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INTRODUCTION

Plan Organization

The Community Plan on Homelessness for the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is structured as follows:

SECTION 1.0 – DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY PLAN describes the background and purpose, scope and planning process used in preparing the Community Plan. Also presented is a brief overview of the Government of Canada’s and the Province of Alberta’s responses to the homelessness issue. The provincial and federal programs form an important policy context for the preparation of the plan.

SECTION 2.0 – SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT presents an overview of the housing situation in Fort McMurray as well as key findings from key person interviews conducted with individuals and agencies in the Regional Municipality. Also included are observations from the Homeless Luncheon, Strategic Planning Workshop, and Landlord Survey. Lastly, an estimate of the number of homeless people is provided.

SECTION 3.0 – GAP ANALYSIS provides an overview of the facilities, programs and services required to ‘fill’ the identified gaps in the continuum of support for the homeless. These have been presented in tabular form to make them easy to understand. The gap analysis has been generated from key person interviews, Strategic Planning Workshop, and discussions with the Homeless Initiatives Committee. The Committee quantified the needs in response to identified gaps, provided order of magnitude cost estimates and assigned priorities.

SECTION 4.0 – A CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS develops strategies and action plans to address the needs of the homeless and for the next three years (2000 – 2003). As part of this, criteria to set funding priorities have been derived through consultation with local helping agencies and the Steering Committee. Although the absolute homeless are the prime focus of the Community Plan, recommended strategies are also presented with regard to long-term supportive social housing and affordable housing which are key components of the Continuum of Support model.

SECTION 5.0 – IMPLEMENTATION PLAN sets a blueprint for the establishment of a Community Based Organization to coordinate the implementation of the action plan. Also included in this section are recommendations of a process for monitoring, evaluating and updating the plan on an annual basis.

A separate Technical Appendix contains minutes from the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee Meetings; proceedings from the Key Person Interviews; a summary of the Strategic Planning Workshop; a catalogue of complementary funding sources; and other relevant data collected by the Consultant while preparing the Community Plan.
1.0. DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY PLAN

1.1 Plan Background and Purpose

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) has identified the need for a Community Plan on Homelessness. In June 2000, the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee issued a proposal call to qualified consultants to provide the Municipality with this Plan. The Plan envisions a three-year strategy that would address the needs of the homeless population within the Regional Municipality. Current housing research has established a link between the level of homelessness and high shelter costs, a shortage of affordable housing and high levels of homelessness. Typically, urban centers that experience a prosperous local economy and buoyant job market also experience a corresponding increase in the number of homeless people. The RMWB is experiencing a period of rapid growth in the local economy, driven mainly by expansion of oil sand plants in the vicinity of Fort McMurray. As a result, there is a strong demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers in the resource and construction sectors, as well as entry-level employees in the retail, food and beverage sectors. The influx of workers has also created a high demand for housing, both rented and owned. During the past three years, housing prices have risen, rental rates have climbed, and vacancy rates have shrunk. At the same time, the numbers of homeless and near-homeless persons appear to be increasing, particularly within the Urban Service Area (Fort McMurray). As such, the community is seeking ways to reduce homelessness and establish an integrated support system for the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

The purpose of the Community Plan is to address the needs of the homeless population within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB). As a community driven plan, the Community Plan provides specific details on how this support system would work. In its most basic form, the Community Plan is a guideline that describes how the resources of the community are to be marshaled to address this issue. Implementing the plan requires the participation of all three levels of government, local helping agencies, as well as private sector. Implementing the plan also requires public awareness of the reality of homelessness within the municipality, as well as public support of the action plan to address this issue.

There are a number of contributing factors that lead to homelessness in the Wood Buffalo region. In summary they include:

- Unemployment or underemployment;
- Insufficient income to save for security deposit and first month’s rent;
- Lack of affordable housing for those on low or fixed incomes;
- Unable to work due to physical, sensory, or cognitive impairment;
- Unable to cope with everyday living due to mental illness or depression;
- Abusive domestic situation;
- Addiction to drugs, alcohol, or gambling; and
- In-migration of people into community in search of employment (transient workforce).

### 1.2 Community Plan Objectives

Specific objectives of the Community Plan on Homelessness for the RMWB include to:

1. Increase the number of emergency shelter beds and transitional and long-term supportive housing units to begin filling the gaps identified.
2. Expand and initiate the supportive and preventative support services identified consistent with the Continuum of Support System.
3. Encourage partnerships and synergies among service organizations in providing needed shelter and support services.
4. Develop a communications strategy that increases community awareness and support for the Community Plan on a sustained basis.
5. Identify the proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation as the Community-Based Organization (CBO) to oversee the administration and implementation of the Plan.
6. Establish a process for monitoring, evaluating and updating the Plan on an annual basis to ensure it is a ‘living planning document’.

### 1.3 Scope of Community Plan

The consulting team worked with the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee to develop an achievable project work plan. The following established the parameters and scope for the Plan:

- Defined geographic area;
- Establishment of an effective community-based planning process;
- Conducting a needs assessment;
- Assessing existing services and programs for the homeless;
- Analyzing the gaps between projected needs and current resources;
- Identifying community priorities;
- Estimating funding requirements;
- Providing an implementation plan;
- Recommending performance measures; and
- Identifying a Community-Based Organization (CBO) to implement and update the Plan.

The geographic scope of the Community Plan included the entire Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Although the needs of the homeless are most acute within the Urban Service Area (Fort McMurray), site visits and consultation also took place in the...
communities of Anzac, Conklin, Janvier, Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan. Map 1 shows the geographic extent of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, including Fort McMurray, Fort Chipewyan and other rural communities.

The First Nations and Metis Communities are an important part of the larger community; help was received from Mike Sharpe from the Athabasca Tribal Corporation and Glenn Tremblay from Metis Urban Housing in facilitating those consultations.
Map 1: Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
### 1.4 Key Definitions

The following key definitions provide a ‘common language’ to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this Community Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Absolute Homeless</strong></td>
<td>People living on the street, in temporary shelter or locations not meant for human habitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Near Homeless (At Risk Homeless)</strong></td>
<td>Individuals or families who are paying too high a proportion of their income (i.e. over 30%) for housing. This group also includes those living in inadequate accommodations (e.g. units in poor condition, overcrowded units, and/or inadequate shelter from the elements).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adequate / Appropriate Housing</strong></td>
<td>Housing with remaining useful life, which meets health and safety standards and is suited to the needs of residents occupying that housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affordable Housing</strong></td>
<td>Housing where residents pay no more than 30 percent of their gross monthly income for shelter.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Community-Based Organization (CBO)** | An organization composed of a representative cross-section of the local community. A CBO in charge of homelessness for the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo would be responsible for such things as:  
  - Developing strategies and coordinating their implementation to address homeless priorities in their communities;  
  - Complementing the activities being done by other organizations who work with the homeless;  
  - Undertaking fundraising; and  
  - Promoting public understanding of the diverse nature of the homeless problem in their community. |
<p>| <strong>Client Group</strong>              | An identifiable group of persons demonstrating a common characteristic or set of common characteristics. A person may be in one or more client group. |
| <strong>Community</strong>                 | A neighbourhood or part of a city or region, which is linked by a common interest, possessions, ethnicity, services and support for persons that reside in the area. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continuum of Support</td>
<td>A community-based support system that helps people move from a homeless situation to transitional and permanent housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Housing</td>
<td>A temporary facility where the agency or landlord determines the maximum length of stay (generally short term), and where the goal of the agency is to stabilize the individual in crisis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap Analysis</td>
<td>A method of quantifying unmet needs, identifying and prioritizing gaps in the continuum of care in order to develop strategies to address these needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard to House</td>
<td>Persons having a multi-problem lifestyle that makes them very difficult to house (i.e., alcohol and substance abusers, those with mental health problems and/or unpredictable behavior).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostel</td>
<td>Residential accommodation that has shared common spaces in the bedroom, kitchen, dining room, and/or bathroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Housing</td>
<td>Long-term housing where the resident or tenant is in control of the length of stay, subject to compliance with residential tenancy agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector Housing</td>
<td>Housing that is owned and managed by individuals and companies that are profit motivated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance Measures</td>
<td>Established benchmarks or quantitative and qualitative measures against which the success of a particular program can be measured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent Supplement</td>
<td>A monetary supplement paid by the Alberta Provincial Government to a private landlord to facilitate rental of a unit to a low-income tenant. Under this program, the qualifying tenant pays 30% of his/her income, with the difference between this revenue and the market rent for the unit paid by the Province.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Contained Unit</td>
<td>An apartment unit that contains its own living, dining, sleeping and bathroom facilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Housing

Housing that requires on-going subsidies to reduce shelter costs for very low-income households. This housing is typically owned and/or administered by a public body on behalf of municipal, provincial or federal government.

Special Housing Needs

Housing that is designed to meet the needs of clients with physical, sensory, or cognitive impairments. This type of housing may also have support services for residents if they are not capable of living independently. Generally, this type of housing meets the requirement for adequate, affordable, suitable, and safe housing for those with special needs.

1.5 The Planning Process

The preparation of the Community Plan was carried out over a 16-week period under the direction of the Homeless Initiatives Committee. Key elements of the work plan can be summarized as follows:

1.6 Review of Background Information

A review of draft Community Plans, social housing plans, homelessness strategies, and governmental policy documents was conducted as part of developing this Community Plan. While the format and content of each report varied widely, the following common themes were reflected:

- Addressing homelessness requires marshalling the resources of the entire community, including all three levels of government; private business and the financial sector; philanthropic funding agencies; and helping agencies.
- Effective strategies to address homelessness are based on the ‘continuum of support’ model, which envisions a comprehensive system of facilities, programs and services for the homeless.
- Since no single agency or government department can deliver all of the required programs and services, partnerships are essential in providing a continuum of support.
- Since human and monetary resources are limited, homeless initiatives must be assigned a specific priority within each housing plan. These priorities must be locally derived to receive the support of the community.
- Addressing the needs of the absolute homeless will also require developing strategies to reduce the risk of homelessness for individuals and families that are struggling financially with high housing costs, or are living in overcrowded or inappropriate housing.
1.7 Public Information Program

Generally, most communities already have in place initiatives that are targeted for homeless people. These may be in the form of emergency shelters, transitional housing, crisis counseling, employment services, and/or homelessness awareness campaigns. Together, these programs and services constitute a community’s continuum of support. However, in order to gauge where there may be gaps in the existing support system, it was necessary to conduct a community information gathering program. This involved the following components:

- A ‘start-up’ meeting with the RMWB Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee and representatives of various helping agencies
- Preparation of a Project Backgrounder that was distributed to all agency representatives
- Key person interviews with local representatives
- Site visit and consultation with representatives from rural communities in the Regional Municipality
- A luncheon for homeless persons, where members of the Steering Committee could gain direct feedback about the concerns and needs of homeless individuals and families
- A survey of tenant characteristics provided by local landlords through the RMWB Landlord & Tenant Advisory Board.
- A strategic planning workshop to validate identified gaps, establish funding priorities, and develop action plans to address homelessness
- A media advisory and coverage of the key findings from the Strategic Planning Workshop

Together, these activities comprise a comprehensive public consultation process that was necessary to help the Steering Committee understand the nature of the problem within the Regional Municipality, and to formulate an agreed-upon strategy to address homelessness.

1.8 Key Person Interviews

During a three-week period in August 2000, a series of in-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of local helping agencies; federal, provincial and municipal departments; as well as local residents. At total of 38 interviews were conducted with over 50 key people. Key informants were asked a number of questions including:

- A description of the housing programs and support services offered by their agency;
- Characteristics of the client group(s) being served by their organization;
- Source(s) of annual operating / capital funding and number of staff;
- Role(s) of their organization during the next five years;
- The estimated size of the homeless population in both the Fort McMurray area and Wood Buffalo region;
- Specific gaps in programs and support services for the homeless; and,
- The three most important priorities that need to be addressed with regard to homelessness in the region.

A summary of key findings from these interviews is presented in Section 2.0 of this report. The proceedings from each of these key contact interviews are included in the Technical Appendix.

### 1.9 Site Visit and Consultation with Rural Communities

In August 2000, field trips were made to the outlying communities within driving distance of Fort McMurray. This included Conklin, Janvier, Anzac and Fort McKay. The trip included a site visit to each municipal office within these communities as well as discussions with local residents and Metis representatives. A summary of key findings from the field trip is included in the Technical Appendix.

On Friday, August 18th, the consulting team conducted a field trip to Fort Chipewyan – an important but remote community on the northwestern shore of Lake Athabasca. Representatives from RMWB Family & Community Support Services accompanied the consultants on this trip. Present at the meeting were representatives from the following organizations:

- Ayabaskaw Seniors Lodge
- Metis Local 125
- Mikisew First Nation
- Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
- Light Island Housing Authority
- Athabasca Tribal Council
- Family & Community Support Services of Fort Chipewyan
- Municipal Councilors, John Chadi and Sonny Flett

In addition, a telephone interview was conducted with a representative of Paspew House Family Crisis Shelter in Fort Chipewyan.
1.10 Homeless Luncheon

On Thursday, August 24, the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee co-sponsored a lunch for the homeless at the Nistawoyou Friendship Centre. Lunch consisted of oven-baked turkey, mashed potatoes, vegetables and gravy. Salad, dessert, coffee and juice were also provided. In total, 76 people signed the guest list and over 100 meals were served. Advance notice of the luncheon was made via word of mouth and advertisements at the Friendship Center. The client population that attended the luncheon consisted of low-income and near homeless households as well as a portion of the absolute homeless population in Fort McMurray.

Section 2.0 of this report contains a summary of the comments and suggestions received from those who attended the luncheon.

1.11 Strategic Planning Workshop

The Strategic Planning Workshop for the Community Plan was held on Tuesday, August 29, 2000, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm at the C.A. Knight Recreation Center Banquet Room in Fort McMurray. Invitations to participate in the workshop were sent to over 75 people, representing a broad range of helping organizations, political representatives, and private interests. A total of 30 people participated in the workshop. Members of the local media were invited to attend the final ‘report out’ session during the final half-hour of the workshop.

A summary of workshop results is included in Section 2.0 of this report. A copy of the Workshop Summary Report is included in the Technical Appendix.

1.12 Landlord Survey

In September 2000, staff at the RMWB Community Services Department contacted 20 landlords who manage a total of 3,338 rental units in Fort McMurray. The following four questions were asked as part of this survey:

1. Are you experiencing doubling-up by families and/or individuals in your units? If so, in how many units is this occurring?
2. How many tenants do you currently have in rent arrears?
3. Can you provide an estimate of the number of tenants in your units struggling month-to-month to pay the rent?
4. How many of your tenants are currently part of the rent supplement program?

1.13 Request for Project Initiatives

In September an invitation to submit expressions of interest were sent to over 75 individuals and agencies inviting them to submit expressions of interest for project
initiatives that would respond to the identified ‘gaps’ in housing and support services. To date eight (8) expressions of interest have been received from five (5) organizations. These will be evaluated based on the priority-setting criteria that has been established and recommendations will be made for inclusion within the budget requests for 2000/2001 fiscal year.

1.14 Release of Report

A draft Community Plan was submitted to the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee on October 12th, 2000. The development of this plan has been an iterative and evolutionary process involving extensive consultation with the Steering Committee and representatives of helping agencies in Wood Buffalo. As such, it is anticipated that a final version of this plan will be released to the public by December 2000.

1.15 Government of Canada’s Homelessness Response

In March 1999, Claudette Bradshaw was appointed the Federal Coordinator on Homelessness. Through the summer of 1999, Minister Bradshaw visited communities across Canada to learn about the nature and extent of homelessness in Canada, and how local communities are dealing with the problem. By Fall 1999, the Federal Government prepared a report on homelessness in light of the findings reported by Minister Bradshaw. On December 17, 1999, the Government of Canada announced that it would make available $753 million over three years for a partnership-based approach to help communities alleviate and prevent homelessness. Funding would be distributed amongst both new and existing federal programs. These programs are:

- $268 M Housing Renovation Programs (CMHC)
- $59 M Youth Employment Strategy
- $59 M Urban Aboriginal Strategy
- $43 M Shelter Enhancement Program
- $10 M Surplus Federal Properties
- $7 M Research, Reporting and Accountability
- $2 M Assistance for Community Plans (HRDC)
- $305 M Supportive Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI)
- $753 M TOTAL

A key component of the federal homelessness strategy is the Supportive Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI). This program will provide $305-million over three years to cities and municipalities with significant homelessness problems. The key assumptions of the SCPI program are as follows:

- That all levels of government must work in partnership with each other and with local community organizations and representatives;
That strategies and priorities to address homelessness must be derived from within each community;
That each community should develop a ‘community action plan’ to address both the short-term (immediate) and long-term needs (preventative strategies) of homeless people; and,
That priority for funding will be based upon alleviating and preventing absolute homelessness.

The majority of this fund (80%) is earmarked for larger cities such Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax. The remaining 20% of the fund is being allocated to smaller communities that can demonstrate that they have a significant homelessness problem. In Alberta, the following cities qualify for SCPI funding:

Major Cities          Smaller Cities
- Calgary             - Fort McMurray
- Edmonton            - Grande Prairie
- Medicine Hat        - Lethbridge

As a center that qualifies for SCPI funding, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo has been allocated just over $615,000 during the three-year federal funding initiative. A year-by-year breakdown of funding is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Year</th>
<th>SCPI Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000/2001</td>
<td>$205,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>$205,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>$203,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$615,602</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Elaine Vincent, Human Resources Development Canada, provided these figures.

1.16 Government of Alberta’s Homelessness Response

The Federal SCPI program requires matching dollars in cash or in-kind contributions. The provincial and/or municipal government can provide matching funding as part of the SCPI program. Matching funding can also be provided by the private and/or non-profit sectors. The SCPI program assumes that all levels of government will want to contribute funds or in-kind donations to help alleviate homelessness.

The Province of Alberta, through Alberta Community Development, has committed $3-million each year for the next three years to support homeless initiatives in the seven Alberta cities listed above. Funding cannot be carried over from one fiscal year to another, however Provincial funds can be used as matching dollars under the SCPI program. The Provincial strategy is laid out in the July 2000 document entitled Moving
Forward… Homelessness Policy Framework: Implementation Strategy. The strategy has the following three components:

- Ensuring that there are adequate facilities and support services to assist homeless people.
- Supporting each of the seven Alberta cities in the development of their Community Plans.
- Improving inter-governmental and inter-departmental communication and coordination of homeless support services. The provincial departments of Health & Wellness, Human Resources & Employment, and Children’s Services will also be involved in this process.

The Government of Alberta’s three-year funding commitment for homelessness initiatives in the RMWB is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Budget Year</th>
<th>Provincial Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000/2001</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001/2002</td>
<td>up to $200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>up to $200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>up to $600,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Walter Tauber and Rob Martin, Alberta Community Development, provided these figures.
2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Overview of the Rental Market in Fort McMurray

The following statistics provide an overview of an important aspect of the local housing situation – the rental market. For homeless people seeking to live in more permanent housing, high rental prices, the requirement for first month’s rent and security deposit, and utility and/or telephone connection costs together form a significant, often insurmountable, financial hurdle. For the near homeless (here defined as low-income households not living in subsidized housing), high market rents may keep some households in overcrowded, unsuitable, or substandard units.

Table 1 shows the core need income threshold for Fort McMurray for the years 1997 to 2000. The core need threshold is the annual income that is required to affordably pay average rents for rental units of various sizes, based on a shelter-cost-to-income ratio of 30%. As this table shows, the income threshold has been rising steadily during the past four years for all types of rental units in Fort McMurray.

**Table 1: Core Need Income Threshold for Rental Housing in Fort McMurray**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of rental unit</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One bedroom</td>
<td>$18,500</td>
<td>$24,500</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$31,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two bedroom</td>
<td>$22,000</td>
<td>$29,000</td>
<td>$34,000</td>
<td>$36,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three bedroom</td>
<td>$29,000</td>
<td>$33,500</td>
<td>$36,500</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four bedroom</td>
<td>$31,000</td>
<td>$35,500</td>
<td>$38,500</td>
<td>$42,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Alberta Community Development and Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

Tables 2 and 3 show a comparison of average rental prices and vacancy rates between Fort McMurray and Calgary for the years 1998 to 2000. Notice that during the past three years, the rental market in Fort McMurray has tightened and rental rates have risen dramatically for all types of units. Vacancy rates in Fort McMurray are now below 1%. Also noteworthy, is the fact that Fort McMurray has rental prices that are higher than Calgary, a major metropolitan that has a significant homeless population.

**Table 2: Apartment Vacancy Rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fort McMurray</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedroom +</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calgary</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedroom +</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation
Table 3: Average Rental Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fort McMurray</th>
<th></th>
<th>Calgary</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apartment Rents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>$455</td>
<td>$471</td>
<td>$668</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>$597</td>
<td>$632</td>
<td>$809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
<td>$695</td>
<td>$727</td>
<td>$906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedroom +</td>
<td>$724</td>
<td>$773</td>
<td>$950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

In September 2000, the Community Services Department of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo released the Emergency & Social Housing Report, which provided rental rates on apartment units in Fort McMurray. Table 4 shows the rental ranges for various sizes of apartment units as of March 2000, as well as median market rents for 2000. In general, newcomers to Fort McMurray are likely to be paying near the top of these rental ranges.

Table 4: Rental Rates in Fort McMurray

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Rental Apartment Rates</th>
<th>March 2000</th>
<th>Median Market Rents 2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>$390 - $975</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
<td>$495 - $1,025</td>
<td>1 bedroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
<td>$595 - $1,195</td>
<td>2 bedroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 bedroom +</td>
<td>$845 - $1,450</td>
<td>3 bedroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Vacancy Rate</td>
<td>0 %</td>
<td>4 bedroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (1): RMWB, Community Services Department
Source (2): Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

Local Stories of Housing Hardship

The consulting team heard many stories of housing hardship due to rising rents in the Fort McMurray area. This anecdotal information provides a human context to accompany the facts and figures presented above. The first story concerns a single adult earning a reasonable salary who has seen his rent increase by 100% over a three year period. The second story concerns a senior citizen on a fixed income – a population group that is increasingly vulnerable to housing hardship in Fort McMurray.

Joe [not his real name] has lived in Fort McMurray since 1973 and has been a renter since he moved here. He is one of a significant number of renters who is quite happy to remain renting and does not want to purchase a home. He takes issue with those who
ask him: “Why not just buy a condominium?” He feels that renting should be a viable long-term housing option for people. He commented that current market conditions are making renting an increasingly non-viable housing option for many local residents.

When he moved into his current residence, a centrally located one-bedroom apartment, in 1992, he paid $470/month rent. The apartment is about 20 years old and has 30 units. He is currently paying $950/month. He has provided a breakdown of monthly rent he has been paying since October 1992. The following graph shows that market rents stayed fairly level for a four-year period between October 1992 and October 1997. Rents even declined somewhat during 1996. However, since mid-1997 his rent has increased steadily. The biggest jump occurred in October 1999, when rent on his one-bedroom increased by $200 per month—a 33% increase in one year. In fact, since October 1997, his rent has increased by 100% over a three-year period.

Although he earns a comparatively good wage at Syncrude as a heavy equipment operator, he is worried that even he will not be able to afford his rent if it keeps increasing. He likes his suite and it suits his needs. However, he fears that his rent may increase to $1,250 per month—a rate that some companies are already paying to rent one-bedroom apartments for their employees. He mentioned that the Millenium Construction Consortium pays its contractors $2,500 per month for food and accommodation while they are working in Fort McMurray. This means that a significant number of construction workers in Fort McMurray can easily pay sky-high rents. This has further inflated market rents in Fort McMurray.
Rising rent is also a serious concern to single individuals earning fixed incomes. Janet [not her real name] is a senior citizen on a fixed income and has seen the rent on her one-bedroom apartment increase by 132% during the past two years (from $408 / month to $950 / month as of October 2000). Her most recent rental increase was $200 per month. She is concerned that if her rent continues to increase, she may be forced out of the unit because she can no longer afford to live there. She has lived in Fort McMurray for the past 20 years, and would like to remain there.

Realizing that she is not the only one facing housing hardship, she is also a member of the Fort McMurray Long Term Care Association – an advocacy group for the working poor, seniors, single parent families, and other local residents struggling with high housing costs. She has written letters to Claudette Bradshaw, Minister Responsible for the Homeless and Alfonso Gagliano, Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, regarding housing issues in Fort McMurray. She has also written to both the local Member of Parliament and Member of the Legislative Assembly concerning the housing situation. She has encouraged other local renters to write to their elected representative about the challenges they are facing.

In April 2000, a local group called Friends Dissolving Poverty, made a presentation to Municipal Council on behalf of those struggling financially with high rents and low wages. During the Open House portion of the meeting, 24 individuals and families made brief presentations regarding their current situation. A synopsis of their comments is as follows:

- Those earning low wages ($6.00-$10.00 per hour), and those on fixed monthly incomes (under $1,000 per month) are having great difficulty affording current market rents.
- Some households have had to use part of their food budget to pay for recent rental increases.
- Many of the presenters supported the idea of rent controls and/or limits on annual increases in rent.
- Increasingly, persons earning low or moderate incomes are being shut out of both the rental and homeownership market. Some of the working poor are living at the Salvation Army Men’s Shelter or at a local motel.
- Saving for first month’s rent and security deposit is becoming a significant financial hurdle for those seeking to rent in Fort McMurray.
- There is evidence that high housing costs are having unwanted negative psychological and social effects on the community (e.g., mental depression, substance abuse, domestic violence, overcrowding and lack of privacy).

Exacerbating the tight rental market is the trend toward condominium conversion of existing rental properties. According to the September 2000 Emergency & Social Housing Report, there has been a 20-year decline in the number of rental properties in
Fort McMurray (between 1981 and projections for 2001).\textsuperscript{1} This trend has occurred despite an increase in the population of Fort McMurray during this time period.

2.2 Findings from Key Person Interviews – Urban Services Area

During a three-week period between August 1 and August 23, 2000, a total of 28 in-depth interviews were conducted with 40 representatives from public, private, and third sector organizations in the Fort McMurray area. In addition, interviews were conducted with several local residents that are currently experiencing housing hardship. The findings from these key contact interviews are extensive, and have been included in the Technical Appendix. These interviews have informed the gap analysis (shown in Section 3 of this report), and have been helped shape the August 29\textsuperscript{th} strategic planning workshop. As such, a ‘snapshot’ sample of comments made by key informants has been included here.

Comments regarding the social and economic consequences of homelessness

- **Northern Lights Regional Health Center** mentioned that during a six-month period between January 1, 2000 and July 31, 2000 a total of 625 hospital days were allocated to individuals without housing. These ‘patient days’ were counted after each person’s treatment period, i.e., they were medically fit to be released, but couldn’t be because they had no home to go to. Multiplying 625 days by $820 per day average cost of a hospital bed, indicates that approximately $500,000 was spent by the provincial government to ‘house’ these people in a hospital ward during a six-month period – representing a total expenditure of $1-million per year.

- **YMCA Job Centre** noted that despite the outward signs of a booming local economy, there are those who are struggling to find work appropriate to their skills. Many newcomers to Fort McMurray have an expectation that finding work will be relatively easy given the booming economy – an expectation that often proves hard to fulfill. Some newcomers are temporarily homeless while they look for work. Many camp in one of the three local campgrounds in Fort McMurray. These clients typically have the greatest challenges in finding work.

- **YMCA Immigrant Settlement Program** commented that some immigrants and refugees are at risk of becoming homeless. Recently, five new immigrants became outright homeless and used the shelter system for a period of time while they were getting established in Fort McMurray.

- **Fort McMurray Housing Authority** remarked that the lack of affordable ownership and rental housing is putting a lot of pressure on the existing social housing stock in

\textsuperscript{1} Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, *Emergency & Social Housing Report*, Community Services Department, September, 2000, p. 2
Fort McMurray. The current number of subsidized units and rental supplements used to meet the demand for subsidized housing in Fort McMurray. However, this is no longer the case.

- **Fort McMurray Food Bank** stated that the Food Bank served 6,000 clients in 1999 – a 500% increase over the 1,300 clients served in 1995. Only a small percentage of Food Bank clients are homeless persons; most are the working poor. Many clients that had not used the Food Bank for five years are now using the service again due to the high cost of rent.

- **Salvation Army START Program** advised that more information is needed about the pattern of daily life for homeless persons in the region. This knowledge would assist in tailoring support services to the needs of these people as part of providing a full continuum of support. For example, this information could help the Salvation Army provide daytime services for the homeless when the shelter is closed between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

- **Correctional Service of Canada** noted that teenagers are a sub-group that is at risk of becoming homeless because of dysfunctional family environments or substance abuse within the home.

- **Habitat for Humanity Society of Fort McMurray** commented that local volunteer organizations are experiencing difficulty recruiting and retaining members because many local residents are working longer hours during the current economic boom. This has caused existing volunteers to burnout and has made it very challenging to recruit new volunteers.

- **Some Other Solutions for Crisis Prevention** is concerned about the long-term social and psychological consequences of the housing situation and the potential negative effect it will have on the health and well being of local residents. Some households are making unusual decisions such as canceling their telephone service due to financial constraints and not wanting to lose their home.

- **Pastew Place Detox Centre** remarked that the boom-bust nature of Fort McMurray has contributed to substance abuse. People are chasing dollars but neglecting to treat their addictions.

- **Northern Lights Regional Health Centre** stated that Mental Health Services finds it difficult to provide a full continuum of support to persons with mental illness or those who are brain injured, because there is a lack of affordable and appropriate housing within the Regional Municipality.

- **Disability Resource Association** noted that very few disabled person own their own home, most rent or live with family members. Thus, many disabled persons live...
in compromised circumstances, lacking the independence that homeownership may provide. It is more difficult to obtain a mortgage, even with a steady income stream from the AISH program, if you are disabled.

- **Fort McMurray Family Crisis Center** commented that the local economic boom may be discouraging women from fleeing an abusive or severely dysfunctional home situation. With a 'tight' rental market and virtually no low rent housing available, the option of starting a new life elsewhere in Fort McMurray is economically challenging for some women.

**Advice for a future Community-Based Organization to assist the homeless**

- **Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce** suggested that a non-profit foundation be set up as the legal entity that would be responsible for raising funds for initiatives geared to the homeless. A foundation is the preferred model vis-à-vis fundraising. In addition, the CMHC may waive or reduce some of its lending requirements with respect to foundations.

- **Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)** noted that helping agencies should be careful about mixing client types in an emergency shelter or group home. While some overlap and efficiencies will occur through the use of a common facility, some clients require separate treatment facilities and specific counseling programs.

- **Nistawoyou Friendship Centre** remarked that all levels of government as well as the oil sand industry have a duty to address homelessness in the broader community. The prosperous economy in the region also attracts a large number of people who relocate here in search of work. Pressure on the local rental market has contributed to a rising cost of living and is making it very difficult for households on low or fixed incomes.

- **Fort McMurray Association for Community Living** advised that partnerships between the private sector and all three levels of government are necessary to provide funding for initiatives designed to help the homeless and near homeless. The non-profit sector can be an active partner in terms of operating new or expanded facilities and programs, but funding sources are required to make these visions a reality.
2.3 Key Person Interviews – Rural Communities

General findings

- While there is very little visible homelessness in the rural areas of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, there is evidence of overcrowding in some communities (i.e., more than one household sharing a single housing unit). In rural communities, most of the near homeless are currently living with family or friends within the existing housing stock.

- There is an interrelationship between homelessness in the rural communities and homelessness in Fort McMurray. Underemployed or unemployed rural residents that obtain short-term or seasonal work in Fort McMurray are often hard-pressed to afford a rental unit, given the combined cost of first month’s rent, security deposit, and utility hookups. Thus, some of these workers exist in a quasi-homeless state while they are living in Fort McMurray.

- It is essential that new initiatives and services targeted for the homeless incorporate an understanding of aboriginal culture and decision-making. In rural communities, local resident’s perceptions of the process involved in resolving homelessness issues are just as important as the goal or end product.

Key findings from Fort Chipewyan

- There is an estimated 200-250 local residents that are under-housed and in need of their own housing unit (rental, long-term lease or owned). This represents about 15% of the total resident population of the community (Fort Chipewyan townsite and adjacent reserves).

- The under housed in Fort Chipewyan consist mainly of single individuals and couples with no kids. These two types of households receive lower priority on waiting lists for new Band housing than for families with children. (This holds true for housing that is under the jurisdiction of either the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation or the Mikisew Cree First Nation, as well as housing managed by the Light Island Housing Authority.)

- A popular suggestion, by local helping agencies seeking to alleviate the housing need for these two groups, would be the development of small one and two-bedroom suites in an apartment-style development. A housing partnership would need to be formed among Metis Housing, First Nation Housing, and the Light Island Housing Authority for this type of development to take place.

- There is a requirement for a safe home that provides shelter and supportive services for children and youths fleeing domestic violence or sexual abuse. Currently, these


people have nowhere to go in Fort Chipewyan except to seek help from their extended family.

- Second stage / transition housing is needed for those who have left Paspew House Family Crisis Center but do not wish to return to their previous home. Alternatively, this facility might be located in Fort McMurray since many of those seeking transition housing also seek to also remove themselves from Fort Chipewyan and begin a new life elsewhere.

**Key Challenges in creating new housing in Fort Chipewyan**

- The challenge is to provide new rental housing that is affordable to individuals and families earning low or fixed incomes (generally earning between $550 and $1,000 per month). However, it is near impossible for the private market to build new rental housing that is affordable to persons that are only able to pay economic rents in the range of $200-$350 per month. Thus, rental charges in the new rental development would have to be partially subsidized to make the project economically feasible.

- In Fort Chipewyan, there are very few private lots available. Most land is under jurisdiction of either the provincial or federal government.

**Key findings from Conklin, Janvier, Anzac, and Fort McKay**

- Many residents in the outlying rural communities and reserves can be considered ‘near homeless’ because a significant number of households have unpaid property taxes, or can’t come up with the money for lease payments, or are receiving social services payments. Many of these households are at risk of losing their home.

- The unmet demand for new housing is highest for off-reserve housing in both Conklin and Janvier settlements.

- A significant number of homes in rural areas are in need of repair (both on- and off-reserve).

- It was suggested that federal RRAP (Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program) monies that are allocated for rural communities be managed by a community-based housing trust.

- The ending of the provincial remote housing / emergency housing programs has contributed to a shortage of housing in rural communities. Currently, there are 150 people on the waiting list for housing under the Metis Urban Housing program.

- Seniors are also at risk of becoming homeless upon return to the hamlet where they grew up. They generally do not have the funds to purchase a home and may end up living with their extended family.
- Because of its close proximity to Fort McMurray, Anzac has experienced a rise in housing prices and rents. This has caused housing hardship for some individuals and families.

- In terms of employment opportunities in the rural hamlets, the local school and band office is often the only provider of secure, full-time employment. Other local employment tends to be piecemeal, part-time, contract, or seasonal in nature. This encourages the unemployed or underemployed to move to Fort McMurray or other cities in Alberta.

- There is a need for a facility in Fort McMurray that would allow for short-term stays by rural residents who are receiving physiotherapy, dental work, or treatment at the local hospital.

2.4 Homelessness Luncheon at Nistawyou Friendship Centre

The Homelessness Luncheon at the Nistawoyou Friendship Centre provided members of the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee and the Consultant to have one-on-one conversations with those who attended. The following are selected quotations that provide some insight on being homeless and the daily challenges faced by those who are poor or destitute:

- “We estimate that there is a total of 250 homeless people in the Fort McMurray area.”
- “Young and old are living on the street.”
- “There is increased competition for bottles [that can be cashed in at the bottle depot] in Fort McMurray. There used to be a few of us, now they are many more picking bottles.”
- “Dumpster diving is a daily activity when looking for bottles and potentially usable items.”
- “Welfare does not even begin to offset the cost of rent at $185 per month.” [The Provincial shelter allowance for a single employable adult with no dependants.]
- “Even if we could earn $250 per month, our lives would be much better.”
- “It is dangerous if you are on your own. We have to stick together to be safe.”
- “We need a shelter that is non-judgmental and where you don’t have to pay to sleep.”
- “Winters are the hardest. Some of us have died on the street in past years.”
- “We need a place where we can take a shower, wash our clothes, and have a safe place to stay for part of the day – with no restrictions on entry.”
- “We are not lazy. Some of us volunteer; many of us work on a regular basis. But finding employment is difficult. It’s hard to get a job when your clothes are
dirty and you look rough.”

− “There is a need for a transitional home for persons who want to leave the shelter. This would provide some assurance that life would get better once you left the shelter.”

− “Ideally, rents for those on low incomes should be under $500 per month.”

− “Some of us [homeless people] are shut out of the local housing market and live in vacation trailers or tents in one of the three local campgrounds. Centennial Park needs to have upgraded stalls with power hook-ups, hot showers, and a laundromat.”

− “We are intelligent people, we have our thoughts and our memories.”

2.5 Strategic Planning Workshop

A Strategic Planning Workshop for the Community Plan was held on Tuesday, August 29, 2000, at the C.A. Knight Recreation Centre Banquet Room in Fort McMurray. The objectives of the workshop was to:

§ Involve stakeholders in the planning process.
§ Present and validate findings of work completed to date.
§ Identify gaps in providing housing and services to the homeless.
§ Establish criteria for setting priorities for funding
§ Develop strategies and action plans
§ Obtain buy-in from stakeholders for implementation.

A synopsis of the outcomes from the Strategic Planning Workshop is summarized in Table 5. The full Workshop Summary Report is included in the Technical Appendix.
Table 5: Key Strategies from the Strategic Planning Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defined Gap</th>
<th>Strategy to address gap</th>
<th>Measurable outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Lack of crisis intervention services for the homeless                      | - Combine resources with RCMP and *Some Other Solutions for Crisis Prevention* crisis help line  
- Provide training for volunteers                                           | - Quicker response times for crisis support                                            
- More time for developing prevention and early intervention strategies       |
| A shelter / safe house for those turned away from existing shelters         | - Identify clients and client needs                                                      | - Less hardship for those that are hard to house                                     
- Match programs and services to client needs                                | - Fewer people living on the street                                                    
- Establish safe house                                                        | - Rehabilitative programs designed for the hard to house                               |
| Homeless people need a place to wash clothes, shower, and pick up messages | - Require a 24-hour provider of basic services                                          | - Better health and well-being for the homeless                                      
- Link with existing programs and services                                    | - Homeless people achieve greater independence and self-esteem                          |
| Require transitional housing for those who are in the shelter system        | - Retrofit an appropriate building for residential uses                                 | - Clients gain independence and confidence to move on to permanent housing            
- Develop long-term affordable apartment units or group home                  | - Clients acquire life skills                                                           |
| Require appropriate dormitory housing for transient workforce              | - Partnership with local businesses to create a dormitory facility                      | - Free up beds in existing shelters currently used by transient labourers             
- Modify existing land use bylaw to allow for this use                       | - Fewer employees living in campgrounds                                                 
- Free up beds in existing shelters currently used by working poor           | - More reliable census figures                                                          |
| Lack of affordable rental housing in Fort McMurray                          | - Municipality to borrow money against future property tax revenue received             | - Increased supply of affordable rental units                                         
- Employer-owned housing co-operative                                         | - Free up beds in existing shelters currently used by working poor                     
- Redevelop existing portfolio of social housing                             | - Local employers able to find workers to fill job openings                             |
| Group home for those with mental health issues                              | - Research current operating models to find 'best fit' for RMWB                         | - Reduced use of psychiatric ward at local hospital                                  
- Research funding scenarios for construction of a group home                 | - Reduced homelessness amongst clients with mental health issues                        
- Increased collaboration between helping agencies                             | - More reliable census figures                                                          |
2.6 Results of Landlord Survey

The September 2000 Landlord Survey provided an idea of the proportion of existing renters who are likely facing housing hardship due to rising rents. These renter households can also be considered at risk of becoming homeless due to rising rents and/or financial constraints.

A total of 20 landlords, who manage a total of 3,338 units, participated in this survey. The results are as follows:

- Are you experiencing doubling-up by families and/or individuals in your units? If so, in how many units is this occurring?
  
  **Answer:** 248 units (approximately 7% of 3,338 units)

- How many tenants do you currently have in rent arrears?
  
  **Answer:** 138 units (approximately 4% of 3,338 units)

- Can you provide an estimate of the number of tenants in your units struggling month-to-month to pay the rent?
  
  **Answer:** 494 units (approximately 15% of 3,338 units)

- How many of your tenants are currently part of the rent supplement program?
  
  **Answer:** 65 units (approximately 2% of 3,338 units)

The survey indicates that up to 15% of renters in Fort McMurray may be struggling to afford the monthly rent on their unit. In addition, there is evidence that high rental costs are forcing some households to take in an additional renter on a sublet basis to help pay the monthly rent. These figures are consistent with an October 1999 report entitled *A Profile of Poverty in Mid-Sized Alberta Cities*, which cited 1996 Statistics Canada Census data on poverty in the Wood Buffalo region. The data revealed that poor people are disproportionately represented amongst renters. In fact, 70% of poor families (lone-parent households, couples with or without children) and 74% of poor unattached individuals are renters in Wood Buffalo.²

2.7 Estimate of Homeless Population in RMWB

**Absolute Homeless Population**

As part of the key informant interviews, participants were asked for their estimate of the number of homeless persons within the Fort McMurray area and the number of homeless persons in the rural communities. Some agencies would not venture a guess as to the number, while others had a fairly strong idea of the total number of homeless persons. Some representatives only provided the number of homeless clients that utilize their agency’s programs and services, and thus did not provide an estimate of the total

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² Canadian Council on Social Development, *A Profile of Poverty in Mid-Sized Alberta Cities*, October 1999
homeless population. However, based on the cumulative feedback received from those interviewed, it was possible to derive a conservative estimate of the homeless population in both the rural and urban areas of the municipality. Based on the existing number of shelter beds (shown in Table 6), it is possible to derive a baseline estimate of the existing capacity to house the absolute homeless in Wood Buffalo. By comparing this figure with the conservative estimate of the absolute homeless population (shown in Table 7), it is possible to derive an estimate of the unmet demand for shelter.

Table 6: Capacity to House the Absolute Homeless in Wood Buffalo – Based on Existing Shelter Beds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fort McMurray</th>
<th>Rural Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Beds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity House Women’s Shelter</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3 families in social housing in Anzac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army Men’s Shelter</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3 otherwise homeless persons in Ayabaskaw Seniors’ Lodge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastew Detox Home</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13 Paspew Women’s Shelter in Fort Chipewyan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otherwise homeless women w/mental health issues</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard-to-house persons that are known to existing caregivers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Subtotal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Shelter Beds (RMWB)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Conservative Estimate of Absolute Homeless Population in Wood Buffalo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absolute Homeless Population</th>
<th>Fort McMurray</th>
<th>Rural Communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Communities</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Absolute Homeless</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Existing Shelter Beds</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Unmet Need</td>
<td>(115)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Near Homeless Population

Deriving an estimate of the near homeless population within Wood Buffalo is somewhat problematic. Those at risk of homelessness include individuals and families who are struggling financially to pay for basic needs (food, shelter, clothing and transportation)
each month. Other at-risk households are those on fixed incomes renting in the private market. This includes those who’s sole source of income is provincial social assistance, i.e., those receiving Supports for Independence (SFI), AISH, or Canada Pension Plan. If these households experience a sudden drop in their income (due to injury, illness, or unemployment), they are at risk of losing their home or being evicted if they are renters. Table 8 shows the current number of provincially subsidized housing units and rent supplements allocated to Fort McMurray.

Table 8: Subsidized Housing and Rent Supplements provided by the Fort McMurray Housing Authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Type</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community housing</td>
<td>147 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors’ self-contained</td>
<td>34 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors’ lodge (Rotary)</td>
<td>40 units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent supplements</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current wait list for subsidized housing or rent supplements</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current wait list for seniors lodge</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The at-risk population also includes a proportion of seasonal, contractual, and temporary workers, since these workers may periodically experience a drop in income due to unemployed or underemployed. Similarly, there is abundant anecdotal evidence that suggests a significant number of low-income earners are severely under-housed in rural areas – particularly for single adults and couples with no children. Table 9 shows a conservative estimate of the number of near homeless persons within the municipality.

Table 9: Conservative Estimate of Near Homeless Population in Wood Buffalo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Near Homeless Population</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Communities</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most key informants would not venture a guess as to the total number of near homeless persons in the Regional Municipality, although one agency estimated that there are 1,000 people in Fort McMurray that are at risk of becoming homeless. Another agency representative estimated that 20% of households in Fort McMurray are likely experiencing financial difficulty meeting their monthly housing costs, and that these households are at risk of becoming homeless. In Fort Chipewyan, an agency representative estimated that the number of under-housed individuals in Fort Chipewyan is close to 225 people, i.e. 15% of the total population of 1,500 residents. In view of these comments, the figures that are provided in Table 9 should be considered conservative and likely on the low side of the actual number of at-risk households in Wood Buffalo.
A suggested method of providing a clearer idea of the number of near homeless individuals is to utilize Statistics Canada household income data to estimate the number of households that are at or below the poverty line in Wood Buffalo. By subtracting the number of social housing units from this figure, an estimate of the number of near homeless households can be derived. Multiplying this figure by the average size of a household (typically 2.6 to 2.9 persons per household) produces an estimate of the number of near homeless people in that City. This could be done on an annual basis by the RMWB Community Services Department or by a local community-based organization that is responsible for monitoring homelessness.

The October 1999 report entitled A Profile of Poverty in Mid-Sized Alberta Cities provided background information on poverty rates in the Wood Buffalo region. These figures are based on 1996 data collected by Statistics Canada. This data was collected just prior to the latest economic boom in Fort McMurray and, therefore, should also be considered conservative in comparison to the current economic situation. Table 10 provides an indication of the size of the near homeless population within the Regional Municipality. The results show that single income earners (lone-parent families and unattached individuals) are disproportionately represented amongst the poor and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Table 10: Poverty Rates in Wood Buffalo, 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Household</th>
<th># of Poor Households</th>
<th>% of All Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic Families</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couples without children</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couples with children</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone-parent families</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other families</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>970</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unattached individuals</strong></td>
<td>900</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,870</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.6%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census of Canada

---

3 As of September 2000, Statistics Canada the most recent figures on household income are for 1998. These figures are based on annual Taxfiler data, which takes approximately 2 years to compile and combine with census updates.
3.0 GAP ANALYSIS

The Continuum of Support

Most Canadian cities have some facilities, programs and/or services that are targeted to assist the homeless. This support system may involve emergency shelters, addiction recovery programs, grants for first month’s rent and security deposit, or employment counseling. Ideally, each community’s continuum of support helps people move from a homeless situation to transitional and permanent housing. This concept is described in Figure 1.

Associated with the basic need for a safe, secure place to live, homeless individuals and families may also require short term or ongoing support services to gain a greater level of self-esteem and well-being. Many of these programs and services play a key role in preventing homelessness. Some are focused on developing life skills, while others are focused on employment and job training. As such, the continuum of support also implies a diverse range of programs and services for the homeless and near homeless. These programs and services are grouped under the following areas:

- Crisis intervention and non-judgmental care
- Community networking and referral system
- Safety from abuse
- Freedom from addiction
- Support services for those suffering from loneliness, depression, or mental illness
- Life skills training and counseling
- Good nutrition and opportunities for healthy living
- Educational / re-training opportunities
- Employment services
- Appropriate care for those with mobility, sensory, or cognitive impairments
Figure 2 illustrates how programs and services for the homeless are integrated with facilities (shelters, transition housing and long-term supportive housing) to form a comprehensive continuum of support.

**Figure 2: Continuum of Support for the Homeless in Wood Buffalo (Programs and Services)**

Ideally, each community would have a ‘complete’ continuum of support for the homeless, including a full range of facilities and complementary programs and support services. In reality, most communities have some gaps in their continuum of support. To understand the nature of the existing continuum of support in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, a gap analysis was conducted as part of developing the Community Plan. Gaps in the Continuum of Support were initially identified as a result of the Key Person Interviews. The results of this initial gap analysis was validated and refined during the Strategic Planning Workshop on August 29, 2000, and further refined by the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee on September 14, 2000.

Gaps that need to be filled are presented in Tables 11 through 18 on the following pages. Table 11 summarizes the existing continuum of support in terms of emergency
shelters. Tables 12 – 15 describe the facilities that will be required to fill the gaps; whether the facility is new or expanded; and the possible service providers for these facilities. Similarly, Tables 16 – 18 describe the programs and services required to fill the identified gaps in the existing continuum of support for the homeless in Wood Buffalo. Based on the feedback from the Strategic Planning Workshop and from members of the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee, a priority rating has been assigned to each facility, program or service needed to complete the continuum of support. This rating system (1-3 or 1-4 depending on the table) is intended to guide the Plan reader in understanding the relative priority this community has assigned to each initiative.

Funding the Continuum of Support

Once the gaps in the continuum of support have been identified, human and monetary resources are needed to:

- Develop new or expanded facilities;
- Provide funding for operating expenses associated with these facilities; and,
- Deliver and administer new programs and services.

Table 19 provides a summary of required funding for all proposed facilities, programs and services identified in the Gap Analysis. Tables 20-23 provide a breakdown of required funding for shelters, transition housing, special needs housing and long-term affordable housing. Tables 24-26 provide a breakdown of required funding for new programs and services for the homeless.

Explanation of Priority Ratings

Tables 12-18 and 20-26 show relative priority ratings for each facility, program or service required to fill gaps in the continuum of support for the homeless. These initiatives have been organized into the following groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Types of Initiative</th>
<th>Number of Initiatives within each Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Emergency Shelter System</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Transition (Second Stage) Housing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Seniors and Special Needs Housing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Long-term Affordable Housing</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Programs and Services</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within each of these groups, a relative priority rating has been assigned as a guide to help assess the relative priority of initiatives required to fill the gaps. The Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee has agreed to give priority to projects focused on the
Emergency Shelter System in 2000-2001. This includes capital costs and operating costs associated with new or expanded facilities, as well as independent programs / services designed to address the needs of the absolute homeless.

The Community Plan on Homelessness is a ‘living document’. In view of this, the gaps in the continuum of support will be reviewed on an annual basis. Priorities may be re-assigned at that time, based on projects completed to date, additional funding available, and other factors that the community deems important.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Provider / Location</th>
<th>Type of Facility</th>
<th>Existing Capacity</th>
<th>Level of Demand at Current Facility</th>
<th>Is a New or Expanded Facility Required?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army Men’s Shelter, Fort McMurray</td>
<td>Emergency shelter for homeless men over age 18</td>
<td>32 beds</td>
<td>Demand at shelter is high due to lack of affordable rental housing and transient workforce.</td>
<td>Yes, may need to expand in future years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unity House Family Crisis Center, Fort McMurray</td>
<td>Emergency shelter for women (and their children) fleeing abuse</td>
<td>21 beds (6 beds are not currently funded)</td>
<td>Unity house has had over 100 turnaways each year for the past two years</td>
<td>Yes, may need to expand in future years. Require a family shelter for those not fleeing abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastew Place Detox Center, Fort McMurray</td>
<td>Detoxification center is sometimes used as an emergency shelter</td>
<td>8 beds</td>
<td>Demand for beds is highest during the winter months</td>
<td>Not at present, but require a shelter / mattress program for those who are intoxicated or high on drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency housing in Anzac</td>
<td>Three families living in emergency housing</td>
<td>3 mobile homes used for emergency housing for families with children</td>
<td>All units are full at the present time</td>
<td>Unknown, but evidence suggests that housing demand exceeds supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paspew House Family Crisis Center, Fort Chipewyan</td>
<td>Emergency shelter for women (and their children) fleeing abuse</td>
<td>11 beds</td>
<td>Current facility adequate at present, but need to expand facility to accommodate handicapped person(s)</td>
<td>Yes, considering expanding shelter to accommodate two handicapped persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayabaskaw Seniors’ Lodge, Fort Chipewyan</td>
<td>Lodge is currently housing four single adults with no place to live</td>
<td>4 beds that are currently not being used by seniors</td>
<td>All four beds are being used at the present time, but seniors will eventually use these beds</td>
<td>Not at present, but Fort Chipewyan requires apartment-style rental units for single adults and couples without children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 12: New Capacity Required – Emergency Shelter System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility to Fill the Gap / Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 4)</th>
<th>Facility Required and Capacity</th>
<th>Possible Service Provider(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>drop-in center</strong> for those who are intoxicated or on drugs (persons denied access to existing shelters)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New facility 20 beds</td>
<td>AADAC, RCMP, Pastew House Detox Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A combined <strong>family shelter</strong> for homeless women not fleeing abuse and homeless men leaving abusive relationships (facility must also be able to accommodate children)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility 10 beds</td>
<td>Fort McMurray Family Crisis Society (Unity House), Nistawoyou Friendship Center, Salvation Army Men’s Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wheelchair accessible</strong> bed(s) / bedroom(s) in Men’s Shelter (Also includes improved security system; an elevator at the back entrance; and changes to the washroom)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Expand Salvation Army Men’s Shelter 2 bedrooms</td>
<td>Salvation Army Men’s Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>multi-purpose facility</strong> where homeless people can shower, wash clothes, store valuables, pick up messages, and socialize</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Retrofit Nistawoyou Friendship Center Allow up to 20 users per day</td>
<td>Nistawoyou Friendship Center, YMCA, New Community-Based Organization, Community Lottery Board (CFEP) Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>hostel / dormitory</strong> facility for the transient workforce, recent immigrants, and those rendered homeless because of personal tragedy (facility must be able to accommodate couples and families with children)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>New facility (pilot program) 10 beds</td>
<td>Salvation Army, Nistawoyou Friendship Center, YMCA Immigrant Settlement Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: Glen Tremblay, is currently working on a dormitory housing proposal in collaboration with a private developer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13: New Capacity Required – Transition (Second Stage) Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility to Fill the Gap / Location</th>
<th>Facility Required and Capacity</th>
<th>Possible Service Provider(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition housing for <strong>homeless women</strong> leaving the shelter system (must be able to accommodate children) Transition housing would be available for homeless women in general, as well as women who have fled abusive relationships. Operators of this facility would coordinate transition services with Paspew House in Fort Chipewyan Fort McMurray</td>
<td>New facility A fourplex (10 beds): Two 3-bedroom units; Two 2-bedroom units</td>
<td>Fort McMurray Family Crisis Society (Unity House) Paspew House Family Crisis Center (Fort Chipewyan) Fort McMurray Housing Authority Shelter Enhancement Program (CMHC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Halfway house</strong> for those with substance abuse issues The facility would allow for variable and extended stays, as well as a limited treatment program. Clients would offset part of their rent and learn life skills through everyday living. Fort McMurray</td>
<td>New facility A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>AADAC Pastew Place Detox Centre Catholic Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition housing for <strong>homeless men</strong> who have left the Men’s Shelter but require assistance with life skills, employment counseling, finding an appropriate rental unit and saving for a damage deposit (This facility could be combined with a dormitory for the transient workforce) Fort McMurray</td>
<td>New facility 15 beds (initially)</td>
<td>Salvation Army St. Vincent de Paul Society Catholic Social Services Nistawoyou Friendship Center Fort McMurray Housing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A facility allowing overnight stays for <strong>rural residents receiving medical treatment</strong> at Northern Lights Regional Health Center, dental surgery, or physiotherapy. (Must also be able to accommodate spouse / partner of patient) Fort McMurray</td>
<td>New facility A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>Northern Lights Regional Health Center Alberta Health Care Community Lottery Board CFEP Grant (Community Facilities Enhancement Program)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 14: New Capacity Required – Seniors and Special Needs Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility to Fill the Gap / Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 4)</th>
<th>Facility Required and Capacity</th>
<th>Possible Service Provider(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group home</strong> for women recovering from mental illness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New facility (similar to existing home for men)</td>
<td>Alberta Mental Health Association / CMHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This would help reduce the use of the 10-unit psychiatric ward at Northern Lights Regional Health Centre (NLRHC). Fort McMurray.</td>
<td></td>
<td>A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>Mental Health Services (NLRHC) Human Resources &amp; Employment (AISH) Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A long-term continuous care facility</strong> for persons with post-trauma mental disabilities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility</td>
<td>Alberta Mental Health Association / CMHA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td>A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>Human Resources &amp; Employment (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped - AISH) Discharge Services and Coordinated Homecare program (NLRHC) Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group home</strong> for those with developmental disabilities (Demand is forecast to increase during the next decade)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility</td>
<td>Salvation Army START Program Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td>A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent living</strong> in a community-oriented facility for those with mobility and sensory impairments (Must be affordable to those on fixed incomes and have some onsite care)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility</td>
<td>Disability Resource Association of Fort McMurray Human Resources &amp; Employment (AISH) Handicapped Housing Society of Alberta Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td>A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 15: New Capacity Required – Long-term Affordable Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility to Fill the Gap / Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 4)</th>
<th>Required Number of Units</th>
<th>Potential partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Perpetually affordable** rental and ownership housing for near homeless single adults, couples with and without children | 1 | New rental and ownership housing 500 – 700 units | Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation / Fort McMurray Housing Authority  
Alberta Community Development  
Non-profit housing co-operative and/or community land trust  
Non-profit business co-operative (employers own units and rent to employees) |
| This housing would be targeted for:  
− Transient workers and formerly homeless;  
− Households with incomes too high to qualify for social housing but not high enough to afford median rents or median housing prices. | | | |
| Fort McMurray, all rural communities | | | |
| **Apartment-style and small suite** rental units for near homeless single adults and couples with no children | 1 | New rental housing 200 – 250 units | Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation / Fort McMurray Housing Authority  
Local Band Councils  
Athabasca Tribal Council  
Metis Urban Housing  
Light Island Housing Authority (Fort Chipewyan)  
Northern Alberta Development Council |
| These suites would be targeted for:  
− Transient workers and formerly homeless;  
− Persons having low priority for provincial or federal social housing programs  
− Those with incomes too high to qualify for social housing but not high enough to afford median rents; | | | |
| Fort McMurray, all rural communities | | | |
| **Expanded RRAP** (Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program) for:  
− Repair of off-reserve housing within the RMWB; and,  
− Conversion of non-residential buildings to affordable housing | 2 | Upgrade / retrofit / conversion of existing homes and buildings 75 – 100 units | CMHC  
Metis Urban Housing  
Athabasca Tribal Council  
Light Island Housing Authority (Fort Chipewyan)  
Nistawoyou Friendship Centre  
Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation / Fort McMurray Housing Authority |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program / Service to Fill the Gap</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 3)</th>
<th>Program / Service Required and Cost</th>
<th>Possible Service Provider(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>life skills</strong> training program / counseling for those in shelter system or transition housing. (Participants would receive help with setting goals, personal finance, nutrition, resume writing and job search skills)</td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Integration of existing programs / services delivered by various helping agencies. To be discussed at FCSS Interagency Meeting in 2001.</td>
<td>Nistawoyou Friendship Centre Salvation Army CHOICES Employment Counseling YMCA Job Centre Canada Employment Center (LOCAN, HRDC) FCSS / Landlord Tenant Board Northern Lights Regional Health Centre (NLRHC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Shelter to allow for <strong>daytime stays</strong> at shelter. (Facility would accommodate shift workers that need to sleep during the day.)</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Expanded service One full-time caregiver plus operating costs</td>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>cultural awareness program</strong> available for all helping agencies that may have aboriginal clients</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New program One full-time trainer (on 6-month contract) to assist agencies with aboriginal issues</td>
<td>Alberta Human Resources Development Program (Province) Athabasca Tribal Council AWASAK Child &amp; Family Services Nistawoyou Friendship Center Fort Chipewyan FCSS Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A <strong>respite program</strong> for primary caregivers who need a break during part of the day to lower stress levels and maintain motivation</td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New program One full-time volunteer coordinator plus operating costs</td>
<td>Fort McMurray Volunteer Centre United Way of Fort McMurray Community Home Care Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A central clearinghouse for <strong>donations of household items</strong> for poor and homeless people (tools, kitchenware, bed linens, and clothing)</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>New service One part-time program administrator plus operating costs</td>
<td>Salvation Army Faith community (churches) Nistawoyou Friendship Center Food Bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17: New Capacity Required – Programs and Services (Part 2 of 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program / Service to Fill the Gap</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 3)</th>
<th>Program / Service Required and Cost</th>
<th>Possible Service Provider(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater coordination of emergency support / crisis intervention / crisis prevention services for the homeless in both rural and urban areas. This initiative should be linked with an aboriginal cultural awareness program for helping agencies. An outreach program would also ensure the safety of homeless persons outside of shelter system so that they do not become victims of theft or violence. (This program could be modeled after Operation Friendship in Edmonton that provides safety for persons living on the street)</td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Link existing crisis intervention and prevention services with a homelessness outreach campaign in both urban and rural areas One full-time professional (on contract for 6 months) to develop a comprehensive program</td>
<td>Some Other Solutions Crisis Help Line RCMP FCSS Nistawoyou Friendship Center Salvation Army Pastew House Detox Center Fort McMurray Family Crisis Center Paspew House Family Crisis Shelter (Fort Chipewyan) AADAC Federal / Provincial Parole Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention worker to assist clients of Fort McMurray Housing Authority with rental concerns and application for assistance</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New service One full-time professional plus operating costs</td>
<td>Fort McMurray Housing Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require an addictions counseling and recovery program for persons with gambling, alcohol, or drug use issues</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New service Develop program in cooperation with Pastew House, Salvation Army and AADAC</td>
<td>AADAC Salvation Army Nistawoyou Friendship Center Pastew House Detox Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives to encourage local homeowners to care for those who are disabled (Community Care Program only pays $475 / month to homeowner to look after disabled person)</td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Expanded provincial program (increase subsidy available to each homeowner)</td>
<td>Community Care Program (Province of Alberta) Human Resources &amp; Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program / Service to Fill the Gap</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Priority (1 - 3)</td>
<td>Program / Service Required and Cost</td>
<td>Possible Service Provider(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Rental assistance program** that provides homeless and near homeless persons loans and/or grants for security deposits, first months rent, or top-up amounts for current renters experiencing financial distress  
Target clients for this program are unattached individuals and couples with no children. (A program sponsored by the Salvation Army already covers families with children)  
Fort McMurray / rural communities | 1 | New service  
A fund capable of assisting 60 rental clients in need each year  
One half-time program administrator | AADAC  
Nistawoyou Friendship Center  
FCSS / Landlord – Tenant Board  
Bank or local savings & credit union  
Proposed Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation |
| Additional support services for **female mental health clients**  
This service would be linked to a new group home for female mental health clients.  
Fort McMurray / rural communities | 2 | New service  
One full-time *Mental Health Consumer Advocate* plus operating costs | Alberta Mental Health Board  
Canadian Mental Health Association |
| **A youth intervention worker** for children and teenagers  
This service would be linked to a new family shelter.  
Fort McMurray / rural communities | 2 | New service  
One full-time professional plus operating costs | AWASAK  
Athabasca Tribal Council  
Nistawoyou Friendship Centre  
AADAC  
FCSS |
| **Expanded transit service** for working poor, students, senior citizens, homeless and near homeless people (must accommodate those with mobility challenges).  
Fort McMurray | 3 | Extend local bus service to evenings and weekends  
Purchase Handibus for those with mobility challenges | RMWB - Handibus Program  
Provincial Infrastructure Grant  
Human Resources & Employment  
Keyano College  
YMCA  
United Way of Fort McMurray  
Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce |
Table 19: Summary of Required Funding – Continuum of Support for the Homeless and Near Homeless

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities / Programs / Services</th>
<th>Capital Expenditure Required</th>
<th>Annual Operating Funding Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Shelter System</td>
<td>$1,045,000</td>
<td>$513,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition (Second Stage) Housing</td>
<td>$1,665,000</td>
<td>$270,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Needs Housing</td>
<td>$880,000</td>
<td>$390,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>$3,590,000</td>
<td>$1,173,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Programs / Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>$591,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Funding Required</td>
<td>$3,590,000</td>
<td>$1,764,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Less long-term affordable housing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long-term Affordable Housing</strong></td>
<td>$50,250,000 - $68,500,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 20: Required Funding – Emergency Shelter System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility to Fill the Gap / Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 4)</th>
<th>Facility Required and Capacity</th>
<th>Estimated Capital Expenditure and Annual Operating Cost *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A drop-in center</strong> for those who are intoxicated or on drugs (persons denied access to existing shelters) Fort McMurray</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New facility 20 beds</td>
<td>$400,000 (capital) $216,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A combined family shelter</strong> for homeless women not fleeing abuse and homeless men leaving abusive relationships (facility must also be able to accommodate children) Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility 10 beds</td>
<td>$200,000 (capital) $108,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wheelchair accessible</strong> bed(s) / bedroom(s) in Men’s Shelter (Also includes improved security system; an elevator at the back entrance; and changes to the washroom) Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Expand Salvation Army Men’s Shelter 2 bedrooms</td>
<td>$55,000 (capital) $21,600 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A multi-purpose facility</strong> where homeless people can shower, wash clothes, store valuables, pick up messages, and socialize Fort McMurray</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Retrofit Nistawoyou Friendship Center Allow up to 20 users per day</td>
<td>$40,000 (capital) $60,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A hostel / dormitory</strong> facility for the transient workforce, recent immigrants, and those rendered homeless because of personal tragedy (facility must be able to accommodate couples and families with children) Fort McMurray</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>New facility (pilot program) 10 beds</td>
<td>$350,000 (capital) $108,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: Capital funds for shelter beds: $20,000 / bed for single adults, and $35,000 / bed for families with children. Annual operating funds for proposed shelter / hostel are estimated to be $900 / month per bed.

Subtotal Emergency Shelter System: $1,045,000 (capital) $513,600 (operating)
### Table 21: Required Funding – Transition (Second Stage) Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility to Fill the Gap / Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 4)</th>
<th>Facility Required and Capacity</th>
<th>Estimated Capital Expenditure and Annual Operating Cost *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition housing for <strong>homeless women</strong> leaving the shelter system (must be able to accommodate children)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New facility A fourplex (10 beds): Two 3-bedroom units; Two 2-bedroom units</td>
<td>$550,000 (capital) $120,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition housing would be available for homeless women in general, as well as women who have fled abusive relationships. Operators of this facility would coordinate transition services with Paspew House in Fort Chipewyan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Halfway house</strong> for those with substance abuse issues</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>$220,000 (capital) $60,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facility would allow for variable and extended stays, as well as a limited treatment program. Clients would offset part of their rent and learn life skills through everyday living.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition housing for <strong>homeless men</strong> who have left the Men’s Shelter but require assistance with life skills, employment counseling, finding an appropriate rental unit and saving for a damage deposit (This facility could be combined with a dormitory for the transient workforce)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>New facility 15 beds (initially)</td>
<td>$675,000 (capital) $60,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A facility allowing overnight stays for <strong>rural residents receiving medical treatment</strong> at Northern Lights Regional Health Center, dental surgery, or physiotherapy. (Must also be able to accommodate spouse / partner of patient)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>New facility A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>$220,000 (capital) $30,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NOTE</strong>: Capital funds for transition (second stage) housing estimated to be: $45,000 / bed for single adults; and $55,000 / bed for families with children. Annual operating funds for support staff and related programs: $40-45,000 salary / person, and $15-$20,000 for expenses / person.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal Transition Housing</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,665,000 (capital) $270,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 22: Required Funding – Special Needs Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility to Fill the Gap / Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 4)</th>
<th>Facility Required and Capacity</th>
<th>Estimated Capital Expenditure * and Annual Operating Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group home</strong> for women recovering from mental illness&lt;br&gt;This would help reduce the use of the 10-unit psychiatric ward at Northern Lights Regional Health Centre (NLRHC).&lt;br&gt;Fort McMurray</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New facility (similar to existing home for men)&lt;br&gt;A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>$220,000 (capital)&lt;br&gt;$60,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A long-term <strong>continuous care facility</strong> for persons with post-trauma mental disabilities&lt;br&gt;Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility&lt;br&gt;A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>$220,000 (capital)&lt;br&gt;$210,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group home</strong> for those with developmental disabilities&lt;br&gt;(Demand is forecast to increase during the next decade)&lt;br&gt;Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility&lt;br&gt;A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>$220,000 (capital)&lt;br&gt;$60,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent living</strong> in a community-oriented facility for those with mobility and sensory impairments (Must be affordable to those on fixed incomes and have some onsite care)&lt;br&gt;Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New facility&lt;br&gt;A large home with four (4) bedrooms</td>
<td>$220,000 (capital)&lt;br&gt;$60,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NOTE: Capital funds for special needs housing estimated to be $55,000 / bed. Annual operating funds for support staff and related programs: $40-45,000 salary / person, and $15-$20,000 for expenses / person.

Subtotal Special Needs Housing: $880,000 (capital)<br>$390,000 (operating)
Table 23: Required Funding – Long-term Affordable Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility to Fill the Gap / Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 4)</th>
<th>Required Number of Units</th>
<th>Estimated Capital Expenditure and Annual Operating Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perpetually affordable</strong> rental and ownership housing for near homeless single adults, couples with and without children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New rental and ownership housing 500 – 700 units</td>
<td>$37,500,000 - $52,500,000 (capital) - See Note - (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This housing would be targeted for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Transient workers and formerly homeless;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Households with incomes too high to qualify for social housing but not high enough to afford median rents or median housing prices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray, all rural communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apartment-style and small suite</strong> rental units for near homeless single adults and couples with no children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New rental housing 200 – 250 units</td>
<td>$12,000,000 - $15,000,000 (capital) - See Note - (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These suites would be targeted for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Transient workers and formerly homeless;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Persons having low priority for provincial or federal social housing programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Those with incomes too high to qualify for social housing but not high enough to afford median rents;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray, all rural communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expanded RRAP</strong> (Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program) for:</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Upgrade / retrofit / conversion of existing homes and buildings 75 – 100 units</td>
<td>$750,000 - $1,000,000 (capital) - See Note - (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Repair of off-reserve housing within the RMWB; and,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Conversion of non-residential buildings to affordable housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray, all rural communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>NOTE:</em> Capital costs for apartment / small suite housing estimated to be $60,000 / unit, and $75,000 / unit for larger units. Operating funds includes salary and benefits for two full-time housing professionals, travel costs and office expenses.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal Special Needs Housing $50,250,000 - $68,500,000 (capital) $120,000 (operating) *
### Table 24: Required Funding – Programs and Services (Part 1 of 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program / Service to Fill the Gap</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 3)</th>
<th>Program / Service Required and Cost</th>
<th>Estimated Annual Operating Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A life skills training program / counseling for those in shelter system or transition housing. (Participants would receive help with setting goals, personal finance, nutrition, resume writing and job search skills)</td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Integration of existing programs / services delivered by various helping agencies. To be discussed at FCSS Interagency Meeting in 2001.</td>
<td>$60,000 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Shelter to allow for daytime stays at shelter. (Facility would accommodate shift workers that need to sleep during the day.)</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Expanded service One full-time caregiver plus operating costs</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cultural awareness program available for all helping agencies that may have aboriginal clients</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New program One full-time trainer (on contract for 6 months) to assist agencies with aboriginal issues</td>
<td>$30,000 (one-time cost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A respite program for primary caregivers who need a break during part of the day to lower stress levels and maintain motivation</td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New program One full-time volunteer coordinator plus operating costs</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A central clearinghouse for donations of household items for poor and homeless people (tools, kitchenware, bed linens, and clothing)</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>New service One part-time program administrator plus operating costs</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* NOTE: Estimated costs include annual salary and benefits, as well as travel, material, and office expenses.

Subtotal Program and Services (Part 1) $240,000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program / Service to Fill the Gap</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 3)</th>
<th>Program / Service Required and Cost</th>
<th>Estimated Annual Operating Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater coordination of emergency support / crisis intervention / crisis prevention services for the homeless in both rural and urban areas. This initiative should be linked with an aboriginal cultural awareness program for helping agencies. An outreach program would also ensure the safety of homeless persons outside of shelter system so that they do not become victims of theft or violence. (Program could be modeled after Operation Friendship in Edmonton that provides safety for persons living on the street) Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coordinate existing services in Fort McMurray and develop a rural outreach campaign One full-time professional (on contract for 6 months) to help agencies coordinate their services and develop and outreach program</td>
<td>$30,000 (one-time cost)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention worker to assist clients of Fort McMurray Housing Authority with rental concerns and application for assistance Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New service One full-time professional plus operating costs</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require an addictions counseling and recovery program for persons with gambling, alcohol, or drug use issues Fort McMurray</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New service Develop program in cooperation with Pastew House, Salvation Army and AADAC</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives to encourage local homeowners to care for those who are disabled (Community Care Program only pays $475 / month to homeowner to look after disabled person) Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Expanded provincial program (increase subsidy available to each homeowner)</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Subtotal Program and Services (Part 2)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$150,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 26 Required Funding – Programs and Services (Part 3 of 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program / Service to Fill the Gap</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Priority (1 - 3)</th>
<th>Program / Service Required and Cost</th>
<th>Estimated Annual Operating Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rental assistance program</strong> that provides homeless and near homeless persons loans and/or grants for security deposits, first months rent, or top-up amounts for current renters experiencing financial distress</td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>New service A fund capable of assisting 60 rental clients in need each year One half-time program administrator</td>
<td>$96,000 (60 clients x $1,600 average loan or grant per client)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional support services for female mental health clients</strong></td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New service One full-time Mental Health Consumer Advocate plus operating costs</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A youth intervention worker</strong> for children and teenagers</td>
<td>Fort McMurray / rural communities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>New service One full-time professional plus operating costs</td>
<td>$60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expanded transit service</strong> for working poor, students, senior citizens, homeless and near homeless people (must accommodate those with mobility challenges).</td>
<td>Fort McMurray</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Extend local bus service to evenings and weekends Purchase Handibus for those with mobility challenges</td>
<td>Unknown cost for extended bus service $100,000 ($55,000 one-time purchase of handibus, plus $45,000 annual salary for driver)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Subtotal Program and Services (Part 3) | $316,000 |
| Total One-Time Costs | $115,000 |
| Total Annual Program and Service Costs | $591,000 |
4.0 A CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT FOR THE HOMELESS

4.1 Priority Setting Criteria

The following criteria was approved by the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee in evaluating potential project initiatives:

*Proposed services, programs, and/or facilities for the homeless must:*

- Ensure the safety and security of individuals and families (food, clothing, warmth, safety from harm);
- 'Fit' into the continuum of care model;
- Be implemented within the three-year Supportive Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) fiscal framework (2000-2003);
- Be realistic, measurable and must be sustainable over time;
- Provide opportunities for partnership between sectors/agencies;
- Provide opportunities to leverage additional funds; and
- Provide opportunities for helping agencies to work together to achieve common objectives.

4.2 Leveraging Additional Funding

In addition to the core funding commitment from the Government of Canada and the Province of Alberta described in Sections 1.4 and 1.5 of this report, it is important to leverage other funding through cash, in-kind contributions, and/or other complementary programs available from the provincial and federal governments. The Homeless Initiatives Committee felt it very important to identify and catalogue these sources of funding.

The following is a brief description of potential funding sources from the public, private, and non-profit sectors:

**Government of Canada**

In addition to the Federal Funding Programs cited in Section 1.15 of this Plan, the following is a list of other programs that complementary funding could be leveraged:

**Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC)**

- Social Housing Support *(Status Indians on reservations)*
- External Housing Research – *NHR Discussion Group on Homelessness*
- **Homelessness Data Collection and Management System**
- **Best practices, regional and national roundtables on homelessness**

**Home-Grown Solutions Grant** (Home Grown Solutions is a national partnership of CMHC, the Canadian Housing Renewal Association, the Canadian Home Builders Association, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. It provides grants to organizations to develop innovative housing proposals. Criteria include: potential to enhance housing affordability, transferability of idea to other communities, degree of innovation in design or construction method, and degree of community involvement.)

**Social Housing Support – Multiple** (Low-income Canadians, persons with disabilities, seniors, homeless or at risk homeless)

**Renovations Programs** (The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program provides financial assistance to households with limited income who own and occupy sub-standard housing and who want to repair their homes up to minimum standards of health and safety.

The RRAP program includes: Homeowner RRAP; RRAP for Reserves; RRAP for Persons with Disabilities, Rental RRAP, Rooming House RRAP, RRAP for Non-Residential Conversion, the Emergency Repair Program – ERP, and Home Adaptation for Seniors Independence – HASI.)

In the Wood Buffalo region, RRAP Homeowner, RRAP for Persons with Disabilities, and the Emergency Repair Program is delivered through the Metis Nations of Alberta.

**Shelter Enhancement Program** (Victims of Violence available for women and children only)

**Canadian Centre for Public/Private Partnerships** (Non-profit housing societies and community groups with low-income housing proposals can approach the Canadian Centre for Public-Private Partnerships for potential funding of their housing proposal.)

**Corrections Canada**

- **Community Corrections** (Offenders released from custody)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Indian &amp; Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Gathering Strength (Status Indians – support strong and more self-sufficient communities through partnership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Economic Development (Expanding and creating economic opportunities for First Nations people living conditions on reserves)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Post Secondary (PSE) and Elementary Education (Assists Status Indians obtain college or university education, also provides funding support to elementary and secondary education)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Youth Initiatives (Status Indians and includes:  
  - First Nations & Inuit Summer Career Placement Programs  
  - First Nations & Inuit Work Experience Program  
  - First Nations & Inuit Science and Technology Camp  
  - First Nations Schools Cooperation Education Program) |
| • Child and Family Services (Provides culturally sensitive child welfare services for Status Indians on Reserves) |
| • Adult Care Program (Assists Status Indians on Reserve with functional disabilities maintain their independence) |
| • Community Infrastructure (housing, roads, water, sanitation, electrification) (Provides Status Indians on Reserves, to improve housing and infrastructure on Reserves) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Environment Canada</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Community Animation Program for Urban and Rural Communities (Assists Communities to take action on issues where health and the environment are linked)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Health Canada</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) (Supports community-driven culturally appropriate programming to support healthy child development and school readiness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aids Community Action Program / Canadian Strategy on HIV/AIDS (ACAP) (Supports both project and capital funding for community-based organizations to address their particular HIV/AIDS problems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community Action Program (Helps the community to address the healthy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Care Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Knowledge Development (RKD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Health Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Marketing and Partnerships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Human Resources Development Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal Human Resource Development Strategy</th>
<th>(Focus on urban Aboriginal employment and training needs to improve the living standards and access to training and employment opportunities)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canada Youth Employment Strategy (YES)</td>
<td>(YES provides HRDC with the opportunity to prioritize the development of youth employment initiatives aimed at homeless youth and youth at-risk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities Fund</td>
<td>(Agreements are signed with NGOs and community groups for specific projects targeting persons with disabilities who are ineligible for EI-funded employment programs and require assistance to prepare for, find, and secure work)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Industry Canada

| VOLNET – Voluntary Sector Network Support Program | (Purpose of the Program is to improve the voluntary sector’s access to information technology and to related skills and tools to help it play a stronger role in Canadian society) |
### Justice Canada

- Community Mobilization Program
  
  (Provides grants up to $50,000 for community-based time-limited projects that address the root causes of crime)

### CCRA

- Women’s Program
  
  (Provides financial and practical support to non-profit, voluntary organizations committed to women’s equality)

### Canadian Heritage

- Aboriginal Women’s Program
  
  (Targeted to Aboriginal women in urban centers and rural communities off-reserve. The program provides technical and advisory support to Aboriginal women to promote equal participation in Canadian society and Aboriginal communities)

- Multiculturalism Program
  
  (Department provides both technical and advisory support to minority communities in assisting them with their issues as they relate to integration in Canadian society)

- Urban Multi-Purpose Aboriginal Youth Centres (UMAYC)
  
  (Targeted to youth 15 – 24 years old, the objective of the program is to improve the economic, social and personal prospects of urban aboriginal youth by providing accessible aboriginal community-based and culturally relevant projects to address a wide range of youth issues and needs)

### Province of Alberta

### Alberta Community Development

- Community Housing Program
  
  (Provides subsidized rental housing for low-income families, senior citizens, wheelchair users or individuals who cannot afford private sector accommodation)

- Emergency Home Program
  
  (Manufactured homes may be provided to eligible households who reside in rural or remote or isolated communities, who require short-term accommodation and whose homes have been destroyed by fire, flood and there is overcrowding and unsafe living conditions)

---

Community Plan on Homelessness
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
December 2000
• Rent Supplement Program  
  (Provides assistance to households in need to obtain affordable and suitable rental accommodation by subsidizing rents in eligible private sector rental projects)

• Special Purpose Housing Program  
  (Provides mortgage subsidy financing to enable non-profit organizations to develop and manage emergency and transitional residential facilities providing care to people with physical, mental or behavioural conditions)

• Private, Non-Profit Housing Program  
  (Allows private, non-profit organizations to own social housing projects which are directed at serving households with the greatest needs)

• Rural and Native Housing Program (Rental)  
  (Provides modest rental accommodation to low income families in small rural communities)

• Housing Registry for Family and Special Purposes  
  (Provides grants to housing registries which enables them to find appropriate housing for households with housing problems and to document information on household problems)

• Senior Citizens Self-Contained Program  
  (Provides apartment accommodation for low-income senior citizens who cannot afford private sector accommodation)

• Seniors’ Lodge Assistance  
  (The Lodge Assistance Program provides financial assistance to lodge foundations or management bodies, operating under the Alberta Housing Act, who provide lodge accommodation)

• Unique Homes Assistance Program  
  (Provides per diem grants to eligible private senior citizen homes to assist with their operating deficits)

• Special Needs Assistance for Seniors  
  (This is a Provincial benefit program that provides financial assistance through a lump sum cash payment to lower income seniors who are having financial difficulties)

• Wild Rose Foundation  
  (Is a Provincial lottery-funded foundation that provides funding assistance to non-profit and non-governmental organizations to carry out important programs and projects that contribute to Alberta’s well-being)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Alberta Health and Wellness</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Home Care</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Community Rehabilitation Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• HIV Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health Innovation Fund</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Alberta Provincial Board</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Community Inclusions Supports Framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC)</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• AADAC (The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Alberta Children’s Services</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• New Service Delivery System</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Community Lottery Boards (CLB)</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Community Lottery Board Grant Programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
for these types of projects can be applied for through the Community Facilities Enhancement Program (CFEP).

Private Sources

- Corporate Sponsorships
- Business Contributions in cash or kind
- Bequests
- Fund Raising Activities
- Alberta Real Estate Association  
  
  With grant assistance from the Alberta Real Estate Foundation, the Alberta Real Estate Association has hired two Housing Facilitators to help members of local real estate boards become involved in the provision of affordable housing. To contact the Housing Facilitators, call AREA at 1-800-661-0231 or by e-mail: housing@abrea.ab.ca

Foundations

- Alberta Real Estate Foundation (Calgary, AB)
- Claridge Foundation (Montreal, PQ)
- Ebenezar Foundation (Abbotsford, BC)
- Comart Foundation (Toronto, ON)
- The Dominion Group Foundation (Toronto, ON)
- Burton Charitable Foundation (Mississauga, ON)
- The Robert Campeau Family Foundation (L’Original, ON)
- James N. Allan Family Foundation (Dunnville, ON)
- Allard Foundation Ltd. (Edmonton, AB)
- The Altamira Foundation (Toronto, ON)
- The Allstate Foundation of Canada (Markham, ON)
- The Buller Foundation Inc. (Winnipeg, MB)
- The Alan Joe Family Foundation (Islington, ON)
- John Deere Foundation of Canada (Grimsby, ON)
- The Kahanoff Foundation (Calgary, AB)
- Shaw Foundation (Calgary, AB)
- De Fehr Foundation Inc. (Winnipeg, MB)
Service Clubs
- Fort McMurray Masonic Lodge #195
- Fort McMurray Tar Sands Lions Club
- Kinsmen Club of Jubilee City
- Kinsmen Club of Fort McMurray
- Knights of Columbus
- Rotary Club

A brief description of these funding sources as well as eligibility criteria is described in more detail in the Technical Appendix.

4.3 2000 – 2003 Project Budget Allocation

The Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee issued a request for letters of intent from 75 groups and agencies who may initiate projects and programs to fill identified gaps. This is intended to be an on-going process and although submission have been received, no project approvals have been given to date.

Table 27 shows the funding requests received to date for homeless initiatives in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for the period 2000 – 2003. These funding projections are based upon Letters of Intent submitted in October-November 2000, to the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee from various helping agencies in Wood Buffalo. These figures were transferred to this pro-forma budget allocation table.

According to Table 27, local agencies have requested a total of $2.97M of funding for the three-year period (2000-2003). This includes $1.28M in capital expenditure and $1.69M in operating funding (facility-related expenses and new programs / services for the homeless). Subtracting the total $1.2M in funding from both the federal and provincial governments results in a funding shortfall of $1.77M over the three-year period.

It is important to note that the Community Plan on Homelessness is a ‘living document’. Table 27 summarizes funding requests that have been received by the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee as of November 20th, 2000. There is no cutoff date for additional funding requests from helping agencies in the Wood Buffalo region. As such, those agencies that have not yet submitted a funding request are invited to do so.

It is also important to recognize that there is no commitment to fund all of the initiatives listed in Table 27. This Plan merely forms the basis for agreements with the Government of Canada, the Government of Alberta, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for funding for 2000-2003 to address the needs of the homeless. Thus, Table 27 serves to inform the reader as to the extent of commitment by local helping agencies to ‘fill’ the gaps in the continuum of support for the homeless and near
homeless in Wood Buffalo. This positive response from the community is recognized in the Plan and provides hope for additional community support in the near future.
Table 27: Funding Requests for 2000-2003
Based upon Letters of Intent from Helping Agencies in Wood Buffalo (Fall 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray Housing Authority</td>
<td>Housing Support Worker</td>
<td>Homeless, near-homeless, and under-housed</td>
<td>$60,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$60,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$60,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$180,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastew Place Detox Centre</td>
<td>Drop-in center; 20-mattress program; open 24-hours, three meals per day</td>
<td>Homeless men and women (some with addiction issues)</td>
<td>$216,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$216,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$216,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$648,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastew Place Detox Centre</td>
<td>Fund two (2) new beds at Detox Centre</td>
<td>Homeless men and women with addictions</td>
<td>$19,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$19,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$19,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$57,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army START Program</td>
<td>3,000 ft² wheelchair-accessible home for four (4) adults &amp; support staff</td>
<td>Near-homeless persons with developmental disabilities</td>
<td>$3,000 (capital)</td>
<td>$250,000 (capital)</td>
<td>See note 7 (operating)</td>
<td>$253,000 (capital)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army Men’s Shelter</td>
<td>Homeless Support Worker; new bedding; improved meals; renovated kitchen</td>
<td>Homeless men (age 18+ years)</td>
<td>$70,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$70,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$70,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$210,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray Family Crisis Society</td>
<td>Transitional housing (fourplex; 8-12 beds) for women leaving Unity House</td>
<td>Sheltered women and their children in need of second-stage housing</td>
<td>$549,000 (capital)</td>
<td>$60,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$60,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$120,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort McMurray Family Crisis Society</td>
<td>Fund six (6) existing shelter beds at Unity House</td>
<td>Women and their children requiring shelter but not fleeing violence</td>
<td>$112,000 ¹¹ (operating)</td>
<td>$112,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$112,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$336,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship Baptist Church</td>
<td>Expand Soup Kitchen operation to five days per week</td>
<td>All homeless, near homeless working poor, and unemployed people</td>
<td>$26,000 ¹² (operating)</td>
<td>$26,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$26,000 (operating)</td>
<td>$78,000 (operating)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal Operating $503,000 $563,000 $563,000 $1,629,000

Subtotal Capital $1,032,000 $250,000 $0 $1,282,000

Total Funding Requested $1,535,000 $813,000 $563,000 $2,911,000

Combined SCPI Federal and Provincial Funding $400,000 $400,000 $400,000 $1,200,000

Additional Funding Required (shortfall) $(1,135,000) $(413,000) $(163,000) $(1,711,000)

Notes:
1. Projected operating costs include salary, benefits, travel expenses, and operational overhead for one year ($59,590 / year). Agency requested funding for 2000-2001 only, but has been allocated over the three-year SCPI period for budget planning purposes.
2. Operating funding based on $900 / month per bed for a 24-hour shelter providing three meals per day.
3. Capital funding based on $20,000 / shelter bed average cost for a single adult.
4. Projected operating costs include portion of salary, plus food, laundry, bedding, medical supplies and program material ($19,000 / year).
5. Estimated cost for architectural drawings of a wheelchair-accessible home for four adults.
6. Estimated cost for purchase or construction of a comparable four-bedroom home in Fort McMurray.
7. Annual operating costs will be funded separately and have not been included here.
8. Projected operating cost for programming to break the cycle of homelessness. Includes salary, travel expenses and materials.
9. Projected capital cost to renovate Salvation Army Men’s Shelter (kitchen, dining area, common area, new furniture and bedding).
10. Projected capital costs include land, site improvements, construction, furnishings, and soft costs (legal fees, levies, and design work).
11. Projected annual operating funding for six beds at Unity House. Includes wages, benefits, client costs and facility costs ($111,336 / year).
12. Projected operating costs assume an average of 25 people served per day, 5 days per week for 52 weeks, and $4.00 per meal served.
A Template to be used for Evaluating Project Proposals

The following template can be used to evaluate funding requests for new homeless initiatives in the Regional Municipality. The applicant should answer the following questions as part of providing a comprehensive overview of the project proposal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Project Description</strong></th>
<th>Is this a new project or extension to an existing facility or program? What target group will it serve, and how?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome</strong></td>
<td>How does this project address an identified gap in the Community Plan, and what are some measurable outcomes? Does the project meet priority-setting criteria established in the Community Plan?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Required</strong></td>
<td>What capital and operating dollars are required? What is the source of these funds? Does this project or program have a partnership component (leverage for additional resources)? How will the project or program be sustained past the three-year SCPI funding period (beyond 2003)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration</strong></td>
<td>What organization(s) will deliver or administer the new project / program? What is the organization’s capacity to implement and manage the proposed project or program in terms of direct experience, financial capacity, etc.?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Performance Measures</strong></td>
<td>What are some specific qualitative and quantitative indicators that can be used to assess whether or not the project or program has achieved its intended objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Information</strong></td>
<td>What other information can be provided in support of the funding request?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Recommended Strategies to Address the Need for More Social and Affordable Housing

Although much of the Community Plan has focused upon meeting the housing and support needs of the homeless and near-homeless in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, strategies for providing permanent social and affordable housing has to be a key component in implementing a “Continuum of Support” model.

The following are some recommended strategies that should be pursued in increasing the supply of social and affordable housing in the RMWB.

4.4.1 Increase the Number of Social Housing Units

There are two key social housing projects that could increase the supply of singles and family-oriented units available in the Lower Townsite of Fort McMurray.
River Lot 13

River Lot 13 is the redevelopment site of an approximately 10 acre publicly-owned site. In cooperation with the Fort McMurray Housing Authority, an architectural feasibility study needs to be completed, financial plan developed, and approaches made to the private sector, federal and provincial government for the needed capital and operating dollars to build and manage the project. The Government of Alberta currently owns the subject property and a commitment is needed by the end of December 2000 from the provincial government to dedicate the property for social housing.

Willow Square

Willow Square is an older social housing site that is not developed to its full potential. The first step in the redevelopment of Willow Square would be to undertake an architectural feasibility study to prepare a design that would look at ways of increasing the density and yield of housing units on the site and determine the associated costs. The project could be undertaken in two phases to minimize the impact of displacement of current residents. As in the case of River Lot 13, a financial plan would have to be developed and approaches made to the private sector, provincial, and federal governments, for capital and operating dollars to build and manage the project.

4.4.2 Incentives for the Construction of More Market Rental Units

With the current rental vacancy rate in Fort McMurray being zero and increased demand created by in-migration spurred by economic activity in the Region. Proactive steps need to be taken to provide incentives for developers to build more rental units. The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo should consider implementing a program of incentives to encourage the construction of more rental accommodation. Incentives to be considered part of the program could include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- density bonuses;
- grants;
- tax relief;
- land write-downs on publicly-owned lands; and
- public space and infrastructure improvements.

4.4.3 Promote the Development of Employers’ Cooperatives

Particularly hard hit are the working poor who are working in service-related and retail industries in the community for the minimum wage. Employers in these industries are finding it increasingly hard to attract these workers because of the housing shortages. This problem has been overcome in part in other communities faced by similar employee
housing shortages (e.g. Banff, Jasper, Whistler) by having housing provided by employers. Good potential exists for employers to band together and provide rental accommodation either at market or subsidized rents to their employees. In this way a range of housing choices for employees can be provided from basic hostel accommodation to apartments and family-suitable town housing. The Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee approached the Chamber of Commerce to survey their membership to determine the level of support that exists for the development of Employers’ Cooperatives. At the time of writing this Plan, we are still awaiting the results of the Membership Survey.

4.4.4 Provide for Affordable Home Ownership Through a Community Land Trust Model

There are currently a number of publicly owned sites throughout the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo that would be suitable for developing housing on. The Institute of Community Economics defines a Community Land Trust (CLT) as a “private non-profit corporation created to acquire and hold land for the benefit of the community and provide secure affordable access to land and housing for community residents.” Controlling the sale of buildings and other improvements on the land protects affordability of housing for future residents. CLT lease arrangements provide a formula for determining resale prices on buildings that offer residents fair compensation for their investment. Land within CLTs is normally acquired through gifts of property, nominal price purchases from government, or market transactions. A CLT must be able to borrow money in order to function. The CLT can develop the housing itself or it can be done in conjunction with a private developer.

4.4.5 Innovative Solutions to Meet Rural Communities Housing Needs

Based upon feedback from helping agencies in Anzac, Conklin, Janvier, Fort McKay and Fort Chipewyan, single individuals and couples with no children are the groups that are most in need of housing in these rural communities. This is because these types of households receive lower priority on waiting lists for new housing (on and off reserve) than families with children. For example, in Fort Chipewyan helping agencies recommended that the development of small one and two-bedroom suites in an apartment-style development would go a long way to alleviate the problem. A housing partnership would need to be formed among Metis Housing, First Nations Housing and Light Island Housing Authority to make such a project a reality. It is recommended that application for funding assistance through CMHC’s Home Grown Solutions Grant to secure a site, develop architectural plans and costing, and develop a financial plan for securing capital and operating dollars. The Home Grown Solutions Grant provides funding for: “Community-based initiatives aimed at encouraging the development of ideas and innovative solutions which will enable local communities to find creative ways to lever resources to meet their housing needs.”
4.4.6 Establishment of the Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation

Recently the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo gave the Administration the direction to establish the Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation (WBHC) in order to be more proactive in meeting the social and affordable housing needs of the RMWB. Work is underway in establishing the new Corporation. It is envisioned that WBHC would be responsible for assuming ownership of the social housing portfolio from the Government of Alberta and also have the responsibility for developing additional social housing units on publicly owned lands. Once established they will assume the role of the Community Based Organization that will administer and implement the Community Plan on Homelessness.

4.4.7 Timberlea Land Bank

One of the critical factors in developing social and affordable housing is to have a publicly owned land base on which social housing can be developed. Negotiations are currently underway to transfer approximately 40.46 ha (100 acres) of land that the Government of Alberta owns in Timberlea to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Once this has been completed, planning and development of these lands for social and affordable housing can get underway, likely under the auspices of the Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation.
5.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

In this section of the Community Plan, recommendations are made for implementing identified projects, programs and/or services as part of providing a comprehensive continuum of support for the homeless in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Also included, is a process for monitoring, evaluating and updating the Plan as part of keeping the Plan relevant and responsive to changing priorities, circumstances and opportunities.

5.1 The Community-Based Organization – Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation

As a result of deliberations with the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee, it was determined that the soon-to-be established Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation (WBHC) would be the Community Based Organization (CBO) ultimately responsible for the implementation of the Community Plan. Once established, the CBO would be responsible for the following:

- Promoting an understanding of the diverse nature of the homeless problem in their community through public education;
- Implementing, reviewing and updating the Community Plan;
- Entering into and administering funding agreements with the Government of Canada, Province of Alberta, and other groups, agencies or foundations;
- Selecting projects consistent with the needs and priority setting criteria established in the Community Plan;
- Ensuring that funded projects reach the target population;
- Establishing terms and conditions for project funding, as well as the mechanism for project review and selection;
- Undertaking fundraising to assist in sustaining programs and projects beyond 2003; and
- Preparing and submitting on an annual basis, financial statements (including information on specific expenditures), and a report on performance measures and outcomes to Human Resources Canada, Alberta Community Development and other funding partners.

5.2 Community Services Advisory Committee

In order to ensure continuity and community-based involvement, the Community Services Advisory Committee of the RMWB would act as the Allocations Committee. The RMWB is currently in the process of appointing new members to the Community Services Advising Committee for the upcoming year. As it is important to have continuity from the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee it is suggested that candidates
currently on the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee apply and be considered for
positions on the Community Services Advisory Committee. Continuity would also be
assured through the position of Community Plan Coordinator who will be evaluating
funding requests in accordance with the provisions of the Community Plan and making
recommendations to the Community Services Advisory Committee.

5.3 Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee

The Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee would also meet once a year to review
and, if necessary, update the Community Plan on Homelessness.

5.4 Community Plan Project Coordinator

Although every attempt has been made to minimize funding allocated to administration
during the planning process, it became apparent that individual agencies are busy
delivering core services and do not have the volunteer or paid staff capacity to complete
funding applications, ensure coordination and provide the reporting required by both
Federal and Provincial Governments. The Homelessness Initiatives Committee supports
the RMWB creating the position of Community Plan Project Coordinator in order to work
full-time implementing the Community Plan. It is proposed that the cost of funding the
position and associated administrative overhead be shared equally among the RMWB,
Government of Canada and Province of Alberta.

5.5 Interim Arrangements 2000 – 2001

It was decided by the Homelessness Initiatives Steering Committee that Human
Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and Alberta Community Development, would
enter into a program contract with the RMWB until such time as the Wood Buffalo
Housing Corporation is established and is operational. The Community Services
Advisory Committee would act as an advisory and allocations committee to the RMWB.

As a Municipality the RMWB may issue tax receipts for charitable donations they may
receive towards projects and programs identified in the Community Plan.

5.6 Sustainability

Sustainability of projects and programs beyond 2003 will be ensured in the following
ways:

- Federal dollars available will be used primarily for outright acquisition of property
  and capital construction eliminating or relieving any requirements for long-term
debt servicing.
• Through the CBO (Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation) every effort will be made to coordinate the efforts of various organization and agencies to reduce duplication and achieve efficiencies thus reducing where possible, ongoing operating costs.

• Programs and services are predominantly funded through the Government of Canada and Province of Alberta. The CBO will identify and solicit these funding commitments on an ongoing basis.

• With ongoing public awareness of the Community Plan as part of the Communications Strategy fund raising efforts from the private sector and foundations should be enhanced.

5.7 **Recommended Communication Strategy**

The Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee recommends the following Communications Strategy as part of the release of the Community Plan to the public. The Communication Strategy is designed to increase community awareness of the objectives of the Community Plan, as well as identify the specific projects that have received funding approval for 2000-2001.

The first priority would be the release of the Community Plan, likely scheduled for December 2000. The following strategies are recommended:

**Short Term**

- The Community Plan will be formally presented to Regional Council where it receives television coverage throughout the RMWB.
- The Community Plan and Executive Summary should be posted on the Internet.
- A media conference should be held, attended by the Mayor, elected officials from the Government of Canada and Government of Alberta, and the Chair of the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee.
- The Executive Summary should be provided in large enough quantities for the general public.
- Depending on budgetary constraints, the Executive Summary could be reprinted as an insert in the Fort McMurray Today newspaper.
- If additional funding (besides SCPI and Alberta Community Development) can be secured for a particular project or program, this should be publicly recognized through a media release.
- Make the most of potential media coverage as new projects / programs are underway or completed.
Longer Term

A long-term communications strategy should be developed so that periodic and timely announcements are made to the community regarding new funding sponsors and key accomplishments of on-going projects / programs.

- Establish a ‘Speaker’s Bureau’ through the CBO (Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation) to address community service clubs and associations regarding homelessness, and provide a public forum for announcing new initiatives.
- Develop an information folder outlining the mandate of the CBO, as well as current project profiles and fundraising efforts.
- Make the most of media coverage for the opening of new facilities or launching of new programs and services. Celebrate success along the way.
- Produce an Annual Report Card on the Community Plan to keep the community informed.

5.8 A Process for Monitoring, Evaluating and Updating the Plan

The Community Plan should be a ‘living’ planning document that is outcome-oriented and responsive to changing needs, opportunities and circumstances within the Regional Municipality.

The CBO (Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation) in cooperation with the Homeless Initiative Steering Committee will conduct an annual review and update the Community Plan in response to changing conditions and needs of the community. This review should be timed to be consistent with the annual budget cycle. Provision should be made for the broader community to have input into the Plan as part of the annual review and budget planning process. The following is a suggested timetable for monitoring, evaluating and updating the Community Plan:

May 2001

The CBO (Wood Buffalo Housing Corporation) produces and releases an Annual Report containing financial statements, accomplishments, performance measures and outcomes. This would coincide with a formal Annual General Meeting, which could serve a dual purpose as a fundraising event.

June 2001

A Strategic Planning Workshop should be held in conjunction with the annual budget planning process. The workshop would provide local stakeholders and the community at large to review progress on current projects and programs, identify any gaps in the continuum of care that need to be filled, and set priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.
June 2001  Immediately following the Strategic Planning Workshop, Requests for Proposals (RFPs) should be issued to invite funding proposals from local helping agencies or other organizations.

September 2001  Project proposals are evaluated by the CBO based upon the priority setting criteria in the Community Plan, and as identified in the 2001 – 2002 budget.

April 1 → Ongoing  Projects are evaluated by the CBO and implemented to ensure that the objectives of the Community Plan are met.

5.9 Performance Measures

A statistical database needs to be established to measure how the Community Plan is achieving its objectives. As part of each project profile (initiative program or service), anticipated outcomes need to be identified and measured. To do this performance measures need to be specified for each project to allow the CBO to gauge progress.

Baseline information has been gathered in the preparation of this Plan during the months of July and August in order to arrive at estimates for the number of absolute homeless or near homeless in both the Urban Service Area and Rural Service Area of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. It is recommended that one of the job responsibilities of the Community Plan Project Coordinator be to establish a tracking system with all agencies interacting with the homeless in the RMWB to track the number of individuals who are turned away because of a shortage of accommodation or support services.

Specific performance measurement criteria that could be used include:

- the number of absolute homeless compared to the August 2000 number for Fort McMurray and rural communities.
- the number of total homeless compared to the August 2000 count for Fort McMurray and the rural communities.
- new shelter beds or programs developed for the hard-to-house.
- new housing units and special programs for persons with special needs.
- the number of formerly homeless clients that have moved from the emergency shelter system to more permanent housing.
- the number of service providers entering into cooperation agreements.
- number of dollars leveraged over and above core funding through SCPI and Alberta Community Development.

The Community Plan Project Coordinator should establish the project benchmarks for fiscal year 2000 – 2001 with input from the Homeless Initiatives Steering Committee. A statistical database would need to be developed and information collected in subsequent years (e.g. civic census data, homeless counts, landlord/tenant survey, etc.) These efforts should be coordinated with the RMWB, which already prepares an Annual Housing Survey and periodic Civic Census. However, we would have to ensure that this also encompasses the rural communities.

Finally, the CBO will also have to submit financial statements (including information on specific expenditures and performance measures) to Human Resources Development Canada and Alberta Community Development on an annual basis during the fiscal period 2000 - 2003.
REFERENCES


**Alberta Community Development**, *A Housing Policy Framework for Alberta: Family and Special Purpose Housing*, Seniors Services and Housing Division, August 2000.

**Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)**, *Guide to Affordable Housing Partnerships*, 1998.


**Lana Wells**, *Grande Prairie Community Social Housing Plan*, Community Services, City of Grand Prairie, June 2000.

LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS INTERVIEWED

FCSS Manager, Fort Chipewyan Municipal Office
Northern Lights Regional Health Services
YMCA Job Centre
Local Renter Living in Fort McMurray
Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce
YMCA of Wood Buffalo – Immigrant Settlement Program
Family Services Agency, Family & Community Support Services (FCSS)
Fellowship Baptist Church, Soup Kitchen
Band Manager, Fort McKay Community Association
Board Members, Janvier Community Association
Manager, Ayabaskaw Senior Home
Representative, Metis Local 125
Housing Coordinator, Mikisew First Nation
Housing Coordinator, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
Light Island Housing Authority
Athabasca Tribal Council
Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commissions (AADAC)
Fort McMurray Housing Authority
Salvation Army Start Program
Federal Parole Officer, Correctional Service of Canada
Habitat for Humanity Society of Fort McMurray
Housing Coordinator, Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
Some Other Solutions for Crisis Prevention
Pastew Place Detox Centre
AWASAK Child and Family Services
Office Manager for Dave Chatters (MP)
Fort McMurray & District Labour Council
Athabasca Tribal Council
Paspew House Family Crisis Shelter – Fort Chipewyan
Northern Lights Regional Health Centre – Mental Health Services
Alberta Mental Health Board
Disability Resource Association
Family Crisis Society (Unity House)
United Way of Fort McMurray
Friends Dissolving Poverty
Shelter Supervisor and Family Services Director
Community Services Director – Salvation Army Men’s Shelter
Nistawoyou Association Friendship Centre
Fort McMurray Association for Community Living
Employment Counseling – CHOICES Employment Counseling