



## National Housing and Infrastructure Forum: Final Report

November 2016



AFN National Housing and Infrastructure Forum:  
*“Moving forward on First Nations  
Housing and Infrastructure Reform”*



November 1-3, 2016 • Winnipeg, Manitoba

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### 1.0 Executive Summary

As part of the continued coordinated approach of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to move forward on the commitment to improving and reforming the delivery of housing and infrastructure in First Nation communities, a National Forum on Housing and Infrastructure was planned. The intention was to affirm and gather valuable information from a First Nations perspective from Leaders, Housing and Infrastructure capital managers and experts in the field, this National Forum convened in Winnipeg, Manitoba November 1 – 3, 2016.

A huge part of the success must be directed to the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCOHI), and technicians that provided valuable support, advice and direction that was instrumental in determining the outcomes of the National Forum on Housing and Infrastructure Reform.

Also contributing to the success of the National Forum, were the delegates who attended and invited to attend the sessions with responsibility and expertise in First Nations Housing and Infrastructure. There were over 500 participants including Federal officials from Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Health Canada and other government departments.

The following agenda designed for the event included the:

1. Lead-off introductory speakers that set the stage to illustrate their vision for the future of Housing and Infrastructure;
2. Panels of expert presenters to discuss, provoke, and elicit dialogue about the specifics of a subject matter (i.e. vision, funding and finance, etc.). The presentations set the stage for the tabletop discussions; and
3. Delegates broke into four different workshop venues, pre-determined by badge colors, and presented with specific questions regarding the housing and infrastructure subject matter. Those tabletop discussions were broken down into four areas: Vision, Funding and Finance, Skills and Capacity, Governance and Delivery, and Innovations.

This final report contains the data analysis for the Visioning, Funding and Finance, Skills and Capacity, and Governance and Delivery areas. First is the breakdown of the **Vision** for each of the four areas. Overall, the existing vision for housing that was previously developed by AFN is widely accepted as remaining valid and relevant. There are some adjustments called for and very few responses indicated that it should be changed all together.

**Funding and Finance** was then analyzed. The main components of a new housing funding approach included increased funding for housing that are based on community needs, funds to pay for housing managers training, certifications and other modern tools of finance. A



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strong message that a funding model needs to be flexible and comprehensive enough to respond to the needs of all of the First Nations no matter where they are located. There is an expectation that this model will be developed by and for First Nations with government playing the role of funder.

The next section of the report analyzed the **Skills and Capacities** delegates deemed necessary. The Skills and Capacity responses indicated a breadth of capacity requirements and need for financial commitment in order to implement a new model. The emphasis on homeowner responsibility and maintenance skills was just as important as construction and technical skills.

**Governance and Delivery** was the last section. The responses for Governance and Delivery varied but it was generally agreed that there needed to be local, regional and national organizations with identified roles and responsibilities where construction and operations activities can be coordinated by resources with adequate skill to do their job successfully.

The opportunity afforded to the plenary on day three to further develop the report saw the gathering of a series of innovations that are new. With these innovations, it was found that most could fit under one of the four subject matter topics that were discussed during the event. Most delegates responded with housing governance and policy innovations. The most prevalent of these innovations was the call for a First Nations run national institution that governs all First Nations housing. The major concern was in the decentralization of INAC & CMHC operations.

## 2.0 Background

As part of the continued approach of the AFN to move forward on the commitment to improving and reforming the delivery of housing and infrastructure in First Nation communities, a National session that would gather information from Chiefs, housing, and capital managers was held on November 1-3, 2016 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Planning for this event began in earnest in May 2016, when it was decided that there would need to be a national-level information gathering session in addition to the various regional and sub-regional events.

Substantive to this effort is the support from the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI) and the AFN Regional Housing Technicians and the AFN Regional Water/Infrastructure Technicians. The advice and direction provided by this group was instrumental in determining the outcome of the National Forum on Housing and Infrastructure Reform.

Further discussion and dialogue at the AFN Annual General Assembly 2016 in Niagara Falls, by the CCoHI and Technical Committees, where it was established that a National Housing



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and Infrastructure Reform Forum be planned and delivered in early November, 2016 to ensure that:

1. An opportunity is provided to First Nation leadership and their representatives for a full and substantive input into the future of housing and infrastructure reform as envisioned from their perspective;
2. First Nations assert their role and responsibility in determining their future vision for housing and infrastructure in a truly Nation to Nation relationship with Canada;
3. Input into the National Housing Strategy that is currently being developed by Canada through the Minister of Children and Families CMHC; and
4. There is a full dialogue and discussion of the findings, recommendations and next steps of the report from the AFN National Housing and Infrastructure Forum at the Special Chiefs Assembly, December 2016, in Gatineau.

### 3.0 The Objectives

The AFN engaged in the planning and implementation of a National Housing and Infrastructure forum to develop a way forward, specifically through:

- Implement the planning, approach and agenda development leading to the National Infrastructure Forum in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1-3 November, 2016;
- Lead innovation discussions, planning with the CCoHI and Technicians for purposes of the Forum, which was formulated at a facilitated two day planning meeting in Ottawa on 12–13 October, 2016;
- Ensure that the approach is rooted in the “Relationship Protocol and the Guiding Principles” that are based in UNDRIP, the Report of the TRC, previous and current AFN resolutions, the current government policy with respect to First Nations. Reconfirm the vision for Housing and introduce the opportunity to develop one for Infrastructure;
- Capture the greatest amount of information to form the main components of the Forum Report that is delivered to the AFN;
- Analyze the findings, data, evidence provided, concerns, challenges and opportunities of the Table Top breakout sessions and plenary as in order to inform the overall roll out of the Infrastructure strategy as proposed by the forum delegates; and
- Preparing an Interim Report and Final Report for the AFN and the Chiefs Committee on the findings for:
  - a. Inclusion and material to inform the National Housing Strategy;
  - b. Inform and report back to the December Special Chiefs Assembly, as the results of the event will form the going forward strategy as the key component of the 20 year Infrastructure Plan for First Nations; and



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- c. Provide an opportunity for discussion on the framework from which the new First Nations-led Housing and Infrastructure initiatives will be developed.

### 4.0 Methodology

The planning for the National Forum on Housing and Infrastructure began with the creation of the AFN Planning Committee, which was led by Director, Housing, Infrastructure and Emergency services, Mr. Irving Leblanc, who was tasked to plan, develop, implement and report on the outcomes of the National Forum. A draft plan and approach was developed and then presented to the CCoHI and Chiefs Technical committee at a meeting in Ottawa on 12 – 13 October 2016.

The following phases of work were the basis of the approach and included the following:

1. In the lead up to the event, collaboratively with AFN, the CCoHI and Technicians, Consultants and other government officials to develop an agenda and approach to the event that will result in innovative discussions towards First Nations institutions that will manage Housing and Infrastructure into the future:
2.
  - a. The Planning Committee developed the agenda and the information gathering approach;
  - b. A facilitated meeting with the CCoHI and Technical committee was able to obtain input for the following approach:
    - i. The overall approach and information gathering technique of “Table Top” discussions; and
    - ii. Input into types and division of questions that would be posed to the delegates:
      1. The Vision for housing and Infrastructure
      2. Funding and Finance
      3. Skills and Capacity
      4. Governance and Delivery
  - c. In order to promote discussion, speakers were identified and prepared for the event. Each speaker/presenter was specifically chosen to deliver a “message” that would assist in provoking dialogue during the “Table Top” breakout sessions;
  - d. Developed the specific questions for the Table Top discussions and created color coded worksheets (See Appendix A)
  - e. During the event, all discussions would be captured during the various sessions during the Forum; and
3. Results of the meeting would be analyzed and a report prepared on the findings for input into the National Housing Strategy and to the December 2016 AFN Special Chiefs Assembly for further direction.



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Part of the planning for the National Forum on Housing and Infrastructure event, the CCoHI and Technicians meeting on 12 - 13 October allowed the planners to confirm their approach and obtain the input and feedback from the technical committee. This step was crucial to get overall “buy in” to the event format.

The format saw the following agenda design for the event:

1. Lead off introductory speakers that set the stage and illustrate their vision for the future of Housing and Infrastructure;
2. Panels of Expert Presenters that discussed, provoked, and elicited dialogue about the specifics of a subject matter (i.e. vision, funding and finance, etc.); and
3. Delegates broke into four different workshop venues, pre-determined by badge colors, and presented with specific questions regarding the housing and infrastructure subject matter.

The Presentations were designed to include:

- The presentations set the stage for the tabletop discussions. Those tabletop discussions were broken down into four areas:
  - Vision
  - Funding and Finance
  - Skills and Capacity
  - Governance and Delivery
- Each presenter would provide the presentations on innovations that are currently happening in First Nations to prime the group for the discussions

Table Top Discussions:

- Four simultaneous facilitated sessions
- Tabletop “work sheets”:
  - Relevant questions pertaining to the area of discussion
  - Background material and description of the concepts to provide context
- Discussions and data capture on the worksheets
- Gather worksheets and begin to compile and correlate data

Analyzing:

- The data gathered from the sessions were analyzed and then broken down further into themes. These themes were then used to group the responses from the delegates and then synthesized to determine the priorities
- The responses were entered into the sorting model and then correlated. This data, once correlated, helped to determine the strategic priorities identified by the delegates as the key items and activities that need to be implemented as part of the overall strategy



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### Reporting:

- Once compiled and reviewed the data was mined for trends and significant observations to be brought back to the group the next day
- The detailed information interpretation exercise involving the analysis and synthesis of data during the report writing stage.

## 5.0 Attendees

The delegates invited to attend the sessions were Chiefs and technical resources with responsibility and expertise in First Nations Housing and Infrastructure. In addition, Federal officials from INAC, CMHC, Health Canada and other government departments. There were over 500 participants including trade show attendees.

## 6.0 Agenda

The meeting facilitation services were provided by Hunter-Courchene Group. Mr. Mathieu Courchene was the Master of Ceremonies and assisted in the development of the Agenda and the overall approach to the flow of the meeting.

The agenda framework was used throughout the session and followed the methodology as described in Section 4.

## 7.0 The Vision

### Overview

**Overall, the existing vision for housing that was developed previously by AFN and contained in the AFN “National First Nations Housing Strategy” is widely accepted as remaining valid and relevant.** This “National First Nations Housing Strategy” was endorsed by the Chiefs in Assembly by resolution 15/2013, *Implementation of a National First Nations Housing Strategy* at the 2013 AFN AGA in Whitehorse, Yukon. There are some adjustments called for and very few responses indicated that it should be changed all together. The key elements remain long term funding for housing, based on a nation-to-nation relationship that truly builds partnerships with First Nations. In terms of how some of





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the recent reports such as the “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples” (The Declaration), other UN Declarations, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) Recommendations and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission “Calls to Action” influence the Vision; the majority of responses believe that these provide a solid basis from which to also launch any initiatives in Housing and Infrastructure.

The predominant theme that was evident throughout the discussions on the additional elements of the vision was that everything needed to be viewed through the Nation-to-Nation lens. There were several suggested additions that could make for a stronger vision on housing but the current vision remains valid and accepted.

**The Vision for Infrastructure is essentially having access to the same safe, quality infrastructure that one sees off reserve. However, it would be rooted in the needs and aspirations of the community and reflective of the cultural identity of the people.** The delegates recognized that there are significant gaps and deficits in infrastructure and their responses were rich with ideas and innovations. **Sustainability and community planning** were key statements amongst the responses and were repetitive throughout the infrastructure visioning exercise.

The vision for the inter community and Nation approach is primarily based on sharing ideas, creating effective networks and respecting each other’s differences and similarities. Creating networks that could be the basis of technical expertise and would be available to all housing and capital managers. There was a significant call for more collaboration, cooperation and knowledge sharing and all of the responses were positive in their tone. The vision for infrastructure was very similar to that of housing and it would not be difficult to develop a unifying statement that could encompass the desires of the delegates.

The vision for the relationship with governments was much more negative in its tones both when delegates suggest changes and when they suggest innovations. The **overwhelming responses** were that government needs to respect First Nations people, their communities and the manner in which they would see Housing and Infrastructure implemented. The responses painted a picture of a relationship that many feel as being extremely one sided whereby all decisions are made on their behalf with little-to-no input. In terms of moving forward there was a substantial voice that calls for the building of trust, open and fair communications and joint decision-making. The responses indicated that continual engagement must be the hallmark of the relationship moving forward if it has any hope of moving from a negative to positive working dynamic.

The responses were very much what was expected in terms of the tone. However, the richness of the responses as they related to innovations and ideas on how to make the vision and the relationships work together was a pleasant surprise. Delegates overwhelmingly called for **First Nations control** over the processes and roll out of any new initiatives related to housing and infrastructure.



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## Data Analysis

### Vision for Housing

Responses for the vision exercise, including responses to 11 questions, in which delegates were asked to consider the existing vision for housing and what they would like to see in terms of a new vision developed for infrastructure, are summarized below. Specific attention was paid to the relationship between government(s) and First Nations.

The current vision for housing is:

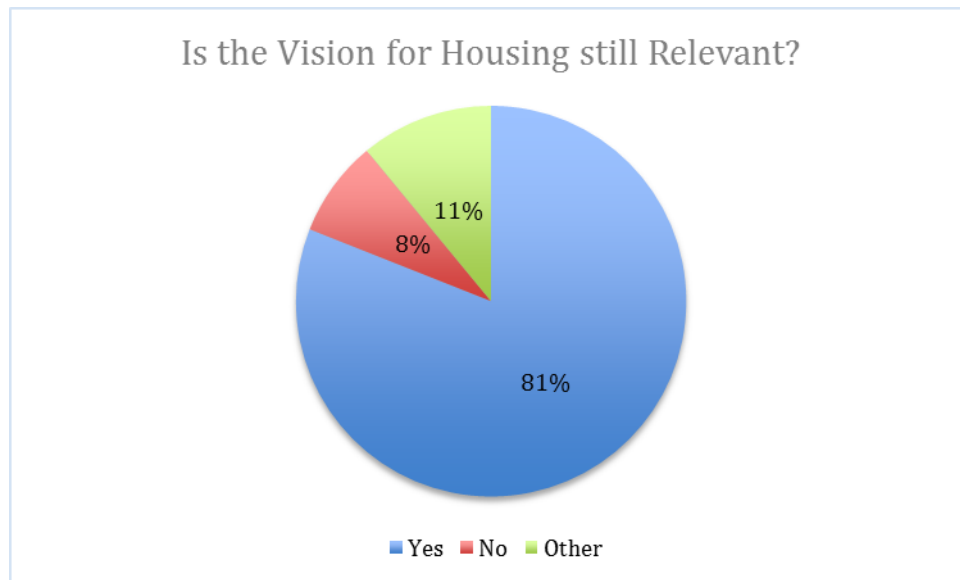
***"All First Nation members living on or away from their community have a right to shelter and they must be provided with an opportunity to access safe, secure, adequate and affordable housing."***

Delegates responded with an 81% response of "yes" that they believe the current housing vision remains valid. Some of the key noted adjustments to the vision would be to include items like affordability, quality, and opportunity. It is safe to conclude that the vision for housing remains valid. Delegates identified that any new vision must be reflective of local community need whereby adequate funding is made available to insure safe, healthy, sustainable and affordable housing and infrastructure. In addition, delegates identified that there is a requirement for increased capacity development in order to develop pride of ownership, accountability for the housing stock and responsibility for maintenance. Some responses indicate that there needs to be the concept of "housing as a human right" within the Vision. Under the current political situation, including the new environment of reconciliation, delegates believed that there is a growing need for the recognition of their rights and they must capitalize on the current political support that will result in First Nations' control and self-determination over housing and infrastructure. It is of note that there is an increased level of expectation with respect to support from Federal and Provincial governments.



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**In terms of importance, delegates called for the redesign of the current model, which sees the transfer of responsibility from INAC and CMHC to First Nations’ controlled institutions.** Delegates also looked to rebuild the relationship based on a nation-to-nation approach that has a joint vision of economic growth, community development, quality and safe affordable housing, while respecting the local cultural practices.

### Vision for Infrastructure

Currently, the AFN does not have a resolution-backed, nor policy-backed “vision for infrastructure.” Delegates were asked for the key elements in their future vision for infrastructure. In addition, they were asked, in the context of future generations, where they would see the infrastructure vision. While Infrastructure encompasses the many elements of community needs including water and sanitation, the AFN does have a National First Nations Water Strategy and a Water Declaration, which must be taken into consideration when developing a Vision for Infrastructure and a National Infrastructure Strategy. As mentioned earlier a combined Housing and Infrastructure Vision and Strategy could be developed.

The most stressed components of the vision were that it would need to be rooted in community-based needs identified at the local community level, culturally relevant and supported by sustainable adequate funding with the same standards as seen in neighbouring municipalities. In terms of the future, delegates reiterated their desire for the same standard as municipalities and equal access to all types of public infrastructure. Delegates also felt that there needs to be a federal recognition of their rights as people and to respect their unique cultural approaches.

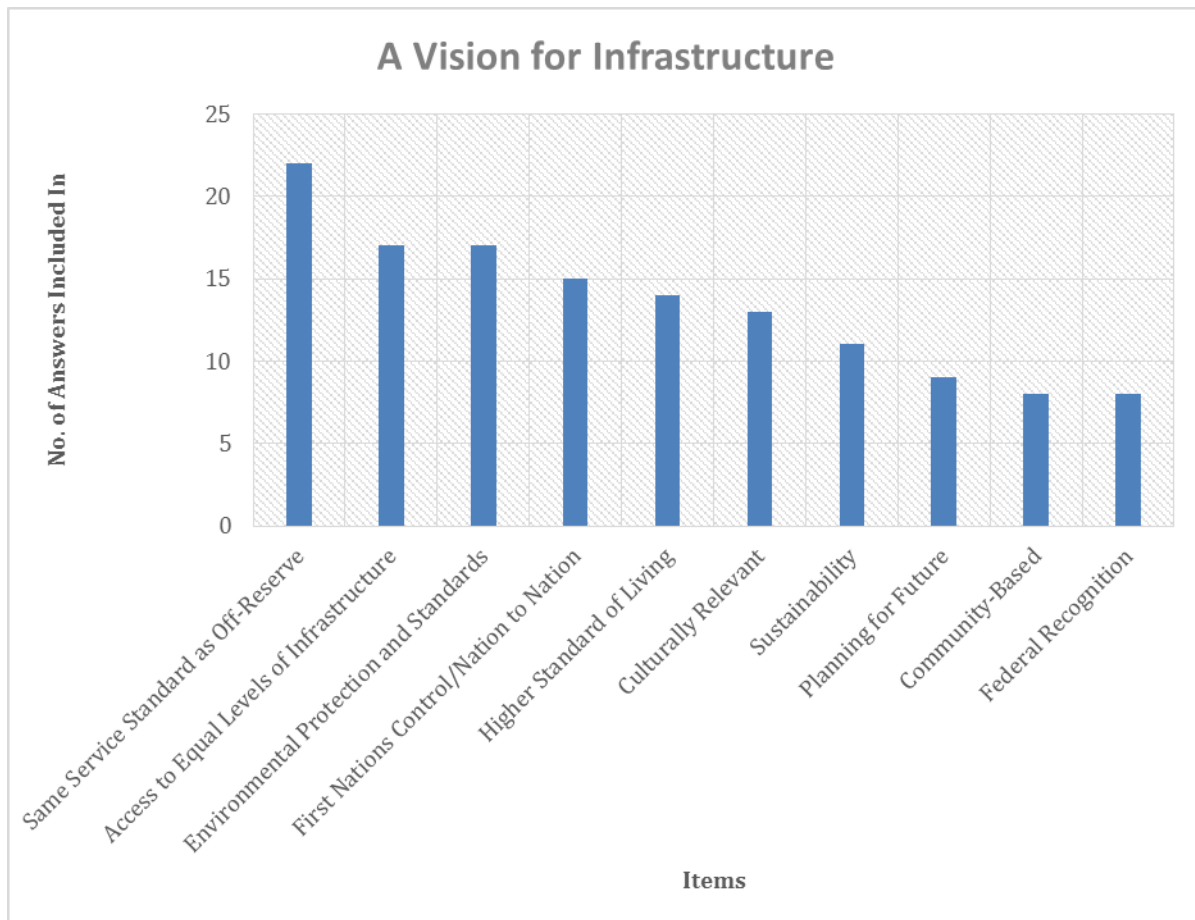


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In terms of the *Vision for Infrastructure*, the following key components, in order of importance, were:

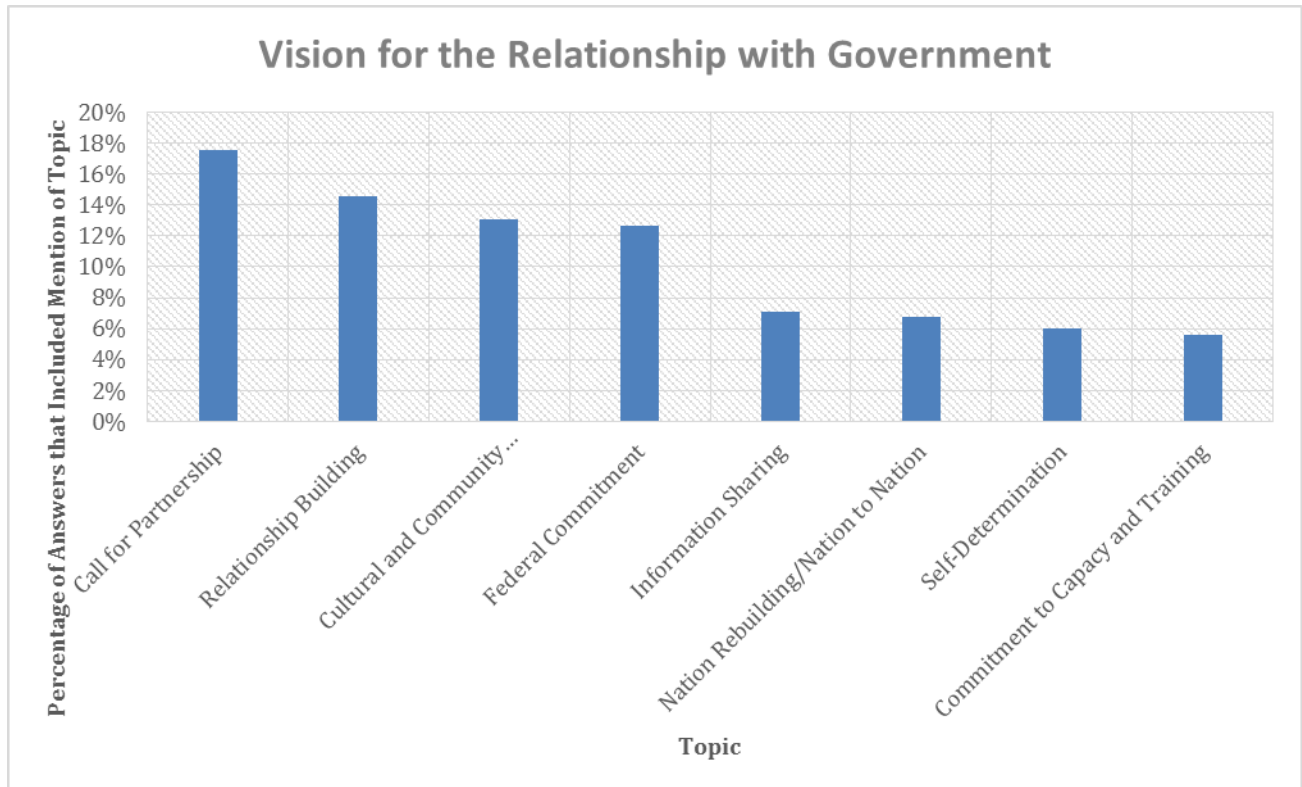
1. Same standard as municipalities;
2. Access to equal levels of infrastructure;
3. Environmental Protection and Standards;
4. First Nations Control/Nation to Nation;
5. Higher Standard of Living;
6. Culturally Relevant;
7. Sustainability;
8. Planning for Future;
9. Community-Based; and
10. Federal Recognition.





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### Vision for the Relationship with Government

There is an overwhelming call for the rebuilding of the relationship with the government. First Nations need to see a significant federal commitment for a renewed call for partnership. In order for First Nations to move forward and buy in to any new approaches, they will need to see that they are working nation to nation with the federal government whereby cultural, treaty and local community approaches have high value. The components of the *Vision for the Relationship with Government* include:

1. A Call for Partnership;
2. Relationship Building;
3. Cultural and Community Understanding
4. Federal Commitment;
5. Information Sharing;
6. Nation Rebuilding/Nation to Nation;
7. Self-Determination; and
8. Commitment to Capacity and Training.

These are the key components demanded by the delegates for any vision of a relationship with the federal government.



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### Vision for the Relationship between First Nations

In terms of the relationship between First Nations, the hallmark is information sharing and nation-to-nation communications based on the foundation of cultural understanding and partnership. Local First Nation desire to be in mutual collaboration with other First Nations, Tribal Councils (TC) and Political Territorial Organizations (PTO) and not feel as though they are competing with them. Any new models should not create intra-competition for resources, which pits First Nations against each other. The key components of the *Vision for the Relationship between First Nations* are:

- Information sharing;
- Relationship building;
- Cultural and community understanding; and
- Nation-to-nation.

## 8.0 Funding and Finance

### Overview

The main components of a new housing funding approach include increased funds for housing that are based on community needs, funds to pay for housing managers training, certifications and other modern tools of finance. The funding model needs to be flexible and comprehensive enough to respond to the needs of all of the First Nations no matter where they are located. There is an expectation that this model will be developed by and for First Nations with government playing the role of funder.

From revolving loans fund to financial instruments and tools being made available to communities through a First Nations led institution, there is an openness and desire to be able to use all of the modern tools of public infrastructure finance (bonds, equity, debt instruments). The one unifying notion is that any new initiatives must be First Nations led and developed and it appears that there is an acceptance to implementing through **national and regional institutions**.

The depth of the responses brings clear the message as to what the delegates would need to be successful in the implementation of their ideal housing environment. There will need to be decisions and dialogue around which of the many suggested innovations and ideas should be further developed into future initiatives.

Funding of infrastructure calls for the exact standards and assets that other non-indigenous communities in Canada enjoy. Even though it is recognized that there is an infrastructure deficit for all of Canada, it is especially evident in First Nations communities and levels of funding. It is generally accepted that there needs to be operations and maintenance funding available to ensure there is lifecycle investment in the assets so they do not rust out prematurely.



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The ideas for models put forward included resource revenue sharing, own source revenue, service fees, managed through a centralized First Nations led institution. Government needs to be an enabler and not a barrier to the next wave of infrastructure implementation in First Nations. It is expected that all forms of public infrastructure (roads, broadband, and electrification, including that traditional infrastructure assets) will be eligible for funding or financing in a new infrastructure implementation model.

When the responses as it relates to financing of infrastructure are explored a similar range of responses as the financing of housing can be observed. The message is that managers have no options other than funding from INAC or CMHC. They welcome the opportunity to learn about and use modern tools of infrastructure development that are currently being used by Municipalities, Provinces and the Federal government. Given the experience and knowledge that currently exists in other jurisdictions in Canada with respect to public infrastructure financing there should be no reason these tools and processes cannot be migrated and tailored for First Nations projects.

The responses are rich with options and connections to the responses both in (a) governance and delivery and (b) skills and capacity. The delegates do make those connections in their responses, you begin to see the various responsibilities, and roles that are envisioned for a First Nations led institution.

### Financing of Housing and Infrastructure - The Data

Delegates were asked eight separate questions regarding the funding and finance of housing and infrastructure, including the type of financing tools they would like to have available to them for financing housing and infrastructure. These questions were asked separately, however, the responses are strikingly similar, with access to new sources of credit, debt and equity, including other alternative financing mechanisms being an overwhelming response. Delegates viewed these financing tools being housed either regionally or nationally under First Nations control with all of the capacity and funding support required to operationalize the new institution. Delegates also see the important value of bringing own source revenue, resource revenue sharing, taxation and fees for service as alternatives that must be explored.

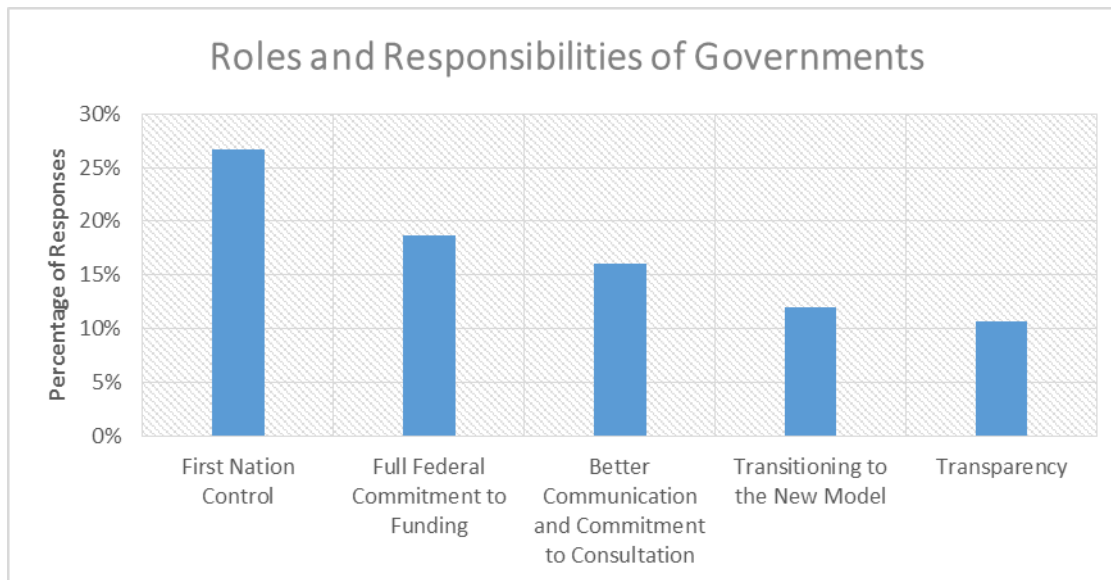
The key components of any financing model for housing and infrastructure include:

- Access to credit, debt and equity;
- Improved access to all traditional infrastructure financing mechanisms;
- Full capacity support for housing and infrastructure managers with the abilities to implement local housing initiatives;
- Knowledge sharing and networking; and
- First Nations control.



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### Funding of Housing and Infrastructure

The most important aspect of any new funding model must be based on capacity and support for the housing and infrastructure manager. Without this resource, there are no housing and infrastructure projects. There must be recognition of the importance of local needs assessments that result in community driven initiatives. The funding model must also contemplate being supported by the use of own source revenues and other alternative sources of revenue.

Components of a housing and infrastructure-funding model in order of importance are:

- Capacity and support for housing and infrastructure managers;
- Recognition and support of local housing initiatives;
- Access to credit, debt, equity and other financial mechanisms; and
- Knowledge and information sharing.

Delegates responded that they would like access to new credit, debt and equity tools and they see the transfer of control to a First Nations centralized institution as an option. Delegates would like to have access to own source revenue and would like to see more fees for service and rent collection, and see the value of resource revenue sharing.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Government for Housing and Infrastructure

The role of government is **to recognize their role as a funder** who will transfer funding to full First Nations control under a new model based on a partnership approach rooted in collaboration, cooperation and consultation. It is expected that government will be transparent and forthcoming throughout any transition period to a new model.





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Through the delegates consulted with, it became evident that there is a nucleus of main components when it comes to the *Roles and Responsibilities of Government for Housing and Infrastructure*.

The top expectations, as illustrated below, were:

- Recognition of First Nations control and administration over that funding;
- Full Federal commitment to funding;
- Improved communication and commitment to consultation; and
- Full disclosure and transparency through any transition period to a new model.

## 9.0 Skills and Capacity

### Overview

The skills and capacity responses indicate a breadth of capacity requirements and need for financial commitment in order to implement a new model. The emphasis on homeowner responsibility and maintenance skills was just as important as construction and technical skills.

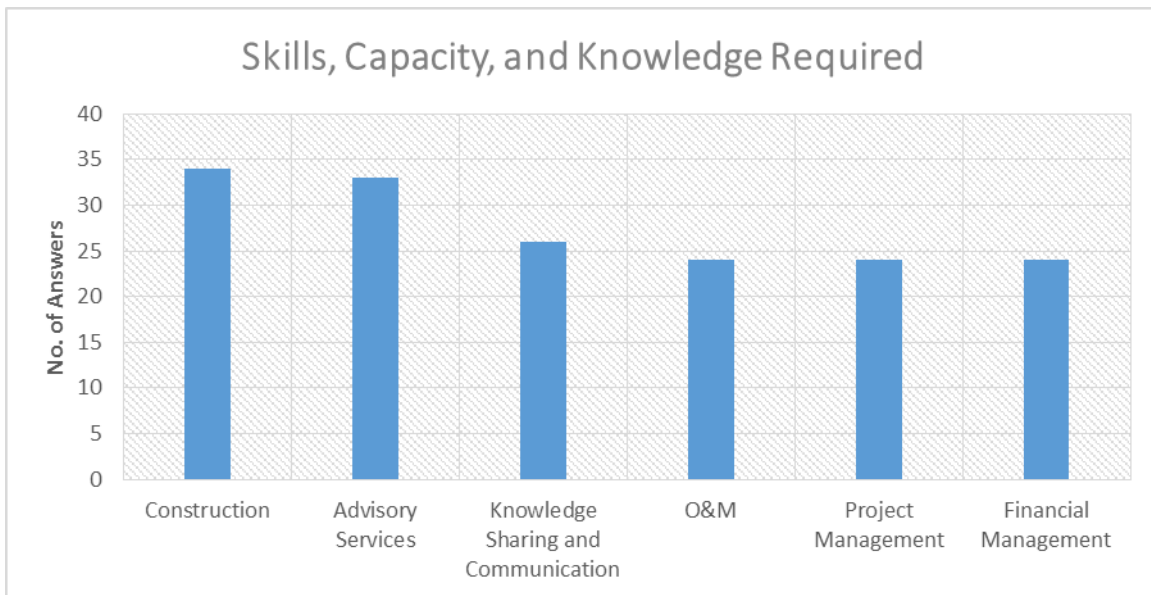
The delegates indicated in their responses that road map to maximize capacity and skills development has to start with developing the homeowners' sense of responsibility and ensuring they have maintenance training. Secondly, the community must be able to secure the employment and skills of a qualified housing and infrastructure manager. Thirdly, a regional agency, technical organization or Tribal Council further supports the community with technical skills and financial tools that allows them to fully implement their community housing and infrastructure plan. This model is based on First Nations control and a full Federal commitment for funding.

In terms of skills and capacities, there was an overwhelming desire for homeowners and community members to develop life skills and homeowner maintenance skills, including the fostering of a sense of personal accountability and pride of ownership. Throughout the exercise, there was a focus on construction skills. That being said, the concentration was not limited, as advisory services, project and financial management, and operations and maintenance skills were also emphasized. The chart below illustrates the number of respondents that indicated each skill was required.



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Knowledge sharing and networks between regional organizations and local First Nations are seen as the possible delivery mechanism for skills and capacity training. There is a significant link that emerges in the data between local First Nations, Tribal Councils and technical service organizations. There is a call to strengthen all capacities within those organizations. There seems to be the recognition that capacity skills and training extend right from youth to community, to Tribal Councils, to regional organizations, right through to the national level and all require new capacities and skills to successfully implement a new strategy. Without a commitment to training, skills and capacity development, the efforts will be destined to the same results that are seen today.

Other items to note were the attention to youth development, the development of incentives for homeowners and the need for financial literacy courses.

When asked how they could maximize these skills and capacities, delegates overwhelmingly responded that knowledge sharing would be the best method, whether through partnerships with Tribal Councils, regional organizations, and/or post-secondary institutions. Mentoring and training was also heavily agreed upon as a method that would maximize skills and contribute to building an expert knowledge base that can support the implementation of a national housing and infrastructure strategy.

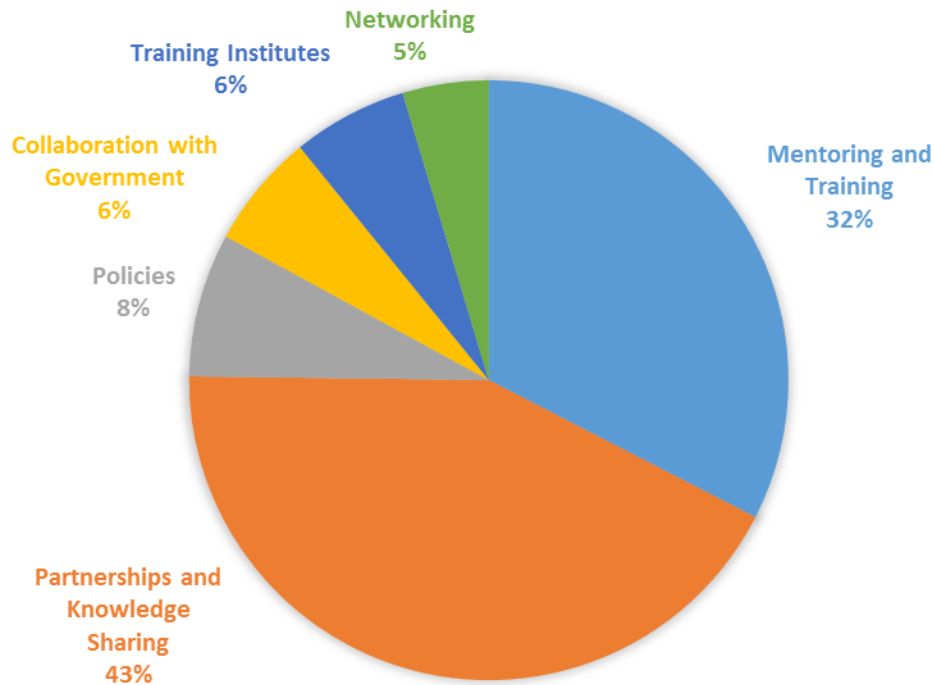


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### METHODS TO DEVELOP AND MAXIMIZE SKILLS, CAPACITIES, AND KNOWLEDGE



## 10.0 Governance and Delivery

### Overview

The responses varied but it was generally agreed that there needs to be local, regional and national organizations with identified roles and responsibilities where construction and operations activities can be coordinated by resources adequately resourced and skilled to do their job successfully. A key message throughout this section was that Chief and Council must transfer their authority over housing and infrastructure to a non-political body that can manage those assets properly without political interference.

The roles for the local regional and national entities have similar types of response. The local responsibility is to have skilled boots on the ground that can construct the assets to the highest standard. Many see the value of having the existing regional structures and see the need to invest and empower the current regional organizations. The regional role



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envisioned is very much like the role that is currently being implemented by First Nations (Alberta) Technical Services Advisory Group (TSAG) and Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC).

The national organizations role was not as clear other than it would be a national clearinghouse of information and would be a center of excellence that could be tapped into by all First Nations. When the delegates consider governance and delivery of the future they see the need for a coordinated approach that sees the national and regional organizations supporting the local managers in the implementation of their infrastructure plan.

Delegates were asked four questions concerning governance and delivery. When asked about the implementation of housing and infrastructure locally, regionally and nationally, delegates responded that First Nations control is their number one priority. They reiterated that capacity must be located in the local community and should be supported by a strong regional organization or Tribal Council. It was envisioned that these First Nations controlled organizations would provide advisory services when those skills and capacities do not exist in the community. Services like information sharing and networking, communications and relationship building, and filling of capacity gaps when local communities do not have those skills in their community. Many see this as only being possible through transitioning to a new First Nations controlled and run institution. The emphasis is on ensuring this capacity is always available locally.

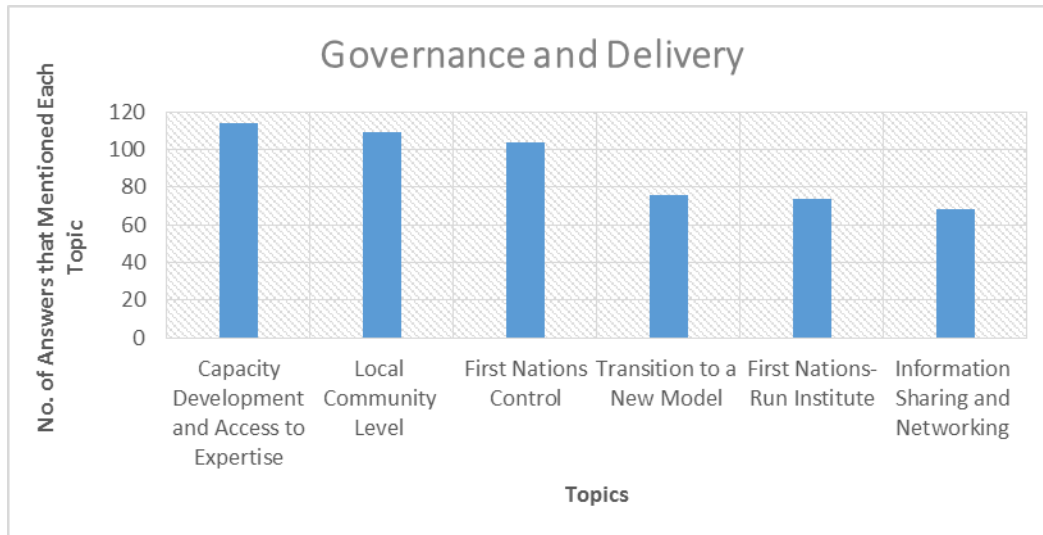
The delegates do see a role for a national organization, but they envision that this national organization would provide supportive information and knowledge-based services. Structures that promote, training, skills and capacity acquisition are most needed. A First Nations run institution seems to be the delivery model that is favored amongst the delegates, though it is not clear exactly what each level would do, but it is expected that most capacity would exist regionally or locally. It is expected, however, as illustrated in the chart below, that this structure/institution would be:

- A First Nations-run and controlled institution, as previously highlighted;
- A provider of capacity development and access to expertise;
- Available to the local community level;
- An enabler for the transition to a new model;
- An identifier and arranger of alternative sources of funding;
- A centre for access to standards, policies and other management tools; and
- A hub for information sharing and networking.



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Furthermore, this institution would focus on communication and relationship building between communities and would be free from political interference. There is a tone of depoliticizing housing and infrastructure programming, and this is evident throughout all of the subject matter. The key reasons that the delegates felt they need new delivery mechanisms was because the current mechanisms do not respond to the local community, nor do they respect the community needs assessment. Therefore, a call for First Nations control has been evident throughout the data. Delegates want to see more information sharing, communications, alternative sources of funding and more access to skills, training and expertise.

Delegates were then asked to turn their attention to what innovation, best practices and/or new technologies could contribute to successful implementation of a new First Nations run and controlled institution (unclear as to whether this would be located at Tribal Council or regional level). They see these new institutions as a window to training capacity development, skills acquisition, unique expertise, financial management, project management and access to best practice documentation and approaches.

Overall, the approach and the implementation of the forum were generally regarded as very positive. Many commented that it was the first time they were able to dialogue with colleagues and not feel like they had been “talked at” for three days like previous conferences. There was a real sense that this was an approach to engaging people on a tough issue that worked. Many left the event feeling like they had been heard and that their contribution would be part of the going forward strategy. Now there is a renewed and increased expectation that a set of recommendations and draft implementation plan will be presented at the Special Chiefs Assembly in December 2016.



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### 11.0 Innovations

#### Innovations

The opportunity afforded to the plenary on day three to further inform the report saw the gathering of a series of new “innovations”. With these innovations, it was found that most could fit under one of the four subject matter topics that were discussed during the event. Fortunately, the innovations that were submitted were more descriptive and detailed than those gathered at the Table Tops. These descriptions will definitely help to further capture and crystalize some of the very interesting approaches suggested by the delegates.

Delegates were asked to record any innovations they would like to put forward. Most delegates responded with housing governance and policy innovations. The most prevalent of these innovations was the call for a First Nations run national institution that governs all First Nations housing. The major concern was in the decentralization of INAC & CMHC money; delegates want the funds to be handled at the First Nations community level. The hope is that this would give stronger decision making to housing managers/committees and housing boards at the community level. Furthermore, delegates call for home maintenance workshops for homeowners with the view to increase pride and ownership and life skills.

Delegates also put forward many innovations when it came to financing and funding. Delegates were most concerned with the creation of a First Nations national bank, in which all First Nations band members become shareholders. The goal would be for First Nations to house all the money to fund business/personal loans and to reinvest in the First Nations population with the accumulated revenue. An additional suggestion was to encourage collaboration between neighbouring First Nations to increase buying power. Furthermore, it was suggested that First Nations should create their own insurance company, which would provide a secure transaction environment for people who wish to invest.

#### High Level Findings

- The input and enthusiasm of the delegates resulted in overwhelming amounts of data and meaningful, significant findings
- Facilitators report that each session had full participation from delegates
- Delegates want to ensure that they have something to bring back to the communities
- The delegates generally saw the benefits of this approach

#### Vision

- The current housing vision is widely accepted, with significant positive response
- First Nations controlled and implemented housing and infrastructure
- Cooperation and collaboration amongst First Nations because they have the solutions
- Inclusion, safe, secure, affordable, healthy, quality housing and infrastructure with adequate resources to create a sustainable housing and infrastructure portfolio



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### Funding and Finance

- Long term, flexible, housing and infrastructure funding model developed by and for First Nations
- Maximize the leverage of funding and financing, through partnerships, with other governments and First Nations
- Access to and implementation of all of the modern financial tools of infrastructure development in First Nations that are available to all other levels of government
- It is imperative to find a way to encourage individual and family responsibility for housing and infrastructure

### Skills and Capacity

- First Nations control over skills and capacity development aligned with community needs
- Committed and significant investment into the existing First Nations technical and skills organizations
- Central repositories of technical knowledge information made available to all First Nations
- Committed and appropriate funding to ensure the attraction and retention of qualified housing and capital managers

### Governance and Delivery

- Significant and committed investments in local management of housing and infrastructure
- First Nations institutions must be stand alone and endowed with all of the necessary authorities and funding to succeed
- Transfer payments directly to First Nations
- A national institution that replaces CMHC and INAC in the delivery of Housing and infrastructure is needed
- Must get local regional and national politics out of housing and infrastructure development

## 12.0 Recommendations and Next Steps

### Situational Analysis

First Nations have stated categorically that all activities in year 1 of the First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Strategy must be rooted in the eventual transition of Housing and Infrastructure to full First Nations control.

Direction has been given by the Chiefs in Assembly, through Resolutions 98/2016, “*Support the Development of a First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy*” and 96/2016 “*Relationship Protocol between Canada and First Nations Related to Housing and*



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*Infrastructure*”, passed at the December 2016 Special Chiefs Assembly to realize on a National Strategy that fully supports Regional, Tribal Council and Community initiatives.

The AFN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure have now been tasked with developing the “National First Nations Housing and Infrastructure strategy”. As part of the early development of the transition towards full First Nations control over housing and infrastructure, there are several initiatives that are crucial if we want to ensure that we are adequately informed about the complete Housing and infrastructure environment, including the details about existing programming, policies, “vote” budgets, including all management systems and frameworks. The following work plan illustrates the 2017-18 strategic plan. This “year 1” work plan is rooted in research and planning for the eventual control of housing and infrastructure programming and budgets. Year 2 implementation plan will be based on the work of 2017.

### Year 1: 2017-2018 Objectives

- To move forward on implementing the plan to full First Nations control over housing and infrastructure, through strategic research and information gathering to better understand the existing programs, policies while we develop possible options for the full transition.
- A Skills and Capacity for Housing symposium will be planned for Quarter 3 with a view to creating a forum for Housing Managers to identify skills and capacity development needs, skills gaps, and a thorough assessment of existing supports currently available to prepare Housing managers/Directors/ and others for the transitional step to control of housing.
- To develop a Year 2 Implementation plan that is based on the research, data and information gathering of year 1 with a view to transitioning specifically identified programming items and activities to full First Nations control

### Execution

#### General Outline:

There is a requirement to gather information, data and the full budgets on the existing suites of programs that fund all aspects of housing and infrastructure development on and off reserve that service First Nations and Indigenous peoples.

Our research, investigation and data gathering will be on all aspects but not limited to the following:

- pre-budget submissions, pre-design and design initiatives, business case development initiative’s , construction, financing, operations and maintenance, training and certifications, legislation, regulations and regulatory frameworks,





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and all information regarding votes 1, 5, 10 and 15 budgets as they are related to Indigenous and First Nations housing and infrastructure development from INAC, CMHC, Health Canada, Infrastructure Canada.

It is important to understand the “true” costs of implementing our rights to shelter. Phases of work are divided by Year and Quarter with associated due dates. Additional note that this draft work plan is based on what we heard and gathered and analysis for the National Forum on Housing and Infrastructure. The work will be based on a phased in – type of work plan with identified deliverables and resources.

Phase	Tasks	Deliverables	Resources	Due Date
Year 1 – Quarters 1-2	<p><b><u>Funding and Finance options development:</u></b></p> <p>First Nations Market Housing Fund research and analysis:</p> <p><i>This activity is for the purposes of beginning the transfer of the FNMHF</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and Data collection on the operations and administration of the Market Housing Fund</li> <li>• Identify and develop transition activities for those targeted budgets</li> <li>• Create initial workplan for transition of fund to First Nations control</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research report on the operational and administrative activities with recommendations for items for transition to First Nation’s control</li> <li>2. Full disclosure document designed to inform First Nations on the full operational and administrative history of the FNMHF</li> <li>3. Meetings, dialogues sessions and engagement activities in support of report production</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFN Staff</li> <li>• 4 members of the CCOHI</li> <li>• Subject Matter Expertise</li> <li>• Advisory support</li> <li>• Project Management support services</li> </ul>	Quarter 3
Year 1 - Quarters 2-3	<p><b><u>Skills and Capacity strategy development</u></b></p> <p><i>These activities are designed to gain full understanding of the capacity and skills programming prior to transformation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the capacity and</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research report on the training, skills and capacity initiatives available for First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Managers, including the associated budgets, “votes” and management systems</li> <li>2. Subject matter for the transition discussion at the “Skills and Capacity</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFN Staff</li> <li>• 4 members of the CCOHI</li> <li>• Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>• Advisory support</li> <li>• Project Management support services</li> </ul>	Quarter 3



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Phase	Tasks	Deliverables	Resources	Due Date
	<p>skills needs and requirements in order to support full transition for First Nations control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pay equity gap assessment and issues identification for recruiting and retaining housing and capital managers</li> <li>• Identify the current suite of training initiatives and budgets supported by the Federal and Provincial government as it relates to training for</li> <li>• Project management training initiatives for Housing managers in the implementation of local projects</li> </ul>	<p>symposium”</p> <p>3. Meetings, dialogues sessions and engagement activities in support of report production are eligible activities</p>		
<p>Year 1 -            Quarters            2-3</p>	<p><b><u>Governance and Delivery:</u></b></p> <p><i>These activities are related to the discussion and plan to transition the management of Housing and infrastructure to full First Nations control</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition Working group: Develop the way forward and the options for the transition plan to full control</li> <li>• Institutional development options and roles and responsibilities between national, regional, sub-regional, tribal council and local</li> <li>• 5 year transition to full control concept paper for discussion, input at the</li> </ul>	<p>1. Transition plan concept paper for discussion at the Fall 2017 Symposium</p> <p>2. Institutional Development options paper</p> <p>3. Meetings, dialogues sessions and engagement activities in support of implementation plan production are eligible activities and will be required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFN Staff</li> <li>• AFN executive</li> <li>• All members of the CCOHI</li> <li>• Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>• Advisory support</li> <li>• Project Management support services</li> </ul>	<p>Quarter            4</p>



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Phase	Tasks	Deliverables	Resources	Due Date
	session at Symposium			
Year 1 – Quarters 2-3	<p><b><u>Infrastructure-specific data gathering, research and strategy development:</u></b></p> <p><i>The following activities are to identify that various programs that exists for Infrastructure in First Nations communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the internal program mechanics and the past and current decision making frameworks and structures at INAC</li> <li>• Priority Ranking Frameworks and budget decision making</li> <li>• All budget information related to Infrastructure programming</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gain detailed understanding of all infrastructure programming for Indigenous people</li> <li>2. Meetings, dialogues sessions and engagement activities in support of implementation plan production are eligible activities and will be required</li> <li>3. Vetting at Fall 2017 symposium</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFN Staff</li> <li>• AFN executive</li> <li>• All members of the CCOHI</li> <li>• Subject Matter Experts</li> <li>• Advisory support</li> <li>• Project Management support services</li> </ul>	Quarter 4
Year 1 – Quarters 1-3	<p>Support for the Housing &amp; Capital managers network development and Symposium – Fall 2017</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMHC is supporting the planning for a Fall 2017 symposium for First Nations Housing and infrastructure Skills and Capacity (CMHC Q4-2017 monies)</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial support for the participation, planning, implementation of the Skills and Capacity Symposium planned for Fall 2017</li> <li>2. Networking and Engagement with leadership, Housing and Infrastructure professionals</li> <li>3. Vetting and reviewing the previous report findings and concept papers and options papers</li> </ol>	Full Symposium participation over that of the First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure forum	Quarter 3



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Phase	Tasks	Deliverables	Resources	Due Date
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning and support services during the implementation and planning of the event</li> </ul>			
Year 1 Quarters 1-3	<p>Support for AFN participation in regional engagement strategies</p> <p><i>On an as required basis, there is a recurring requirement for AFN National office staff and support to participate in regional engagement sessions in order to provide policy and technical support</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentations, communications and other forms of support are required during regional and sub-regional engagement sessions</li> <li>Participation at events</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AFN support for Regional AFN affiliates in the implementation of their engagement sessions and strategies</li> <li>Presentations, Panels, facilitation, Question and Answer sessions</li> </ol>	<p>AFN Staff</p> <p>AFN Executive</p> <p>Subject Matter experts</p> <p>Support resources</p>	Quarters 4
Year 1 Quarters 3-4	<p>Year 2 – Implementation Plan and Budget – Initial transition year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For Special Chiefs Assembly Approval</li> <li>2018-19 Transition Agenda</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 year implementation plan and strategy</li> <li>Budgets and transition timelines</li> </ol>	<p>Chiefs in Assembly</p> <p>AFN Executive</p> <p>AFN Staff</p>	Quarter 4



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## 13.0 Resolutions passed at 2016 AFN Special Chiefs Assembly

### **Resolution 98/2016, “Support the Development of a First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy”**

#### **Support the Development of a First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:**

1. Support and affirm the importance of a Treaty right to housing and infrastructure, which includes the continued need to eliminate the infrastructure deficit.
2. Support AFN and First Nation efforts to leverage local, regional, and national networks, grassroots organizing, shared research and resources, and joint action to assert the Treaty right to housing.
3. Call upon the Government of Canada to recognize and affirm the Treaty right to housing and commit to eliminating the infrastructure deficit, and to enter into an honourable process of consultation, collaboration and negotiation with First Nations across Canada to implement this right and address housing shortages and the infrastructure deficit.
4. Support the development of a First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy based on the outcomes of the *First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Forum*, to facilitate First Nation control of housing and infrastructure.

### **Resolution 96/2016 “Relationship Protocol between Canada and First Nations Related to Housing and Infrastructure**

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:**

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to work with the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, the Minister of Health, and the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, to establish a Relationship Protocol that will guide the relationship between Canada and First Nations and ensure the effective development and delivery of sustainable housing and infrastructure programs and services to First Nation communities.
2. Direct the AFN to provide a progress report on the development of a Relationship Protocol at the 2017 AFN Special Chiefs Assembly.

For further information, please check our website: [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)