



The Assembly of First Nations

2020 NATIONAL HOUSING AND
INFRASTRUCTURE FORUM AND TRADESHOW

DRAFT REPORT

*First Nations Control: Transformative
Change in Housing and Infrastructure*

*March 10 – 12, 2020
Toronto, ON*

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) hosted the 2020 National Housing and Infrastructure Forum and Tradeshow, *First Nations Control: Transformative Change in Housing and Infrastructure*, to discuss the implementation of the **10 Year National First Nations Housing and related Infrastructure Strategy** (the Strategy). The 2020 National Forum and Tradeshow took place from March 10 – 12, 2020 in Toronto, Ontario. There were more than 450 participants in attendance.

The goal of the National Forum was to provide an opportunity for delegates to learn more about the transformative change coming to First Nations housing and infrastructure with the implementation of the Strategy. The input of delegates will further shape the Strategy's Implementation Plan with an emphasis on infrastructure as it relates to Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and Asset Management Planning (AMP).

AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde delivered opening remarks on the first day of the National Forum, encouraging participants to continue to lobby and advocate for the housing needs of First Nations across the country. Regional Chief Kevin Hart, portfolio holder for Housing and Infrastructure, welcomed delegates and asked them to share their views and ideas on the implementation of the Strategy, particularly as it related to O&M and AMP. The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, addressed the participants via video message. She stressed the importance of the federal government working together with First Nations for proper funding for infrastructure to close the gap.

The Day 1 Keynote Address was provided by Ms. Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi, Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society. She provided an overview of the work done by the Society on a pilot project on culturally supportive housing called, 'Priority One'. The project targets those individuals aging out of foster care; Residential School Survivors; and, addicts. In addition, she highlighted the Society's work on developing a dual model of housing care.

Presentations continued in the afternoon with an update on the First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy implementation activities, including an update on the AFN Housing and Related Infrastructure Data Project. Several Regions also presented on the work they were doing with respect to the Status of Care and Control of First Nations Housing in Canada.

Day Two of the National Forum featured a Keynote Address by Mr. Henry Lickers, Canadian Commissioner, International Joint Commission (IJC). Mr. Lickers highlighted the following: building to code was not always best, however building to "Grandma's Code" was always the best; use resources that communities have readily available to build the best houses possible; and, the traditional and cultural knowledge gained from First Nations is beginning to be incorporated in the work being done in communities.

An Address was provide by Ms. Pam Damoff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada. She stated that the federal government was committed to renew funding for infrastructure projects on-reserve and mentioned the work being done by First Nations in Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec to increase care, control and management of housing in First Nations.

Participants also heard from Mr. Craig Baker, P.Eng., First Nations Engineering Services Ltd. on Asset Management Planning/O&M, the draft O&M Policy, the O&M Engagement Report and the Pilot Study

Results. Day Two ended with a panel on Climate Change Risks and Impacts, featuring Mr. Henry Lickers, ICJ, Mr. Elmer Lickers, Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC), Dr. Guy Félio, Stantec Consulting Ltd., and Ms. Rosalie Labillois, Co-Chair, Assembly of First Nations Youth Council. The panellists spoke about the risks and impacts of climate change in First Nations.

The final day of the National Forum included a plenary discussion on First Nations Members' Housing in Urban Centres. The panel featured Ms. Margaret Pfoh, Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA); Ms. Jocelyn Formsma, National Association of Friendship Centres; Mr. Ron Rice, Victoria Native Friendship Centre; and Ms. Donna Morin, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation. The panellists provided information on housing programs and services provided for the Indigenous population in urban centres.

There were 20 concurrent workshops that were held throughout the National Forum that focused on transformative change in First Nations housing and infrastructure with the implementation of the Strategy. A Tradeshow, featuring 27 exhibitors and artisans, was also open throughout the 3 days of the National Forum where participants were able to access additional information on housing innovation, asset management processes and infrastructure services.

2. BACKGROUND

The AFN hosted the 2020 National Housing and Infrastructure Forum and Tradeshow on March 10 – 12, 2020, in Toronto, Ontario. The theme of the National Forum was *First Nations Control: Transformative Change in Housing and Infrastructure*.

The purpose of the National Forum was to provide information on the transformative change coming to First Nations housing and infrastructure with the implementation of the Strategy. The National Forum would also take input from delegates to further shape the Strategy's Implementation Plan, with a particular focus on infrastructure as it relates to O&M and AMP. It also provided an opportunity to present a revised draft O&M Policy for discussion and input and information on AMP activities by First Nations, service providers and industry.

There were over 450 delegates in attendance at the AFN 2020 National Housing and Infrastructure Forum. The participants included First Nations leadership, First Nations housing and infrastructure technicians and stakeholders, urban Indigenous housing service providers, members of the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCoHI) and federal and provincial government representatives.

3. FORUM OVERVIEW

3.1 Opening Ceremonies and Welcoming Remarks

Mr. Mike Mitchell, Wolf Clan, Akwesasne, Knowledge Keeper, AFN, acknowledged the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat. He opened the Forum with a prayer. He was joined by Elder Chuck Hume, Yukon, AFN and Elder Valarie King, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Elder King provided a prayer and song. Chief R. Stacey Laforme, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, welcomed the participants to his traditional territory and shared a poem, *'On Common Ground'*, with the participants. Chief R. Donald Maracle, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte then provided welcoming remarks on behalf of Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald.

3.2 National Chief's Address

National Chief Perry Bellegarde, AFN, welcomed the participants to the Forum and thanked the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat for hosting the National Forum on their traditional territory.

National Chief Bellegarde recognized that housing management was a tough job. There had been no budget increases and many First Nations required housing, both on and off community. He noted that 50% of First Nations did not live on-reserve and recognized that not every city had Indigenous housing corporations that could provide culturally appropriate services.

The AFN was working on bridging the housing gap through Nation-to-Nation relationships and a new fiscal relationship with the Crown. Each year, the AFN lobbied and advocated for investments in the federal budgeting process. Within the last seven (7) years, \$21.4B had been allocated for First Nations; boil water advisories had been reduced; and, the education gap was closing. However, First Nations housing has not seen an increase in 20 years. First Nations were working towards building capacity at the community level for housing authorities and to ensure that proper policies were in place.

National Chief Bellegarde said that the previous Speech from the Throne, which outlined the government's high-level priorities, included a chapter on Indigenous reconciliation for the first time in Canada's history. First Nations lobbied for legislation on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration) as well as Treaty implementation. He said that Treaties remain in effect for generations yet unborn. The AFN also worked towards C-91 on Indigenous Languages; mental health; the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Action Plan; and, C-92 on child welfare legislation that puts the needs of the child first.

The National Chief stated that by 2030, the infrastructure gap will be closed. That gap includes water, housing, sewage, bridges, roads, etc. He highlighted the need for data to present a good business case to Cabinet. He mentioned that closing the gap is beneficial for Canada and some provinces were working towards closing that gap, including British Columbia who allocated \$50M towards closing the infrastructure gap for First Nations. The Crown has a fiduciary obligation to close this gap.

He said that there was a need for new, innovative policies and ways of doing things when it comes to housing. National Chief Bellegarde encouraged the participants to continue to lobby and advocate for the housing needs of First Nations across the country.

He also acknowledged the importance of the continued planning by First Nations to address COVID-19, in particular, isolated communities. In addition, First Nations have to be included in provincial and national planning sessions.

3.3 Opening Remarks

Regional Chief Kevin Hart, AFN Housing and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, acknowledged the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat. He welcomed the participants to the AFN's 2020 National Housing and Infrastructure Forum and Tradeshow. He said that there was some valuable information in the Forum kits on COVID-19 and said that crowded housing

conditions contribute to the transmission of diseases, such as the novel coronavirus. He encouraged participants to visit the AFN website for further information.

He stated that the first National Housing and Infrastructure Forum was held in 2016 in Manitoba. The current National Forum focused on the implementation of the Strategy; an update on the 2018/19 Housing Survey; O&M Reform; and, a summary of key AFN housing priorities in Canada. Regional Chief Hart said that the common theme was, 'direction' as well as maintaining the momentum.

Regional Chief Hart noted that there were a large number of projects in the Regions and attributed their success to the leadership and advocacy of Chiefs and technicians. He shared with the participants that in June 2019, he lost his home in Sagkeeng and he and his family were currently living with his in-laws. His family, two (2) adults and two (2) children, shared one (1) room and that was the reality for many First Nations.

First Nations have brought back control with respect to housing inspections. The authority now lies with the Regions, as the previous system did not work for First Nations. Regional Chief Hart said that it was important to remember the urban centres and ensure that the proper mechanisms were in place to ensure that housing is accessible and housing services are culturally appropriate for all First Nations. He recognized that there were regional differences, including price, time frames and materials. There were also gaps between funding announcements and 'shovels in the ground', which must also be addressed.

First Nations have done great work in the social development sector, particularly as it relates to C-92, however, more needs to be done. More housing and more infrastructure is required because if First Nations children are returned to their families, housing for those families will be needed.

3.4 Setting the Context

Mr. Irving LeBlanc, P Eng., Director of Housing, Infrastructure and Emergency Services, AFN, thanked the National Chief and Regional Chief for providing the background on the work being done on First Nations housing and related infrastructure as well as their expressions of support for the ongoing work. He acknowledged that the National Forum was taking place on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat and thanked Knowledge Keeper Mitchell, Elder Hume and Elder King for the opening prayers and song.

He said that he was proud to showcase that work done by the CCoHI, technicians and staff. He noted that housing did not exist without O&M and asset management. Mr. LeBlanc said that the Chief's Committee and technicians advocated for asset management and emergency management for First Nations. He highlighted how overcrowding affects learning and a lack of access to clean water leads to poor economic development. He said that those issues were interrelated and the AFN was working hard to address those issues. He also thanked Regional Chief Hart for his hard work on the housing and infrastructure portfolio.

Mr. LeBlanc continued that delegates would be discussing the Strategy and recognized the participation of urban housing providers at the National Forum as well. He acknowledged that AFN advocates for First Nations no matter where they live. The AFN was working with providers and organizations related to homelessness for First Nations and looking towards developing a First Nations homelessness strategy.

The 2020 National Forum has a greater emphasis on maintenance and asset management planning and updates would be provided on new O&M policies, including reviewing the results from the pilot projects. They would discuss what was currently being funded versus what is actually needed. Discussions would also focus on awareness, strategy building and implementation.

Mr. LeBlanc thanked the participants for attending the AFN 2020 National Housing and Infrastructure Forum and Tradeshow and encouraged the participants to visit the exhibitors and artisans at the Tradeshow.

3.5 Keynote Address: Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society

Ms. Fran Hunt-Jinnouchi, Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society, thanked the Chiefs and leaders for recognizing the needs of urban Indigenous citizens. The Society was established in 2016 and is a British Columbia non-profit society and registered charity. They have been providing housing since 2018 in Victoria, BC, although their mandate is island-wide. The Society's mission is to provide culturally supportive, affordable housing and services, which is a constant challenge. There are complex needs at various levels and organizations and key knowledge holders need to come together to develop and implement a comprehensive strategy.

The governance structure is comprised of a 9-14 member Board of Directors that includes seven (7) representatives from First Nations band, district or Hereditary Councils. The structure is critical to provide that connection to communities. The Society provides shelter, housing and homes and also focuses on community relations, providing resources and support services.

The first step in developing a Framework, included the acquisition of research data and evidence-based strategic directions. Through the research, they learned that the primary clients included those individuals aging out of foster care; Residential School Survivors; and, addicts. The Society began a pilot project on culturally supportive housing called, 'Priority One'. The Society learned that for their clients, having a home meant being in community. The pilot project included three (3) key findings: love could not be quantified; Indigenous women face unique safety challenges; and, pathways to healing and recovery were missing from existing housing strategies. Ms. Hunt-Jinnouchi said that providing culturally supportive housing draws people in and keeps them there. Although the client base is not the easiest group to work with, there has been much success.

The Society applied for funding from the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA) to bring together healers, Elders and Knowledge Keepers for a "Wisdom of the Elders" gathering. One key message was that the leadership needs to step up and get involved in the communities. They must meet with communities, teachers, Elders and create healing communities. The homeless must be helped and be brought back out on the land in order to reconnect their spirits. The Society held their first pilot camp recently and a second camp will be held at the beginning of next week with a third camp being held in the summer.

She said that the Society recognized the need to bring both western and Indigenous ways of knowing and approaches together to create a dual model of housing care. The model includes the following:

- Culturally supportive; decolonized harm reduction;
- Aligns western and Indigenous practices; and,
- Establishes 'healing communities' across the island.

It is anticipated that the Framework will be completed by 2021-2022. The goal will be a strong document that includes metrics, legal components and evidence that supports that the model will work with the population and partners should come on board and work collaboratively with the Society.

She noted that SPAKEN House (Flower House) was a dual model of housing care pilot that focused on respect to the territory's protocols and knowledge transfer. The project honoured land from the outset.

The Society was also working with the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) on a 3-year project on the design, implementation, operation and evaluation of an Indigenous residence managed alcohol program.

Ms. Hunt-Jinnouchi said there was a need to influence policy and address structural barriers as those were the largest impediments to the support and care that was needed. The City of Victoria made a commitment within their community plan to allocate 33% of new community housing for Indigenous tenants. She noted that the National Housing Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy were key documents in influencing policy. Experts were also required, including those that understood low-barrier housing and affordable housing.

She left the participants with the following closing thoughts:

- Need to be clear on purpose;
- Self-reflection – what do I know? What don't I know?;
- Improve relationships within the system(s);
- Consider the long-term consequences;
- Strategic interventions/spectrum of expertise;
- Homelessness is not solved by using the same thinking that created the problem;
- Opportunities – Indigenous people have an opportunity to design and to lead;
- We are only as strong as our most vulnerable; no one left behind; and,
- There is a need for evidence-based solutions.

Ms. Hunt-Jinnouchi then showed a video entitled, '*Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness Society*'.

3.6 First Nations Housing and Related Infrastructure Strategy Implementation Activities

Mr. Dan Gaspé, AFN and Ms. Amy Nahwegahbow, First Nations Information and Governance Centre (FNIGC) provided an overview of the Strategy's implementation activities. Mr. Gaspé said that he had the opportunity to visit different Regions and was inspired by the commitment of and knowledge shared within each Region. He acknowledged the connection between healthy housing, education and childhood development. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) Report stated that housing was a tough challenge with no sign of resolution as needs keep increasing. The demoralizing and debilitating effects of poor housing impedes relations between First Nations and other sectors of society.

He noted that the following AFN priorities were assigned by resolutions:

- Development of a national First Nations Housing and Infrastructure strategy, including data gathering;

- Action Plan on Homelessness;
- Work with Infrastructure Canada to change bilateral agreement to enable First Nations access to funding;
- Transparency;
- Support for Dene Nation control of housing; and,
- Reverse the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC) approach to housing inspections to First Nations control.

In 2017, a policy framework was developed that contained the basis and context for a Strategy and approach to housing. It included the fact that Treaty First Nations feel that housing is a Treaty Right. In 2018, the Chiefs approved the *10 Year National First Nations Housing and related Infrastructure Strategy*, which provided First Nations control of their own housing programs. The AFN is currently developing an Implementation Plan to accompany the Strategy. A Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) will be prepared that will change the federal First Nations housing policy. The federal government will become the funder and not the deliverer of programs. The Strategy must also include tools to address off-reserve members. The Strategy acts as a guide for First Nations to develop their own Strategies. Mr. Gaspé noted that every AFN resolution states that national efforts are not intended to interfere with Regional plans or approaches. The AFN will fully support regional, Tribal Council and local initiatives.

He said that the Strategy includes the following key components:

- Skills and capacity;
- Program and delivery models accountable to First Nations;
- Authority to develop and deliver programs;
- Funding and financing – appropriate tools to fund the system;
- Related infrastructure;
- Communications with Regions and First Nations; and,
- Short-, medium- and long-term expected outcomes.

The Framework will give space to Regions to develop their own approaches in their own way. The Framework will signal expected outcomes and although co-developed with Canada, it will be First Nations-led. It will address the lack of funding and be based on First Nations local and regional solutions and include a wider range of choices. Many First Nations have stated that housing cannot be developed on its own without considering health, poverty, homelessness, climate change, emergency services, etc.

The Implementation Plan will deal with legacy issues, such as poor programs, neglect and lack of funding. First Nations cannot take on programs that do not work and deal with negative outcomes from chronic underfunding. It is important to note that First Nations need assistance with data, models and structure and require tools and best practices.

First Nations have been asked about the feasibility of developing a Centre of Excellence to provide advice. The AFN will go to the Regions to ask their requirements for a Centre of Excellence, i.e. location, electronic, etc., and will move forward once input is received.

In the area of governance and delivery, it is anticipated that First Nations will develop their own plans and Strategy, their own systems and culturally appropriate delivery models. The AFN will look for partnerships and innovative solutions.

Mr. Gaspé said that with respect to funding and finance, there will be a transition process to move from CMHC and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) programs to First Nations controlled programs. Transition plans must be in place and data gathering will be important to ensure equitable funding across the country, with transparency. There is an expectation that First Nations will contribute to their own housing needs and investment needs will include loans, revenue generation, occupant contributions and lending options expanded to include individuals. It was anticipated that provinces and territories will be more involved in collaborative approaches to funding.

Skills and capacity are also important. Before First Nations can manage their own systems, they require a critical mass of available employees. It was expected that by the end of the implementation of the Strategy, barriers will have been identified and addressed and training will be in place.

Mr. Gaspé said that general outcomes of the Strategy will include the following:

- Involvement of various partners, including lending organizations, private sector, provinces/territories and municipalities;
- Homelessness programming will be First Nations controlled and expanded;
- The Dene Nation can control their own housing systems;
- Concerns of disabled First Nations citizens and their needs will be addressed;
- ISC has started the process of service transformation to First Nations;
- Governance and delivery by First Nations will accelerate to funding and financing options accelerating to skills and capacity;
- First Nations will develop their own programs;
- First Nations will secure predictable and long-term funding; and,
- First Nations will have a critical mass of skilled workers.

He noted that by spring 2020, the data gathering and analysis will be completed. The Implementation Plan will also be completed in the spring 2020. The AFN will be reporting to the Chiefs in July 2020 and if the Plan is approved, the development of the MC will begin. At that point, the AFN will shift from drafting and preparation to providing support to Chiefs for advocacy, which will be essential.

The AFN has received funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to become involved in the homelessness process, "Reaching Home". It is the first time that the AFN has been involved and they will be meeting with experts from across the Regions and reporting to the Chiefs. They will also work with organizations, urban housing providers and groups working with homeless populations.

Mr. Gaspé stated that infrastructure was critical for community development. The AFN is hoping that informal discussions will lead to a more formal process so First Nations do not have to apply to the provinces for infrastructure funds. Transparency is an issue, even though the mandate letters speak of transparency to all. First Nations have learned about initiatives being in place six (6) months after the fact, rather than at the outset. The AFN will continue to lobby for early information.

The Dene Nation is in a unique situation. Funding for housing is controlled by the Government of the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. The Corporation is not cooperative in providing information. Information on funding intended for First Nations housing is not available. The Dene Nation want to take advantage of the movement to First Nations control of housing.

Mr. Gaspé said that the MMIWG Final Report included many references to housing and its effect on the quality of life, economic development, etc., including that, *“All governments must ensure that Indigenous people have access to safe housing, clean drinking water, and adequate nutrition.”*

Ms. Nahwegahbow provided an overview of FNIGC and said that First Nations data sovereignty was the inherent right to exercise authority over its data and information. The FNIGC undertook national surveys (First Nations Regional Health Surveys (RHS), First Nations Early Childhood, Education & Employment, Regional Labour & Employment Development); research; and, education and training.

She stated that the FNIGC was also a partner in the AFN Housing and Related Infrastructure Data Project. Each First Nation was provided with the opportunity to participate. One (1) individual in each First Nation, with knowledge of housing issues, was asked to complete the survey tool. Information was collected on inventory and capacity; subsidy and ownership; age; condition and costs; and, system capacity (water and wastewater).

The FNIGC developed the national sampling strategy, was responsible for data stewardship, data processing, statistical analysis and interpretation. Although FNIGC is responsible for warehousing the data, the data is owned by the AFN/communities. Data was collected from all Regions except the Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories and Prince Edward Island. The information in the report includes: community information; number of housing units; subsidy and home ownership; systems capacity; housing age; condition and costs; and, construction and planned housing. The data will be released at a future date.

Ms. Nahwegahbow reported that the RHS Phase 3 included the following housing information:

- Housing situation;
- Safety devices (smoke detectors, etc.), services (i.e. Internet);
- Repairs required (minor/major);
- Mold or mildew in home; and,
- Safe drinking water.

Some results included the following:

- 75% responded that they have safe drinking water year-round;
- 3x higher mold and mildew rates;
- There is a higher percentage of dermatitis and asthma in homes reporting mold/mildew;
- Housing impacts education, economic development and health.

Questions and Discussion

A participant asked how many communities participated in the survey. Ms. Nahwegahbow responded that the sample size included 253 First Nations across Canada, which was a good representation.

The participant continued that the RCAP Report included several volumes, with one related to dimensions of social change. The report is 24 years old. Reports continue to be developed and yet First Nations continue to negotiate and seek required resources to improve the quality of life in their communities. He asked whether or not it will take another 24 years for Canada to come to terms with the importance of those resources. His First Nation has 2,400 members, with 400 living on-reserve and a budget of \$600K for capital housing.

Mr. Gaspé said that the statistics provided by the participant are unacceptable and yet not surprising. It is not only housing, but all areas, that Chiefs and the Executive have been working towards, for many years, to improve the flexibility of funding. He noted that this is the first time he has seen an apparent shift in the government approach. The window of opportunity is currently open and they did not know how long that will last. He commented that they have all lived through federal administrations that were not First Nations-friendly.

3.7 Minister Catherine McKenna Video Message

The Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities, addressed the National Forum participants via video message. She noted the importance of getting First Nations projects built quickly and well. There was also a need to ensure that the federal government was working together with First Nations to get proper funds for infrastructure to close the gap.

3.8 Regional Updates – Status of Care and Control of First Nations Housing in Canada

The panellists presented regional perspectives on the status of care and control of First Nations housing in Canada.

3.8.1 Québec

Chief Lance Haymond, Kebaowek First Nation, said that the Quebec Regional Strategy included three (3) main components: skills and capacity; governance; and, delivery. The Strategy was developed by the Regional Tripartite Committee. The Committee has been in operation for 20 years and includes First Nations, CMHC and government representatives. The Committee works in the best interests of First Nations in the Region.

Chief Haymond said that during the engagement sessions, First Nations identified the following needs:

- More skills and capacity;
- More financing options; and,
- More First Nations autonomy.

The Committee was currently in its second year of development of the Strategy and would soon be implementing the skills and capacity component. The Region celebrated its third cohort of the On-Reserve Housing Managers Training Program. The housing and financing component was being developed in collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador (AFNQL).

Chief Haymond stated that a major change was needed in the way that First Nations housing was approached. The current system does not work and eliminating the gap solves the problem only

temporarily. There are disincentives to private home ownership and changes are required within the financial processes.

There is a need for some type of regional governance system, however, a large administrative structure is not necessary. Training and capacity building and helping home owners understand costs are important. The Region was also looking at assuming care and control of health services as in British Columbia.

He said that data collection was important. In Quebec, they had been collecting housing data since 2000 and the Region took the opportunity to update its study with the national data collection project. There was 100% participation from the 43 First Nations in Quebec. The Region needs over 10,000 new units to address the increase in demographics and rehabbing. An investment of \$3.9B is needed to address the current and future housing needs. Chief Haymond noted that having good data is important. At the AFNQL Chief's Assembly, the statistics were presented to Minister Miller, ISC and the AFNQL will be meeting with ISC to move ahead on the Quebec 10-Year Strategy. It will be important to begin dialogue to obtain funding.

Asset management was also important and he encouraged delegates to participate in the Region's workshop tomorrow morning. The Region receives \$450K per year to manage assets, however, the study indicated that the Region requires \$1.4M to manage assets. First Nations should not be expected to manage with less funds than are required.

Chief Haymond concluded by stating that Quebec will continue to support and undertake the work needed at the national level.

3.8.2 British Columbia

Dr. Sylvia Olsen, British Columbia First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Council (HIC), reported that HIC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ISC and the Council is working on the data and details. She noted that BC is behind on data collection.

The Region was working on a framework agreement to sign over housing and infrastructure to HIC. The Council has been undertaking a lot of work, however, it was recognized that the organizational structure needs to mature. Since October 2019, HIC has reorganized and become a Governance Council and Working Group. They were working towards something that has not been done before, which was intense, difficult and exciting. HIC is working with Chief Mark Point, Skowkale First Nation; Chief Greg Louie, Ahousaht; and, Chief Dan George, Ts'il Kaz Koh, in addition to 7-8 other professionals.

Dr. Olsen noted that BC was unique; there were 100 First Nations that had under 200 members, unlike other Regions. They were not Treaty, but rather self-governing First Nations. There were also a few struggles recently (Heredity Chiefs versus elected Chiefs).

She said that with respect to priorities, HIC was focusing on information; policy; engagement; collaboration and readiness (skills and capacity). They will continue to work towards transformation of housing and infrastructure. She noted that they had stronger ties with First Nation organizations and First Nations and wanted HIC to be an effective organization. Dr. Olsen said that an engagement Forum will be hosted on June 9-10, 2020 in Richmond, BC.

She concluded by stating that HIC remains committed to maintaining its mandate from the Chiefs of British Columbia to create an authority that is flexible, transparent and community and service-oriented.

3.8.3 Northwest Territories

Mr. Dale Booth, Innovation Seven, said that it was a challenge to access housing in the Northwest Territories. There were currently 928 families on a waiting list. Funding also goes to the territorial government, rather than communities. This makes funding for housing difficult to access. The resolution passed by the AFN Chiefs-in-Assembly spoke to the need to: improve Nation-to-Nation relationships; obtain federal commitments; and, improve collaboration on housing and infrastructure.

Mr. Booth continued that funding was an issue, as well as a lack of data. First Nations also waited for public housing and empty homes and did not receive a northern allowance. The territorial government was also not particularly cooperative. There were 20 government houses, reserved for government workers, sitting empty. The northern allowance was also available to government workers, however, no allowance was provided for Northwest Territories citizens.

The Dene Nation wanted to change the situation and move forward with an environmental scan to identify needs. They wanted to build capacity, for Dene, by Dene. They were looking to capital investors. Colville Lake and K'at'l'odeeche were looking to develop innovative housing approaches using local labour and building materials.

3.8.4 Ontario

Mr. Barrett Dokis, Chiefs of Ontario (COO) said that in Ontario, there were four (4) Provincial/Territorial Organizations (PTOs) as well as Independent First Nations. COO worked with the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation (OFNTSC) on the data collection exercise. They had 109 communities (81%) participate.

The Region has been undertaking engagement sessions and housing summits with leadership and Industry Canada. They noticed that leadership was moving away from the concept of, 'fair share', that takes away from other Regions. The concept of legacy issues, and not inheriting existing problems from old programs was also identified as an issue. COO was trying to address those issues while taking on care and control of First Nations housing.

Mr. Dokis said that homelessness was another issue in the urban centres and COO was putting a greater focus on that issue under a separate lens. There were many organizations available to assist with that particular issue. He noted that by addressing housing in communities, it will create opportunities for people to return home. Another issue identified was providing adequate housing for their Elders. Communities must also be able to build homes to standard and to the way that they need or want to build them.

The Region has two (2) models to look at as a starting point: a centralized housing entity for Ontario that includes a suite of available services; and, a hybrid model that includes both centralized and regional bodies. More discussion on those models is needed. The Region will also be looking at skills and capacity, governance and funding. They will continue to work with the AFN on the MC. COO was anxious to get to the next phase with respect to First Nations housing.

3.8.5 Atlantic

Mr. James MacKinnon, Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA), reported that the Authority was a First Nations organization owned and operated by the member organizations. It was a technical organization and not political. It was a utility for water and wastewater, incorporated as a not-for-profit. It operates as a business and moves care and control for the provision of safe drinking water to community.

The Authority requires long-term funding for capital planning and asset management to undertake the following:

- Capital upgrades based on long-term planning and funding agreements;
- Guaranteed funds with long-term funding agreements;
- Consolidated funding for water operations, management and facilities;
- Decision-making lies with the Authority;
- Own engineering department and staff; and,
- Assumes burden and liability of operating, maintaining and capital upgrades for water/wastewater systems.

Service accountability will be equitable and based on two-eyed seeing. Operations will be decentralized where each operator would work on a circuit within hubs. The Board of Directors passed a resolution stating that all operators currently employed will be offered employment after asset transfer.

The Authority was currently working on a framework agreement with a commitment to work long-term. They have submitted a business case to federal government as well as a 2-year funding proposal.

Mr. MacKinnon stated that the work aligns with the themes of transfer of services to First Nations control. A number of presentations will deal with asset management plans. When they negotiate a long-term funding agreement, they require good data, risk assessments and a change management strategy. Human resource needs also need to be considered.

Chief Sidney Peters, Glooscap First Nation, said that he has been working in the housing field for the last 35 years, both on and off-reserve. He said that in the early 1980's, the *Marshall* decision was made in regards to Treaty Rights. During that time, housing began to decline as it was not the priority of leaders. The impact of those decisions are now being seen today. Housing on-reserve and urban Native housing existed back then and he noted that a lot of urban housing was devolved to the provinces. Chief Peters said that within three (3) years, his organization lost the urban Native housing program and the maintenance dollars were cut by 50% and administration dollars were cut by 80%. It then became a liability issue to continue to provide the program.

The Chiefs in the Atlantic supported the Water Authority as a top priority. If people drink poor water and get sick, that is a liability on Chief and Council. There are many opportunities and institutions that want to assist in the process, however First Nations must determine where they need to go in the future.

Chief Peters continued that with respect to urban Native housing, they saw that mortgages were now paid and subsidies have now ended. He said that the bilateral funding agreement in Nova Scotia provides funding of approximately \$100K per unit. However, infrastructure funding goes to the provinces. Housing

is important to First Nations and is the greatest asset in communities. Some communities are building 40-50 units on their own and CMHC is only building 400+ units in 10 years. The status quo continues to drop. If they wait another 10 years, housing will be in a deplorable condition.

Questions and Discussion

A participant commented that she is noticing that First Nations are moving more towards corporations and asked if that was moving away from Treaties.

Mr. MacKinnon said that for the Chiefs in the Atlantic, it was a question of liability. Moving to the Water Authority transfers liability away from Chief and Council and it also transfers services. He noted that any system is made better when the communities own it, as determined by discussions with the Elders and Chiefs in the Atlantic.

Dr. Olsen said that in BC, they did not have many Treaties. In their engagement sessions, there was a strong sense of keeping government's 'feet to the fire' and remind them of their fiduciary responsibility. The government has been devolving their responsibility since the 1980's.

Mr. Dokis added that corporations were required to conduct activities such as transfer payments.

A participant asked how funding for the Water Authority affected funding for First Nations and did the Authority take funding away from their Nations. Mr. MacKinnon said it was an amalgamation and the Authority was responsible for funding and decision-making. He noted that with respect to impacts, efficiencies can be created by an amalgamation.

The comment was made that First Nations never seem to access enough funding and asked whether or not the Water Authority received additional funding from government. Mr. MacKinnon said that they have not yet signed a final agreement, however, they will need additional funding for O&M and updates to operate efficiently. He stated that water has been chronically underfunded, as well as housing.

3.9 Keynote Address: International Joint Commission

Mr. Henry Lickers, Canadian Commissioner, International Joint Commission (IJC), said that in Akwesasne, they were always looking to improve housing conditions in the community, however, they also looked at traditional knowledge of homebuilding in their area. There was a need to rethink and understand the places where they lived.

Mr. Lickers felt it would be important to speak to the participants as friends and people known to him. He sat with IJC and was the first Indigenous person to sit as a Commissioner. He sat with another friend, Mr. Pierre Beland, who at one time visited Akwesasne to talk to the community about their knowledge. He went to Akwesasne to try to determine why the beluga whales in the St. Lawrence River were loaded with contaminants. The community's fishermen said that the whales were eating eels, which were becoming contaminated downriver. This was an example of how traditional knowledge helped science.

That was also applicable when building houses or infrastructure in Canada. Engineers in the south have told the community how to build houses their way, however, it is too cold in the community to build that way. First Nations knowledge can be 'on the ground' and be incorporated into the work that they do. First Nations have always been knowledgeable about the land where they live. Their community was never

flooded and they believed in resiliency. Mr. Lickers said that Lake Ontario was flooding because of exceptionally high water levels, perhaps the highest in history. His villages were always built above the flood plain. The settlers came and built on the flood plain, if not right on the shoreline. Mr. Lickers said that the communities up north, which constantly flood, would not have built their communities on the flood plain. They would built where they traditionally lived, rather than where the government told them to build.

Mr. Lickers commented that straight line roads were the worst things to build on-reserve because it enables people to speed with ease. Curves should be put in roads. Subdivisions are built in First Nations and every tree is cut down and then it takes 50 years to grow them back. Subdivisions can be built around mature trees. A single mature maple or butternut tree can help heat or cool a home. The melding of biology and engineering still has a long way to go.

Mr. Lickers said that often he hears, 'we are going to build to code'. That is the minimum that can be done, however, if you want to build to what Grandma wants, then she wants the best. First Nations should be building to 'Grandma's code'.

The Haudenosaunee have been on the St. Lawrence for 10,000 years. They saw the ice and have lived through the Ice Age and saw the people who came after the Ice Age. They know that in 50 years, Akwesasne will be like North and South Carolina. In 50 years, the Cree communities will be like Akwesasne, so we should show them how to build. In Akwesasne, they did not travel 600 miles away to cut logs to build in Akwesasne. They used local materials.

He asked participants to keep in mind the following:

- Code is not always the best. Grandma's code is the best.
- Use what communities have and build the best houses that they can.
- The knowledge gained from Native people is beginning to be used in the work that they are doing.

Mr. Lickers said that the Indigenous Committee of the IJC is comprised of four (4) Commissioners (2 Canada, 2 United States) to incorporate Indigenous knowledge into the work of the IJC.

3.10 Address by Pam Damoff, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous Services Canada

Ms. Pam Damoff, Member of Parliament and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of ISC, acknowledged the traditional territory and thanked the participants for their passion for building healthy communities across Canada. She said that the mandate letter instructs the Minister to work with Infrastructure Canada to build better infrastructure in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. She acknowledged that helping to build a successful National Forum was also part of that mandate. Parliamentary Secretary Damoff stated that infrastructure was part of closing the gap in First Nations.

She had recently met with the Executive Director of the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto, who informed her that without a safe and warm place to live, it was difficult to find work, education, etc. She said that with respect to safe drinking water, they were working hard to eliminate all long-term advisories, carry out urgent repairs and upgrade water treatment plants. Parliamentary Secretary Damoff stated that \$2B had been allocated towards water/wastewater infrastructure.

The federal government is committed to renew funding for infrastructure projects on-reserve and created the Indigenous Fire Marshall's Office. She acknowledged that there are unique fire safety challenges on First Nations. She said that with respect to procurement, the federal government is sourcing 5% of procurement from Indigenous businesses. However, she said that Indigenous-led businesses could fill 25% of federal government requirements.

Parliamentary Secretary Damoff said that with respect to COVID-19, the federal government was committed to protecting the health and safety of First Nations. They are working with communities to raise awareness and to ensure proper preparations are in place. They are engaging with the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and provincial/territorial counterparts to protect the health and safety of First Nation citizens.

She continued that First Nations in Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec were working to identify ways to increase care, control and management of housing in First Nations. They wanted to deliver solutions from 'the ground up' as identified by communities. They were working with leaders and experts to invest in measures that will address needs. Parliamentary Secretary Damoff said that since 2016, \$143M had been allocated for housing needs. ISC has supported 807 housing related projects, including housing authorities and housing management training. They are also committed to a new fiscal relationship for predictable and sustainable funding. They have also implemented 85, 10-year transfer agreements, reducing reporting burden. She acknowledged that transformative change does not happen overnight, however, they must eliminate the unacceptable socio-economic gap.

Questions and Discussion

It was noted that Parliamentary Secretary Damoff will provide her speaking notes to the AFN for distribution to participants.

Chief R. Donald Maracle, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, said that a 2014 Plan developed by the IJC, predicted flooding. Their community has had two (2) floods that damaged houses. The lake level rose 18 inches. One solution discussed, was to lower the level in the fall to make room for the spring snow melt. He asked how long it would take before they could expect the federal government to pay for damages caused by the flooding.

Parliamentary Secretary Damoff said that the same issue exists along the Great Lakes. She noted that her assistant was taking notes on the issues identified. She said that changes were made in 2017, jointly with the United States and the situation was being monitored.

Chief R. Maracle added that the floods had also shortened the shipping season. He noted that Montreal is protected more than his community. Parliamentary Secretary Damoff mentioned that flooding as also attributed to climate change, including torrential rains in the spring. Chief R. Maracle said that the flooding was also damaging the pickerel spawning. Parliamentary Secretary Damoff said that they also had to consider that 100-year floods were now occurring every few years.

Mr. Paul Ledoux, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, said that his community was small and they had a good source of water. Homes were still on wells, with advisories. He stated that to operate a first-class water facility, they received \$27K per year. The cost of chemicals and filters exceed that amount. He said that the resources flowed too slowly and were inefficient. The process needed to be quicker and First Nations

needed technicians that were trained and qualified. His community has been using their own-source funds to operate for years.

Parliamentary Secretary Damoff said that they cannot address the issues in a short period of time. They were training operators. She applauded the work being done by First Nations and said that the comments were helpful and that information is what the federal government needed to hear from participants.

Mr. Gaspé, AFN, said that the AFN was co-developing the Strategy with Canada. There were major milestones upcoming, including the development of an MC. He has been advised by colleagues that there is a good working relationship, as there have been concerns that the MC would not reflect the options and key information that First Nations want Cabinet to be made aware. There are difficulties in being assured that First Nations priorities would be reflected. Parliamentary Secretary Damoff said that the Minister has been engaged with First Nations. She agreed that the issue was critical and would be speaking with the Minister upon her return. She said that having the Minister committed to ensuring that Indigenous voices are heard and respected and that the MC reflected those voices was essential.

Mr. Troy Knowlton, Piikani Nation, said that there was a discrepancy on shelter allowance for members on social assistance. Members received a shelter allowance of \$325, however, in Alberta, individuals off-reserve received a \$530 shelter allowance. The First Nation enters into programs with CMHC and units are rented at approximately \$600 and there is a deficit for renters accessing social assistance. He asked how that deficit can be addressed for those First Nations who have opted to go with CMHC housing? The First Nation has to go into deficit or discriminate against its own members by not providing those individuals on social assistance to access CMHC housing. Parliamentary Secretary Damoff said she was not familiar with that issue where First Nations are being provided with less funding on reserve, ultimately forcing members to move off-reserve. Mr. Knowlton said that the issue has been ongoing for a number of years. His First Nation had accumulated a \$13M deficit, which has been paid, due to its own source-revenue. Parliamentary Secretary Damoff asked Mr. Knowlton to touch base with her assistant, so she could capture the issue in greater detail.

Chief Harold Turner, Misipawistik Cree Nation, said that First Nations have a Treaty right to housing. He has heard about First Nations using their own-source revenue and borrowing funding to build housing. In Grand Rapids, the community made a conscious decision to build housing. It was either build and go into deficit or use ISC funding and only build two (2) houses per year. If First Nations decided to go with CMHC, they could build five (5) houses per year. That does not address housing needs, so the First Nation borrows to build. He continued that ISC has not yet addressed the Treaty right to housing for First Nations. He said that with respect to rent, the First Nation is not allowed to collect rent from those individuals accessing social assistance and living in an ISC or CMHC house. When the community does build its own housing, water and sewage are over capacity. The First Nation then has to borrow again to upgrade its existing infrastructure. He asked when the government was going to meet its obligations under Treaty. He asked if having an asset management plan in place would help move the situation further along. Once again, Parliamentary Secretary Damoff asked Chief Turner to meet with her assistant so that she could get the full details on the issue presented.

Chief R. Maracle said that he was the Co-Chair on the Chiefs Committee on Long-Term Care. There were facilities being built to accommodate members in need. Currently, there were 300 members in hospitals with no place to go. There is a need for a strong and immediate investment, including a construction grant and operating funds. A plan is in place and the investment is needed from the federal government. He

stated that he would like to see something in the Budget this year and the federal government must be a strong partner.

3.11 Asset Management Planning/Operations and Maintenance Policy

Mr. Craig Baker, P.Eng., First Nations Engineering Services Ltd., presented on the Asset Management Planning/Operations and Maintenance Policy, the draft O&M Policy, the O&M Engagement Report and the Pilot Study Results.

Resolution 80/2017 mandated the AFN to work with ISC on reforming the current policy. Resolution 80/2019 mandated that work to continue. In 2018, the pilot projects were implemented. In 2011, \$1.2B was provided for capital funding over four (4) years. Following that, the funding was slashed by 40% to \$600M over 4 years. In 2016, there was a change in government and funding was brought back up to 2011 levels. However, capital requirements continued to grow at 6% per year and with the funding falling at 10% per year between 2010-2015, the deficit has widened. Costs are increasing faster than the consumer price index, making a bad situation worse.

The definition of asset management is the coordinated activity of an organization to realize value from assets. Important concepts included: levels of service; line of sight; management strategy; risks; contingency planning; lifecycle costing; and, maintenance concepts. Mr. Baker said there was a need for capacity building and training. There is little contingency planning being built into budgets.

Mr. Baker said that asset management provided information on how to move forward. It is modern, holistic, transparent, provides cost savings and is accepted by industry. It enables users to look at everything holistically and provides an understanding of why and how things are done. Better asset information can answer what has been done and what needs to be done. It also balances risk, cost and performance.

He stated that with respect to the AFN pilot results, five (5) Regions have completed pilot projects, including Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. There are a total of seven (7) projects in progress. O&M funding is a chronic shortfall in all projects. First Nations do not account for O&M on an asset by asset basis. The pilots indicated that there is a backlog of capital assets renewal. In Alberta, the Louis Bull Tribe indicated that ISC is currently providing 21% of required funding and a 500% increase in required. In Ontario, Moose Cree First Nation said that ISC is currently providing 28% of the required funding and a 400% increase is required; Curve Lake First Nation reported that ISC is providing 22% of required funding and a 500% increase is required; and, in Kasabonika Lake First Nation, ISC was providing 60% of required O&M funding and a 200% increase was required.

In Quebec, Kebwaowek First Nation required a 300% increase, as ISC was providing 32.8% of the needed O&M costs. In the Yukon Territory, Liard First Nation and White River First Nation were still processing their information, however, were struggling with the current funding. In British Columbia, four (4) First Nations received block funding and ISC provided 75% of required O&M funding.

Mr. Baker noted that different methodologies were used for calculations. It was important to know what the gap was and perhaps funding could be resolved using comparable figures with adjacent municipalities.

He said that 10 engagement sessions were held across Canada in 2019. There was consensus that asset management was necessary and participants endorsed moving to asset management planning. Participants believed that Asset Management Plans (AMPs) could be implemented in communities within five (5) years, providing funding, training and support was provided.

Mr. Baker stated that work had been done on developing a revised draft O&M policy based on asset management industry standards. It reflected the need for sufficient funds to cover eligible O&M expenditures, such as training. He noted that a copy of the draft policy was available in the Forum kit. The policy statements include the following, among others: that ISC will adopt the policy; that First Nations Levels of Service will meet or exceed the federal/provincial/territorial levels; and, that First Nations members be given priority for employment on-reserve.

Mr. Baker stated that ISC has commented on the degree to which the new policy includes capital. It cannot look at O&M in isolation. A holistic approach should be taken with infrastructure, however, the policy seems to focus primarily on O&M. There is no mention of net funding requirements, i.e. 80% water, 20% community buildings. ISC also stated that if the intent were to fund at 100% it would require a significant increase in funding that does not currently exist. The ISC Regions believe that they are providing enough funding, which is a big disconnect. The gap and need have to be justified and there is currently no buy-in from the Regions.

ISC also identified the following challenges with the revised policy:

- ISC unable to afford plans, specifically if capital is included;
- A rigorous review of AMPs by ISC must occur to ensure industry standards are followed, for example;
- It is not consistent with ISC being less involved in First Nations affairs;
- There are few roles and responsibilities for First Nations;
- There is a need for ISC to better understand the compliance requirements; and,
- There are concerns about the ability of First Nations to implement within the timeframe and greater capacity building may be required.

Mr. Baker said that the technicians have also provided comments on the new policy stating that a proper AMP eliminates the need for the Asset Condition Reporting System (ACRS). It would forecast the required O&M as well as a replacement reserve fund, which is required for asset management. They noted that every asset would be different and a template will not work for AMPs. The question was raised as to whether or not ISC involvement was needed as they lack expertise in asset management planning. There is also an education component to asset management. Perhaps that can be structured within a regional hub while building capacity at the community level, similar to the current operator hubs for water treatment plant operations. The technicians noted that inspections need to be carried out with consistency, inspectors must have similar levels of professional status and consistent processes that are undertaken between and within First Nations. The technicians also asked why the life-cycles were based on 25 years, as infrastructure can last longer than that. There was also little mention as to how ISC can assist First Nations in the transfer of care and control of water systems. They asked where was the responsibility of ISC to teach and educate? First Nations should always create a list of all assets no matter how they are funded. Plans must be comprehensive. Finally, the technicians asked whether the intent of the policy was 'funding' or 'planning'.

Mr. Baker said that the next steps included the following:

- Assist ISC with requirements to revise current policy;
- Leverage existing databases and processes;
- Develop a coherent training strategy to implement AMP;
- Develop budgets to address current O&M and capital shortfalls;
- Develop budgets to implement AMP training requirements; and,
- Financial capacity development must be incorporated into training plans. Financial accounting capacity is key to the successful implementation of AMP.

3.12 Climate Change Risks and Impacts Panel

The panellists discussed the experience of climate change risks and impacts witnessed in First Nations and around the world. The Chair welcomed Mr. Henry Lickers, Canadian Commissioner, IJC, Mr. Elmer Lickers, OFNTSC, Dr. Guy Félío, Stantec Consulting Ltd. and Ms. Rosalie Labillois, Co-Chair, AFN Youth Council.

Mr. Henry Lickers said that one of the first times he heard about climate change was from his great-grandmother. He used to sit and listen to their stories and once asked his great-grandmother what the community looked like long ago. His great-grandmother said that they had lived there for about 10,000 years. They also saw the ice come and where they were sitting, the ice was 3 km thick. They lived further south then. His great-grandmother said that their ancestors had worked for the Stone People back then and built their houses. She said that when the winds grew angry with the Stone People, the Stone People could no longer hunt or trap and their ancestors were free to move north once again. Mr. Henry Lickers said that their people knew what could happen to societies when people did not take into account the changes that surrounded them. He asked what they would tell their kids and would they change the way they were doing things.

Mr. Elmer Lickers said that he lived on the “Mighty Grand River”. When he was a child, he could see the bottom of the river because it was so clear. However, he could no longer see the bottom of the river because of pollution. He could appreciate the efforts and interest made by First Nations with respect to climate change. Mr. Elmer Lickers said that Six Nations built a \$40M water treatment plant. He asked how climate related planning was protecting First Nations infrastructure. He stated that OFNTSC has developed a tool that helps communities assess that risk, which was the ‘First Nations Infrastructure Resilience Toolkit’. The tool is scalable and adaptable. It has been tested in Moose Cree First Nation and in Oneida Nation of the Thames. The second iteration of testing is currently in progress. He acknowledged the private sector partners that contributed to the project. The project developed 10 different weather models for Ontario.

Dr. Félío said that he looked at climate change risks and impacts from a geographical perspective rather than a timeline. Assets were being affected. He continued that undertaking a climate risk assessment was not rocket engineering or rocket science. However, rocket engineering was harnessing rocket science to bring people back from the moon. The advantage was that First Nations across the continent have the knowledge about the climate and it was a matter of how that information was inserted into how First Nations managed their assets.

Ms. Labillois said that she found her strength from the lodges and ceremonies back home. She mentioned that a friend shared the following with her, *“Maybe our infrastructure cannot handle the changes, but we will have our people. Since time immemorial we have adapted; we have the Knowledge Keepers.”* She said that First Nations will return to the lodges for that knowledge. The Elders have been running survival camps for the youth. Ms. Labillois said that she comes from the East Coast and has witnessed changes. Recently, there was a storm surge that affected the community. The community now has a seawall. Her community was in the process of obtaining more land because they knew they will eventually have to move inland. She continued that the water and land were integral to First Nations. She has faith in their way of being and knowing that her people will be able to adapt. That is why she advocated for their traditional Knowledge Keepers. One of her biggest teachings is to be unapologetic about who one is. Ms. Labillois said that their Elders were waiting for them and she acknowledged their wisdom and value. It was necessary to walk in two (2) worlds and young people must be part of both worlds.

Questions and Discussion

Chief Edward Sangris, Yellowknives Dene First Nation, said that they have been working on their 5 and 10-year plans on climate change. They see the effects of climate change more quickly in the north than in the south and it has a direct impact on their country food. The permafrost is melting and it affects their caribou. Caribou live on lichen and the muskeg is drying up. The Northwest Territories has lost 10 million hectares of forest to fire in the last two (2) years. The AFN is supposed to represent the Northwest Territories so it was important to listen to their issues. The Mackenzie River has dropped at least four (4) feet. He extended an invitation to Mr. Irving LeBlanc, AFN, to visit the Northwest Territories to see firsthand what their communities were facing in the north.

A participant said that climate change affects all aspects of life. He was a technician and supported leadership in the planning of services. Government funding was provided in siloes and that forces communities to follow that planning. Elders tell them to plan in a holistic way. Poor housing affects all aspects of life, i.e. economic development, education, etc. He asked if panellists could provide good examples of holistic approaches.

Mr. Elmer Lickers said that one thing they wanted to ensure was that communities were properly represented. He said that when it came to traditional knowledge, every person was unique. Further north, in Kasabonika Lake, when they engaged the Elders, it brought forward a completely different perspective. In talking with youth, they also shared a different view. On the technical side, they adopted the processes within the Toolkit, to ensure that communities were engaged. ‘Line of sight’ discussed leadership and governance to custodians and maintenance. He said that the Toolkit was adaptable to meet the needs of First Nations.

Dr. Félio said that they were in the process of identifying the climate risks. The question to consider was, ‘How is my community being affected?’ The community decided to develop a community climate adaptation plan. The toolkit includes three (3) modules, however, it does not include a community adaptation plan.

Mr. Henry Lickers said that the Two-Row Wampum tells communities to keep their societies separate. It does not stop them from yelling at the other boat, “Hey! Something is changing!”. He noted that he had to work with his community to incorporate both traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge. It was their common duty to listen. If his brother was affected and could no longer carry out his living, how does it impact himself?

Ms. Labillois said that there is a 'divide and conquer' aspect and First Nations needed to 'decolonize' their thinking. Many organizations are competing for funding and that is where the siloes existed. It was time to leave the egos at the door and look at the bigger picture. That is where the traditional way of knowing comes into play. First Nations are a communal people and Nation.

Mr. LeBlanc thanked Chief Sangris for his comments and concerns. He understood what he was saying and noted that he and his team had traveled to Yellowknife twice but would like to travel there again. They have been working with Chief Yakelaya, Dene Nation. He thanked Chief Sangris for his invitation and he wanted to learn more about how they could help. He said that they were all affected by climate change.

Dr. Félio said that many communities learned self-reliance during the Ice Storm in 1998. If those extreme events are going to happen more often, they are not going to have the energy to come back and rebound. The impacts have to be minimized.

Mr. Henry Lickers commented that most people would say that First Nations are not prepared. That is fatalistic and leads to despair. First Nations do not despair and are not fatalists; they laugh. They know they are going to survive it and learn by the experience. What has to be done? People have to survive. They have to prepare. They have to use the expertise that is available to them and further develop their expertise. First Nations are concerned about their children and want them to grow up to be good people. When adversity hits, First Nations must look it square in the face and ask, "What can we do? What can we do right now?"

Mr. Elmer Lickers said that in 2018, his mother fell and hit her head. She was unconscious for three (3) days. The hospital told him to bring the family together because she would not live much longer. On the fourth day, his mother woke up and asked why was she at the hospital and why were they not all at work. First Nations were resilient. His mother was 86 and walked to Wal-Mart every day. The Elders must be protected. On the technical side, he asked if they were ready and if so, what were they ready for? They must determine how the climate was affecting their infrastructure. In identifying the problem, the solution will be found. There is a wealth of experience in the room and they must work together.

Ms. Labillois said that when she attended the Water Symposium a few months earlier, they also had a room full of experts, however, they were missing the perspective of the water. First Nations must have a deep understanding of their elements. They are complicating issues too much. They see migratory species moving to different places and those species are ready. However, First Nations are not ready. They are going to have to go back to their own ways to get connected to the spirits of the land and the water surrounding them. They must share their gratitude for things that they have.

3.13 First Nations Members' Housing in Urban Centres Panel

The Chair welcomed the following speakers to the panel: Ms. Margaret Pfoh, Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA); Ms. Jocelyn Formsma, National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC); Mr. Ron Rice, Victoria Native Friendship Centre; and Ms. Donna Morin, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation.

Ms. Morin said that she worked for Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation and worked with eight (8) communities, including one community embedded in Prince Albert, SK. The Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) process

created a reserve near Prince Albert and as is the case for most First Nations, the highest priority is shelter. Without shelter, chaos follows. They must elevate housing to the #1 priority for First Nations. She noted that Peter Ballantyne currently has a housing shortfall of 600 units. She worked towards creating opportunities and building partnerships. The First Nations and the Prince Albert Grand Council (PAGC) were working to forge new fiscal relationships which must be government to government. That relationship must be enhanced based on Treaty and the relationship with the Government of Canada.

Ms. Pfoh said that the AHMA of British Columbia was the first organization of its kind to accept devolution from the province. They came together in the 1990's as Aboriginal housing providers in order to provide housing for the Indigenous community. The devolution of housing to municipalities created inequity for the Indigenous community. There were 142 housing providers and 100 service providers, representing a huge spectrum of skills and capacity that has been delivered for the past 26 years. They serve all Indigenous citizens and have paid off mortgages, reinvested, divested and invested. They provide more than just 'bricks and mortar' services. Holistic, wraparound services are required. Ms. Pfoh said that there was an opportunity to have discussions on how Indigenous housing can be delivered effectively without having the government dictate the process.

Ms. Formsma said that the NAFC was reigniting the partnership/relationship with the AFN and thanked the AFN for inviting them to speak at the National Forum. She said that Indigenous people were better when they worked together. Friendship Centres began in the 1950's with the largest growth occurring between the 1960's to the 1980's. Now there are approximately 130 member Centres. Prince Edward Island is the only province/territory where there is no Friendship Centre. Friendship Centres have 238 buildings across the country and work to support languages, culture and health. They are volunteer-driven and not politically-driven.

Friendship Centres serve hundreds of thousands of people every day through the delivery of 1,200 programs. In 2016-17, Friendship Centres operated various housing programs and 53 homelessness initiatives. They focus on referrals and advocacy for tenant rights. They provide seasonal and emergency shelters and advocate for and provide affordable housing. Ms. Formsma said there was a need to match their efforts to reality; there were more First Nations now living in urban centres. They must ensure that their needs are met within their community. There is an opportunity to provide mutual support through partnerships with First Nations. Those individuals born and raised without a community connection also need support to be reconnected to their roots.

Mr. Rice said that he has been working with British Columbia Friendship Centres since 1998. Many Friendship Centres have housing and homelessness programming. Friendship Centres provided housing in Vancouver as well as in Victoria. The challenge was a focus on family housing and a need for housing for youth aging out of care or youth moving for education. There is also a need for non-traditional units and wraparound services. The Friendship Centre has made an effort to create a community building to serve tenants of apartment buildings. They taught basic cooking skills as well as the preparation of fish. A community began to form around that common space and the tenants began to drive the programming. The building became the 'heart of the village'. Problems were addressed within the community, i.e. noise complaints.

They also operated a homeless shelter that included an extreme weather response, when the temperature was less than 4°C. The shelter was changed to seasonal rather than extreme. Proper mattresses were obtained, showers were installed as well as a commercial laundry facility. That also began

to create another sense of community. The challenge faced is that there is no day programming for those individuals living on the streets. They have to clear the building by 6 a.m. and be out by 7 a.m. They have been working with partners to try to create day programming. Heat during the summer months is now beginning to be an extreme event, which is another challenge. More needs to be done for the homeless population. The service delivery lines must be erased between on and off-reserve. In addition, Indigenous service providers do not have to accept the government idea that long-term is three (3) years.

Questions and Discussion

Mr. Rod Hill, BC Housing, said that Ms. Hunt-Jinnouchi's presentation encouraged bringing community members back to the land and to the culture. He asked the panellists if they had any advice for Chiefs on how to bring people back to community.

Ms. Pfoh responded that First Nations were electing younger Chiefs and Councils who have lived the experience in urban settings. More Chiefs are asking for discussions with urban Indigenous providers in communities. The AHMA has hired someone specifically to act as the liaison between urban and First Nations. The program, "Ready, Set, Operate" was recently created, that sets out how to get Indigenous housing off of the ground. It is a unique challenge with urban Indigenous populations and municipalities. She said that the need has to be identified and they will do what they can to meet that need.

Ms. Formsma said that wraparound supports provided by Friendship Centres were always culturally relevant. She recognized that Friendship Centres in more remote areas were less diverse than centres in larger urban centres, such as centres in Toronto and Montreal, for example. There is a demand for language programming and it was tailored to each specific community. They also have language programs that takes the language teachings on the land. Friendship Centres do the best they can and are mindful of the traditional territories they operate within.

Mr. Rice said that it would be practical for Chiefs to introduce their staff to programs and perhaps consider volunteering at the Centre or sitting on the Board of Directors. It would be a great first step to have people understand issues at a deeper level.

3.14 Concurrent Workshops

The National Forum featured 20 workshops that were held throughout the three (3) days that focused on the 10-Year National First Nations and related Infrastructure Strategy's Implementation Plan, with an added emphasis on infrastructure as it relates to O&M and AMP.

3.15 Welcome Reception and Tradeshow

The AFN hosted a Welcome Reception on the evening of March 9, 2020 to kick off the National Forum, that featured the wonderful music of Lacey Hill and Trio. The National Forum also featured a Tradeshow that featured 27 exhibitors showcasing their housing innovation, asset management processes and infrastructure services as well as artisans.

4. KEY THEMES

Key themes and ideas were discussed throughout the concurrent workshops. The key themes and sub-themes are listed below and are not presented in any particular order.

4.1 Governance and Delivery

There are many examples of governance and delivery mechanisms for First Nations housing and infrastructure across the country.

4.1.1 British Columbia First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Council

The mandate of the British Columbia First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Council (HIC) is provided by the BC First Nations Leadership Council. The goal is to create a First Nations-led Housing Authority. Once created, the Housing Authority will be led by First Nations.

They signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), formalizing the collaborative government-to-government relationship and committing parties to work towards the transfer of housing and infrastructure authorities to First Nations. The discussion often centres around services, however HIC wants more than that. It must include: housing for homeless and urban populations; be affordable; include support and training; include financial tools/mechanisms, including new funding; and, have better management and communications.

There are seven (7) core directives including:

- Community-based and community-driven;
- Inclusive (no First Nation left behind);
- Service-oriented (effectively and efficiently delivered);
- Flexible (not one size fits all);
- Sustainable;
- Transparent; and,
- On and off-reserve harmonization (eliminate geographic boundaries).

In 2019, HIC reorganized to better position itself to become more efficient and effective. The Board of Directors comprised of four (4) First Nations Chief and 8 other members. It is led by an Interim Director plus 2 staff with the assistance of consultants and advisors.

HIC has identified the following four (4) key goals for the 2020/21 Plan:

- Enhanced engagement;
- Transformation of housing and infrastructure;
- Stronger relationships with First Nations organizations; and,
- Effective and efficient organization – transparency.

The Phase II engagement sessions included bringing forward models for feedback. The responses favoured a central authority and a combination of a centralized/regional model was also supported.

4.1.2 Nishnawbe Aski Nation Housing Strategy

In 2014, the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chiefs-in-Assembly declared a NAN-wide *Housing State of Emergency*. In 2018, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly reaffirmed the housing crisis and directed the creation of a new modern housing strategy.

The goals of the strategy include the following:

Create inclusive occupant-focused housing needs assessment tools and support the creation of community-based, long-term housing and infrastructure plans.

Currently, housing in Canada is measured using the standardized metric *Core Housing Need*. However, NAN First Nations have demonstrated that those metrics are not the only elements of the collective housing emergency declared by NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly. Without the right metrics, it is not possible to develop appropriate solutions or measure if solutions are working.

Vision appropriate housing and community designs to match the diverse needs within NAN communities
The design needs to be recognized as a critical element of the housing development process. Communities have identified minimum design standards and NAN will be working towards creating a 'Home for Youth'.

Create experiential educational opportunities, support professional development, establish skills training programs and encourage inter-community mentorship programs in housing related fields

This goal will see the increase in community members qualified in trades and professions such as architecture and planning in NAN communities. It will also develop alternative training opportunities and capacity development for member First Nations.

Develop policy alternatives by identifying opportunities in government and agency program and policy, alternative funding mechanisms

The goal will focus on identifying existing policies and required changes to support community self-determination in their housing systems. It will also work to develop the true cost of housing in the north, including review of maximum unit pricing; review of remoteness quotients; and, a review of population projections.

NAN has indicated that it is difficult to address just one section of the housing system independent of others, given the entrenchment of the current system.

4.1.3 Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation Housing Strategy

The Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation (PBCN) is working towards the development of its Housing Strategy. In 2015-16, was facing a housing crisis. 46% of their homes required minor renovations (under \$15K); 32% required major renovations (over \$15K); 64% had serious mold issues; 6% are uninhabitable, however, are still housing band members; 3% of homes lack water and/or sewage services; and, 64% of homes were overcrowded.

PBCN partnered with the First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF) to build 52 new units at a cost of \$9M. The financing was done through the First Nations Finance Authority. Housing policies have been developed and PBCN continues to work with the FNMHF to further develop their Housing Strategy. This will include awareness and education for Council and membership in all areas of housing operation; the organizational restructuring of the Cree Nation and all departments in order to work together more effectively and efficiently; and, meetings with ISC to establish a new fiscal relationship that will yield beneficial results in the PBCN communities.

4.1.4 Aboriginal Housing Management Association

The Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA) is a non-profit Indigenous housing authority in Canada with a mission to, "lead and advance the housing rights for all Indigenous People living in British

Columbia. They build partnerships with Chiefs and Councils and municipalities to identify synergies and create culturally appropriate housing strategies. They have 41 members, each an Indigenous housing and service provider, who serve more than 5,000 Indigenous families. AHMA members provide more than 35 different types of service programs from homelessness prevention to transition homes, mental health addictions and more.

In 2018, in partnership with the provincial government, the *Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund* was announced, dedicating \$550M toward 1,750 homes over 10 years. This marked the first time a province in Canada had ever provided funding for Indigenous housing both on and off-reserve.

AHMA wants to work with the AFN to explore collaboration. They do not want to create situations where there is competition over funding. AHMA has worked with some municipalities and local First Nations in order to make connections for on and off First Nation members.

The work of AHMA extends beyond housing. They are trying to address the need of Indigenous people with medical conditions needing patient and family lodging services for those requiring treatment in urban centres. They also provide services for youth at risk and those aging out of care as well as those individuals released from incarceration. Addressing housing must be holistic.

4.1.5 Challenges to Governance and Delivery

Many challenges were identified with respect to governance and delivery of housing and infrastructure in First Nations.

Poverty affected many First Nations. Often, there is no economy within a community. Some communities have a revolving loan fund, but it no longer revolves because of poverty. In Oneida Nation of the Thames, 400 of the 500 homes are occupied by Ontario Works clients, for example.

4.2 First Nations Housing Design and Planning

There were many thoughts shared with respect to housing design within First Nations. Presenters indicated that discussions on housing should start from a place of community. It should also look to cultural and traditional knowledge. For example, the Haudenosaunee used to live communally in longhouses. That is their tradition and culture. Housing planners should consider larger, multigenerational homes. That is currently the way many families live.

Family homes should be designed so that they can remain in families for future generations. They should be designed with leisure space, communal space and private space.

The University of Manitoba is looking at sustainable, culturally appropriate design and how interior and furniture design can support culture. There are unique challenges in remote and northern communities, for example. Design solutions should address the challenges and meet the needs of community and use local materials. The University was currently working on a design concept that included shared spaces and separate spaces for various family type units and constructs.

Housing must also address community needs. Housing should meet the needs of singles, Elders, youth transitioning out of care, homeless, single parents, persons with disabilities, etc. The overall goal should be to have homes designed, built and maintained in a proper fashion that looks at the unique needs of

each community. They may consider the following question: What are the trends? Aging? Young? What do health clinic visits show – high number of respiratory illness? For example, in Oneida Nation of the Thames, 70% of the population is under 30 and requires housing now and in the future.

4.2.1 Socio-Economic Impacts of Poor Housing

Poor housing conditions lead to respiratory illness, gastro-enteric, radon, toxic fumes and it also affects mental health and well-being. Social conditions deteriorate and poor housing leads to negative health outcomes.

Household hazards lead to other impacts, such as healthcare costs, stability costs and crime costs. The United Kingdom is working to identify costs to health system and the value that housing brings in to an individual's overall health benefit. It is a housing health cost calculator. Canada does not have these tools, but they are being developed. It was noted that low-income homes are more likely to be crowded, cold and in disrepair.

A CMHC study shows that good housing shows improved health, mental health, educational outcomes and child development (Measuring Outcomes of Affordable Housing, 2019).

4.2.2 Holistic

Housing cannot be looked at in isolation. Health and welfare must be considered together. First Nations look at wholeness, connectedness and balance. In First Nations, housing has to be part of the asset management work, however, housing is a different funding stream than asset management.

4.2.3 Climate Change

Climate change must also be considered. First Nations must identify what the current climate will look like in 10 years, 20 years, etc. Some communities are surrounded by a lot of water, for example. The building techniques and materials must suit the climate. It was noted that wood build and building at the water table encourages mold and mildew.

4.2.4 First Nations Persons with Disabilities

When undertaking planning, First Nations People with Disabilities (FNPWD) must be considered. A presenter indicated that her family was deaf, so their home must have clear, visual sightlines as they communicate through sign language. Safety also has to be a consideration. Their home also has to consider lighting, because using a visual language requires lighting. There should also be a lot of natural light.

Including individuals with disabilities in the planning is important. They provide a unique perspective on the housing needs for end users who have disabilities. Given the rise in disabilities, chronic disease, obesity, etc., planning for housing must take this into consideration. Housing with long stairwells were also not accessible for older people or people with mobility issues. Larger first floors would be more beneficial. "Granny's Code", as mentioned by a plenary speaker, should also be considered. The Elders are the experts and 2-storey homes that require retrofitting are costly. Many seniors do not want to move; they want to remain in their homes.

It was noted that contaminated environments can lead to disabilities, i.e. in Grassy Narrows, 20-30% of members in community have disabilities caused by decades of mercury poisoning. Post-traumatic stress

disordered (PTSD) was also considered a disability. Maintaining mental wellness and capacity is a matter of urgency for First Nations.

Action should be taken on principles of universal design. Design buildings and products to make them more accessible and usable by everyone, without adaptation, i.e. wider doors, one-level, curb cuts on sidewalks, etc.

Disability prevention and injury prevention should also be considered. There are dangers from climate change, such as fires and flood and emergency management planning must also take place. Those plans must also consider the needs for those individuals with disabilities.

4.2.5 Healthy Environment

British Columbia has undertaken an evidence-based review on healthy environment and highlights the following four (4) planning principles:

- Access to affordable housing;
- Adequate housing;
- Specialized housing for marginalized populations, i.e. accessibility; and,
- Site and zoning.

The current policy and funding programs do not recognize the diversity of housing or support a diversity of built form, i.e. remoteness quotients do not reflect different levels.

4.2.6 Resources and Tools

The BC Healthy Built Environment Linkages Toolkit¹ has housing identified as one pillar and includes planning principles that show the strongest research correlations found in evidence reviews:

- Access to affordable housing – people stay in communities longer, improves ability to afford other basic needs, decreases stress;
- Adequate housing quality;
- Specialized housing for marginalized populations – increases ability to continue living independently in their homes, access to permanent housing for homeless. Priorities: homeless, elderly, low-income, disabilities, mental illness; and,
- Site and zoning – minimize environmental exposure – radon and noise.

The Cree Nation of Waskaganish has used the comprehensive community planning (CCP) process to ensure that the development of housing and infrastructure uses a community-based approach.

4.3 Engagement

First Nations engagement is essential to any process that affects First Nations and this includes First Nations housing and infrastructure. *“Nothing for us, without us”*. The National Forum provided many examples of effective community-based engagement strategies.

¹ <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/professional-resources/healthy-built-environment-linkages-toolkit>

4.3.1 British Columbia First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Council

HIC hosted a Forum in 2019 providing an opportunity for engagement on next steps for the HIC and transformative change for First Nations housing. The next Forum will be taking place in June 2020. Their engagement strategy includes the following phases:

- Phase I – Inform – I share information;
- Phase II – Consult – I tell you something, you tell me something;
- Phase III – Involve – I want you included. Staying at consultation is not building, just talking;
- Phase IV – Collaborate – I partner with you. I want you to make some decisions;
- Phase V – Co-production – By First Nations, for First Nations – working together to create something.

HIC shared the following engagement lessons learned:

- Getting buy-in is essential;
- BC leadership responded and assisted, which was integral to the process;
- Early information sharing was difficult because government was not clear about messaging so HIC was not clear either;
- Bring experts together for review and analyze information is key;
- Evaluate the engagement process at least 3 times;
- Be prepared for interruptions in the process;
- Don't move away from community engagement. Work closely with existing organizations; and,
- Public relations is key!

4.3.2 Nishnawbe Aski Nation Housing Strategy

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) indicated that the following engagement lessons were learned when developing its Housing Strategy:

- A focus on community engagement is essential to creating a holistic housing strategy;
- A wider understanding of housing allows all community members to participate and share their experiences and goals for the future; and,
- It is important to understand experiences that are shared as well as those that are unique both within and across communities.

4.4 Innovation

Several examples were provided of innovative programming and solutions for First Nations housing and infrastructure.

For example, Brighter Future Homes with Living Atmosphere Control System (LACS) is an alternative to high debt home ownership. These homes offer lower living costs and are self-sustaining.

4.4.1 Chippewas of Nawash First Nation

The Chippewas of Nawash First Nation partnered with Habitat Grey Bruce in 2016 and have built 15 homes in the community with a plan to build 4 more homes in 2021. The key objective of the partnership include:

- Instill pride of home ownership in the community;

- Build a bridge between the communities; and,
- Provide safe, healthy and affordable homes for families.

The First Nation was responsible for site development and the required infrastructure. The housing design, using Habitat For Humanity guidelines, was also approved by the First Nation. Construction focused on energy efficiencies. Habitat organized the volunteers/contractors, skills training, insurance and home warranty. Financing was acquired through either CMHC or ISC and Habitat For Humanity prepared the quote. The program then provided home ownership education, including sessions on personal finances/budget, wills, power of attorney and insurance and home maintenance.

It was difficult to get funding for infrastructure funding to prepare the lots for construction and the First Nation had to use their own source revenue to pay for infrastructure.

Future projects may include youth participation in the building of new homes. The First Nation said that community engagement was key in establishing partnerships.

The homes will be monitored over the next few years to evaluate building materials and check efficiencies to determine if the designs need to be updated.

4.5 Funding and Financing

Some residents on-reserve can afford to purchase homes but need assistance securing bank loans. ISC is working towards bringing more housing options, including market, as well as Ministerial Loan Guarantees. Other financing options include the First Nations Market Housing Fund.

CMHC must look at affordability. They are supposed to change market rents plus services. Not looking at affordability is a huge mistake. It is one of the biggest issues and challenges in communities. After rent, some families have less than \$100/month to feed their family.

There is concern that some resources are going to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for asset management for First Nations. There is concern that other organizations are approaching the federal government for funding to serve First Nations. That funding should be going directly to First Nations.

Asset management resources that target First Nations are limited.

There is a need for predictable and sustainable funding. The impact of own source revenues and tracking government funding received versus how much First Nations pay on their own must be considered.

ISC indicated that funding for asset management for First Nations under the current envelope is limited (9 approved applications out of 42 for Phase I and those projects will need to be supported in Phases II and III). There is just not enough funding to complete the asset management work in one First Nation, let alone all that are currently ready to proceed. Asset management involves housing, infrastructure, roads, schools, etc. First Nations need to impress on their federal partners that predictable and sustainable funding has to be committed as per the Minister's mandate letter.

Despite the limitations, First Nations are already doing asset management and are masters at maximizing their O&M funding.

4.5.1 Tools and Resources

First Nations Market Housing Fund

The First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF) is a non-profit trust. It is designed to support market housing arrangements between First Nations and lenders. They provide the following services: Capacity Development (CD) Program; Access Criteria; and, Credit Enhancement.

The CD Program is for First Nations who believe in market-based housing and for areas which require strengthening to implement and sustain a home loan program. It considers financial management; good governance; and, community commitment.

Access Criteria serves as a basis for the assessment and qualification of First Nations which: apply for the Fund's Credit Enhancement; and/or receive targeted funding from the Fund's Capacity Development Program.

Credit Enhancement facilitates the ability of individuals to obtain housing loans on a standard market basis from financial institutions. One of the key tools used is the Credit Enhancement Facility.

Indigenous Services Canada Housing Programs

ISC provides funding to support capital housing needs. ISC provides three (3) main programs: Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program (CFMP)(\$149M), On-Reserve Housing Component; Targeted Investment in First Nations Housing (\$400M); and, Ministerial Loan Guarantees (MLG).

Over the past 5 years, \$1.3B has been allocated for First Nations housing. It was noted that ISC needed to be more transparent with how the funding broke down within each province.

ISC also launched the Indigenous Homes Innovation Initiative in April 2019 to fund innovative Indigenous led-housing ideas. Some of the projects funded to date include the Housing Management Professionals Initiative, that provides professional training, created a national association and national platform to support networking/sharing of information. The Teslin Tlingit Council Housing Conversion Initiative in the Yukon Territory, has renovated 11 band-owned homes for sale/home ownership. And the Pikangikum Transitional Homes Pilot in Ontario has built transitional homes for youth and women offenders. This project included multiple partners.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

In 2019, Canada unveiled the National Housing Strategy that focuses on adequate housing for all. A new Indigenous and Northern Housing Solutions Team was developed to help navigate available programs and services. The Strategy is focused on home ownership and working towards focusing on affordable and social housing space as well as working to close the housing gap in Canada. The National Housing Strategy has received \$55B and improving First Nations, Inuit and Métis housing outcomes is a priority. A large suite of programs are available under the Strategy and many programs are 'open' application-based.

CMHC also works with ISC to deliver on-reserve housing programs, including the On-Reserve Non-Profit Housing program and the Renovation Program Funding On-Reserve.

ISC has funding available under the First Nations Adapt Program.

4.6 Operations and Maintenance (O&M)

4.6.1 Nishnawbe Aski Nation Infrastructure Needs Assessment Synopsis

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) undertook an infrastructure needs assessment for education. The needs assessment also looked at operations and maintenance (O&M) needs. A detailed review of existing O&M funding was completed and an O&M model was developed, calibrated using a school in northern Ontario as well as southern Ontario.

The following O&M components were considered: repair and maintenance; preventative maintenance; general facility maintenance; heating; electricity; and, building insurance. The needs assessment determined that NAN schools only received 44% of actual O&M funding required to properly maintain them. Underfunding results in schools not reaching full design life.

The assessment left outstanding data gaps that should be considered in order to determine holistic education needs for NAN, such as the availability and costs of: water servicing; wastewater servicing; electrical servicing; solid waste management; and, Internet servicing.

It was important to note that all infrastructure must be considered concurrently and that future planning should consider both capital and O&M requirements, as it is illogical to fund capital without adequate O&M to go along with it.

There is a need for certified maintenance personnel locally to take care of the education assets. It was suggested that a hub model would make this more cost effective.

4.7 Asset Management Planning

4.7.1 Five Core Capacities for Asset Management

The following core capacities to implement asset management have been identified by ISC, BC Region and include the following:

Awareness and Priorities – There is a general lack of and incomplete understanding of asset management. There is a need to develop communications materials on asset management for leadership and management.

Internal Activities/Organizational Systems – There is a lack of organizational systems to support asset management and uncertainty on where to begin on asset management. Capacity building programs, including workshops on asset management should be delivered. AMPs templates should be developed. Tools for coordinating asset management activities should also be developed.

People – There is a lack of broad asset management skills and knowledge. An asset management training program should be developed, for those responsible for administration, finances and capital planning.

Information – There is a lack of guidance on how to link the capacity asset inventory system (CAIS) and ACRS to a broader asset management strategy. First Nations should continue with CAIS and ACRS but guidance should be provided on how to use the data to support an asset management strategy.

Funding – There is lack of dedicated funding for asset management planning. There is also a lack of data on actual O&M Costs. A dedicated fund for asset management planning should be established. Funding should also be made available so that First Nations can identify actual O&M costs; and, funding for those costs should be provided. Financial incentives should also be provided for asset management.

4.7.2 First Nations Asset Management Implementation Needs

There are a number of needs that First Nations require in order to implement asset management planning, as recommended by First Nations Engineering Services Ltd. (FNESL) These include the following:

Additional Funding – Funding is required for awareness activities; training; hiring of new staff; closing O&M and capital funding gaps; and, for the purchase of software.

Asset Management Policy – The policy should come from the community's Strategic Plan and outlines policy statements to guide staff.

Asset Inventory – The inventory will include natural resources, such as a sugar bush or fishery. The inventory for funded assets already exists. First Nations need an inventory for their non-federally funded assets.

Condition Assessment – This will determine the real condition of assets. E-ACRS provides more detailed, professional reports as well as an asset replacement forecast.

Maintenance Management Systems (MMS), O&M Budgets and Capital Forecasts – Each asset should have a MMS, O&M Budget and capital forecast. FNESL has produced realistic O&M budgets for 4 First Nations schools (3 in UCCMM territory) and have also designed 5 UCCMM water treatment plants with detailed MMS budgets and real O&M costing. However, they are lacking realistic O&M budgets for roads and other buildings.

Accounting Practices – Accounting practices should be aligned on an asset by asset basis.

Gap Analysis

4.7.3 Integrated Asset Management Plans

Integrated AMPs include a number of aspects including: asset renewal; natural assets; energy opportunities; growth and demographic change; climate change; maintenance requirements; other risks; and, improvements.

There is a need to define a broader range of assets, such as human resources, park/green space/social gathering places, technology (computers, software); data; and, wildlife.

Integrated asset management planning did not have to start off complicated; it could begin with First Nations engaging with colleagues and seeking help. They could get organized and build on community vision and goals; collect data; develop a plan; and, communicate with the community. It would be important to keep it simple and keep it relevant.

It was noted that the cost of doing reactive maintenance versus proactive maintenance is upwards to 9 times more expensive. Asset management is an area that will make a difference for communities in the long-run.

4.7.4 United Chiefs and Councils of Mnídoo Mnising

The United Chiefs and Council of Mnídoo Mnising (UCCMM) looked at asset management and evaluated what they were currently doing. Identifying what works and what does not work was the key to their approach. They looked at people, assets and financial perspectives. They reviewed O&M policies and allocation and identified flaws and antiquated policies. UCCMM built from the existing work to asset management. In addition, they evaluated the environment at local and government levels to identify gaps and challenges and enhanced existing tools to assist First Nations in their approaches to sustainable Asset Management.

They continue to work towards small, achievable pieces within the elements of an Asset Management approach. Eventually, AMPs will be provide evidence-based needs for capital, operations, maintenance and investments to achieve and maintain desired levels of service for their First Nations.

UCCMM communities identified a lack of capacity with respect to asset management planning. A Youth Internship Program was implemented. 14 youth participated and received their Water Quality Analyst (WQA) certification and are all fully employed. They have continued to Operator-in-Training, Levels I and II.

UCCMM has also purchased geographic information system (GIS) data collection equipment, which will form the basis of an AMP.

4.7.5 Ogemawahj Tribal Council – Technical Service Asset Management Program

The Ogemawahj Tribal Council (OTC) was funded by ISC under Phase I – Awareness. Activities included: understanding the importance of asset management; determining how asset management can result in effective service delivery; and, identifying the importance of asset management as a strategic business tool

Communities were already using asset management concepts to some degree and were at different stages of asset management. They needed resources/training to enhance their asset management. The OTC will be undertaking regional training workshops, a community engagement session, a community engagement plan and also the development of an asset management toolkit.

The key to the OTC asset management approach is the following: providing a unique and specific approach for each community; building capacity and buy-in for staff; clarifying stakeholders roles to success; and, asset management expertise will assist with the journey to undertaking asset management.

4.7.6 Tools and Resources

Fulcrum Digital Platform

Arcadis and their partner Fulcrum, have created a digital platform for the creation and management of asset management plans. The digital platform has the ability to bring together large amounts of data in a format that allows for the performance of the core concept of asset management planning and answer key questions in the asset management process, i.e. What is the current state of my assets?; What is my required level of service?; Which assets are critical to sustained performance?; etc.

The digital tools used include data profiling, mobile data collection, data collection monitoring, 360 imaging, capital planning and funding. A key component is the ability to monitor. The data provides an opportunity for experts to review data and make any changes to ensure it is correct and consistent. First Nations can compare different scenarios of risk vs. funding vs. return on condition. The digital platform also enables users to build Apps for individual users and for specific assets, i.e. water, housing, etc. It was noted that existing data can be brought into the platform, i.e. ACRS, E-ACRS.

Asset Condition Reporting System

All on-reserve O&M funded capital assets are inspected on a 3-year cycle and that data is captured through the Asset Condition Reporting System (ACRS). The inspection collects data and reports on the operation and maintenance of assets. Physical/operational condition assessments are performed and priority projects with a focus on health and safety are identified. ACRS inspections are carried out by qualified professionals and identify the following Projects:

Group 1 Projects – Projects that are minor maintenance activities that are not deemed to be resource draining.

Group 2 Projects – Major repair of components or elements that would not be covered under the normal ISC funding subsidy. The replacement and/or reconstruction of major components of an asset that have reached the end of their service lives or have deteriorated to the state beyond normal repair

Group 3 Projects – Study projects to provide an in-depth review to generate technical solutions to problems that cannot be readily assessed in normal ACRS inspections. Asset replacement/reconstruction project to replace a complete system due to its poor operating condition with an estimated remaining life of 5 years or less. Upgrade projects that may be required due to total ineffectiveness of the existing system to deliver the required service level

Enhanced ACRS

Enhanced ACRS (E-ACRS) focuses on the Tangible Capital Asset (TCA) reporting requirement for local governments. It began in January 2009. It requires annual reporting by all First Nations and municipal governments across Canada.

Asset Management Planning Initiative

ISC launched the Asset Management Planning Initiative and is working in 3 phases with First Nations. Phase I focused on awareness; Phase II focused on planning, with a target of 92 communities; and Phase III focuses on implementation, with a target of 72 communities.

ISC reported that as of December 2019, 194 communities were supported to provide awareness/workshops; 9 communities were supported to develop Asset Management Plans (AMPs); and 2 communities were supported to implement AMPs.

First Nations Infrastructure Resilience Toolkit

OFNTSC, in partnership with ISC, Ontario Centre for Climate Impacts and Adaptation Resources and Stantec Consulting, developed a First Nations Infrastructure Resilience Toolkit (FN-IRT) used to assess the vulnerability of community infrastructure to climate change impacts and to provide guidance on developing asset management plans.

The FN-IRT includes the following modules: Built Environment; Climate Risk Assessment; and, Asset Management. Existing data (ACRS) was used and traditional knowledge was added to the toolkit. Partnerships were key in the development of the toolkit, including First Nations, private sector, government and the AFN.

First Nations need tools. Tools that are relevant and help their communities and leadership reach evidence-based decisions. Asset management planning includes looking at climate risks. It is important that communities keep a placeholder for climate risks in their asset management plans.

4.8 Skills and Capacity Development

It was noted that often, training is geared towards municipalities, i.e. how they operate with a taxation and grant base. More training is needed for First Nations particular to their specific jurisdictions. In addition, supports and expertise need to be identified locally for First Nations asset management work.

4.8.1 YC Homes: Housing Through Education – Building a Tiny Home as a High School Block Program

The Youth Apprenticeship Program provides an opportunity for students to learn to build tiny homes for their community. Program participants built single adult living houses as they found there was a lack of housing for Elders and for middle-aged men. The build went through the regular stages of construction but in a shorter timeframe.

The program worked with high school students and partnered with the Ermineskin Cree Nation and 3 high schools. They began the program with engagement from the Elders to determine what was needed and decided to build 6 homes for Elders in their own small village within the community.

The program combines classroom and hands-on learning involving students at each part of the construction but also in life skills and building their confidence. The program has a mentor week supported by leadership and others in the community.

The program increased young peoples' awareness of the trades which could support economic development in the community. The curriculum was created and the province audited it and recommended adding a work experience component. Currently, the program was looking at options with different federal departments for funding.

4.8.2 Mino Bidmaadiziwin Partnership and the Youth Homebuilding Education Program

The purpose of the initiative is to engage youth in the building of homes in community which will be part of a healing and economic renewal journey. The project was undertaken in Garden Hill First Nation; Wasagamack First Nation; and, St. Theresa Point First Nation.

It is an education-based program that builds youth capacity in the trades and builds homes in the community. It includes community-led housing education; partnerships on design and training; creation of a housing and sawmill corporation; and, the development of funding proposals to support the initiatives.

The program has included the achievement of credentials at every stage with 11 certifiable courses offered. The partnership was created by bringing outside funders together and the community identified and refurbished a building to house the initiative.

The partnership now includes the entire home building process (harvesting and preparation of timber, design and construction of specialized components within the entire home building process), is strength-based and includes the capacity to design and construct homes based on existing community assets, resources, strengths, history, cultural practices and family relations.

The partnership results are currently being tracked and the outcomes to date are positive. Attempts to replicate the process in other areas is just beginning.

4.8.3 First Nations Housing Professionals Association

The First Nations Housing Professionals Association (FNPHA) is a national not-for-profit, professional association for current and future housing professionals. It is committed to expanding capacity of those who manage housing. It provides training, certification, professional development and networking opportunities and offers a Canada wide certification program leading to the First Nations Housing Professional (FNHP) designation.

4.8.4 British Columbia Skills Development – Vancouver Island University, First Nation Housing Manager Program

The program, provided by Vancouver Island University (VIU) provides training to Housing Managers to help them do their work more efficiently and effectively. It is intended to provide training to Housing Managers who work with on-reserve housing programs or those who may do this work in the future. It will also benefit others involved in First Nations governance or leadership. VIU took over the certification program from CMHC.

The program provides learners with the opportunity to develop management skills through a combination of theory and practical application. It is an interactive approach to learning new skills and encourages participants to test new ideas, fine tune relevant skills and share experiences and expertise with other housing managers in a supportive learning environment.

The program will be looking towards adding the following topic areas to add to its curriculum: green building and energy; and, emergency management. The program is currently writing a textbook for First Nation Housing Managers.

4.8.5 First Nations Adult Education School Council – Quebec

The Regional Tripartite Housing Committee (RTHC) in Quebec, comprised of representatives from AFNQL, ISC, CMHC, undertook engagement sessions to create a regional strategy on housing and infrastructure. The resulting Regional Strategy on Housing and Infrastructure identified three (3) key priorities: more skills and capacity at all levels; more funds and financing options; and a path towards First Nation autonomous governance.

Skills and capacity development had to be increased at all levels. Elected people needed to be more knowledgeable about the housing field and occupants needed to be properly informed of their responsibilities, as well as made aware of their rights and the limitations of housing programs. Administratively, the regional structures and communities needed to improve the skills of existing staff and ensure adequate management and planning.

The Housing Managers' Certificate Program was an example of one initiative in the Region to increase skills and capacity. The program has graduated three (3) cohorts of students since 2016 and will see the fourth cohort graduate later in this year.

The Region also provides a Community of Practice in Housing (CoPH) with networking and help provided through a virtual platform called "Work Place". A Housing Technical Resource Group with a pilot project is being implemented for Circuit Riders and Trainers. The creation of regional tables in housing to encourage networking and the sharing of best practices has been beneficial.

4.9 Data

First Nations lack data with respect to all aspects of housing and infrastructure needs, including the current state of housing in First Nations as well as actual O&M costs, etc.

4.9.1 FEHNCY – Food, Environment, Health and Nutrition of First Nations Children and Youth

The goal of the Food, Environment, Health and Nutrition of First Nations Children and Youth (FEHNCY) is to help inform government policy and community programming recommendations geared toward the improvement of First Nations children's health. It also has a goal to build capacity within communities and AFN regions to address nutrition and environmental health and housing issues through partnerships and community participation.

The FEHNCY Study includes the following:

- Part 1 – Participatory and Qualitative Research
- Part 2 – Household Questionnaire and Inspection
- Part 3 – Mobile Clinic

Capacity development and training occurs with the following: hiring of community research managers (CRMs); hiring of community researchers (CRs); community housing inspectors receives 3-4 days of training to work with CRMs and CRs to schedule home inspections and install indoor air quality monitors and collect house dust samples; housing inspectors receive training on home inspection skills; and, there is the potential for certification of housing inspectors in First Nations.

Knowledge Translation occurs through the following: individual health reports; indoor air quality summary report – household report; community report; regional summary and regional release; data training workshops; and, development of integrated knowledge transfer tools based on study findings.

The FEHNCY Study will collect data throughout the next 10 years, beginning in the Atlantic with 3 First Nations completed in the fall 2020 and 3 in the spring in 2021.

4.10 Urban Indigenous Housing

4.10.1 Friendship Centres

Friendship Centres across Canada currently offer 96 housing programs and 53 homelessness initiatives. They are a service delivery agency that is ready to match their efforts to the realities that exist on the ground and are willing to work with First Nations to focus on improving the well-being of Indigenous peoples in the urban environment.

Siem Lelum (Respected House) – Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Housing Initiative

The Siem Lelum in Victoria is trying to address the housing and homeless needs of First Nations. Programs include a homeless shelter and a seasonal shelter that is open 7 nights a week. There is no limit to the number of nights people can stay in the shelter. In addition, the program works with partners to find permanent housing for some shelter guests.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Irving LeBlanc, AFN, thanked the delegates for their attendance at the 2020 National Housing and Infrastructure Forum and Tradeshow. He thanked the speakers and panellists for their expertise and input. He acknowledged the networking and information sharing that took place throughout the three (3) days. He thanked the Regional Chiefs for their support and acknowledged the federal partners for their participation. He encouraged everyone to keep referring back to the Ministerial mandate letters to remind government to work with First Nations on infrastructure and connectivity. Finally, Mr. LeBlanc thanked the urban housing providers for their plenary and workshop presentations and the Tradeshow exhibitors and artisans.

Elder Valarie King closed the National Forum with a prayer.