to helping residents achieve lifestyles of independence, dignity, health and security. For these reasons, housing is recognized as an essential element of community and territorial infrastructure. Together we will build a strong housing future for our neighbours, our families and our communities that will benefit generations to come. From a national perspective, the 2007 Throne Speech recognized that *in order to take advantage of the North's vast opportunities, northerners must be able to meet their basic needs*. In order to achieve this, the Government of Canada has committed to continue to improve living conditions in the North for First Nations and Inuit through better housing.

Many of the actions listed in previous sections are designed specifically to contribute to healthy, safe and sustainable communities. Construction of new affordable housing, improved repair and maintenance programs, and efforts to build capacity all contribute to reducing the cost of living and increase the sustainability of communities. The NWT HC will also undertake actions designed specifically to positively impact the health and safety of residents through improvements to their living environment.

Actions to be Undertaken

5.1 Awareness Campaign – Mould in Housing

5.1.2 Develop and deliver a public awareness campaign on mould prevention and remediation.

5.2 Neighbourhood Improvement Strategy

5.2.1 Consult with communities, Local Housing Organizations, NGOs, and the public on improvements to public housing dwellings and surrounding neighbourhoods.

5.2.2 Following consultations, implement strategies to improve and beautify neighbourhoods that have a high percentage of public housing.

- 5.2.3 Encourage tenants of public housing to participate in the maintenance of to their dwellings.

5.3 Protection of Tenant Rights

- 5.3.1 Partner with the Departments of Justice and ECE, to reduce criminal and illegal activity in public housing dwellings.
- 5.3.2 Collaborate with the Department of Justice to improve public housing lease documents to ensure fairness, equity and the protection of tenant rights.

5.4 Community Driven Solutions

- 5.4.1 Provide a greater opportunity for LHO Managers, Board Chairpersons, and Regional Directors to contribute to setting the strategic direction of the NWT HC.
- 5.4.2 Improve the service provided to communities that do not currently have Local Housing Organizations.
- 5.4.3 In partnership with MACA, pursue land assembly options in communities with limited capacity to provide and develop land for affordable housing.

5.5 Appeals Process

- 5.5.1 Complete an review of appeals processes being used by other housing and social services deliverers across Canada.
- 5.5.2 Return to the Legislative Assembly with options for an appeals process for public housing and homeownership applicants.
- 5.5.3 Complete public consultations on a draft appeals process.
- 5.5.4 Introduction and implementation of new appeal board for housing programs.

6.0 Providing Training Opportunities in Housing

Current economic activity in the Northwest Territories has resulted in a serious shortage of qualified trades people. This has impacted on the ability of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation to hire contractors to construct homes under the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI), and has limited the ability of homeowners and the NWT HC to access qualified people to repair their homes in some communities. At the LHO level, the shortage of skilled labour to complete housing maintenance activities will have a serious impact on the long term sustainability of the public housing stock.

The NWT HC is committed to providing education and training to interested youth and adults to encourage them to enter housing-related trades. As an additional benefit, many of the training programs utilized have also allowed for the completion of modest homes and needed repairs and maintenance for NWT HC clients.

Actions to be Undertaken

6.1 Trades Training – Secondary

- 6.1.1 Work with ECE on the development of a formal curriculum for housing trades training at the intermediate/secondary level.
- 6.1.2 Deliver the housing trades curriculum in high schools in at least 6 communities.

6.2 Trades Training – Post Secondary and Adult Learning

- 6.2.1 Partner with Aurora College to further enhance housing-related training courses.
- 6.2.2 Conduct a review of housing training offered through the School of Community Government, and develop options for future delivery.

6.3 Apprentices

- 6.3.1 Hire a minimum of 12 apprentices at Local Housing Organizations.

6.4 NWT HC Employee Training

- 6.4.1 Develop and deliver a Workshop Training Series for all NWT HC Regional Staff.
- 6.4.2 Collaborate with CMHC and other partners to develop and deliver technical training for NWT HC and LHO staff.

7.0 Fostering Partnerships

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation considers partnerships with Federal and Territorial Government Departments, communities, and non-governmental organizations to be an important component of its activities. The NWTHC's partnership with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has not only resulted in the construction of thousands of affordable housing units over the past 34 years, but it has also provided the NWTHC and, in turn, residents of the NWT, with access to the wealth of knowledge and expertise in housing construction and maintenance held by CMHC.

Working in collaboration with other departments will be a key element of the Corporation's business activities during the life of this Action Plan. Housing is an area that can have an impact on the activities of many other departments and agencies. Those departments and agencies can in turn play an important role in the delivery of housing to residents through collaborative efforts with the Corporation.

The NWTHC also relies on its community partners to ensure that programs and services are being delivered in a manner that reflects community needs and interests. As the NWTHC's primary partners at the community level, Local Housing Organizations are the link between the Corporation, the communities and residents. Through the dedication and commitment of our LHOs we are able to remain responsive to the communities and residents we serve.

In addition, the NWTHC regularly partners with non-governmental organizations in an effort to better serve the client groups they advocate for. The results of such partnerships include agreements to share information, regular input from NGOs on NWTHC policy and procedures, as well as construction projects that provide facilities specifically targeted to special needs.

Actions to be Undertaken

7.1 CMHC/NWTHC Communications Strategy

- 7.1.1 In partnership with CMHC, develop a communications strategy for collaborative communication of programs, services and education materials available through both organizations.

7.2 Public Housing/Income Support Implementation

- 7.2.1 Consult with communities, LHOs, and NWTHC and ECE regional staff to determine specific issues associated with public housing administration in each community.
- 7.2.2 Based on consultations, make adjustments to the administrative program on a community-specific basis, with solutions tailor-made to each community.

7.3 Working with LHOs

7.3.1 Convene regular meetings of all LHO Managers and Board Chairs with the Minister Responsible for the NWT HC.

7.4 Working with NGOs and Private Sector

7.4.1 Regularly consult with NGOs on the NWT HC's programs and services.

7.4.2 Develop options for partnering with NGOs and the private sector for future community-driven projects.

8.0 Communicating With Those We Serve

The Northwest Territories Housing Corporation recognizes that providing information to the public in a timely, accurate and consistent manner is fundamental to its operations. Communications in the Northwest Territories present additional challenges from the limited availability of certain media in many communities, and the 11 official languages used in the territory. In general, communications will be managed in an orderly and planned fashion, in order to:

- ensure the public is informed about Corporation policies, activities, initiatives, programs and services;
- take into account public concerns and views in establishing priorities,
- developing policies and implementing programs;
- ensure that the Corporation is visible, accessible and responsive to the clients that it serves; and
- provides opportunities for Corporation clients to not only receive information, but to provide input and feedback.

It is critical that all employees understand, and are guided by, the principles, goals and objectives of the NWT HC. Therefore, the NWT HC will work to improve its internal communications in an effort to improve client service and contribute to a positive working environment at the Headquarters and District Levels. The Corporation will also ensure easy access for all residents to the Framework for Action and other key Corporation documents.

Actions to be Undertaken

8.1 NWT HC External Communications Strategy

- 8.1.1 Improve the NWT HC's External Website to better serve clients.
- 8.1.2 Raise awareness of the NWT HC's programs and services through an enhanced print media campaign.
- 8.1.3 Place Information Kiosks on the NWT HC's programs and services in all LHOs and District Offices.

8.2 NWT HC Internal Communications Strategy

- 8.2.1 Make improvements to the NWT HC Internal Website to improve employee awareness of the NWT HC's strategic activities.

Next Steps

This Framework for Action maps out actions for the NWTHC. Appendix A provides a summary of actions, timelines and accountabilities identified throughout the framework.

The purpose of this Framework is two-fold. First and foremost, it provides NWTHC residents with a better awareness of the undertakings of the NWTHC during the period of this Framework. Regular updates will be available to the public online. Printed updates may be made available at intervals within the 4 years.

The Framework will also provide the basis for further strategic and business planning activities. Though many of the actions identified within this Framework are underway, the Corporation will continue to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are available to complete them. With the support of Members of the Legislative Assembly, regional offices, Local Housing Organizations, and the general public, this Framework for Action will create a strategic approach to taking the many steps required to improve housing conditions throughout the NWT.

1.0 Providing Access to Affordable, Adequate and Suitable Housing

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
1.1 Funding for New Affordable Housing	1.1.1 Complete the three year scheduled delivery of AHI Allocation	Approximately 500 affordable dwellings will be made available in communities by the end of the AHI.	2009	
	1.1.2 Complete an evaluation of the AHI following delivery Complete an evaluation of the AHI following delivery, and complete progress reports on construction, repair and renovation activities on a yearly basis.	The first evaluation report detailing how Northern Housing Trust and matching funds were utilized under the AHI will be developed and made available to the Legislative Assembly in 2010.	2010	
	1.1.3 Develop an 10 year needs assessment paper for submission to the Government of Canada	The NWT HC will develop a 10 year needs assessment and funding proposal to be submitted to the Government of Canada during the last year of Northern Housing Trust Funding	January 2009	
	1.1.4 Convene regular meetings of CMHC and officials from the NWT, Nunavut, and Yukon Housing Corporations	Tri-Territorial/CMHC meetings are regularly scheduled.	Ongoing	

	1.1.5 Promote Northern Housing Issues at meetings of P/T and F/P/T Housing Forum.	Regular status updates on intergovernmental activities will be provided.		
	1.1.6 Develop partnerships with the private and not-for-profit sector to leverage funding for specific projects.	The NWTHC will formally request proposals for partnership opportunities with NGOs, communities, and the private sector through a public Request for Proposals	Ongoing	
1.2 Improved Capital Planning	1.2.1 Improve the integration of capital planning processes within the NWTHC.	The NWTHC will conduct several integrated planning processes during fiscal year 2008-09. These will include the Framework for Action, a traditional Strategic Plan, GNWT Business Plan, and a Capital Needs Assessment.	November 2008	
	1.2.2 Enhance coordination of capital projects with key contracting departments (PWS, DOT, MACA).	Key contracting departments have agreed to work more closely in order to coordinate their capital projects.	Ongoing	

	1.2.3 Develop new needs assessment criteria for housing delivery.	The NWT HC will continue to develop new assessment criteria for housing delivery prior to collection and release of housing needs data through the 2009 NWT Community Survey	2009	
	1.2.4 Improve monitoring of LHO inspections and condition ratings.	Regular updating and reporting of public housing condition ratings inventory.	March 2009	
	1.2.5 Undertake Housing Needs Assessment Through the NWT Community Survey (Bureau of Statistics, Winter 2009)	The Bureau of Statistics will release reports on Community Housing Needs using data collected in the 2009 NWT Community Survey	January 2010	
1.3 Arrears Strategy	1.3.1 Ensure that clients address their arrears and are offered options for repayment.	Meet with every client currently in rental or mortgage arrears to verify income and discuss and select a repayment option	December 2008	
	1.3.2 Selection of options by all clients in arrears.	New repayment agreements signed with every client with arrears.	April 2009	

	1.3.3 Provide quarterly reports on arrears collection progress.	Quarterly reports will be made available to the Minister. General information on arrears statistics will be made available publicly.	Quarterly	
	1.3.4. Bring mortgage collection rates up to the 90%+ threshold by 2011.	The NWT HC will report annual mortgage collection rates to the Legislative Assembly through the Main Estimates process.	Yearly beginning in 2009	
	1.3.5 Re-investment of funds collected into housing programs.		Ongoing	
1.4 Policy Renewal and Program Delivery	1.4.1 Undertake an evaluation of the <i>Housing Choices</i> Program.	The <i>Housing Choices</i> Program Evaluation Committee will begin formally evaluating the <i>Housing Choices</i> programs after one year of delivery, and will report its findings to the Minister	October 2008	
	1.4.2 Expand delivery of educational modules delivered under STEP	After two years of delivery, the NWT HC will begin offering STEP modules to future clients (non-applicants) and members of the general public where possible.	2009-10	

	<p>1.4.3 Implement a communications campaign to inform residents of NWTCH program offerings</p>	<p>The NWTCH will produce an information campaign to improve the awareness of clients and the general public on NWTCH's programs and services.</p>	<p>September 2008</p>	
	<p>1.4.4 Through the work of the NWTCH's Policy Review Committee, renew and adjust all Housing Corporation policies and procedures to ensure they reflect the Corporation's strategic direction.</p>	<p>In 2008 The Policy Review Committee will prepare a work plan for the policy renewal project.</p>	<p>October 2008</p>	

2.0 Ensuring the Long Term Sustainability of the Housing Stock

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
2.1 NWT HC Maintenance Strategy	2.1.1 Increase and improve the maintenance completed on the public housing stock.	Develop a strategic action plan to improve the maintenance performed on public housing units.	September 2008	
	2.1.2 Provide quarterly updates on maintenance completed on the public housing stock on a community-by-community basis.	Quarterly updates will commence following development of the strategic action plan for maintenance.	June 2009	
2.2 Public Housing Replacement and Repair	2.2.1 Complete an inventory of dwellings that are currently decommissioned or in poor condition.	LHOs and District staff will complete assessments on all units deemed to be beyond economic repair or with condition ratings below 60%.	January 2009	
	2.2.2 Repair, replace or dispose of public housing as decommissioned or in poor condition.	Efforts to repair and replace public housing units are ongoing.	Ongoing	
	2.2.3 Provide quarterly updates on the progress of the replacement and repair of public housing.	Quarterly updates will commence following the completion of the inventory.	April 2009	
	2.2.4 Replace any single detached	The NWT HC will	2009	

	units that are identified for replacement with energy-efficient multi-unit dwellings.	ensure that future delivery of public housing is done using multi-unit configurations to the greatest extent possible. The Framework for Action Status Report will provide updates on the use of multi-unit designs in construction.		
2.3 Home Maintenance Education and Counseling	2.3.1 Expand delivery of home maintenance education and counseling to offer courses for future clients and interested members of the general public.	After two years of delivery, the NWT HC will begin offering STEP modules to future clients (non-applicants) and members of the general public where possible.	2009-10	

3.0 Improving Energy Efficiency and Reducing Environmental Impacts

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
3.1 Climate Change Mitigation through Adaptation	3.1.1 Develop a strategy outlining means by which the NWT HC can modify building designs and utilize new technologies to mitigate the affects of climate change on new and existing housing.	The NWT HC will provide a report to the Minister and Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure on the NWT HC's response to climate change.	June 2009	
	3.2 Energy Consumption in Public Housing	3.2.1 Complete repairs and modifications identified during Phase I of the NWT HC's Public Housing Energy Consumption Survey.	Dwellings identified in the survey will be targeted for repairs and modifications in the 2009-2010 capital plan.	2009
		3.2.2 Implement Phase II of the Public Housing Energy Consumption Survey.	Phase II of the Public Housing Energy Consumption Survey will be completed during the 2008-09 fiscal year pending funding.	April 2009
	3.2.3 Following completion of Phase II, complete energy related improvements to dwellings identified.	Following completion of Phase II, the NWT HC will complete repairs and provide a final.	2009-2011	

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
		report to the Minister by 2011.		
3.3 Testing New Technologies	3.3.1 Identify new housing technologies and building designs being used locally, nationally, and internationally.	The NWT HC will issue an RFP nationally requesting proposals from developers to test technologies in the NWT.	June 2009	
	3.3.2 Complete pilot testing of technologies identified through the RFP.	Contingent on the response to the RFP, the NWT HC will conduct testing of heating and energy technologies on existing dwellings over two years. A report will be provided following the test period.	2009-2010	
	3.3.3 Construct and test model homes using new building designs in at least three communities, including one in the High Arctic.	Any responses to the RFP dealing with building envelope and construction designs will be tested. Building envelope designs specifically will be tested in a High Arctic community.	2010	

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
3.4 NWTCH Energy Consumption Strategy	3.4.1 Complete a review of the current energy consumption of the NWTCH, identifying areas for improvement.	Provide a report to the Minister outlining the NWTCH's energy footprint, including energy consumption from Housing Corporation dwellings, offices, vehicles, and other assets.	2009	
	3.4.2 Implement new policies designed to lower the NWTCH's environmental impact and respond to issues identified in the review.	Policies to be developed dealing with vehicle acquisition, recycling, and standard environmental requirements for office leases.	2010	
3.5 Fuel Tank Replacement Strategy	3.5.1 Implement plan to replace fuel tanks on public housing that have been in use for more than 20 years.	Yearly reports on dwellings using fuel tanks beyond 20 years old and schedules for replacement.	2009 (first report)	
	3.5.2 In partnership with ENR, create a strategy to improve awareness and provide incentives for homeowners to replace fuel tanks more than 20 years old.	External communications process to follow internal assessment of the plan to replace fuel tanks on NWTCH assets.	2011	

4.0 Securing and Protecting Our Investments

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
4.1 NWTCH-MACA Affordable Housing Strategy	4.1.1 In partnership with MACA, acquire a land inventory in all communities for current and future delivery of affordable housing.	Acquisition of land for Year 3 AHI and future delivery to continue in 2008.	Ongoing	
4.2 Land Inventory Database	4.2.1 Develop, in conjunction with the capital planning process, projected land requirements for future housing delivery.	The NWTCH will begin identifying land requirements for construction beyond the AHI during the final year of AHI construction.	December 2008	
	4.2.2 Create and administer a database of existing and required land.	The NWTCH has formed a working committee to develop a comprehensive database that will integrate capital planning and land information.	October 2008	
4.3 Land Partnerships – Federal, Territorial, Aboriginal and Community Governments	4.3.1 In partnership with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations, negotiate with Federal and Aboriginal Governments to ensure that appropriate land tenure instruments prior to constructing on Indian Affairs Band land.	The NWTCH will continue to negotiate for land arrangements in communities that have IAB lands. Regular updates on progress will be provided.	Ongoing	

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
	<p>4.3.2 Consult with Aboriginal governments, bands, organizations, and DAAIR to identify and select lands for future affordable housing development.</p>	<p>As required during self-government and land claims negotiations, the NWT HC will participate fully in land selection to ensure land remains available for affordable housing in communities. Regular updates on progress will be provided.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>4.4 NWT HC Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan</p>	<p>4.4.1 Develop an emergency preparedness and response plan for the NWT HC’s Headquarters, District Offices, and Local Housing Organizations.</p>	<p>The NWT HC will form an internal committee in 2008 to develop an NWT HC-specific emergency preparedness and response plan. The final plan is expected to be developed in 2009.</p>	<p>June 2009</p>	

5.0 Contributing to Safe, Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
5.1 Awareness Campaign – Mould in Housing	5.1.2 Develop and deliver a public awareness campaign on mould prevention and remediation.	The NWTHC will provide information on mould prevention and remediation in writing at district offices, on-line, and through public information sessions.	Winter 2009	
5.2 Neighbourhood Improvement Strategy	5.2.1 Consult with communities, Local Housing Organizations, NGOs, and the public on improvements to public housing dwellings and surrounding neighbourhoods.	Consultations to be held in each region of the NWT in the spring of 2009.	May 2009	
	5.2.2 Following consultations, implement strategies to improve and beautify neighbourhoods that have a high percentage of public housing.	Neighbourhood improvement projects completed in at least 3 communities by the end of 2010.	July 2009 – December 2010	
	5.2.3 Encourage tenants of public housing to contribute to the maintenance of their dwellings.	Implement an incentive-based program to promote encourage tenant improvements and maintenance.	2011	

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
5.3 Protection of Tenant Rights	5.3.1 Partner with the Departments of Justice and ECE, to reduce criminal and illegal activity in public housing dwellings.	Introduce a new Safe Public Housing policy.	September 2009	
	5.3.2 Collaborate with the Department of Justice to improve public housing lease documents to ensure fairness, equity and the protection of tenant rights.	To coincide with proposed changes to the Residential Tenancies Act, introduce a new standard lease for public housing.	September 2009	
5.4 Community Driven Solutions	5.4.1 Provide a greater opportunity for LHO Managers, Board Chairpersons, and Regional Directors to contribute to setting the strategic direction of the NWTHC.	Regular updates on the role of regional and community officials in the NWTHC's Corporate planning processes will be provided.	January 2009	
	5.4.2 Improve the service provided to communities that do not currently have Local Housing Organizations.	Develop an options paper recommending new means by which communities without LHOs can be effectively served by the NWTHC.	May 2010	

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
	5.4.3 In partnership with MACA, pursue land assembly options in communities with limited capacity to provide and develop land for affordable housing.	Future status reports will provide update on land assembly activities.	Ongoing	
5.5 Appeals Process	5.5.1 Complete an review of appeals processes being used by other housing and social services deliverers across Canada.		August 2008	
	5.5.2 Provide MLAs with options for an appeals process for public housing and homeownership applicants.	Options paper to be presented to Standing Committee on Economic Development and Infrastructure.	September 2008	
	5.5.3 Complete public consultations on a draft appeals process.	Consultation framework to be developed. Consultation will take place in communities and online.	October 2008 – February 2009	
	5.5.4 Introduction and implementation of new appeal board for housing programs.	Establishment of an appeals board with format and terms of reference based on results of consultation.	April 2009	

6.0 Providing Training Opportunities in Housing

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
6.1 Trades Training – Secondary	6.1.1 Work with ECE on the development of a formal curriculum for housing trades training at the intermediate/ secondary level (ECE, NWTHC).	A curriculum guide for teachers will be developed prior to the 2009-10 school year.	May 2009	
	6.1.2 Deliver the housing trades curriculum in high schools in at least 6 communities.	Provide curriculum and support to high schools in 6 communities for the start of the 2009-2010 school year.	September 2009	
6.2 Trades Training – Post Secondary and Adult Learning	6.2.1 Partner with Aurora College to further enhance housing-related training courses.	NWTHC and Aurora College will review current program offerings and identify areas for future development of training courses.	2009	
	6.2.2 Conduct a review of housing training offered through the School of Community Government, and develop options for future delivery.	The NWTHC will conduct a review of its current involvement with the School of Community Government.	October 2008	
6.3 Apprentices	6.3.1 Hire a minimum of 12 apprentices at Local Housing Organizations.	Funding for apprentices was approved for	March 2009	

		2007-08. Pending approval of funding for 2008-09, the NWTHC will facilitate the hiring a total of 12 apprentices at Local Housing Organizations.		
6.4 NWTHC Employee Training	6.4.1 Develop and deliver a Workshop Training Series for all NWTHC Regional Staff.	NWTHC Officials will develop workshops to training regional staff during 2008, with delivery of workshops to take place later that year.	September-October2008	
	6.4.2 Collaborate with CMHC and other partners to develop and deliver technical training for NWTHC and LHO staff.	Technical training modules to be developed and delivered in conjunction with regional workshops.	September-October 2008	

7.0 Fostering Partnerships

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
7.1 CMHC/NWTHC Communications Strategy	7.1.1 In partnership with CMHC, develop a communications strategy for collaborative communication of programs, services and education materials available through both organizations.	Communications strategy to be developed and approved by both agencies.	2009	
7.2 Public Housing/Income Support Implementation	7.2.1 Consult with communities, LHOs, and NWTHC and ECE regional staff to determine specific issues associated with public housing administration in each community.	Consultations will be held in communities across the NWTHC to determine satisfaction with current approach and potential solutions to specific concerns.	Completed	
	7.2.2 Based on consultations, make adjustments to the administrative program on a community-specific basis, with solutions tailor-made to each community.	During 2008, NWTHC and ECE officials, together with LHOs and regional staff, will implement required changes on a community-by-community basis to improve the administration of public housing.	December 2008	
7.3 Working with LHOs	7.3.1 Convene regular meetings of LHO Managers and Board Chairs with the Minister Responsible for the NWTHC.	A meeting of LHO Managers took place in January 2008, and future	Ongoing	

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
		meetings are planned.		
7.4 Working with NGOs and the Private Sector	7.4.1 Regularly consult with NGOs on the NWTHC's programs and services.	A consultation process will be initiated during 2008, focusing on the NWTHC's role in serving clients with special needs (seniors, persons with disabilities, victims of family violence, and the hard-to-house)	Ongoing (to commence in 2008)	
	7.4.2 Develop options for partnering with NGOs and the private sector for future community-driven projects.	Following the completion of delivery under the AHI, the NWTHC will seek project partnership opportunities at the community level. Updates on the progress of these efforts will be provided.	January 2010	

8.0 Communicating With Those We Serve

Initiative	Action	Deliverable	Timeline	Status
8.1 NWTCH External Communications Strategy	8.1.1 Improve the NWTCH's External Website to better serve clients.	Visitors to the NWTCH's website will be asked to complete surveys both prior to and following improvements.	First survey report – October 2008 Follow-up survey report – October 2009	
	8.1.2 Raise awareness of the NWTCH's programs and services through an enhanced print media campaign.	The NWTCH will produce an information campaign to improve the awareness of clients and the general public on NWTCH's programs and services.	2009	
	8.1.3 Place Information Kiosks on the NWTCH's programs and services in all LHOs and District Offices.	Information kiosks will be in place by early 2008, with information updated on a regular basis.	March 2008	Complete
8.2 NWTCH Internal Communications Strategy	8.2.1 Make improvements to the NWTCH Internal Website to improve employee awareness of the NWTCH's strategic activities.	The NWTCH will introduce an enhanced Internal website designed for employee collaboration and information sharing.	January 2009	