



EXPERT ROUNDTABLE #5

DELIVERY MODELS

**NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPING
A CANADIAN HOUSING FRAMEWORK**

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1.0 Introduction

The success of a comprehensive national housing strategy depends on the ability to deliver a wide range of program initiatives under many different sets of circumstances. Models of delivery have to be results based, flexible and accommodate multiple stakeholders.

Delivery models must accommodate a range of household types– households on social assistance, the working poor, people with mental and physical disabilities, Aboriginal people, seniors, single parents and other groups, each with their own special needs and circumstances. They also have to be flexible enough to deliver program funding in communities with varying levels of capacity, municipalities with different levels of interest and funding capacity, rural and remote areas, large and small urban centers, inner city and suburban situations. The ability to accommodate the myriad jurisdictional complexities – no small issue in the Canadian context – is also important.

The following discussion will highlight important principles for delivery models, discuss models that have evolved over time, and suggest a framework that could be considered to deliver a long-term housing strategy for Canadians.

2.0 Proposed Principles for Delivery Models

There are certain principles that delivery models must incorporate to be effective in delivering a continuum of programs that are part of a national housing strategy. They must:

- 1) provide affordable, accessible housing with the necessary support services to all those with housing problems, providing assistance in accordance with need;
- 2) be flexible enough to attract and incorporate funds from a range of sources;
- 3) incorporate a democratic process of consultation that invites participation from all concerned and that leads to decisions and action as opposed to stalemates and inaction;
- 4) identify clear roles and responsibilities for all the stakeholders involved and leadership in the various sectors and jurisdictions;
- 5) have the capacity to link with other sectors that deal with the same households. Housing programs need to be coordinated with other social and economic policy initiatives;
- 6) provide the necessary capacity building and expertise to guarantee adequate involvement by all sectors;
- 7) deliver housings outcome that are sustainable over the long term;

- 8) complement other community building exercises and respond to broader community needs;
- 9) facilitate the delivery of both supply and demand side interventions;
- 10) facilitate the introduction of initiatives that address the gaps that currently exist in the housing program continuum and strengthening existing programs; and,
- 11) incorporate the flexibility necessary to accommodate local needs but ensure accountability to funders and other stakeholders.

The demands and circumstances delivery models must address probably preclude the adoption of any one particular model. Although it may be possible to develop a broad general delivery framework, this framework will have to be flexible enough to address differing local circumstances.

3.0 Delivery Models that have Evolved in Canada

There are many examples that exist in Canada that we can build on. A number of these are discussed below.

- 1) The traditional **federal/provincial model (FPT Agreements)** that was used to deliver much of the current public housing portfolio. Although not noted for its incorporation of a broad consultative process, it may still be a useful approach to build on in small communities that lack community capacity, or in communities that show little interest in addressing housing needs. Despite being criticized for its top down approach, it has delivered a substantial amount of the existing portfolio of assisted housing.

A possible advantage of this model is that the framework is in place and less time would be required to structure new agreements. The existing template could be modified to suit the circumstances. On the other hand, disagreements on cost sharing, the flexibility of program regulations, and project development and management criteria often slows and frustrates delivery agents. The role of the Affordable Housing Initiative is a case in point. This model is also not effective when certain jurisdictions are unable or unwilling to participate in funding affordable housing. It may also require considerable expansion of staff – particularly at the federal level, as they have closed regional offices or cut staff.

- 2) Delivery through **non-profit and cooperative community-based organizations**, that provided much of the non-profit and cooperative portfolio in the late '70s and early '80s. Although many of the groups involved did not always represent the broader community, the community-based approach often provided better links between housing policy, broader community development initiatives and other social support programs.

This approach has the ability to respond to special needs and unique groups. For example, Aboriginal housing and service based agencies are a component of the non-profit sector. They deliver a range of housing and housing support services. They represent an example of delivery models that operate to address special needs groups in both urban and rural/remote centres, providing housing and support services that are culturally appropriate and delivered in a manner that makes Aboriginal people feel comfortable.

The not-for-profit sector has fallen on hard times in recent years. The withdrawal of funding by senior orders of government for any significant level of unit production weakened the sector. Although they retain their property management function, the loss of development capacity has weakened these organizations overall as the technical resource/support people involved in development have moved on to other employment opportunities. Housing advocates worry that there are a diminishing number of people with the know-how to “make it happen.” Budgets are not available to provide the unit numbers necessary for sustained programs and development dollars are scarce. Housing groups have disappeared along with much-needed skill sets. More development capacity funding programs are required – both seed money and training dollars. Despite these concerns there are inspiring examples of creativity across the country and strengthening this sector will be key to successful delivery of a continuing housing program.

- 3) **Tri-Partite Agreements:** some major urban centers (Winnipeg, Toronto and Vancouver, for example) have delivered a range of programs, including housing, on the basis of partnerships between the three orders of government. Although this approach does not necessarily guarantee broad community consultation, it does help facilitate coordination between the three orders of government who are funders and when delivered through a “single window” should provide community groups, the private sector and other organizations with a “point of contact” that provides information and accepts proposals for many government programs.
- 4) **The Supporting Community Partnership Initiatives (SCPI) Model,** which incorporates broad community participation, needs assessment and comprehensive community plans, does invite broad participation, opportunities for grass roots involvement, knowledge sharing and partnering and better inter-sectoral linkages than many models. As a model it has attempted to incorporate the views of a broad range of service agencies, both housing and support services.

Critics of this model point to the excessive time required to consult and plan, the long decision making process that can ensue when so many individuals and organizations are involved, and the risk that the process can be dominated by certain sectors in the community to the exclusion of others.

When one has a comprehensive, inclusionary model one runs the risk of engaging in a long consultative process where decisions on unit delivery are delayed. There has to be a leadership that will make a decision for the common good once a consultation process has been completed and a plan is in place. SCPI, like the non-profit approach, lacks the necessary investment in capacity building that may be required in the community sector. In addition, the focus has been the homeless and community plans have had the same focus. Despite these concerns, the model has been an effective vehicle that multi-stakeholder partnerships have used to deliver housing and a broader mandate in housing should not be ignored.

- 5) **The Housing Trust Model:** the Edmonton Housing Trust Fund is a working example. Founded in 1999 to address the growing concern over the lack of affordable housing, it was identified as the community-based entity best positioned to be responsible for funding projects identified in the development of a detailed Community Plan. The Trust assists a diverse range of people by working with non-profit and private sector agencies and service providers, builders and Aboriginal groups. Funding is provided by the three levels of government, the private and non-profit sectors. The Trust becomes the focal point or conduit for the distribution of funds with an emphasis on serving those most in need. The Trust also raises a significant amount of money from philanthropic organizations, the corporate community, and the general public through fund-raising activities.

The seven Trustees of the Trust include representatives from the Province, the City of Edmonton, the Homebuilders and community based non-profit associations. Although it does not deliver all the money that goes into affordable and supportive housing programs in the City of Edmonton, it has distributed over \$35 million to support close to 1,200 emergency, transitional and long-term supportive units. The distribution has been based on a community plan developed after wide consultation. Although the focus has been on homelessness and households with high support needs, this model could be expanded to deliver a broader range of programs.

- 6) **The Calgary Homeless Foundation** represents another model that has effectively delivered housing services. The Foundation was conceived in 1998 by successful Calgary businessman Art Smith. With the support of the Province (the Premier), the Mayor of Calgary and the CEO of the City (provincial, municipal and business representatives) the Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Calgary and Area, the Foundation was established.

The Foundation created the “Funders Table” a partnership of all three levels of government, the United Way, private organizations, philanthropic agencies and individuals. The “Table” brings contributors “to the table” to fund affordable housing initiatives. They make decisions on the basis a Collaborative Granting Process to ensure the desires and priorities of the community are part of any decision making process. The Funders Table is a mechanism to tap additional

sources of funds and the Collaborative Granting Process helps to better coordinate funding for the homeless.

The Foundation soon discovered that land is needed to facilitate project development, so it has expanded its mandate through the development of the Calgary Community Land Trust that purchases land or finds and manages donations of land and land and buildings. The Foundation has also broadened its mandate to include research on the state of the homeless so that it has the information necessary to guide its plans to respond to community needs.

Like the Edmonton Housing Trust, their emphasis has been on the homeless, but their activities suggest a capacity to expand into other areas and deliver a comprehensive housing package.

These two organizations, as well as similar organizations in other cities, have certain characteristics in common:

- they represent broad based community partnerships
- they operate on the basis of community plans developed through a broad consultation process supported by research and needs analysis
- they are arms length from government but incorporate representatives of all three orders of government
- they incorporate a collaborative decision making process
- they prioritize and coordinate community housing projects, allocating funds on the basis of need
- their broad representation allows them to tap funds from sources that have not traditionally funded affordable housing initiatives, including the private sector
- their broad representation (board members) allows them to tap areas of expertise that are not always available to housing organizations, including the skills of the private sector
- their broad representation also allows them to tap the voluntary sector and incorporate the resources provided by many volunteer individuals and organizations
- similar to the SCPI and non-profit approaches, these two organizations lack front end investment in the capacity building that is necessary.

- 7) **Housing Works, a National Housing Foundation**, proposed by the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, is another vehicle that should be considered. As part of a delivery framework it may have strengths that more locally based delivery mechanisms lack. The proposed foundation would operate as a funding conduit to support community developed affordable housing initiatives and to build and expand local expertise and capacity. Although funded largely by government, it would operate at arms-length and be governed by, and accountable to, a multi-sectoral board of national housing experts. The basic objectives of the foundation would be to:

- increase the sources and availability of funding;
- invest in rehabilitation and preservation of the existing affordable stock; and,
- support local capacity building and promote broader understanding of the need for affordable housing.

The development of such a foundation would expand the institutional framework necessary to support multi-source partnership funding and financing, expand technical assistance available to groups and undertake capacity building activities with local organizations. It could also prove to be an effective alternate delivery vehicle when circumstances impede government initiatives aimed at expanding and improving the affordable housing stock. In addition to developing local capacity and expertise, the foundation could assist with financing predevelopment costs and land acquisitions (a short term revolving loan fund) – activities that are often difficult for local groups. The other layer of funding would be outright loans and grants. As well as funding from the federal government, the foundation would work to incorporate provincial and municipal contributions, waiving of levies, fees and charges, labour sponsored investments, donations from individuals and corporations, philanthropic investment as well as group equity.

The foundation would work with community based agencies such as the Edmonton Housing Trust, Calgary Foundation, the Saskatoon Housing Initiatives and the Fonds québécois d’habitation communautaire and other groups in the non-profit sector who would act as local delivery agencies.

This national organization would have many of the advantages of more locally based foundations and trusts, but there are some additional advantages – the mandate to build capacity and expertise in the housing sector, the ability to fund initiatives in areas governments are unable to address and the ability to work directly with community based organizations and municipalities without the restraints that often apply to inter-governmental interaction. However, as a national body, it may run into criticism for its lack of local understanding. Working through local groups will be very important for such an agency.

- 8) **Delivery through Public Non-Profits:** distinguished from private non-profits by the fact that they are created, partially funded, and work under the legislation and general direction of governments, generally municipalities. Examples include The Toronto Community Housing Corporation and similar organizations in several other cities. They are essentially entities of the municipality that work with neighbourhood groups and agencies to provide affordable housing or use funds from the various orders of government to develop, own and manage their own affordable housing property. As entities or creations of municipalities they have advantages such as familiarity with local needs, their close association with the jurisdiction most involved in local land use and neighbourhood planning, easier access to land and/or buildings that become available through the

municipality and other supports municipalities are able to provide through the regulatory and planning environment.

- 9) **Delivery through Private Sector Companies:** there is always the argument that the private sector will not involve itself in providing affordable housing because of the absence of reasonable profit margins. Although private firms cannot operate without profit, this does not preclude playing a role in developing affordable housing. There are many examples of effective, sustainable private sector involvement. Kinkora Developments in Winnipeg, working with funds from the Neighbourhoods Alive Program, has been able to purchase and renovate older apartments and rooming houses to provide affordable housing for students, immigrants and refugees. Through Neighbourhoods Alive and Winnipeg's "single window" the Winnipeg Housing and Homeless Initiative, Kinkora is able to access RRAP funding as well as provincial and municipal grants. Kinkora consults with neighbourhood groups and community agencies and works within the neighbourhood housing plans developed by neighbourhood associations. Rents are set at levels that students and other modest income households are able to afford.

Such developments by the private sector, using up-front grants and other funding sources, free governments from the burden of long term subsidies and management responsibilities, although there is never a guarantee over the longer term that housing developed in this manner will remain affordable for low and modest income households. The Saskatoon and Region Home-Builders Association is a similar example that provides affordable homeownership without any appreciable government subsidy. Homes are small and feature cost saving design approaches.

The private sector brings significant development and project management experience to the table and must be stakeholders and participate in any national strategy.

- 10) **Delivery through Neighbourhood Development Corporations and Neighbourhood Resident Associations.** At no time in recent history have communities and community based organizations ever been asked to take on the level of responsibility they are today. The shift in the role of governments from "provider" to "facilitator" has had a great deal to do with adding to responsibility at the community level. Most people in housing view this as a positive shift. The expanded community role includes assisting with development of neighbourhood plans, neighbourhood needs assessments, decision making on allocation of funds within local neighbourhoods, playing a role in program delivery, working to develop the necessary partnerships, applying for other sources of funds and, for some community based housing organizations, project ownership and management.

When communities accept and effectively play such roles, the end result can be more effective policy and program outcomes and better linkages with other initiatives that are part of community building and revitalization. However, if community based organizations do not have the capacity and expertise to adequately perform such roles, the consequences can be disastrous.

- 11) Another successful mode of delivery is one patterned on the activities of organizations such as **Habitat for Humanity** and the **Frontier Foundation**. These organizations deliver affordable housing, often without public subsidies, by incorporating sweat equity and significant contributions by volunteer labour and donor contributions of construction material. Future occupants often contribute substantial amounts of labour (sweat equity). Habitat for Humanity has operated a successful program in many urban centres in Canada for several years. The Frontier Foundation has been more active in small communities and rural areas. One disadvantage of this approach is the relatively small number of households served and the limited income range that can be served without public subsidies.

The preceding discussion has highlighted some of the basic “models” of housing delivery that have been operative in recent years. There are more, but those discussed capture most of the characteristics of the many alternatives that have functioned to deliver affordable housing. They all have their strengths and weaknesses. Some are very locally based and project focused. Their strength is their ability to work at the community level. Others such housing trusts or foundations have the capacity to draw together representatives of various policy sectors and access funds from a much wider range of organizations. Some of the more creative solutions were developed after significant cuts in the level of government funding, but have the capacity to deliver higher funding levels.

Both approaches are needed to effectively deliver the range of programs and services that are required to deliver a comprehensive long-term housing strategy for Canadians. There are so many aspects of a comprehensive housing strategy that it is simply not possible to identify one delivery model that can provide all the various program requirements: expanding the social housing inventory, broadening the continuum of programs with both supply and demand side initiatives, accommodating innovative financial mechanisms, strengthening the private rental sector, repairing existing units, providing supportive services to housing projects, support for energy efficiency upgrades, support for transitional and supportive housing, and land assembly activities. It will be difficult to achieve all these objectives with a single delivery model. A number of delivery models may have to be utilized.

4.0 Mechanisms to Strengthen Delivery Models

Certain mechanisms, if they were part of a delivery framework, could strengthen delivery models.

Inter-sectoral Committees could be structured to more effectively integrate housing with other key support services and policy areas. In recent years some cities and

provinces have formalized inter-sectoral committees to try to break down the “silo” mentality that often characterizes program delivery and policy development. Examples of such committees are present in Regina and Saskatoon in the Province of Saskatchewan and in some cities in the Province of Alberta. In these jurisdictions they generally occur in the social service and human resources areas. The federal government has also structured inter-sectoral committees in an attempt to better coordinate policy and program delivery and improve the interface between various policy areas.

Although these inter-sectoral committees would not “deliver” programs *per se*, they could help coordinate policies and programs that serve the same clients. There is tremendous overlap in the client group that affordable housing programs accommodate: income security, health, education, justice, immigration, community economic development, employment assistance and social development are other policy and program areas that deal with many of the same people.

Inter-sectoral committees should be encouraged – not necessarily to get involved within the “hands on” delivery of programs, but to more effectively coordinate housing policy and programs with other areas of social and economic policy. Although housing is back on the social and political agendas it is struggling to find a place amongst other spending priorities such as health care and education. Inter-sectoral committees that include representatives from the three orders of government, community based organizations and the private sector could change this and more effectively integrate housing with other policy areas, improving the effectiveness of budgeted housing funds.

Technical Resource Groups (TRGs) may also be a way of strengthening delivery models. Capacity and technical skills are a very important aspect of successful delivery. Absence of skills has already been raised as an issue in the discussion of involvement of non-profit and community based organizations. The use of TRGs may help address this concern. Montreal neighbourhood associations work with TRGs who provide the technical skills to develop proposals, work through the regulatory and planning process and provide construction management services. These are skills that are also often needed by non-profit organizations.

TRGs are very similar to the many resource groups that developed to serve the non-profit sector when non-profits dominated the delivery of social housing in the late '70s through the '80s. These resource groups withered and died when budgets for social housing dried up in the late '80s and early '90s. Delivery models that support the re-building and development of this sector may help address the capacity problem that is so prevalent in the not-for-profit community-based sector.

5.0 Defining Roles and Responsibilities

In any discussion of delivery models there must be a clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

Suggested roles and responsibilities of the orders of government and communities, the major stakeholders in the housing delivery process, are outlined below:

- 1) **Strong leadership from the federal government to:**
 - develop policies to guide national strategies
 - develop basic guidelines to ensure a level of national equity
 - be the major funder of an expanded range of programs
 - establish inter-sectoral committees to coordinate housing policy with policies of other social and economic sectors
 - identify a “contact agency” to lead the federal initiative.

Housing has become an “orphaned” child over the past couple of decades. With devolution and the “backing away” of the federal government, the housing policy field has become an area of shared responsibility or, some would argue, “shared neglect.” All levels of government and organizations beyond government are being called on to play a role in new housing initiatives. Shared responsibility can bring with it the benefits of effective partnerships but without strong leadership it can also be an impediment to development and implementation of new policies and programs. Housing seems to be stuck in a framework of shared responsibility that is characterized by lack of leadership, buck passing of responsibility and too much concern over who should do what as opposed to what should be done.

The federal government has to provide strong leadership to move the housing agenda and housing strategy forward. Recently it has been difficult to determine which department is the federal government’s “housing agency.” Both HRDC and CMHC have been involved. The involvement in housing of two or more departments is beneficial because of the linkages housing has with other policy areas. However, a “key contact” would facilitate the involvement of other stakeholders and coordination at all levels. Given its mandate, expertise and past history, is CMHC best placed to provide this leadership?

- 2) **Provincial leadership at the regional level to:**
 - provide additional funds
 - establish provincial inter-sectoral committees to integrate strategies with other social and economic sectors at the regional level
 - assist municipalities and neighbourhoods to design comprehensive neighbourhood plans.

Historically the federal government led housing policy development. As noted strong leadership is still required at the federal level. However the provinces, from a jurisdictional perspective, control many of the areas that support a housing continuum and are important “linkages” in a successful housing policy. Provinces, therefore, must also play an active role in policy development.

- 3) **Municipal leadership at the neighbourhood level to:**
 - build neighbourhood capacity
 - develop neighbourhood plans
 - facilitate the development of the necessary partnerships
 - use the planning regulatory environment and land base to facilitate program development.

- 4) **Active engagement at the community level to:**
 - assist with the development of neighbourhood plans and neighbourhood needs assessments
 - provide input into allocation of funds
 - work to build the necessary partnerships
 - play a role in program delivery and project management.

The successful operation of delivery models requires a clear definition of roles and responsibilities. The preceding comments highlight general areas that can be refined in subsequent discussions. The importance of federal leadership has also been stressed. It is crucial, however, not to lose sight of the fact that **housing is a shared responsibility** so all orders of government have to have a commitment to funding and to use those tools and regulations within their mandate to make programs work. It is also important to recognize that housing is more than shelter. Adequate, affordable housing helps improve education, health, labour force and social outcomes for people. This improves the economic and social competitiveness of countries. Improved housing can also be used to achieve environmental objectives, help revitalize neighbourhoods and address other community development goals. These broader impacts are important to all orders of government and the many stakeholders in the community. **All share the benefits, so all should share the responsibility.**

6.0 Developing a Delivery Framework

Two quotes from Canadian Housing and Renewal Association's (CHRA) promotion of their upcoming *Congress 2005 Linking Sectors: The Case For Housing* seem appropriate at this point:

Joined outcomes don't happen in Cabinet rooms or government offices: they take place in homes, streets, neighbourhoods, and communities. You only get the right top level outcomes if you start from the bottom up as well as top down. CHRA 2005

Linking sectors will lead to better outcomes through a democratic process that invites participation, knowledge sharing and partnering. CHRA 2005

As the quotes suggest, effective delivery models have to incorporate mechanisms that provide both top down and bottom up participation and consultation. They also have to provide linkages between housing and other policy sectors. As stressed earlier,

circumstances may dictate a need for more than one model. A successful delivery framework may incorporate the following components and models:

- 1) strong leadership by the federal government, but with active involvement of all orders of government and stakeholders in the community: “shared responsibility”;
- 2) an inter-sectoral committee of federal departments, chaired by a lead housing agency, to coordinate housing policy with other federal policy areas;
- 3) inter-sectoral committees at the provincial level that include municipal and community representation to coordinate and integrate policy at the regional level;
- 4) a “single window” agency to work with groups to coordinate and allocate program funding. With such a range of programs necessary, it is important to limit the number of funding streams and reporting relationships households, developers and community providers have to deal with. The important question is how best to do this. Two options are possible
 - (i) a single window, represented by a national foundation (Housing Works, for example) at the national level that comes a conduit for funds that are channeled to housing organizations at the municipal level. Organizations at the municipal level may, in turn, work through “single windows” – Edmonton Housing Trust, Calgary Housing Foundation, etc. An identified organization to coordinate local initiatives based on the community plan could help prioritize local requests for funding; or,
 - (ii) if a national single window is not in place then funds from governments could be directed through local “single windows;”
- 5) a variety of non-profit, community based and private sector organizations that work through the single window(s) to access funds to build projects, provide services, renovate homes, etc.;
- 6) a comprehensive neighbourhood plan that provides guidance to the single window organization and the various housing agencies in the allocation decision making process. The neighbourhood plan would be more comprehensive than the SCPI product: incorporating discussion on a broader range of housing needs and highlighting linkages with initiatives in other policy sectors;
- 7) technical resource groups to provide technical capacity and expertise to enhance the capacity of neighbourhoods and the various housing agencies; and,
- 8) delivery through FPT Agreements to accommodate centres and circumstances that the discussion has indicated may not be accommodated under the “single window” approach. FPT Agreements may also still be required for other broader

purposes – specifying cost sharing arrangements, criteria for allocation of funds, etc.

A schematic illustrating this general framework is presented in Figure 1 on page 16.

There are some programs, housing agencies and geographic areas that will not fit or work well within a single delivery model. Accordingly the framework incorporates more than one model. Some reasons behind this rationale include

- energy upgrading programs that may not be targeted only to low and modest income people. If such programs are introduced on a universal basis, delivery might be more effective if a particular order of government, as specified in a FPT Agreement, worked directly with households and private sector firms;
- some housing agencies such as Habitat for Humanity, because they do not depend on government funding, may want to work outside these models. It can be argued, however, that comprehensive neighbourhood plans could inform their delivery decisions;
- because of the current debate surrounding Aboriginal self-government, Aboriginal groups may be reluctant to work through a “single window” with other housing agencies. Setting jurisdictional issues aside, there is a strong rationale for Aboriginal people to be part of this framework as low income and marginalized Aboriginal people are frequent users of other social services and better integration of housing with other policy areas can work to their benefit;
- single window model(s) work best for larger urban municipalities. Although a large proportion of housing need is concentrated in these centres, people in need of housing support in smaller centres, rural and remote areas cannot be ignored. However, it is not realistic to develop single-window agencies in every community and some communities may not have housing agencies to step forward and sponsor housing projects. Provincial governments or umbrella agencies such as public non-profits may have to play a more active role and be more hands on as “providers” of housing in these centres. The FPT Agreements may be a more effective delivery model in those circumstances; and,
- to expand on the above point, some of the models operate best at a local level, but regional and national models are needed as well and FPT Agreements, a National Housing Trust, or other options may be more effective at a regional or national level.

7.0 Conclusion

What does this suggested approach accomplish?

- 1) It incorporates input from all levels – neighbourhood, community, provincial/regional and national. Housing solutions have to be discussed and designed at all levels – not just dictated by one order of government.
- 2) Although basic policy and program guidelines will be established by the major funder(s), flexibility to suit local circumstances can be incorporated in the decision making process at the “single window” level in accordance with neighbourhood plans. This will also help address jurisdictional concerns.
- 3) It is a model that enhances local involvement, tries to address the lack of capacity and expertise at the local level and sets in place a framework to better integrate housing policy with other social and economic sectors. This should help strengthen housing strategies and move us toward a longer-term coherent strategy. It also draws on “best practice” models in existence in several jurisdictions.
- 4) It permits (with the development of community plans) an inclusionary, participatory planning process with an opportunity for all sectors – public, private and community – to get involved. There is ample opportunity for municipalities to provide leadership and work with neighbourhoods and other partners to develop community housing plans.
- 5) The community plan and the “single window” organization working with communities should guarantee responsiveness to local priorities.
- 6) The framework outlined places considerable responsibility on the community, which includes the private sector, and municipalities to develop local solutions. The public, particularly the provincial and federal governments, play more of a “facilitator” role – providing funding and basic policy and program guidelines. With the major funder(s) establishing basic guidelines it should be possible to ensure a system that treats all Canadians in an equitable fashion.

A concern with the proposed approach is that the time required to develop community plans and establish “single window” organizations will slow delivery of program assistance. However, implementing an effective comprehensive national strategy without plans on how money should be spent in major centres may result in funds being wasted on initiatives that are not community priorities. The time required to develop such a framework will also be reduced as there are ample opportunities to build on organizations already in place (foundations, housing trusts, tri-partite agreements, etc.). Some centres have also already developed neighbourhood plans under SCPI.

No model is perfect nor are the models mutually exclusive. Some models can work with others to deliver a successful housing program – cooperatives and non-profits, for

example. There is no one model that will fit all circumstances and delivery models will only work if there is a buy in by all partners. Without a broad commitment to a national strategy few, if any, approaches are likely to work.

References

This paper has been prepared using information in publications from the Canadian Policy Research Networks, The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, and the *Housing Again* Website, amongst others.

**Figure 1:
A DELIVERY FRAMEWORK TO FACILITATE THE DELIVERY OF A NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY
Housing is a Shared Responsibility**



