

Resolution 9A

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING (PASSED)

⇒ Halifax Regional Municipality

WHEREAS affordable housing is an integral part of building an accessible, welcoming community that attracts people; and

WHEREAS municipalities have an interest in ensuring their residents have access to an adequate supply of well-maintained affordable housing options; and

WHEREAS affordable housing is an issue impacted by many stakeholders and requires a committed approach from all partners; and

WHEREAS \$1.7 billion in federal government support for social housing subsidy is ending, leaving significant gaps in the funding available for social housing maintenance; and

WHEREAS the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) is undertaking substantial advocacy efforts to maintain and increase the federal government's role in supporting housing;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM write the Province in support of its efforts to secure federal funding for affordable housing; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the UNSM endorse the FCM housing campaign to develop a long-term plan for housing that protects federal core investments that allow for ongoing maintenance and expansion of affordable housing stock, and that ensures participation from all partners.

BACKGROUND:

HRM is currently engaged on the United Way-led Housing and Homelessness Partnership. While HRM does not have a mandate in the provision of affordable housing, the Municipality recognizes that availability of affordable housing is a key factor in developing vibrant, accessible communities that attract people and business. Municipal support is expressed through land use planning and development tools to encourage affordable housing. HRM is active on the Partnership's affordable housing working group, which aims to upgrade, preserve expand the existing stock of affordable housing throughout the municipality. The United Way Partnership is a multi-stakeholder group with representatives from the three levels of government, Affordable Housing Association of NS, Capital Health, the IWK and the Investment Property Owners Association of NS.

The Province of Nova Scotia oversees housing related programs and services. Traditionally the federal government has contributed a significant level of funding for social housing to the Province. However federal funding is now beginning to expire, with \$1.7 billion being phased out. Without the federal subsidy, one out of three social housing units across Canada are at risk of closing their doors, totaling 200,000 units nation-wide. In Nova Scotia, this represents some 20,900 households and approximately \$50 million in federal subsidies annually. Without this federal support, the provincial government is facing UNSM significant increases in the amount required to support ongoing and deferred maintenance on social housing units.

In November 2013, HRM hosted a roundtable discussion on housing, as part of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) campaign “Fixing Canada’s Housing Crunch.” The campaign calls 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.

Given the role affordable housing plays in building accessible, mixed-use communities that can attract and retain people, it is recommended that Council send the following resolution to UNSM’s annual conference for endorsement.