The Corporation of the City of Greater Sudbury

Housing Services
**Strategic Plan**
2011-2015

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# Executive Summary

Housing Services funds and administers social housing programs and maintains a legislated number of rent-geared-to-income housing units that are permanent and affordable for the community.

As part of the Community Development Department, Housing Services is a member of the Healthy Community Initiative. Addressing local sustainable development challenges is a priority for the Division.

This strategic plan highlights internal and external measures that were used to develop goals, planned actions and outcomes. Over the next four years, the Division will use this document as a planning tool to continue to implement programs and manage services.

## Goals:

1. Become the local expert with respect to the new Housing Services Act and accompanying legislation.

2. Build knowledge and capacity by preparing and delivering training to local housing providers, CGS staff, stakeholders and the public.

3. Work with partners to develop and implement a local housing plan which addresses the community affordable housing needs and the requirements of the Housing Services Act and accompanying regulations.

4. Facilitate, support and promote community based delivery of social/affordable housing and maintain the integrity of the social housing system.

# Introduction

The Community Development Department has engaged stakeholders in a planning process to generate strategic plans for the next four years (2011-2015).  Each strategic plan is presented to City Council for consideration.  The documents will serve as planning tools for decision-making and allocating resources.

Creating a strategic plan is a multi-step process that involves discussion, analysis and decision.  There are several components that have been incorporated into this document to facilitate an understanding of the internal and external environmental factors that influence services.

The following strategic planning process was used:

- Create a Vision, Mission and Values statement;
- Review Divisional Revenue and Expenditures;
- Identify Strategic Assets: Key Stakeholders, Past Successes, Key Success Factors;
- Analyze Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT);
- Analyze Political, Economic, Social and Technological (PEST) factors;
- Create a Strategic Position and Action Evaluation (SPACE) Matrix;
- Survey stakeholders and service users; and
- Develop goals and performance measures.

The Housing Services Strategy is reflective of the past, present and future potential of affordable housing in Greater Sudbury.  The goals of this strategy are ambitious and will be accomplished with continued participation from community partners.

# Community Development Department

The City of Greater Sudbury organizational structure was designed to create a corporate environment that is aligned with its vision for the community. The Community Development Department delivers programs and services to the residents of Greater Sudbury through six operational divisions: Citizen Services, Leisure Services, Social Services, Seniors Services, Housing Services and the North East Specialized Geriatric Services. Together, these Divisions account for over 1500 employees and an annual budget of more than $170 million.

## Vision:

"Creating a Healthy Community Together"

## Mission:

Working with the community to achieve service delivery excellence that consistently exceeds citizen expectations and enhances our Northern lifestyle.

## Values:

- services that enhance the capacity of our community to meet its health, social and leisure needs;
- strong, collaborative relationships with community partners; and
- volunteerism and community.

# Housing Services

The City of Greater Sudbury is required by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to fund and administer social housing programs and maintain a legislated number of rent-geared-to-income housing units in the community. The Housing Services Section is the social housing program administrator.

The local portfolio houses over 4,500 households and is a vital community asset valued at more than $225 million. It provides permanent, affordable, quality housing to seniors, families, the disabled and households without dependents. Service delivery of housing is community based.

Housing Services interacts with the 44 local non-profit housing corporations who own and operate projects across the CGS. These providers are all governed by individual volunteer boards and have their own staff. Housing Services has a direct relationship with all housing providers but not with tenants.

The Greater Sudbury Housing Corporation (GSHC) is the largest local non-profit housing provider with 1,848 units. It is responsible for the effective and efficient management of public rent-geared-to-income housing and private rent supplement programs. The City of Greater Sudbury is the sole shareholder of the GSHC.

## Governance

In 2004, the corporation of the City of Greater Sudbury underwent an extensive restructuring process. The Health and Social Services Department was renamed "Community Development" and several responsibilities were added to the Department's portfolio. Housing Services became one of six divisions within the new Community Development Department.

Housing Services is accountable to the City of Greater Sudbury and City Council along with reporting regularly to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing regarding housing programs. Community participation is a significant driver for programs and policy development. The Division has regular dialogue with community experts who advise staff on local housing issues.

# Vision

Housing Services will be a healthy, vibrant, innovative CGS Division that values excellence in client services and program delivery.

# Mission

Housing Services will through commitment, partnership, innovation and excellence, create and deliver housing policy and programs which benefit the community.

# Values

- access to housing that is healthy, safe and affordable;
- the role and status of housing providers;
- human rights and the dignity of all members of the community;
- fair and equitable treatment of customers, partners and staff;
- open communication among Housing Registry and its stakeholders; and
- education and learning opportunities for staff, customers and partners.

# Housing Services
## is Part of a Healthy Community

In 2005, the City's Healthy Community Strategy was created as a roadmap for the implementation of the Healthy Community Initiative to make Greater Sudbury a truly healthy community. The key elements of the strategy are defined by four pillars: Human Health and Well-Being; Environmental Sustainability; Civic Engagement and Social Capital; and Economic Vitality.

The Healthy Community Initiative is important to the Housing Services Division. Planning and project development have inclusively incorporated the philosophies and concepts of the initiative in order to build a healthy and sustainable community, for example:

- Housing Services promotes Human Health and Well-Being by providing funding to local housing providers which enables them to provide safe, accessible and affordable housing to needy households.
- Housing Services promotes Economic Vitality through participation in a variety of federal and provincial housing programs which provide funding for the development and rehabilitation of affordable and social housing projects. This funding creates employment opportunities in the construction and retail sector.
- The City of Greater Sudbury requires housing which is affordable to all income levels in order to be a viable community. Housing Services builds Social Capital by ensuring that the social housing portfolio continues to provide affordable housing to households in need.

# Revenue

Provincial Grants and Subsidies
25%

Municipal Levy
75%
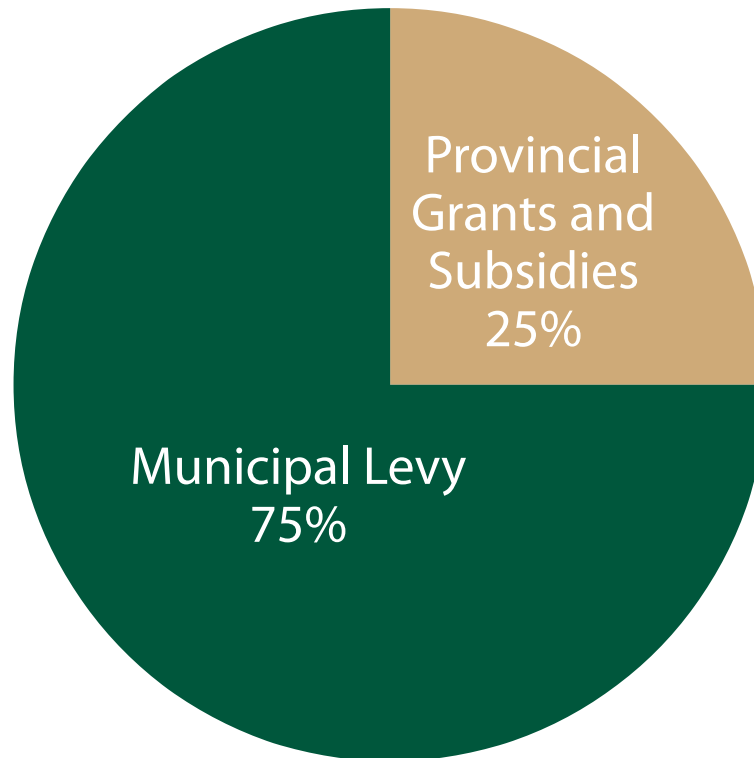
# Strategic Assets:

## Key Stakeholders, Past Successes, Key Success Factors

### Key Stakeholders

- Key Stakeholders
- Community, applicants
- Housing providers
- Tenant population

- Council
- City – various Departments
- MMAH, CMHC
- Common sector organizations (SHSC, ONPHA, CHF)

### Past Successes

- Successfully delivered $1.8M – social housing capital repair for housing providers
- Social Housing Renovation and Retrofit Program (2 yrs.) $9 million for social housing providers

- Affordable Housing Program ($16.9 million)
    - New build (166 units)
    - Home repair/ home ownership (310 units)
    - Housing Allowance (47 units)
- Arrears Database
- Housing Registry – fair, equitable, consistent
- Program accountability

### Key Success Factors

- Experienced staff
  - Technical, legislative, policy
- Network
    - Other Service Managers
    - City – various departments
    - Provincial government

- Technology for registry
- Eligibility Review
- Provincial/ Federal funding

# SWOT Analysis
## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Strategic planning employs various methods of analysis in order to determine the current situation and future outlook of the Section. The purpose of this exercise is to reflect on internal and external environmental factors that influence the development of goals and objectives.

### Strengths (internal)

- Staff
- Policy – efficient/ effective flow of services
- Creative – because of legislative limitations

- Universality of programs
- Partnerships

### Weaknesses (internal)

- Staff succession planning

- Not entry level due to complexity and variety of programs offered – require knowledgeable individuals

### Opportunities (external)

- Working with senior levels of government re affordable housing

- Shift in emphasis from social to affordable housing
- Programming changes – mortgage subsidy vs. rent subsidy

### Threats (external)

- Sustainability of staff
- Changes in legislation
- Change in service providers
- Change in boards
- Bureaucracy re funding and program requisites

- Declining funding (Federal)
- Escape clause Social Housing Reform Act
- Sustainability of housing stock – post escape clause

# PEST Analysis
## Political, Economic, Social, Technological

This environmental scan provides the framework necessary for strategic planning.  Factors developed through this specific process identify context and provide an understanding of the Division before goals are established.

## Political

- Federal / Provincial – delivering programs, any changes impact local work
- Long Term Housing Strategy
- Homelessness Policy
- Social Housing Reform Act under review

## Economic

- Economic downturn, increase in demand for housing & programs
- Economy increase – change in housing market, lower vacancy rate

## Social

- ALC pressures as a result of demographics – supportive housing
- Family composition – demand on supply of smaller units
- students, changing family composition

## Technological

- SMART meters – increased expenses
- Green technology
- Electronic waitlist

# Strategic Positioning

Strategic positioning assists organizations identify strategies that will be effective at improving organizational performance based on internal and external dimensions.

| Industry Strength | Aggressive Goals | Financial Strength |
|---|---|---|
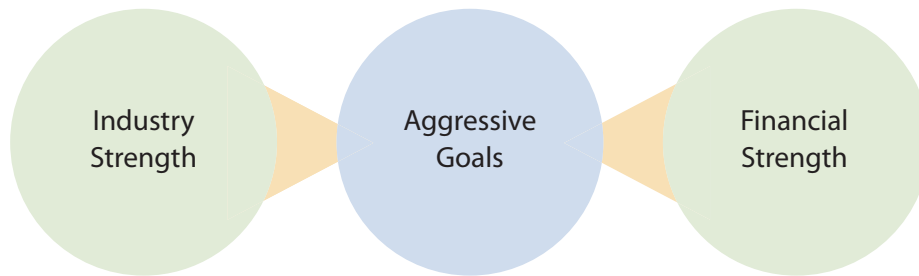
Housing Services should pursue an aggressive strategy. They operate in an environment that is highly regulated and heavily funded. Housing Services should continue to focus on ensuring that the CGS receives its fair share of Provincial and Federal funding for building development; that housing providers are accountable for the flow of funds; and that an applicant's status in the registry list is current and updated.

# Surveys Applicant and Provider
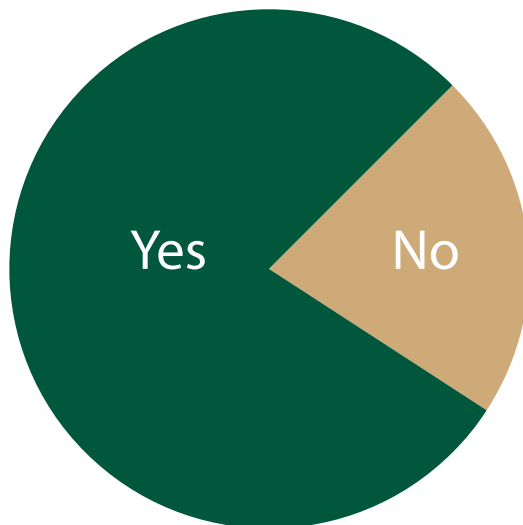
## Applicant Survey

On February 22, 2011 applicants were invited to participate in a survey. There were 70 respondents. Answers were recorded in French and English.

The survey results indicated strong satisfaction with customer service and the application process for rent-geared-to-income housing. Respondents expressed a desire for faster access to housing and more detailed specifics about types of housing, utility costs and pet policies. Of the 70 surveys collected, 77% had access to the internet and 23% did not.

## Provider Survey

Housing Services providers were asked to participate in a survey. Responses were received from 1 board member, 12 staff and 5 respondents who were both a staff and Board members.
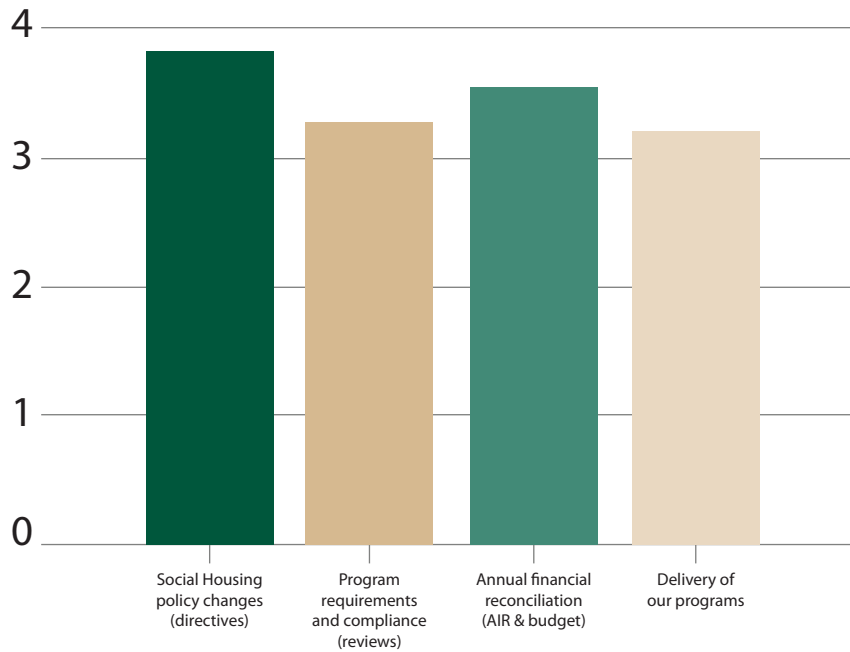
The survey responses indicated that housing providers were overall satisfied with the education and training provided by Housing Services and the method of communication about policies, programs and finances. There was also satisfaction expressed with the centralized wait-list web-based application; although, frustrations were noted with access to information based on bedroom size. The majority of survey participants did attend training sessions offered by Housing Services and an interest was expressed for increased training opportunities and additional resources.
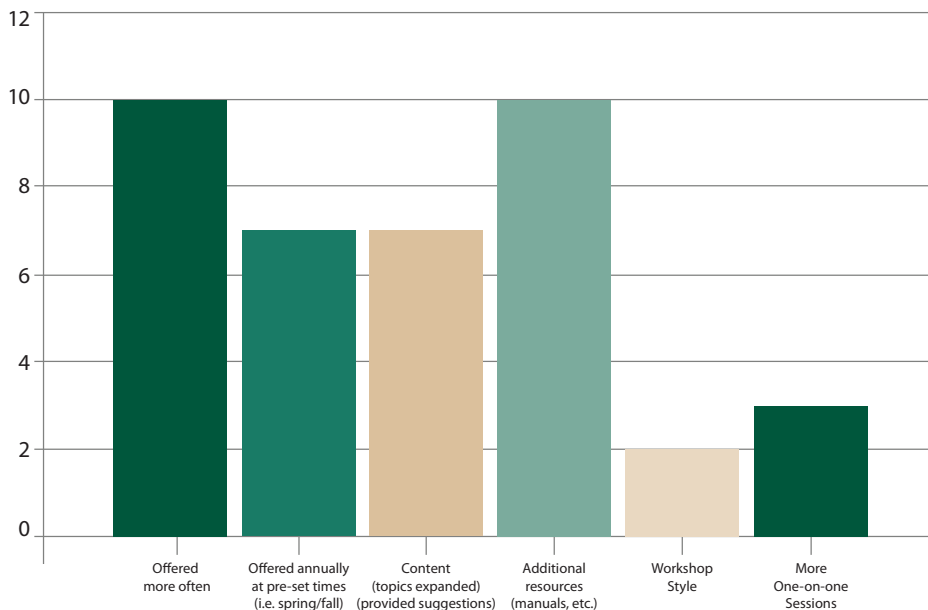
Yes   No

# Surveys Applicant and Provider

## How would you rate the method of communications for the following areas:



Bar chart with y-axis from 0 to 4:
- Social Housing policy changes (directives): ~3.8
- Program requirements and compliance (reviews): ~3.3
- Annual financial reconciliation (AIR & budget): ~3.55
- Delivery of our programs: ~3.2

## How do you feel the training/education offered by Housing Services might be improved
### (you may select more than one answer)



Bar chart with y-axis from 0 to 12:
- Offered more often: 10
- Offered annually at pre-set times (i.e. spring/fall): 7
- Content (topics expanded) (provided suggestions): 7
- Additional resources (manuals, etc.): 10
- Workshop Style: 2
- More One-on-one Sessions: 3

# Goal 1: Housing Services will become the local expert with respect to the new Housing Services Act and accompanying legislation

## Planned Action

- Complete a full review of local housing policies and program administrative processes, forms
- Consult with housing providers, provincial staff, service managers regarding the new legislative framework, policies, program requirements
- Identify changes to local processes, policies and programs
- Complete analysis of issues, changes identifying pros and cons
- Prepare reports and obtain Council approval of new policies (as required)
- Issue directives/instructions/action plans to CGS staff and housing providers regarding new policies/procedures

## Performance Indicators

- Council approval of policies obtained (as required)
- New procedures in place with appropriate directives/instructions issued
- CGS program delivery in compliance with policies and new legislative framework

# Goal 2: Housing Services will build knowledge and capacity by preparing and delivering training to local housing providers, CGS staff, stakeholders and the public

## Planned Action

- Prepare and deliver on-going training/orientation to CGS staff and housing providers regarding new policies/procedures
- Follow up with CGS staff and providers to ensure consistent application of new policies/procedures

## Performance Indicators

- Appropriate training delivered
- Affected stakeholders and providers given appropriate tools/strategies necessary to operate within new legislative framework

# Goal 3: Housing Services will work with partners to develop and implement a local housing plan which addresses the community affordable housing needs and the requirements of the Housing Services Act and accompanying regulations.

## Planned Action

- Consult with housing providers, provincial staff, service managers regarding the new housing plans, legislative framework, policies, program requirements
- Co-ordinate housing plan development with other strategic municipal plans i.e. Official Plan, Homelessness Plan
- Identify gaps in the housing market response to housing needs and propose new local programs to address local needs as required
- Prepare reports and obtain Council approval of new policies, programs
- Pursue, facilitate, co-ordinate and participate in senior government housing programs and initiatives to maximize their impact on our community

## Performance Indicators

- Consultation completed and input considered in final plan, policy, procedures
- Council approval and Ministry endorsed housing plan, policies in place

# Goal 4: Housing Services will facilitate, support and promote community based delivery of social/affordable housing and maintain the integrity of the social housing system

## Planned Action

- Monitor the program and financial performance of local housing providers
- Fund providers and program participants in accordance to the program policies and legislative framework
- Operate and maintain a wait list and unit access system ensuring that applicants are ranked appropriately and offered units in accordance to the legislative framework
- Advise providers/ program participants in a timely manner regarding issues, policies, procedures and assist and/or provide direction on strategies to address identified issues
- Prepare and implement action plans to ensure that providers/program participants continue to comply with legislation and program requirements
- Minimize CGS risk and program financial losses
- Consult, report to Council, Ministry as required on provider non-compliance and action plans designed to assist housing providers in addressing issues

## Performance Indicators

- Continued community based delivery of social and affordable housing programs
- Applicant access system operated in accordance to local policies and legislative framework
- Monitoring and action plans in place ensuring that providers and program participants are operating in compliance with program and legislative framework

# Notes

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