

Atlantic First Nations Housing Engagement Session

Summary Report

James MacKinnon, Policy Analyst – Team Leader
Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat
153 Willowdale Drive
Cole Harbour
Dartmouth N.S.
B2V 0A5
877 667-4007
www.apcfn.ca

ATLANTIC FIRST NATIONS HOUSING LANDSCAPE



Introduction

On Feb 28 and March 1st, 2017, the Atlantic First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Network (AFNHIN) Housing Working Group and Atlantic Policy Congress (APC) of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat hosted a regional gathering of First Nations housing stakeholders focused on housing reform. The overall purpose of the session was to:

- Identify Atlantic regional perspectives leading to recommendations on First Nations housing reform, and
- Advance regional self-determination over First Nations housing

The insights shared at the gathering are the basis of a strategic regional housing framework. The framework will be used to guide the work of the AFNHIN Regional Committee and other regional partners and stakeholders moving forward, and will help inform an Atlantic regional submission to INAC and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), as a first step in a process to create a national housing strategy.

This report is a summary of information shared at the session, including:

1. Presentation summary of the national and regional First Nations housing landscape.
2. Atlantic First Nations housing issues and challenges shared at the session, as well as strengths and opportunities.
3. A draft planning framework with elements suggested by session participants.
4. Specific year 1 and 2 next steps.

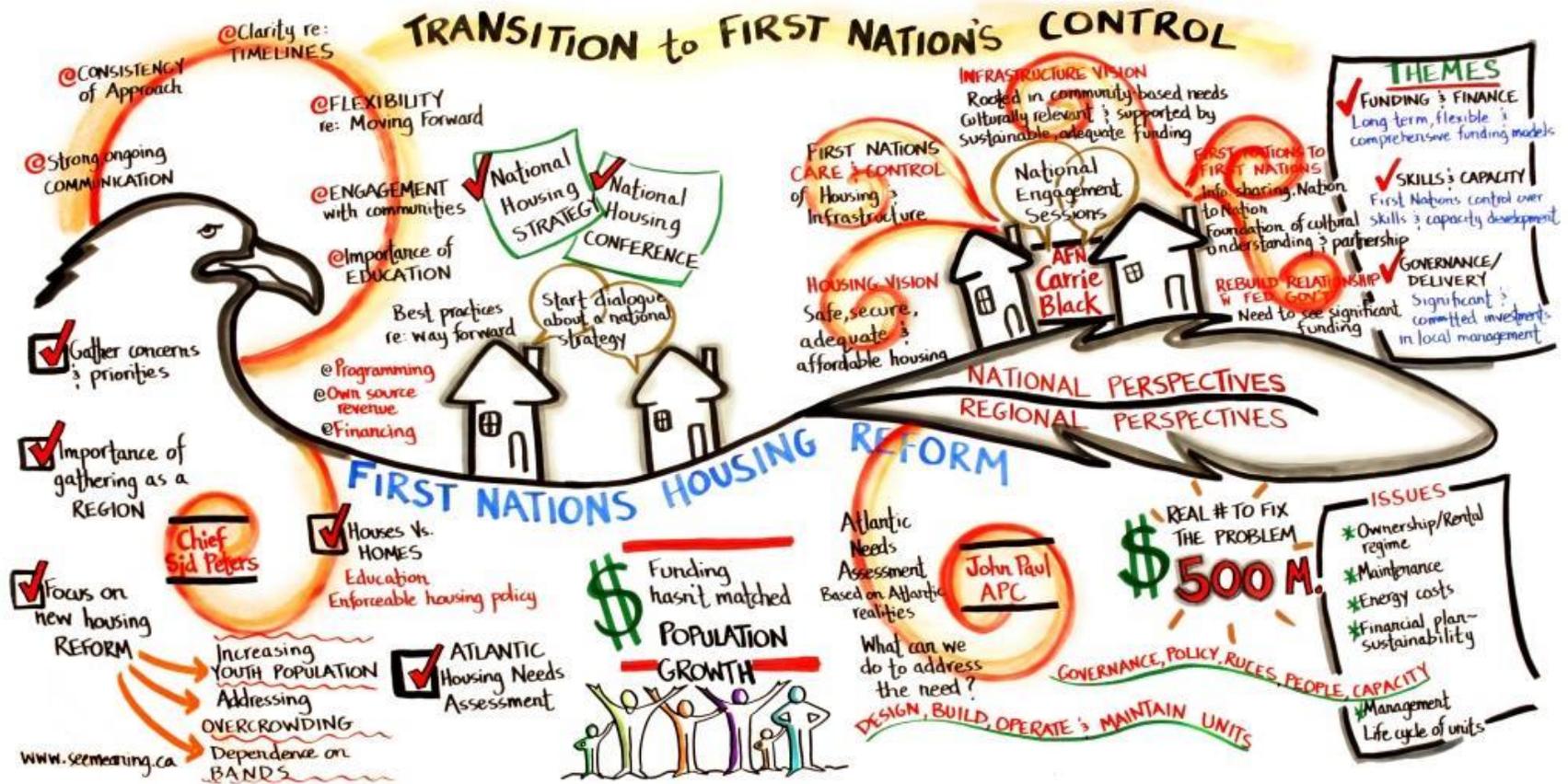
The session agenda is included as Appendix 1. Flipchart notes have been provided as a separate document.

Graphic recordings of session highlights are included within the report.

1. First Nations National and Atlantic Housing Landscape: Presentation Summary

The session began with a sharing of the regional housing landscape by Chief Sidney Peters, Glooscap First Nation, and John Paul, Executive Director, Atlantic Policy Congress (APC) of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat. Kerry Black, Assembly of First Nations, shared national perspectives, including elements of the *National First Nations Housing Strategy*. This strategy is available online at: <http://www.afn.ca/en/policy-areas/housing/key-issues-activities/national-housing-strategy>

Presentation highlights are summarized in the graphic below.



2. First Nations National and Atlantic Housing Landscape: Summary of housing issues and challenges

Participants were asked to identify issues and challenges. This information was themed and is summarized in the table below. Insights and select strengths and opportunities with each challenge area are also included, if shared.

Needs	Strengths and opportunities
<i>More, safe, accessible, healthy and better quality housing, land and infrastructure</i>	
<p>Land and infrastructure needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give us back our lands! - Need more quality lands with space for building and not in flood zones or swamps. - We need to consider future growth of the community and have a lack of space, land is running out. - We need green areas - Lack of infrastructure. Water systems and pipes. Water, roads, septic's need to be working and healthy before we build. - Need a system for land and lot management - We need to create new subdivisions <p>Housing needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to get rid of the housing backlog and repair on all units. Address lack of housing in community. More units. - Repair of heating systems is costly. - Need homes, not houses. Need to build around the family unit and have a range of options to meet community housing needs. - Multi-generational housing. - Must meet family needs versus building 1150 square foot home. - Overcrowding. - More assisted living homes, accommodation for persons with disabilities - Health and safety features such as fire extinguishers, dehumidifiers, filters (no funds for this) 	<p>CMHC student program re: maintenance</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health: need to deal with mould. Poor air circulation, leaks, overcrowding and neglect. - Radon testing needs to be done by community <p>Quality and sustainability of housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of construction is an issue: inadequate funds to build proper homes - Overcrowding contributes to premature deterioration - Need energy star construction to deal with quality control and comfort for members and departments <p>Need data for baseline planning and housing trends research</p> <p>Contractor issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incomplete work - Inappropriate solutions, no experience with our communities - Contractors need to hire band/community members 	
<p><i>Strengthened capacity to address our own housing challenges</i></p>	
<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Under-staffed and underfunded. - Need to hire our own people as staff and contractors - Housing Managers need to be trained, paid appropriately, valued for their work, deliver on expectations and be retained. Housing Manager training program. - Address burnout of managers and staff. Need relief. Succession planning. - Need more staff: inspector, data clerk, project manager <p>Need to develop capacity for long-term planning.</p> <p>Training for carpenters, plumbers, electricians and other housing staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work ethics training 	<p>Many assets already in each community.</p> <p>Communities have their own tradespeople.</p> <p>NS Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) a good partner for tradesperson certification</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ability to retrofit houses - Following a maintenance regime - In small communities, it is hard to keep someone busy. They must move on to other jobs. - Liability issues with staff - Need a long-term trades development plan <p>Empowerment and education for tenants and home owners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Budgeting - How to think of houses as assets and take care of them, maintenance to keep homes healthy, responsibilities and consequences if this is not done - Financial planning tools for members to know how to budget, use funds to maintain their home - Community members need to be educated on how funds are allocated for housing needs. - New tenants: Education manual; Mandatory 1-day training; Move-in inspection, annual inspections; Tenant agreements - Need a counselling component to deal with each family member - Teach values: financial planning vis-à-vis housing, savings. Ownership means improved pride. 	<p>Housing Manager training Program</p> <p>Having our own machinery, tools and supplies</p> <p>CMHC Basic Home Maintenance Workshops</p> <p>National toolkit and curriculum</p> <p>Maintenance schedules</p> <p>Glooscap housing information poster</p>
<p><i>Improved governance over housing, including policies, plans and implementation</i></p>	
<p>Need long-term housing plans for communities. Need to consider future growth. Include housing, land and decision-making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to identify real needs - Comprehensive Community Plans (CCPs) - Chief and Council to set priorities around CCPs - Need protocols and processes to be then developed on these plans. <p>Political interference in housing decisions and enforcement of policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This needs to stop. Remove politics from decision-making 	<p>Communities have housing policies to share</p>

- Need clear policies and consistent enforcement of these with everyone.
- Community members need to be engaged and information and data shared throughout the community.
- Separate decision-making and enforcement. Chief and Council should approve good policies, enforcement happens in departments.
- Include community members in policy development

Need to be more holistic in our approach to housing

- Housing and health are connected. Mental health, diabetes—these linked to housing.
- Work with health, housing and education to case manage issues holistically.
- Housing Managers could communicate better with Social managers to identify early social and financial issues. Are certain housing issues signs of a bigger social issue (broken doors-family violence). Foster housing solutions through improvements in socio-economic conditions.
- Need holistic provision of service and a lens.
- Need to network with other departments: social, health/home care, education (school programs)

Better planning for emergencies and access to resources during emergencies. Funds for clean-up homes after floods, for example. Need to consider extreme weather events.

Data analysis on housing.

- Collect our own data.
- Compile information so we can make informed decisions

Plans and policies for the Housing Department to function

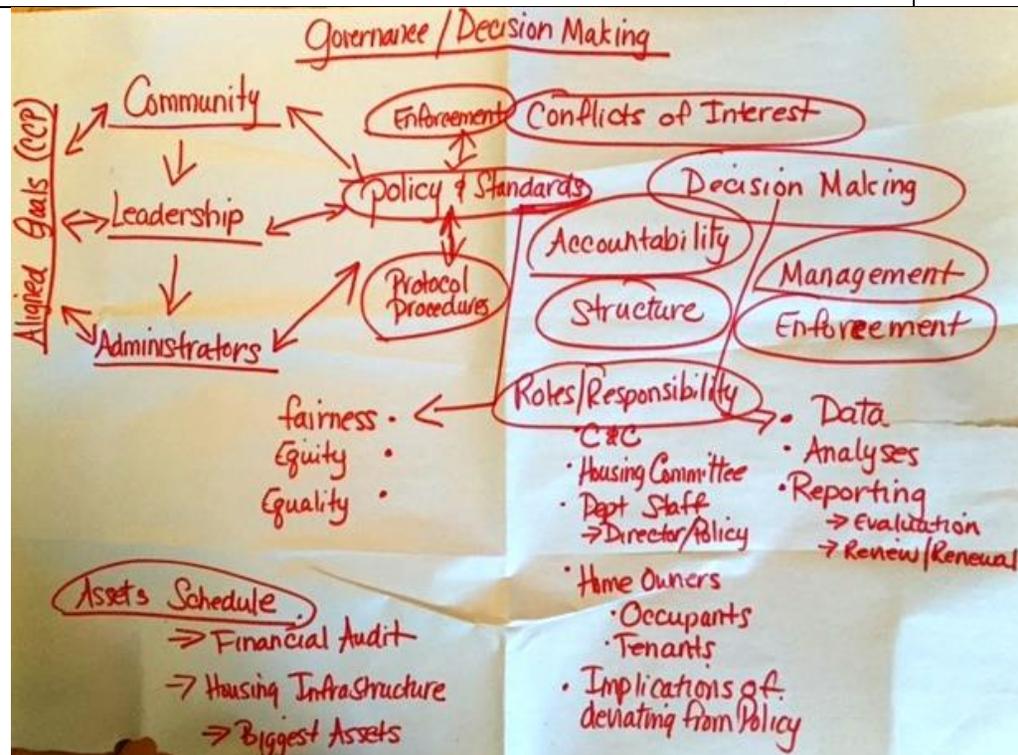
- Need maintenance schedules
- Need housing budgets and long-term housing plans
- Need a system for land and lot management

Many community partners such as training, Ec Dev, Post-Secondary, Social, Health, Gisheries, Cigarettes

Access to funding and finances

<p>Inadequate funding. Communities need the funds to fix and build homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - O&M not meeting new builds in community and not adjusting each year. - Lack of money in the community. Community members often do their own repairs and pay costs. <p>Quality of construction is an issue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inadequate funds to build proper homes - Funds needed to pay for industry-standard construction. Need better quality materials and products <p>Economic leakage, housing and housing-related services.</p> <p>Communities need Own Source Revenue (OSR) for housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need ownership options, not rentals - Proper rent collection—consistency and consequences for not paying. - A range of financing options needed: ownership and rental - Need mix of residential and commercial to help subsidize costs. <p>Need to improve cash flow system</p> <p>First Nations control of the housing construction process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We need to cut out the middle man and get rid of high mark ups we are being charged. - We need to work together for bulk buying. - We need a First Nations housing construction factory in 2 locations - We could work together more <p>Government programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government decision-making puts First Nations people and decision-makers in a tough position daily regarding wants and needs, including care for elders. 	<p>Budgets!</p> <p>We can partner with other communities for bulk buying</p> <p>We have to look outside the community to fill housing voids that we could be taking care of ourselves.</p>
---	--

- Improve INAC application processes. It is flawed. First Nations, not INAC, should make decisions.
- Funding applications are too complex.
- First Nations should set housing priorities, not government.
- Programs and needs have evolved but funding has not.
- Need changes to funding programs
- Need enhanced communication with INAC, CMHC and Health
- Need a First Nations controlled, streamlined process for government funding.
- Health and Social funding also needs to be improved to help with housing needs



2. Overview of Regional Housing Framework Elements

A draft of framework components was developed during the engagement session. These are meant to be a first step in framework development—further refinement is required. Framework elements are described briefly below.

Future vision: The collective dream for a better future.

Purpose statement: What this plan is ultimately trying to achieve.

Targets: Long-term housing targets for Atlantic First Nations.

Goals: Broad, long-term aims that help us define the accomplishments we seek in key theme areas. *What big things do we need to do?*

Objectives: Specific targets that help us measure the accomplishment of a goal. *What, exactly, do we hope to accomplish?*

Strategies: High level approaches to help us reach our objectives. *What can we do together to reach our goals?*

Action opportunities: Specific steps within each strategy area.

a) Atlantic First Nations Housing Vision: What's our dream for the future?

We have prosperous, vibrant First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada.

Control: First Nations are in control of decision-making, planning and collaborative opportunities linked to housing.

Prosperity: Housing is an asset to achieve economic prosperity and employment. First Nations people have businesses and jobs in all areas of housing.

Sustainability: We care for and pay for our housing through a range of housing management and ownership models.

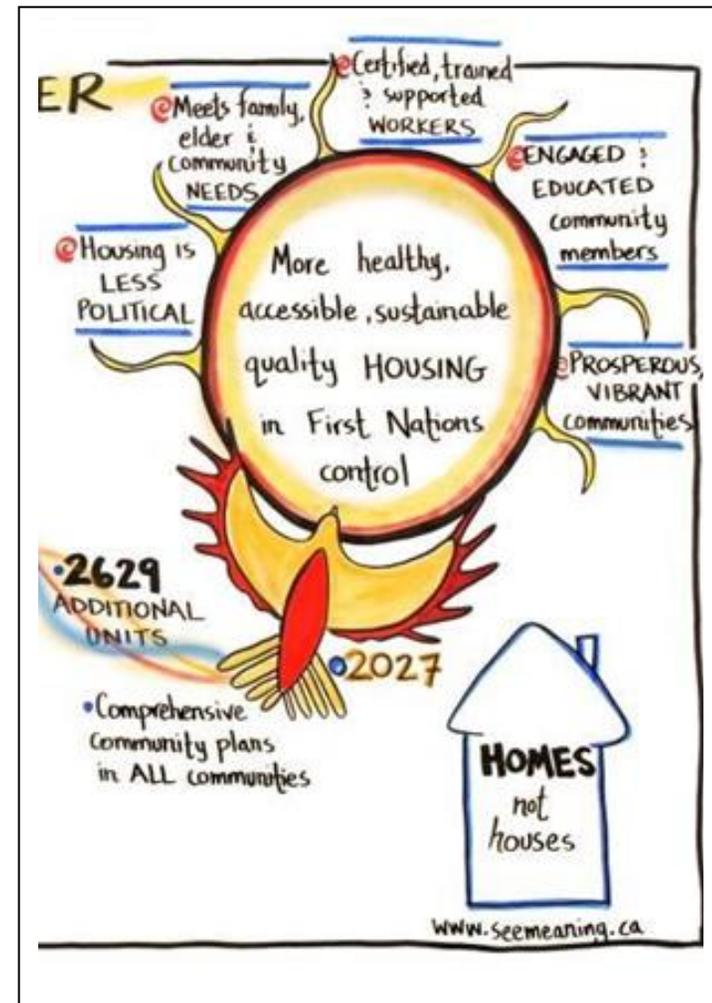
Health: We have homes, not houses. Our homes are comfortable, healthy, and accessible that meet the needs of all our families and residents.

Green: Our homes are energy-efficient, net zero, passive solar houses.

Growth: The housing backlog has been addressed. We have enough houses to meet community needs. Our communities are bustling with a mix of housing and development. Residential housing needs are met and new commercial structures are in place.

Governance: Housing decisions are less political. Housing policies are in place and being followed. Our housing is developed with community involvement and meets elder, family and community needs. We approach housing holistically with Health and Social. Our well-planned communities consider street locations, green areas and infrastructure needs.

Capacity: We have certified, trained and supported workers. Our home owners and tenants are educated, independent and responsible.



b) Atlantic First Nations Housing Framework: Purpose, goals, objectives and strategies

Purpose of our collaborative work

- Sustainable, accessible, healthy, affordable, energy-efficient, safe and high quality homes with adequate infrastructure that meets the needs of First Nations people and First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada.

Regional housing targets

By 2027, we will:

- ✓ Have First Nations control over decision-making and resources for First Nations housing in Atlantic First Nations communities and within the Atlantic region.
- ✓ Have capacity, funding and governance structures in place to address our current housing needs of 2560 units and our anticipated future housing needs of 2560 units.
- ✓ Homes, when constructed, meet family and community needs, offer a range of housing options and contribute to more prosperous, vibrant communities.

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Potential Actions

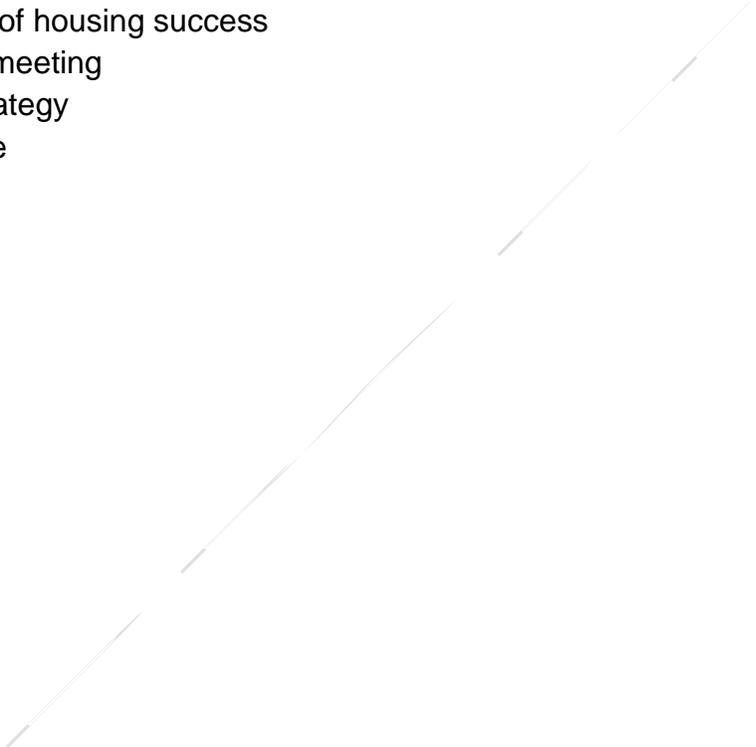
<p>Goal 1: Finances and Funding First Nations communities have access to a comprehensive suite of financing options to meet community housing needs</p>	
<p>Objectives/targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Each First Nations Housing Department is adequately funded. ✓ First Nations community members, through their Housing Departments, have access to financing, including a revolving mortgage fund. ✓ First Nations Housing Departments and First Nations communities collectively, have access to appropriate and effective revenue-generating opportunities, including collective purchase options, First Nations owned pre-fab housing construction enterprise(s), and residential and commercial rental opportunities, among others ✓ Federal government funding for housing is adequate (matches actual needs and assets), flexible, streamlined, easy-to-access, reasonable (match CMHC rates 1.8%) and is First Nations controlled. Funding agreements are multi-year. First Nations communities are able to leverage funding to finance housing ventures. ✓ A First Nations Financial Management Board, Act and Market Housing Fund are in place 	
Strategies and actions	Who leads
1.1 Strengthen the ability of Housing Departments to charge and collect rent and arrears	This goal will be presented at an All Chiefs Meeting where leadership for these strategies and actions will be determined.
1.2 Enable centralize procurement; tendering opportunities available on provincial websites	
1.3 Address need for change in government programs, including (but not limited to) mortgage rates and the ability to leverage funding to finance housing ventures.	
1.4 Develop, share and implement options for First Nations financing and revenue-generation opportunities - APC to create summary sheet showing financing options, including 100% First Nations.	

- Share and facilitation discussion of options for First Nations housing leads.	
Goal 2: Capacity Empower and educate tenants; train, certify and value housing managers and staff	
Objectives/targets By 2027 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Housing managers in all Atlantic First Nations communities are adequately trained and appropriately compensated ✓ Housing staff in all Atlantic First Nations communities are trained, certified, trained and supported ✓ Engaged and educated community members 	
Strategies and actions	Who leads
Capacity strategies and actions will be developed and implemented after APC retrieves the results of the prospective capacity needs survey.	Pending the results of the Capacity needs survey, this goal will be presented at an All Chiefs Meeting where leadership for these strategies and actions will be determined

<p>Goal 3: Governance and Planning Housing decisions are planned, with community involvement. Interventions are considered holistically with other departments. Practices for community, leadership and administrators are fair, equitable and effective due to the consistent enforcement and use of clear policies.</p>	
<p>Objectives/targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ All Atlantic First Nations communities have access to a comprehensive suite of housing policies and are working from a housing budget by 2022 ✓ All interested Atlantic First Nations communities have Comprehensive Community Plans in place by 2027, with 3 to 4 communities each year taking part in the Comprehensive Community Planning process. ✓ In these communities, Chief and Council housing priorities are set based on Comprehensive Community Plans. Community members are actively and regularly engaged regarding housing issues in an ongoing manner. ✓ Community members are actively engaged and empowered regarding housing ✓ Housing Managers collaborate with Social and Health Departments to address housing issues holistically. 	
Strategies and actions	Who leads
<p>3.1 Create and share a comprehensive suite of housing policies and support implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify helpful housing policies available from other Atlantic First Nations communities. Create/obtain additional policies as required. Policies should include HR policies, Conflict of Interest, allocation of houses, finances, Administration, Programs, tenant agreements, inspection protocols, among others. - Share policies and suggestions for implementation and use in multiple ways: events, meetings, in hard copy and online. - Create governance standards. Provide opportunities to build capacity of Chief and Council to adopt and implement policies and guidelines. 	APC leads in partnership with Housing Managers
<p>3.2 Champion the Comprehensive Community Planning process regionally and at the First Nations community level</p>	APC leads regionally, Housing Managers lead in communities

- | | |
|---|--|
| ✓ Clarify, share and promote the need to remove politics from housing. Include a specific strategy to obtain Chief and Council buy-in from across the region. | |
|---|--|

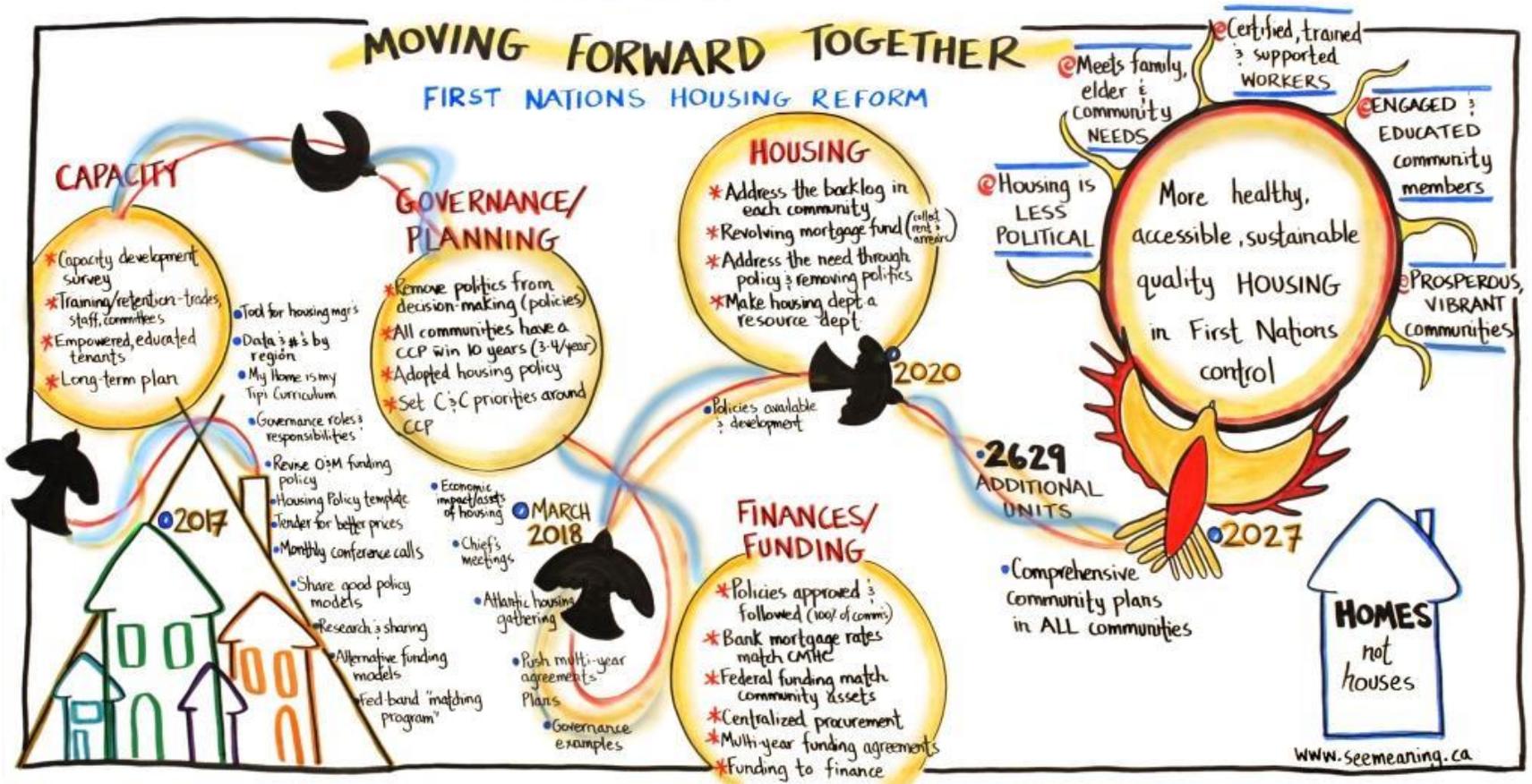
Goal 4: Collaboration, communications and information sharing

- ✓ Host monthly conference calls
 - ✓ Use network meetings
 - ✓ Show and share examples of housing success
 - ✓ Present updates at Chiefs meeting
 - ✓ Strong communications strategy
 - ✓ Updated and useful website
- 

One-Year Timeline Actions

TASKS	Who leads? Who partners?	June '17	Dec '17	Mar '18
<p>Funding and finances Policy changes: Advocate to Prime Minister regarding changes to the CMHC interest rate and to revise the O&M funding policy (national ask).</p> <p><i>Deliverable: Request made, response received and shared</i></p>	<p>APC drafts letter with AFNHIN</p> <p>Chief Morley, Roger and Perry Bellegard sign and send.</p>	✓	✓	
Investigate and share options for tendering process to obtain better prices for bulk purchases	APC with AFNHIN	✓		
Investigate other funding options and opportunities	APC with AFNHIN	✓		
Develop and share tools on the economic impact of housing and value of housing assets that Housing managers can bring to Chief and council				
<p>Push for multi-year funding agreements</p> <p><i>Deliverable: Multi-year agreements are in place</i></p>			✓	✓
<p>Governance and planning Housing policy templates - Identify and compile policies</p> <p>Governance models - Identify and compile good governance examples</p> <p>Prepare and share communication materials, including data and needs numbers by regions.</p>	<p>APC to get this started by asking communities to share. Also seek from other sources.</p>	✓		

<p><i>Deliverable: Policy toolkit developed and shared</i></p>			✓	
<p>Prepare and share communication materials, including data and needs numbers by regions.</p> <p>✓ Share highlights of survey more broadly</p> <p><i>Deliverable: Data shared and materials available for advocacy in an easy-to-use format</i></p>	APC	✓		
<p>Initiate and support 3-4 communities/year in CCP process</p> <p><i>Deliverable: All communities who request CCPs have access to them; completed by 20207</i></p>		✓	✓	✓
<p>Communications and information sharing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Host monthly conference calls ✓ Use network meetings ✓ Show and share examples of housing success ✓ Present updates at Chiefs meeting ✓ Strong communications strategy ✓ Updated and useful website 		✓	✓	✓



Appendix 1: Agenda

DAY 1	
Time	Process
Focus: National and Atlantic regional landscape: <i>Where are we now?</i>	
9:00 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Opening prayer b) Welcome and sharing the purpose/focus of the 2-day session Chief Sid Peters, Glooscap First Nation (15 minutes) c) Introductions: Who's who in the room? Facilitator Review of agenda and objectives, Facilitator Additional questions or comments to feedback cards, Facilitator d) Remarks AFN Regional Chief, Atlantic, Morley Googoo (10 minutes) e) Atlantic Perspectives, John Paul, Atlantic Policy Congress (APC) of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (20 minutes) Discussion and Q/A (10 minutes)
10:30 – 10:45	BREAK
10:45 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Irving LeBlanc, Dir of Housing, AFN National engagement sessions (20 mins) Discussion and Q/A (10 minutes) b) Large group: <i>What national and regional context shared thus far do we most need to keep in mind today?</i> c) Needs assessment highlights, James MacKinnon APC (15 mins plus 10 mins Q/A)
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 – 2:15	<p>Atlantic First Nation community regional landscape: <i>Where are we now?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>Round 1: What are the core issues and challenges related to on-reserve housing in your community? In our region?</i> (30 minutes) Use table templates to catch this info. Make sure to note communities at the table for whom this is accurate (might not represent all). b) Large group share back. Use post-its, cluster by theme
2:15 – 2:30	BREAK
2:30 – 3:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Large group: <i>Anything to add?</i> b) Give each table a cluster and visual of capacity areas. <i>Round 2: What do we have to build on in these areas? What's working for us and why?</i>
3:30 – 4:00	<p><i>Regional perspectives, response: Chief Sid Peters, Glooscap First Nation</i> Close Day 1 and provide a brief overview of day 2: moving forward</p>

DAY 2	
Focus, Moving Forward: <i>Where are we going? How will we get there?</i>	
Time	Process
9:00 – 9:30	Review Day 1 and Preview Day 2 a) <i>Recap of Day 1 and set the stage for Day 2, Atlantic landscape</i> Chief Sid Peters, Glooscap First Nation b) Brief overview of day 2 agenda: Moving Forward, Facilitator
9:30 – 10:30	Vision and goal-setting: <i>Where are we trying to go?</i> a) Table groups: Visioning discussion to table templates <i>Round 3: It's 2027 (10 year timeline?) Our housing reform work has been wildly successful. As you walk around your community and into your workplace, you see these signs of success. What do you see? What are people saying about this in your community? Amongst the leadership? In the region?</i> b) Share back vision highlights by theme area
10:30 – 10:45	BREAK Post potential theme/goal areas from Day 1 and vision statements
10:45 – 12:00	Goal-to- objective walkabout: Need APC at each goal area a) <i>Round 4: Theme/goal activity to develop potential objectives: If we were to make progress in this area, what would success look like by 2027? Specifics for community level and regional level</i> b) Large group discussion: Review potential objectives, by goal area. <i>Anything to add?</i> c) <i>Round 5: What critical conditions need to be in place for us to achieve these objectives? What barriers do we need to address moving forward?</i> d) Share back highlights
12:00 – 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 – 2:15	Strategies: <i>What can we do? What main broad activities can we take on to achieve these objectives? Who leads? Who partners?</i> a) Theme groups by goal area, facilitation/note taking support from APC staff. People can choose any 2 goal areas. Will have worksheets for this b) Large group share back: Group can add additional strategies to each goal at this time c) <i>What other related topics impact housing? Are there actions for us here as well?</i>
2:15 – 2:30	BREAK
2:30 – 3:30	a) Create initiative accountability outline: • <i>What are the immediate next steps moving forward?</i> • <i>When do people hear back? From whom? About what? When is the next engagement?</i>
3:30 – 4:00	a) Closing remarks Chief Sid Peters b) Closing prayer