

Tamapta

identifies the need for an **achievable and comprehensive** long term Housing Strategy that addresses the entire continuum of housing, increasing public housing, strengthening the rental market and providing support for private homeownership. Supported by findings in **“Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let’s Build a Home Together”** the Framework for the Government of Nunavut’s (GN) Long Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy, the following document outlines a strategy for **meeting Nunavut’s housing challenges**.

Table of Contents

Vision	4
Guiding Principles	5
Letter from the Chair	6
Ministers’ Message	7
Introduction	8
Understanding Nunavut’s Housing Context	9
Nunavut’s Housing Priorities	16
Strategic Direction: Increase Nunavut’s housing stock	16
Strategic Direction: Improve collaboration among housing stakeholders	16
Strategic Direction: Identify and address gaps in Nunavut’s housing continuum	17
Strategic Direction: Instill self-reliance to reduce dependence on government	17
Nunavut’s Housing Challenges	18
Challenge: Housing Demand Factors	18
Challenge: Limited Investment Dedicated to Housing	19
Challenge: The High Cost of Housing	19
Challenge: Barriers to Housing Supply	20
Nunavut’s Housing Strategy: Goals & Objectives	21
Goal: Define Housing Demand Factors	21
Goal: Increase Investment in Housing	22
Goal: Reduce the Costs of Housing	22
Goal: Remove Barriers to Housing Supply	23
Next Steps	24

Vision

Everyone deserves to have a home. The Government of Nunavut (GN) will **build and diversify housing** for Nunavummiut while **promoting economic development** and **self-reliance** – a central element in Tamapta “Working Together”, the Government of Nunavut’s 2009-2013 Action Plan.

Guiding Principles

The Government of Nunavut's Housing and Homelessness Strategy is guided by the following *Tamapta* principles, which shaped the strategic direction set out in "Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let's Build a Home Together" the Framework for the Government of Nunavut's Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy and will define the action to address Nunavut's housing challenges:

- **Inuuqatigiitsiarniq** *Respecting others, relationships, and caring for people.*
The GN Housing and Homelessness Strategy respects Inuit knowledge and values, fosters strong relationships, values a local understanding of housing solutions in decision making, and values participation of all stakeholders in finding common solutions.
- **Tunnganarniq** *Fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive.*
Positive housing outcomes are created through good spirit and inclusivity; the GN Housing and Homelessness Strategy provides equitable solutions to individuals along the housing continuum and across the territory.
- **Pijitsirniq** *Serving and providing for family and/or community.*
Putting people first; the GN Housing and Homelessness Strategy is sensitive to aspirations of our communities, encourages flexibility, and promotes positive results for individuals and families.
- **Aajiiqatigiinni** *Decision making through discussion and consensus.*
Housing need and capacities differ across the territory; the GN Housing and Homelessness Strategy respects diverse needs, and promotes policy development and decision making through discussion and consensus to maximize multi sector collaboration.
- **Pilimmaksarniq** *Development of skills through observation, mentoring, practice, and effort.*
Building housing will develop the territory; the GN Housing and Homelessness Strategy fosters development of local skills through observation, mentoring, practice and effort, supporting economic development opportunities.
- **Ikajuqtigiinni** *Working together for a common cause.*
Partnerships strengthen housing; the GN Housing and Homelessness Strategy reflects the collective responsibility of all levels of government and other stakeholders in the creation of suitable, safe, and affordable housing for Nunavummiut.
- **Qanuqtuurniq** *Being innovative and resourceful.*
Innovative and sustainable housing solutions will drive action; the GN Housing and Homelessness Strategy strives to maximize existing resources, while exploring alternatives that both support the development of a sustainable housing market and increase private market participation.
- **Avatittinnik Kamatsiarniq** *Respect and care for the land, animals and the environment.*
Understanding of the land and natural environment; the GN Housing and Homelessness Strategy considers the impact on and by the natural environment in all capital planning as well as in its housing solutions.

Letter from the Chair

The Honourable Peter Taptuna
Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing
Corporation
Government of Nunavut

Dear Sir:

As the lead agency for housing in the territory, the Nunavut Housing Corporation was tasked with producing a long term comprehensive housing strategy on behalf of the Government of Nunavut. This Strategy builds on the findings of the Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy presented in the fall of 2012 and lays the foundation for the development of a coordinated Action Plan.

This Strategy, the Framework it is based on, and the forthcoming Action Plan, represent a comprehensive and overarching approach to meet the housing needs of Nunavummiut. **Together, they provide the blueprint necessary to drive the collective effort to overcome the daunting and complex, but not insurmountable challenge of overcoming Nunavut’s housing issues.**

Responding to our territory’s housing challenges will require significant contribution and collaboration from a wide range of partners invested in seeing Nunavut’s housing crisis resolved. It will also require considerable financial investment.

The Government of Nunavut has the ingredients to solve the housing crisis, but it needs these ingredients to be put in the right formula. The key to developing the right formula for Nunavut is to recognize housing as an essential service for Nunavummiut and that fixing housing first is the right thing to do.

On behalf of the Nunavut Housing Corporation’s Board of Directors, I have the honour of presenting the Government of Nunavut’s Long-Term Comprehensive Housing Strategy: “Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let’s Build a Home Together”.

This document has been reviewed and approved in compliance with the Nunavut Housing Corporation’s Board of Directors responsibility to review and approve strategic plans produced by the Corporation.

Respectfully submitted,



Eugene Lysy
Chair
Nunavut Housing Corporation

Ministers' Message

“Everyone deserves to have a home.”

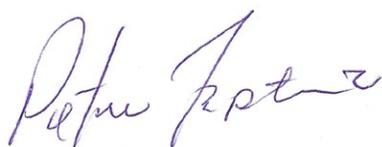
Tamapta 2009-2013

On behalf of the Government of Nunavut, we are proud to introduce ***The GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy***.

Many Nunavummiut are, and have been for decades, living in housing crisis. It is a crisis because the quality and quantity of housing in the territory is below acceptable standard. Nunavut's acute overcrowding masks a deeper homelessness problem that is increasingly harder to define. Capturing what homelessness means for Nunavummiut is crucial to identifying how it can be addressed. Beyond overcrowding, Nunavut's working definition of homelessness includes the hidden homeless, those “at risk”, as well as the absolute and visible homeless.

Without collaborative investment and shared responsibility, Nunavut's most vulnerable cannot be effectively supported to move from dependence to independent housing. The gaps that exist in shelter services perpetuate the cycle of homelessness. **Only by working together to create more transitional and supportive housing options can we find ways to increase opportunities for Nunavummiut to move along the continuum and improve their quality of life.**

Respectfully,



Hon. Peter Taptuna
Minister responsible for the
Nunavut Housing Corporation

Investment in housing and related public infrastructure creates jobs and economic growth, and helps to resolve Nunavut's inequities in health and education. Above all, housing investments provide Nunavummiut with adequate shelter — a necessity of life and the base upon which a healthy, and sustainable future can be built.

As stated in the Framework, **a home rarely stands alone; it fits into a neighbourhood, a community, and a territory**. To develop more homes is to develop Nunavut. Many barriers limit housing development in the territory. However, with time, collaboration, informed discussion, and strategic investment, solutions are within our reach. The very scale of such an undertaking is both challenging and promising. It represents a true opportunity to shape the future and advance Nunavut's economic, social and cultural development.

The GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy addresses the entire continuum of housing, highlighting the need for stronger commitments to shelters, transitional, and supportive housing options, increasing public housing, strengthening the rental market and providing support for private homeownership. The Strategy equips Nunavummiut to make informed decisions to solve Nunavut's housing crisis.

Let's start working together to address Nunavut's housing crisis.



Hon. Monica Ell
Minister for Homelessness

Introduction

Tamapta outlines a vision for housing in Nunavut based on the principle that everyone deserves a home. To support this vision, *Tamapta* identifies the need for an achievable and comprehensive long term Housing Strategy that addresses the entire continuum of housing: increasing public housing, strengthening the rental market and providing support for private homeownership.

Since the establishment of Nunavut in 1999, much research has been done to identify the impacts of overcrowding and homelessness, and the barriers limiting the development of Nunavut’s housing sector. The 2002 “Building Connections in Nunavut” initiative was the Government of Nunavut’s first attempt at a multi-sectoral approach to developing a housing strategy. The 2004 GN-NTI Nunavut Ten-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan identified the need for \$1.9 billion dollars to address overcrowding and the deteriorating condition of Nunavut’s housing stock.

In 2010 the “Nunavut Housing Needs Survey” was completed, which gives an overview of the demand for housing in Nunavut. More recently, the “NHT Lessons Learned” report identified the cost drivers and capacity challenges that affected housing programs backed by \$300 million of federal funding. In the fall of 2012, the Nunavut Housing Corporation completed “Igluliuqatigiilauqta: Let’s Build a Home Together” the Framework for the Government of Nunavut’s (GN) Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy (the Framework). The Framework builds on research done and provides the foundation from which the GN’s Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy has been developed.

Supported by findings in the Framework, the *GN’s Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy* (the Strategy) outlines a complete strategic structure for meeting Nunavut’s housing challenges. The second of three phases forming a coherent and holistic response to the territory’s housing needs, this strategy provides a solid structure for the next step in the Government of Nunavut’s comprehensive long term approach for meeting all of Nunavut’s housing needs: the development of a realistic, achievable and coordinated Action Plan.

Together, the Framework, the Strategy and the Action Plan provide the blueprint that will both guide and drive the collective effort required to overcome the daunting and complex, but not insurmountable, challenge facing housing in Nunavut.

Understanding Nunavut's Housing Context

As demonstrated in the Framework, Nunavut's housing challenges are unquestionably complex. The territory's **great size**, its **challenging climate**, and a **legacy of underinvestment** in basic infrastructure have all worked to hold back the social and economic development needed to keep pace with the long term housing needs of Nunavut's young, dispersed and small, yet rapidly increasing, population.

Nunavut's Socio-Economic Status

Nunavut's constrained economic potential and dependence on government differs sharply from the Canadian experience. The discrepancies are even more striking when socio-economic performance indicators for Nunavummiut are compared to those of all Canadians (Table 1).

Whether one looks at the age profile of Nunavummiut, the dependency ratio, fertility rates, educational attainment, health status, income levels, poverty, or the extent of crime, they all reveal great differences from the Canadian average.

The effect of the lagging social performance on the future economic development of Nunavut and the prosperity of Nunavummiut cannot be overstated. These differences stand in the way of Nunavut achieving its ultimate goal of a high and sustainable quality of life.

Addressing the needs related to the current socio-economic conditions of Nunavut requires a

significant allocation of limited GN funds. Although the Government of Nunavut directly subsidizes more than 80 percent of all housing, many Nunavummiut continue to experience a crisis of chronic and socially crippling overcrowding which has developed over the last half century. The consequences of this enduring crisis are increasingly evident. Foremost, the health of Nunavummiut is being compromised.

Overcrowded conditions raise the potential for stress, violence, food insecurity, abuse, addiction, and suicide. They have contributed to Nunavut's debilitating rates of respiratory infection and other maladies. Beyond the negative health effects and the implications for health-care spending, overcrowding imposes a number of social burdens. There is evidence that children's early-age development and their performance in school are influenced by the adequacy of their home. The performance and productivity of adults in the workplace and in their community is similarly affected.

Table 1
Select Socio-Economic Statistics for Nunavut and Canada

	Nunavut	Canada
Median Age	23.1	39.9
Fertility Rate (2009)	3.22	1.67
Life expectancy at birth, years, males (2005-07)	67.2	77
Life expectancy at birth, years, females (2005-07)	70.2	82
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) (2005-07)	12.1	5
Cigarette smoking (% of daily or occasional use age 12+)	62.3	22.1
Adult body mass index (Age 18+) (30 and greater) (2008)	27.7	17.2
Dependency Ratio (residents aged 0-19 and 65+ vs. 20-64)	82.1	59.2
Graduation Rates, % of graduates aged 17 or 18 (2008-09)	39	75
Social Assistance Recipients (% of population)	51.7	-
Average after-tax income (for income earners, 2005)	\$28,781	\$29,214
Median after-tax income (for income earners, 2005)	\$20,042	\$23,307
Households facing food insecurity (2007-08)	31.9%	7.7%
Total Crime Severity Index	505.7	88.9
Violent Crime Severity Index	345.7	82.7

Source: Statistics Canada, Demographic Division; 2006 Census of Population; Nunavut Bureau of Statistics & Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey; Government of Nunavut, Department of Education; Canadian Institute for Health Information; Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey.

Further, overcrowding increases “wear and tear,” driving operating and maintenance costs higher; forcing the Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) to divert resources that otherwise could have been used to build more homes. The economic

and social costs associated with these negative outcomes have never been fully quantified for Nunavut, but elsewhere evidence has been presented to show that these societal costs can be measured in billions of dollars.

Income and Economic Growth

Decades of low participation levels in the education system and the wage economy have left many without the financial literacy skills and the savings to break their dependence on Public Housing. Strong economic growth accompanied by significant job growth could reduce the demand for public housing, but one must also appreciate that a great number of Nunavummiut have inadequate or inappropriate employment skills, poor labour mobility, and challenges with the existing support systems.

In 2010, Statistics Canada found that average personal income in Nunavut actually exceeded the national average. However, median income levels were the lowest in the country, which indicates that a large number of Nunavummiut did not earn the high average income. Income disparities in Nunavut were very large, however, income levels alone do not tell the full story. One must consider what incomes mean in purchasing power. In Nunavut, essential goods and services cost two to three times more than in southern Canada, and household operating costs can be five to ten times more expensive.

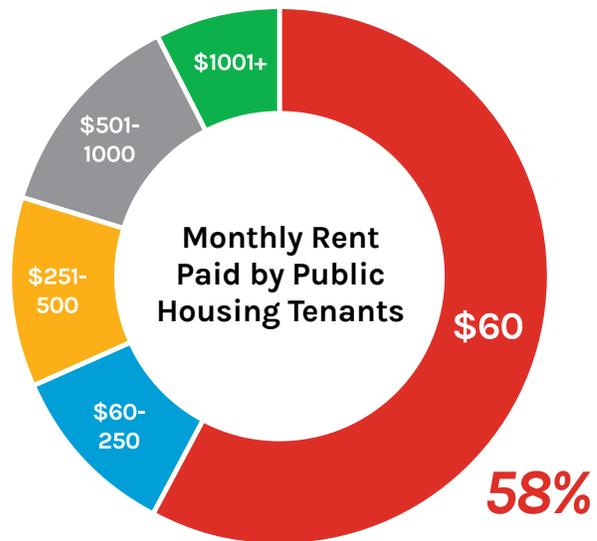
Income must also be viewed against the territory's dependency ratio, which compares the number of income-earners aged 19 to 64 to those under 19, and to those 65 plus. Nunavut's dependency ratio was 82.1, compared to a national ratio of 59.2. In other words, Nunavummiut who earned incomes supported more dependents than anywhere else in Canada. **As the only realistic alternative for Nunavummiut faced with hard choices between food and housing security, public housing will very likely remain Nunavut's primary source of shelter for decades.**

Population Growth

Nunavut's population – 33,322 as of July 1st, 2011 – had grown by 18 percent over ten years. In the coming 25 years, it could rise by one percent annually to reach 43,000 by 2037 – a net gain of 9,500 residents. If the proportion of Nunavut's population who live in public housing remains constant through 2037 – in other words, if public housing continues to shelter 57.5 percent of Nunavummiut, the number of public housing tenants will rise to 24,650. This increase of close to 5000 public housing tenants will generate a need for 90-100 new public housing units per year just to keep up with population growth.

Rental Assessments

Figure 1
Public Housing Tenants' Income and Rent, 2011



Average Household Income	\$9,700
Average Rent Assessed	\$285
Median Rent Assessed	\$60

Source: Nunavut Housing Corporation

2013 changes to the Public Housing Rent Scale will index the minimum rent threshold to Nunavut's minimum wage, effectively increasing the current household income threshold of \$15,600 up to approximately \$22,800 a year. This is anticipated to increase the percentage of tenants eligible for minimum rent from 58 percent to 76 percent (Fig. 1). In 2008, almost half the population – more than 15,000 people – received income support payments for at least part of the year. Clearly, a family bordering on poverty cannot afford anything other than public housing.

Benefits of Investment in Housing

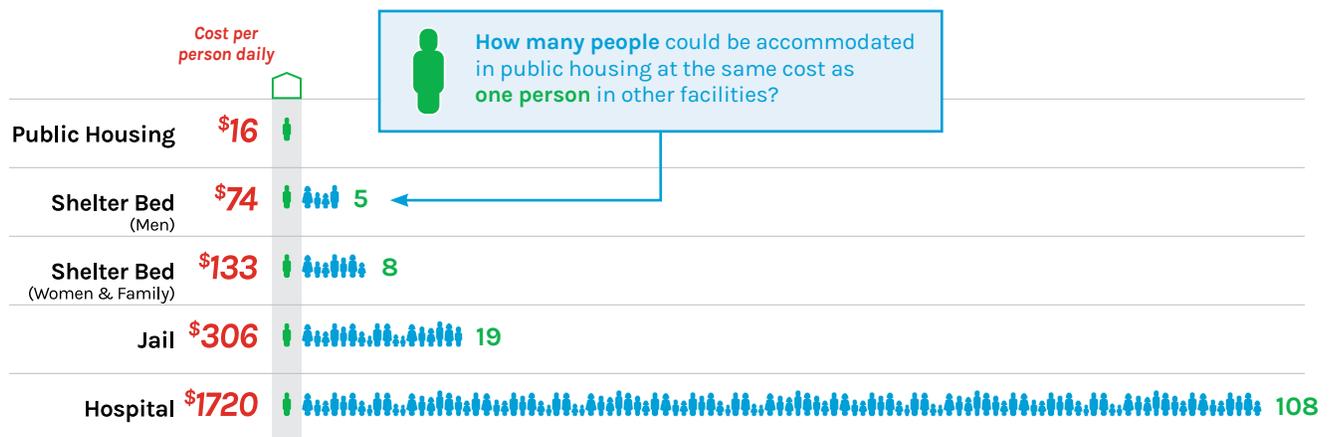
Nunavut needs greater investment in housing to increase stock and provide more diversity in its housing options if its citizens' socio-economic performance is to improve. Direct investments in housing provide economic stimulus with measurable outputs. **Moreover, investments in public housing also provide cost savings to the government in terms of reduced pressure on other essential government services** (Fig. 2).

As demonstrated in Figure 2, at \$23,000 per year, NHC's average public housing cost is \$63 a day (of which 65% is utility charges). With an average occupancy of 4.44 persons per unit, this equates to \$16 per person per day.

Uquutaq Men's Homeless Shelter in Iqaluit, with 20 beds, operates a 16 hour shelter only service at \$27,155 per person per year or \$74 per person per day. Sivummut House Women's Homeless Shelter in Iqaluit, with 12 beds, operates a 24 hour full service at \$49,490 per person per year or \$135 per person per day. The daily cost of a jail cell in Nunavut is \$306 and the daily cost of a hospital bed is \$1720 per day. There are also societal costs that have not yet been calculated in terms of employee absenteeism and high school dropout rates, for example. **Investing in public housing is not just good social policy; it is good education, health care, economic and community development policy.**

Figure 2

Public Housing Costs vs. Alternatives



Source: Nunavut Housing Corporation estimates 2012. Figures rounded to nearest whole person.

Nunavut's Housing Continuum

Public housing investment not only reduces pressure on other government services, but it provides an affordable housing option for lower income Nunavummiut. Affordability is also an issue for the occupants of GN staff housing, but not to the same extent as for public housing tenants. A household receiving two government pay cheques should be better positioned to consider buying a home or even renting one from the private market, but it faces two obstacles: a lack of incentive, and a lack of opportunity. The subsidy provided to GN employees through reduced rents creates an economic disincentive which works against the establishment of private real estate markets. GN staff housing is however, an indisputably necessary recruitment and retention tool where there are gaps in the private market.

This issue of incentive, however, is much less important to address than the lack of opportunity to engage in the private market. Even if government employees wanted to leave their subsidized units, the great majority of them could not. Housing markets simply do not exist in many communities. Even where rental markets exist, too few units are available.

This means that in the short term, though costly, the Government of Nunavut cannot abandon its Staff Housing program. The program remains an important element in the government's recruitment and retention of employees. But for staff housing to become a stepping-stone to private-market rentals or homeownership, government will need to consider changes. Staff housing should provide new employees who move into market communities with a home until they become settled. These employees should be encouraged to move into the private sector or discouraged from remaining in staff housing when market conditions develop to a point where this becomes a feasible option. Currently, the program

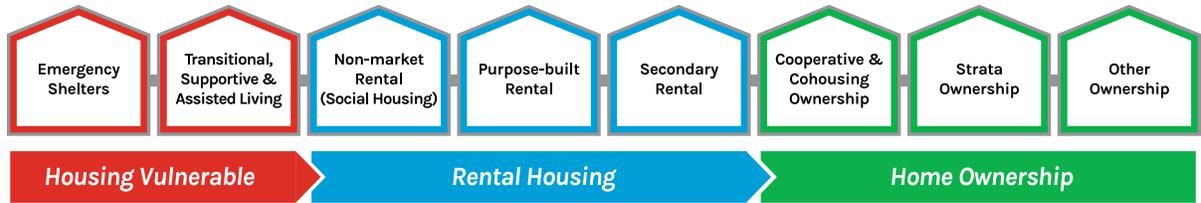
does not adequately support this transition, leaving many tenants to remain in staff housing for the long term.

Government has established Homeownership programs to help with mortgage down payments and repair costs. It has programs to help public housing and staff housing tenants make the transition into market housing. It can improve these programs by working with developers, municipalities, and financial institutions to increase the private rental market and make homeownership more attractive and affordable. Government should consider how to adjust its homeownership programs to attract more Nunavummiut into the market for owner-occupied homes and especially its own employees living in staff housing.

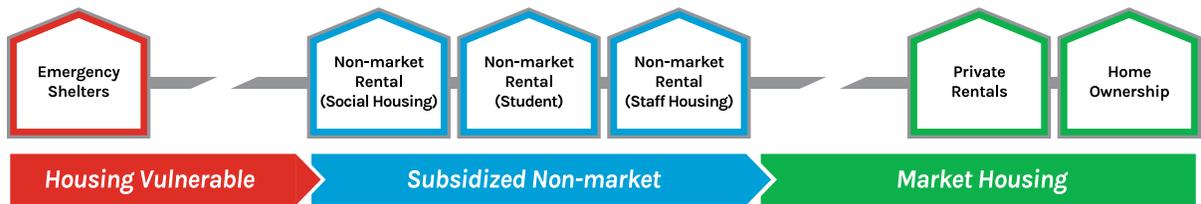
However, without ensuring supply barriers are addressed first, making programming decisions has the real potential to aggravate already strenuous circumstances. It is critical that the GN's approach addresses the root causes of Nunavut's housing challenges before interfering with programming levers that only address the symptoms of Nunavut's housing crisis.

Nunavut's housing continuum (Fig. 3) clearly reflects the substantive reliance on government for meeting housing need. For all intents and purposes, Nunavut's housing continuum is defined by the territory's inordinate reliance on government subsidized non-market housing, namely the Public and Staff Housing programs. Private homes make up only one-fifth of Nunavut dwellings. With such limited availability of market rental or homeownership, even Nunavummiut who could afford to move along the continuum are not able to, and are forced to rely on staff or subsidized housing

Figure 3
An Example of a Complete Housing Continuum



Housing Continuum in Nunavut



Source: City of North Vancouver / NHC

Another major drawback of the territory’s existing continuum is the huge discrepancy in the quantity and diversity of shelter for the housing vulnerable. To date, the GN has not been in a position to determine the full range of supportive housing needed to meet the specific needs of the population with mental wellness issues, physical disabilities, seniors’ needs and other supportive housing. Consequently, by necessity, all needs tend to fall into public housing as a catch all, worsening the already overcrowded living in these units.

For the Government of Nunavut to provide significant additional shelter or new programs and services, it will require a policy priority approach, targeted at rationalizing the delivery of housing and its attendant support infrastructure. Addressing the infrastructure deficit and the housing gap will take longer to address.

The link between housing and economic development is clear: a predictable and sustainable investment in housing creates skilled jobs directly in construction and indirectly in related industries; it also means employers can find more workers locally rather than in distant labour markets. The payback through education

alone warrants serious consideration. In providing a generation with employable skills, housing **investment carries the potential to reduce Nunavut’s future need for public housing** – itself a compelling argument in favour of housing investment. Through investments in particular types of housing, government can address specific needs across the housing continuum for both low and middle income Nunavummiut.

Growing Infrastructure Needs

All of these housing investments carry particular infrastructure needs; including oil storage tanks, water and sewer, power generation, schools and other community buildings. They could also enable a more sophisticated system of building lot preparation, perhaps leading to inclusive zoning and other community-strengthening innovations. They permit new approaches to energy efficiency, wastewater treatment, landfill management, and other environmental issues.

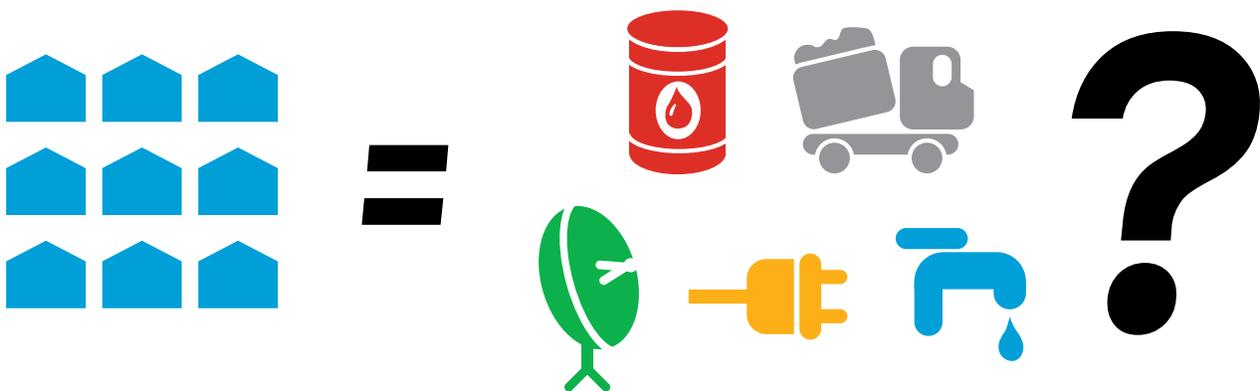
Naturally, defining the relationship between housing and infrastructure must be a key action item. At this time, the GN has not pursued the calculation of the total infrastructure costs associated with building the several thousand units required to meet the future housing needs of Nunavummiut (Fig 4). Likewise, the GN has not undertaken the cost/benefit analysis to measure the effectiveness of its programming efforts to influence the demand and supply pressures the housing sector bears.

As such, a necessary step is the development of a modeling formula that can define the ratio of needed supportive infrastructure – how many power generators, power poles, cubic meters of oil tank storage or sewage lagoons, how many sewage and water trucks or utilidor systems are required for every 100 housing units, the number of units per year required to keep up with population growth. 100 houses may not have a large immediate impact, but continued growth will eventually exceed current infrastructure capacity.

This step would ensure that the delivery of housing is tied to the delivery of the supporting infrastructure. In itself, this formula would help the GN in prioritizing its capital investments but it would also help to appropriately determine the impact of any future housing investments.

Evidently, resolving Nunavut’s complex housing issues will require a higher degree of coordination and collaboration to ensure Nunavut’s limited resources are appropriately allocated to effectively and efficiently address the many barriers to fulfilling Tamapta’s vision for housing in Nunavut.

Figure 4
Relationship between Housing and Infrastructure



Nunavut’s Housing Priorities

The Strategic Directions introduced in the Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy set the foundation for a comprehensive approach to address Nunavut’s housing and homelessness issues over the long-term. These **Strategic Directions** are based on **key housing priorities** used to **guide the creation of this Strategy**. They will continue to shape the development of the Action Plan to follow.

Strategic Direction:

Increase Nunavut’s housing stock

There is an immediate need to **increase Nunavut’s public housing stock** to alleviate the socioeconomic burden of overcrowding. However, over time the goal will shift to **finding ways to increase other types of housing**, with a focus on social and affordable housing in the midterm, to supporting increased levels of homeownership in the long term. The key to meeting this priority will be in ensuring housing stakeholders are able to contribute innovative solutions to meeting the increasingly complex sheltering needs of Nunavummiut.

Strategic Direction:

Improve collaboration among housing stakeholders

With a finite budget, the GN needs to find opportunities to maximize resources for improving or alleviating pressures to housing. **Increased collaboration** among departments and agencies, rather than increased competition for the distribution of the government’s resources, will provide a more effective and efficient approach in the prioritization of government spending. The NHC has consulted and collaborated with other GN departments and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) throughout the development of this Strategy, and its accompanying Framework. The Action Plan to follow will be interdepartmental and multi-sectoral to further maximize resources and knowledge. Greater collaboration will also provide a higher degree of innovation in resolving Nunavut’s unique housing challenges; this innovation is especially critical for attracting a level of investment in housing to comprehensively address Nunavut’s growing need for homes that improve human capacity, reduce social exclusion, and create widespread gains in employment and income.

Strategic Direction:

Identify and address gaps in Nunavut's housing continuum

To understand the complex interrelationships at the root of Nunavummiut's housing needs, it is imperative that the **gaps in Nunavut's housing continuum are identified and researched**. Gaps in the continuum not only prevent individuals from accessing supportive housing options, but also limit transition for individuals who would have the financial means of accessing private market housing alternatives, if they existed. Through the work done in the Framework, NHC has already established certain gaps that exist in the housing continuum, including purpose-built transitional and supportive housing, and affordable private market rental options. In the development of the Action Plan, further research must be completed to establish other gaps that exist, and how these gaps can be addressed in a collaborative way.

Strategic Direction:

Instill self-reliance to reduce dependence on government

To successfully address the many complex elements impacting the delivery of adequate, suitable and affordable housing options for Nunavummiut, the long term focus of Nunavut's housing strategy must be on **increasing the self-reliance** of Nunavummiut, effectively reducing their dependence on the government, or their employer, for meeting their housing needs. NHC is working to develop programs aimed at increasing self reliance. Recent changes made to the Public Housing Rent Scale, for example, are intended to encourage Nunavummiut to work and accumulate wealth that may be reinvested in the larger housing market, and eventually reduce dependency on Public Housing and other social programs. More initiatives aimed at increasing self reliance will be vital to the further development of housing in Nunavut.

Nunavut’s Housing Challenges

An achievable and comprehensive long term response to Nunavut’s housing challenges requires **collaborative government involvement** and **significant investment** to address the entire continuum of housing. Until we begin to **confront Nunavut’s housing challenges**, the housing crisis will persist.

In meeting the complex housing needs of Nunavummiut, a strategic approach to addressing the challenges must be undertaken. As illustrated in the Framework, housing issues in Nunavut are both unique and complex and solutions must be considered relative to one another. Housing is interconnected and requires significant investment, coordinated policy development, strategic planning, and a clear understanding of demand. A successful housing strategy cannot depend on the viability of a single economic sector, nor can the housing strategy expect one GN department or agency to solve the crisis alone.

Solving the housing crisis is not a matter of changing housing programs in isolation. There is a relationship between each housing type; to change one would mean that we need to ensure that other options are available. This can only be done if we have a clear understanding of the housing challenges.

Challenge:

Housing Demand Factors

The Nunavut Housing Needs Survey showed that 49 percent of occupied dwellings were overcrowded or in need of major repair; there is a

clear need to explore policies that will move people along the continuum and out of overcrowding¹. Further, the Nunavut Housing Needs Survey also showed that if more housing were available, 3,580 household groups would move. The GN has yet to identify which types of housing will meet the demands, or explore policies that enhance the ability of people to move along the continuum².

Ensuring that housing supply is diverse will improve return on investment and improve quality of life. For example, as Nunavut’s population ages, housing must be built and maintained with accessibility in mind to accommodate individuals living with disabilities. This will allow elders to stay in their home or “age in place”, will improve quality of life, and will save the healthcare system significant sums³.

As highlighted in the Framework, Nunavut has a gapped housing continuum which limits movement between housing types. In other

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- 1 Igluliuqatigiilauqta “Let’s Build a Home Together” – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy pg 16
 - 2 Igluliuqatigiilauqta “Let’s Build a Home Together” – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy pg 16
 - 3 Igluliuqatigiilauqta “Let’s Build a Home Together” – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy pg 21

jurisdictions, many housing options enable individuals to reasonably transition from one to another. For example, the GN Staff Housing program does not properly support the transition of employees into the private housing market. At the same time, the limited availability of private-market alternatives (i.e. gaps in the continuum) restricts this transition and continues to cost the GN significant sums.⁴

Challenge:

Limited Investment Dedicated to Housing

Since inheriting the housing shortage that began with settlement, the GN has never had a sufficiently funded housing program to meet demand⁵. The Framework suggests that improving territorial housing investment will take a major restructuring of the GN's capital spending⁶.

Investment is needed to address not only population growth, but the growing federal funding gap. Existing federal agreements will expire without renewal and significant housing contributions will cease. As per the agreements with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Nunavut's federal funding for social housing is already declining annually. Eventually, the territorial government will bear the full burden of providing social housing, which shelters a majority of Nunavut's population. Nunavummiut will have to make strategic decisions about the GN's funding priorities. Developing a strong lobby and exploring alternative financing options to increase investment in housing, as well as providing more

diversity in its housing options will improve self-reliance and economic outcomes. Just as an inadequate housing stock imposes societal costs, **increases in the housing stock lead to a stronger economy and a healthier society**⁷.

Challenge:

The High Cost of Housing

The high cost and limited availability of housing options in the territory compel many Nunavummiut to continue as public-housing tenants⁸ for reasons of affordability. The high cost of housing also places limits on public and private construction and creates a barrier to market participation. This is not abnormal for remote locations facing climate challenges, and to some extent, is to be expected.

The GN subsidizes 80 percent of the housing in Nunavut, the bulk of that as public housing. Maintaining the stock of public housing costs the GN \$23,180 annually per unit. Utilities represent 60-65 percent of this with water taking up the greatest share of these costs, up to one third of the total operating cost.

The GN will require significant support to address the current housing shortfall and gaps in the continuum, but with the right policies and priorities, this growth in demand can be met by the GN. Until sustainable housing alternatives are available, the GN must continue to provide public housing for the majority of Nunavummiut.

It has been argued that homeownership is the logical transition for Nunavummiut living in public housing, but analysis from the Framework shows that for most tenants, homeownership is not a

4 Igluliuqatigiilauqta "Let's Build a Home Together" – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy Pg 26

5 Igluliuqatigiilauqta "Let's Build a Home Together" – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy Pg 9

6 Igluliuqatigiilauqta "Let's Build a Home Together" – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy pg 13

7 Igluliuqatigiilauqta "Let's Build a Home Together" – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy pg 5

8 Igluliuqatigiilauqta "Let's Build a Home Together" – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy pg 17

viable option. Out of the 5000 public housing units, 58 percent have a household income less than \$15,600; only 69 households are assessed rent more than \$1,500 per month and only 39 households have a combined household income greater than \$20,000/yr. In fact, the private homeownership and private rental markets in Nunavut are highly underdeveloped. 22 percent of Nunavut’s housing stock is privately owned, compared to 68 percent throughout Canada. The most frequent cited challenge to homeownership is the high cost of construction.

In Nunavut, essential goods and services cost two to three times more than in southern Canada, and household operating costs can be five to ten times more expensive⁹, which drive operation and maintenance costs. That coupled with the short construction season and limited local skilled workers increases the perceived risk of ownership and drives the cost of construction. Reducing housing costs for government and the private market will allow public funds to be diverted to increase housing programming or additional stock and will permit private developers to bear less risk in helping grow the private market and improving housing in Nunavut.

Challenge:

Barriers to Housing Supply

Nunavut is made up of 25 communities situated across a vast geographic range that encompasses 20 percent of the Canadian land mass. Access to these communities is by air or sea only. Each community lives in isolation, and requires the same infrastructure and services as every other community.

Economic development and construction are restricted by limits to infrastructure. Nunavut’s

potentially vast wealth is costly to access because it lacks infrastructure that would support resource exploration and extraction. Coordinated development of infrastructure will create more opportunities for new housing construction¹⁰. Nunavut’s underdeveloped wage economy also plays an important role in economic, social and cultural sustainability.

Creating policies that promote land availability, coordinating strategic and community planning, developing effective private market incentives (especially in non-market communities) and building diversified housing will bring Nunavut housing supply in line with demand.

These four areas describing the challenges and limitations with regards to housing are critical for creating a clear understanding of the efforts needed for achieving the Goals & Objectives set out below.

9 Igluliuqatigiilauqta “Let’s Build a Home Together” – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy pg 28

10 Igluliuqatigiilauqta “Let’s Build a Home Together” – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy pg 10

Nunavut's Housing Strategy: Goals & Objectives

Goal:

Define Housing Demand Factors

Government programs are required across the housing continuum to ensure housing is affordable in Nunavut. Nunavut needs to ensure that the very diverse housing needs of Nunavummiut are being met, today and tomorrow, in the most efficient, effective and fair way. In the current context, public housing must be made a priority.

There is also a need to establish a full continuum of housing options, research the demand pressures for specific types of housing, and to examine the costs and opportunities for transitions between these housing types. This will allow a better allocation of resources to bridge the gaps in Nunavut's housing continuum.

Objective 1:

Increase public housing stock to address gaps and growth in demand

- The Nunavut Housing Needs Survey identified a 3580 shortfall in existing housing availability. Moreover, to simply keep up with population growth, the GN will have to build 90-100 new Public Housing units per year.

Objective 2:

Establish a complete housing continuum specific to Nunavut

- A better understanding of the specific housing needs across the continuum, including those of vulnerable Nunavummiut, students, seniors, families and individuals is required to ensure all needs along the housing continuum are being addressed.
- A Nunavut specific housing continuum is needed to enable better strategic planning to respond to the full range of housing needs in the territory.

Objective 3:

Improve transition along housing continuum

- Government subsidies and incentives used to encourage one form of housing should not dissuade individuals from moving to other points along the continuum.

Goal:

Increase Investment in Housing

Realistic solutions to Nunavut’s housing challenges require considerable financial investment and the contribution and collaboration of multiple partners, including the federal government, Inuit organizations, non-government organizations and the private sector. Without increased investment, the housing situation in Nunavut will remain in crisis.

Objective 1:

Strengthen government partnerships to renew investment in housing

- A consensus on housing investment as a GN priority requires interdepartmental dialogue about how to allocate GN spending to meet housing and housing related infrastructure need. GN housing core investments will need to be maintained regardless of federal investments levels.

Objective 2:

Strengthen advocacy for renewed federal investment in housing

- The federal government should have an investment role in addition to the GN’s core investment in housing. With the collaboration of all stakeholders, the creation of a solid, reasonable and progressive business case is required to address the legacy of underinvestment in infrastructure and housing in Nunavut.

Objective 3:

Explore alternative financing options for housing

- Finding alternatives to the government’s existing financing options for housing will alleviate budgeting pressures.

Goal:

Reduce the Costs of Housing

Reducing the cost of housing to Nunavut as a whole can be achieved through utility reduction and efficiency initiatives, construction techniques and administrative reductions. Any achievements in this goal in one area of the continuum will likely be applicable to other areas of the continuum. Keeping with the Nunavut Housing Trust Lessons Learned document, provision of public housing will be through multi-family needs based housing, maximizing private sector involvement and minimizing costs through combined supply and build processes.

Objective 1:

Explore ways to reduce operation and maintenance costs

- Across the board, the delivery of housing services must be reviewed to identify opportunities for greater efficiencies including the delivery of utilities at the municipal and corporate level and reduced consumption at the individual level.

Objective 2:

Retrofit and repurpose existing affordable housing stock

- Preserving existing stock is critical to maintaining affordable housing across the territory. Retrofitting existing units may provide greater flexibility in filling gaps within Nunavut’s housing continuum.

Objective 3:

Ensure new construction is delivered efficiently

- Building on lessons learned, new construction must support economic development while ensuring that all components of the project are focused, transparent, and suitably resourced.

Goal:**Remove Barriers to Housing Supply**

Lack of competition in some areas of the market results in barriers to housing supply. Government's role is to reduce these barriers and ensure it has not inadvertently created others. The GN must ensure land availability and proper construction incentives for the housing market. The high level of perceived risk in developing housing in the North, related to construction costs and climate, limits the development of a strong private market. Creating policies that incentivize development and stimulate construction will help grow the private market and improve housing in Nunavut overall. With Government directly responsible for providing parts of the housing supply, such as land, it must be careful not to inadvertently put a constraint on supply. These barriers will not be consistent across communities or over time. Action must be targeted with resources directed to where and when barriers exist.

Objective 1:**Strengthen strategic, capital and community planning processes**

- *Coordinated planning processes will improve infrastructure development and increase land availability to harmonize residential construction.*

Objective 2:**Enhance private sector incentive to supply housing**

- *Incentives and partnering opportunities may reduce the risk associated with building homeownership and rental housing to strengthen the private market.*

Objective 3:**Ensure appropriate housing options are available**

- *As research brings into focus the diversified segment of Nunavut's housing market, planners and builders should ensure a supply of housing that meets user needs.*

Next Steps

Clearly there are **multiple and multilayered benefits** to improved housing in Nunavut. Moving beyond the strategic goals as set out in this Strategy, the next step is the **development of a realistic Action Plan** to successfully address the many complex elements impacting the **delivery of adequate, suitable and affordable housing options** for Nunavummiut.

Responding to the challenges outlined in the Framework and this Strategy will require significant investment, but they will also bring significant benefits in the form of economic and social development. Evidence exists from other jurisdictions to show that investments in housing has significantly reduced health and social service costs, and stimulated economic growth. The Alberta Government attributed cost savings worth billions of dollars over ten years to its strong investment in social housing, and Quebec’s housing agency calculated that every \$1 spent on social housing projects directly and indirectly created economic activity worth \$2.30¹¹. The economic benefits are obvious. Investments in housing lead directly to higher employment and incomes in the construction sector, and indirectly to a general rise in economic activity. The social benefit should also be clear. More and better housing will take away some of the causes of Nunavut’s current crisis. Compounded by hidden homelessness, overcrowding contributes to low literacy, low graduation rates, high unemployment, acute addictions, violence, and crime. Overcrowding also contributes to Nunavut’s high suicide rate. Lacking the shelters, supports and services to deal with these negative outcomes,

Nunavut bears the burdens of high incarceration levels and expensive healthcare costs. A portion of these could be recovered by providing more and better housing.

A home does not stand alone. It fits into a neighbourhood, a community, and a territory. To develop more homes is to develop Nunavut. **The very scale of such an undertaking is both challenging and promising. It represents a true opportunity to shape the future, and to advance Nunavut’s economic, social and cultural development.**

It is imperative that there be consensus on both the range of issues needing attention and the most effective means for addressing them. As stakeholders are consulted and further research is done, proposed actions will evolve; action toward specific objectives will be prioritized. The scope of each objective and action will indicate the length of time required to effectively complete it.

The credibility of the Action Plan will rest in its ability to demonstrate that the Government of Nunavut is indeed prepared to address the issues impacting housing in a logical manner so that work is directed to solving issues comprehensively and strategically.

¹¹ Igluliuqatigiilauqta “Let’s Build a Home Together” – Framework for the GN Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy. pg 6

The strength of the Action Plan will be its ability to demonstrate that the critical path it will provide is both logical and achievable. To this end, a broad range of assumptions concerning the barriers affecting housing delivery and how best to remove them, must be revisited.

It is critical that the Action Plan addresses known barriers and identifies others that impede action for housing in Nunavut. The Action Plan must also take into consideration opportunities for action to improve or alleviate pressures related to housing and to maximize the use of the GN's resources to meet other objectives by addressing specific housing needs. Openness to new solutions will be critical, for example, beyond reviewing existing NHC programs, actions promoting privatization across all areas related to housing, including land development and ownership of public and staff housing will be explored.

The Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness must be a reflection of the Government of Nunavut's collective understanding of the individual role of each department and agency and how their respective mandates intersect with the delivery of housing and the eradication of homelessness.

The GN Long-Term
Comprehensive Housing and
Homelessness Strategy

“Let’s Build
a Home
Together”