

## Building an Inclusive Community-Based Housing Strategy

### Our Ask

The Intentional Community Consortium (ICC) is calling on the federal government to fulfill its affordable housing commitments by developing a local and National Housing Strategy that incorporates the needs of people with disabilities and supports the construction of new affordable housing for people with disabilities. This can be achieved by dedicating 5% of any funds flowing through the National Housing Strategy for people with developmental disabilities, and making it a requirement for provincial and municipal housing programs.

In particular, Reena, in cooperation with a consortium (ICC) of fourteen other agencies, is seeking support for the development of 15 affordable housing projects for mixed use across Ontario. Reena is seeking a two-thirds combined federal/provincial/municipal grant of \$66 million over 3 years to implement the initial 5 project, matched by one third of local community funding. We are asking the federal government for \$11 million per year for three years.

### Building Homes for Canada's Most Vulnerable

The current situation is alarming.

- Over 18% of people who are homeless have a developmental disability
- 90% of adults with developmental disabilities live below the poverty line
- Women with developmental disabilities are 65% more likely to experience abuse
- 50% of those with developmental disabilities live with significant medical issues
- A 45 year old with developmental disability has the same frailty index as a typical 65 year old
- **There is currently a 40 year wait list for those seeking Affordable Housing with supports across Ontario, with similar numbers across the Country**

### Our Proposal

- The ICC envisions a community that completely and successfully integrates people with developmental disabilities into all aspects of society.
- There is an urgent need for affordable, accessible and supportive housing that redirects some of the most vulnerable in our community out of basements, hospitals, prisons, shelters and long-term care facilities back into homes of their own.

This can be achieved by dedicating 5% of any funds flowing through the National Housing Strategy for people with developmental disabilities.

### Intentional Community Consortium (ICC)

Together with our partners, we are proposing to build 15 housing projects modeled on our successful work at the Innovative Reena Community Residence that will be able to be scaled out across the country. Each partnership will serve local needs as defined by local disabilities service partners, March of Dimes Canada, and the Local Health Integration Network, and will involve an expanded planning

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process with local municipal leadership, relevant agencies and self-advocates. In each case, Reena will provide the core design and service plan with the lead agencies and work to define additional needs that can be accommodated within the facility.

These projects can be done quickly within three years of funding approval. Each local partnership will secure one-third of funding through private donors and lenders. The ICC is able to commit to implementing five projects and has acquired the lands to do so. We are seeking \$66 million over 3 years from the Federal Government to support and implement these projects.

Reena, as lead agency of the ICC, has decades of experience in developing affordable housing. The consortium has also retained the services of SHS Consulting, in collaboration with Kehilla, to provide technical expertise to support the consortium in the development of these projects. SHS has identified further potential partners interested in participating in the consortium. We look forward to sharing our expertise with our partners to implement the affordable housing strategy, particularly as it relates to supporting persons with disabilities.

## **Federal Government's Commitments**

The ICC's proposal is directly aligned with several of the Federal Government's commitments including developing a national housing strategy, supporting persons with disabilities, and building strong communities.

### **Infrastructure**

The federal mandate letters committed to make significant investments in infrastructure and develop a comprehensive National Housing Strategy, as demonstrated in the following excerpts:

- Develop a 10-year plan to deliver significant new funding to provinces, territories and municipalities.
- Ensure both immediate increased investments in infrastructure and long-term, predictable funding should support provincial, territorial and municipal priorities.
- Focus on [among other items]: social infrastructure, including affordable housing, seniors' facilities, early learning and child care, and cultural and recreational infrastructure.
- Work with the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to create a housing strategy to re-establish the Federal Government's role in supporting affordable housing.
- Work with the Minister of Infrastructure and Communities to develop a strategy to re-establish the Federal Government's role in supporting affordable housing
- Prioritize infrastructure investments in affordable housing... including finding ways to support the municipal construction of new housing units and refurbishment of existing ones.
- Provide communities the money they need for Housing First initiatives that help homeless Canadians find stable housing.

The Federal Government's 2017 budget included \$11.2 billion towards a variety of initiatives to renew Canada's affordable housing sector over the next 11 years including \$5 billion towards a National

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Housing Fund (NHF) “to address critical housing issues and prioritize support for vulnerable citizens, including ... persons with disabilities”. The ICC is in a strong position to help fulfill your affordable housing mandate. As the Federal Government prepares the application process of the new Investing in Canada infrastructure program, it is crucial that the new program provides funding for innovative social housing projects, such as the ICC’s proposal, which would address a serious need to provide housing to Canada’s most vulnerable citizens.

### **National Disabilities Act**

The Liberal Party’s platform committed “to eliminate systemic barriers and deliver equality of opportunity to all Canadians living with disabilities, we will consult with provinces, territories, and other stakeholders to introduce a *National Disabilities Act*.” The 2016 budget allocates \$2 million over two years for the consultation process.

Affordable housing is a major barrier for people with developmental disabilities. In addition to this legislation, a “Housing First” initiative for people with disabilities would represent a key step in eliminating systemic barriers.

## **The Time is Now to Support Affordable Housing**

The supply of affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities remains far less than the need. Being part of the community and living as independently as possible are among the most important values and goals shared by people with disabilities, their families, and advocates. A home of one’s own is the cornerstone of independence for people with disabilities. Reena can deliver on the Government’s commitment to build strong communities and help vulnerable Canadians obtain a home.

### **Barriers to Housing for People with Developmental Disabilities**

Canadians with disabilities, including those with autism, complex physical needs and people with severe intellectual disabilities, are increasingly being forced into environments that may be risky, unsafe or costly.

Housing developers do not find it lucrative to include 3+ bedroom units for affordable rentals and affordable ownership. This impacts people with developmental disabilities living independently, as larger units enable agencies to share and cluster supports for those who need it most, and to provide opportunities for inclusion and skills building.

- For recent affordable housing builds, the affordable rental rates for 3-bedroom units are mostly reserved for families, with less priority given to scenarios such as three people with disabilities who are not related. This impedes the ability to effectively support vulnerable people who are living independently.
- It is financially challenging for agencies to dedicate supports for people with an intellectual disability who require accessible apartments and 24/7 supports.
- Getting in on new builds is critical – by having access to many units of different sizes in the same building, agencies are able to redirect the necessary supports so that people can live more independently with support available in the building.

Rent supplements that are tied to a unit do not allow a person to move and transfer the supplement with them.

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### **Opportunities to Deliver Affordable Housing**

Across Canada, we have a network of charitable and non-profit organizations dedicated to supporting people with developmental disabilities. These agencies work on the ground in their communities and are well positioned to implement solutions.

We are asking Governments to dedicate 5% of the Housing Strategy funds for specialized housing for people with disabilities. We recommend that the funding model continue to be a one-third to two-third matching program, and allow non-profit organizations to find the matching funds through private support.

As part of the Government's social infrastructure fund dedicated to affordable housing, the ICC is requesting \$66 million over 3 years from the Federal and Provincial governments in support for 15 affordable housing projects for mixed use with a guarantee of no less than 20 units for people with developmental disabilities. Several partner communities have expressed early interest in developing these housing projects with Reena, including projects in Vaughan, Markham/Stouffville, Ottawa, Oshawa, Hamilton, Peterborough, Scarborough and Mississauga.

The following is a list of partners as of August 2017:

Organization	Project Status	Location
Anand Vihar – Centre for Dignified Learning	Business Plan being prepared. Project Concept identified; preliminary pro forma budget developed; meetings conducted with City of Markham re obtaining surplus municipal lands for project	Markham, Ontario
Beth Tikvah	Business Plan being prepared. Concept calls for small integrated developments within the community	Hamilton, Ontario
CAFFI – Caledon Area Families for Inclusion	Business Plan being prepared. Concept includes small facility for persons with developmental disabilities in Caledon.	Caledon, Ontario
Camphill Communities	Business Plan prepared – own large site in Angus, Ontario. Co-housing concept plan and unit designs prepared for 20 units for persons with developmental disabilities and housing for support workers. Zoning review underway by municipality.	Essa Township, Ontario

Centre Miriam Home		Montreal, Quebec
Christian Horizons	Very early in discussion stage	Ontario Wide
Community Living Hamilton	Business Plan in preparation. Concept plan calls for new facility for persons with developmental disabilities in Hamilton. Site search currently underway	Hamilton, Ontario
Cribwolf Foundation	Very early in discussion stage	Halton Region, Ontario
Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation	Own site in Oshawa already zoned and serviced – conducting feasibility analysis of potential addition of units for persons with developmental disabilities	Oshawa, Ontario
KW Habilitation	Funding approved – project under construction – 20 unit residence for persons with developmental disabilities	Kitchener – Waterloo Region, Ontario
Mills Community Support	Business Plan completed. Own site in Almonte Community of Mississippi Mills that is zoned and serviced. Have designed 13 unit single storey apartment complex for persons with developmental disabilities and for victims of domestic violence. Awaiting funding approval from Ontario Home for Good Program. Project has been selected by Service Manager (Lanark County) and submitted to Ministry of Housing for funding approval.	Mississippi Mills, Ontario
Peterborough Communication Support Systems	Business Plan underway. Considering several concepts – likely prefer small facility for persons with both developmental disabilities and hearing challenges. Site search underway.	Peterborough, Ontario
Reena	Site in Thornhill secured; program concept drafted for 60 unit apartment building for persons with	Vaughan, Ontario

	developmental disabilities. Currently preparing rezoning application.	
St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church	Site already owned, designated multiple residential in OP. Developing Business Plan for integrated building combining housing for persons with developmental disabilities with affordable housing for seniors and singles.	Scarborough area of Toronto, Ontario
Tamir	Site secured, concept drawings prepared for 35 unit residence for persons with developmental disabilities, \$4+ million in local fundraising, preparing funding submission to City of Ottawa under Action Ottawa Program.	Ottawa, Ontario

### About Reena: A Leader in Community Based Social Services

Reena is a non-profit social service agency dedicated to helping children, adults and senior citizens with developmental disabilities realize their full potential and become fully integrated into mainstream society.

Since its inception in 1973, Reena has been a pioneer in the field, implementing new and creative ways of fostering inclusiveness and ensuring the rights of people with developmental disabilities. Its responsiveness to both the community and government has enabled the agency to grow to serve 1000 individuals and their families, each according to their needs, through a variety of programs – residential services, day programs, family respite and social programs, counselling and advocacy as well as training and professional development for staff and volunteers.

Reena today manages an annual budget of \$40 million dollars, \$42 million in capital assets reflecting 26 locations across the Greater Toronto Area and is a transfer payment agency of the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ontario.

Reena's history of success has made a profound and meaningful impact on the lives of people with developmental disabilities:

- The Toby and Henry Battle Developmental Centre, opened in 1999, provides day and evening programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities. The building provides a wellness and health centre, sports centre, creative arts workshop, computer lab, greenhouse and library.
- The Reena Community Residence, opened in September 2012 in the heart of the Lebovic Jewish Community Campus in Vaughan, provides apartments for 84 adults with developmental, cognitive, physical or mental health needs. The Residence is designed as an

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Intentional Community for individuals with special needs. The Residence received federal and provincial funding, and is an example of a successful partnership between government and Reena.

### **About SHS Consulting**

SHS Consulting is an independent Canadian consulting firm specializing in affordable housing development and housing policy and research. Operating out of offices in Richmond Hill, SHS Consulting maintain a full-time consulting staff of seven individuals with qualifications in planning, project management, finance and economics, public administration, property management, operational reviews, housing policy, market analysis, strategic planning and other related areas. Their clients include federal, provincial and municipal governments; crown corporations; agencies, boards and commissions; community-based non-profit agencies; sector associations and non-profit and private sector housing providers. Our services have been retained by more than forty non-profit housing providers, as well as more than two dozen municipal service managers.

SHS Consulting has a strong record of success in working with non-profit boards to help them pursue various funding opportunities. Their projects have ranged from 3 to 350 units with capital budgets from under \$1 million to over \$50 million. They have managed the development of more than 90 affordable housing projects in all corners of Ontario containing over 5,000 units and totaling over \$1billion in capital costs.

Their team is highly familiar with the requirements of various funding programs, including the current Investment in Affordable Housing Program, as well as the entire development process from feasibility to construction to ongoing management of affordable housing projects. Their involvement in development projects commences at the initial phases of the project and continues until project occupancy and beyond, as required.

SHS Consulting have developed a customized pro-forma and financial viability model which have been used extensively to identify the capital and operating costs associated with affordable housing development, as well as the financial viability of proposed projects. They have an in-house database of comparable capital and operating costs across the province which has enabled them to develop realistic cost estimates throughout all phases of development, from project inception to completion. They have been retained to develop comprehensive municipal housing strategies for over three dozen municipalities in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada and conducted numerous studies on affordable housing issues. For example, they recently completed a study for the City of Toronto reviewing its Affordable Ownership Housing Definition. SHS Consulting was also retained, in collaboration with Decision Economics, to conduct a full review of the Federal Affordable Housing Initiative and is currently leading the review of the Province of Alberta's Affordable Housing Program.

### **For further information, please contact:**

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## Appendix A: Innovative Housing Model

### Reena Community Residence (RCR)

The RCR is a four-storey building with three residential floors, each with 20 units, with a mix of one, two and three-bedroom units, some of which are wheelchair accessible. These 60 apartments are home to 84 adults and seniors with a range of special needs, including developmental, physical and mental health. RCR is a setting for a March of Dimes Canada (MODC) Supportive Housing Independent Living Program called the Vaughan Congregate Care Model.

- Vaughan Congregate Care Model, within RCR

An innovative housing model with two 3-bedrooms and one 1-bedroom unit, providing support for seven medically complex young adults who direct their own care. Units are wheelchair accessible with lowered light switches and kitchen counters, automatic door openers, roll-in showers, wall protection and ceiling tracks with a lift system in each bedroom. This model is funded by the Central Local Health Integration Network (CLHIN).

- Cross Sector Complex Care Model, within RCR

This innovative housing model supports nine individuals with developmental and physical disabilities, funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. RCR provides housing and joint services with March of Dimes Canada for five young adults, living in two 2-bedrooms and one 1-bedroom unit. The apartments are wheelchair accessible with lowered light switches and kitchen counters, automatic door openers, roll-in showers, wall protection and ceiling tracks with a lift system in each bedroom. Community Living York South supports four individuals in another location in Richmond Hill.

The funding for this model was provided by the following income sources in support of the \$16M development and built cost:

- The City of Vaughan and York Region provided – \$1.8 million in the form of reduced development charges and a facilities grant
  - The province, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services, provided capital contribution of \$4.1 million
  - Federal funding was provided in two forms – capital contribution of \$1.6 million and support of a fixed mortgage of \$2.6 million
  - The remaining \$6 million was raised through private donors
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