

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING ON NOVEMBER 12, 2013
FROM:	GRANT HOPCROFT, DIRECTOR OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY LIAISON
SUBJECT	FCM's NATIONAL HOUSING CAMPAIGN – FIXING CANADA'S HOUSING CRUNCH

RECOMMENDATION

That, on the recommendation of the Director of Intergovernmental and Community Liaison, the following motion **BE ADOPTED** in support of FCM's National Housing Campaign – Fixing Canada's Housing Crunch.

Development of a New Long-Term Federal Plan to Fix Canada's Housing Crunch

WHEREAS, a stable and secure housing system that creates and maintains jobs and allows for a range of living options is essential to attracting new workers, meeting the needs of young families and supporting seniors and our most vulnerable citizens; and,

WHEREAS the high cost of housing is the most urgent financial issue facing Canadians with one in four people paying more than they can afford for housing, and mortgage debt held by Canadians now standing at just over \$1.1 trillion; and,

WHEREAS housing costs and, as the Bank of Canada notes, household debt, are undermining Canadians' personal financial security, while putting our national economy at risk; and,

WHEREAS those who cannot afford to purchase a home rely on the short supply of rental units, which is driving up rental costs and making it hard to house workers in regions experiencing strong economic activity; and,

WHEREAS an inadequate supply of subsidized housing for those in need is pushing some of the most vulnerable Canadians on to the street, while \$1.7 billion annually in federal investments in social housing have begun to expire; and,

WHEREAS coordinated action is required to prevent housing issues from being further offloaded onto local governments and align the steps local governments have already taken with regard to federal/provincial/territorial programs and policies; and,

WHEREAS, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has launched a housing campaign, "Fixing Canada's Housing Crunch," calling on the federal government to increase housing options for Canadians and to work with all orders of government to develop a long-term plan for Canada's housing future; and,

WHEREAS FCM has asked its member municipalities to pass a council resolution supporting the campaign;

AND WHEREAS, our community has continuing housing needs, such as the gap between the market price of a housing unit and the price that someone in housing need is able to pay, the different and varying housing needs of an aging population and the ability to attract private sector investment in housing, that can only be met through the kind of long-term planning and investment made possible by federal leadership;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that council endorses the FCM housing campaign and urges the minister of employment and social development to develop a long-term plan for housing that puts core investments on solid ground, increases predictability, protects Canadians from the planned expiry of \$1.7 billion in social housing agreements and ensures a healthy stock of affordable rental housing for Canadians.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the minister noted above, to the Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing Linda Jeffrey, to London MPs and MPPs, to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

BACKGROUND

FCM Campaign

FCM has launched a national campaign calling on all orders of government in Canada to focus on the high cost of housing, the most urgent financial issue facing Canadians — **Fixing Canada's Housing Crunch**. This campaign was launched in part by the work of the Big City Mayors' Caucus (BCMC) and the urgency it felt with respect to this issue. Mayor Fontana, along with Brampton Mayor Susan Fennell, Co-Chairs the BCMC Working Group on Affordable Housing. The City is also well represented at the FCM Board of Directors level to ensure that London perspectives on affordable housing are incorporated into evolving policy and advocacy – Councillor Harold Usher serves as a Board Member and Councillor Joni Baechler serves as a Committee Member.

In addition to passing the above resolution and reaching out to members of parliament, the FCM membership is being asked to keep the housing issue front and centre leading up to Federal Budget 2014 and leading into the next federal election in 2015. Municipalities are being asked to convene housing round tables to discuss local housing needs, bring together traditional and non-traditional partners to advocate for a long-term housing strategy and to raise public awareness on this important issue. The City of London is working with FCM to organize such a round table in January.

Members of Council and the public can also engage in this campaign through FCM's website www.fcm.ca/housingcrunch.

FCM Background Information on Housing Crunch

One in four Canadians is paying more than they can afford for housing, and mortgage debt held by Canadians now stands at just over \$1.1 trillion. These costs are undermining Canadians' personal financial security while household debt, as the Bank of Canada notes, is putting our national economy at risk.

At the same time, \$1.7 billion in annual federal affordable housing investments are set to expire, with the greatest drop, \$500 million, slated for the next five years. Those declining federal investments will put 200,000 Canadian households at risk of losing their homes and cause spillover effects throughout the Canadian economy.

Canadians need a stable and secure housing market that creates and maintains jobs and allows for a range of living options. Cities and communities need better housing options to attract new workers, meet the needs of young families and support seniors and our most vulnerable citizens.

FCM is calling on the federal government to commit to a long-term plan for housing, working with municipalities and all orders of government to address these crucial issues.

PREPARED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
SHERRI HANLEY SPECIAL ADVISOR, EXTERNAL RELATIONS	GRANT HOPCROFT DIRECTOR OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND COMMUNITY LIAISON