



*"Our vision is to become a strong, united voice for supplementary support and effective services to all our member First Nation as they create Health, Prosperity, and Good Governance"*

## First Nations Housing Shortages

### MLTC Technical Services

There are five Cree First Nations and four Dene First Nations within the MLTC. As of 2015, the total registered membership of all nine MLFNs was 14,029. There are 8,237 members residing on-reserve within the nine First Nations and 5,792 members residing at locations off-reserve as of 2015. The first languages are Cree and Dene. The member Nations of MLTC are:

1. Birch Narrows Dene Nation
2. Buffalo River Dene Nation
3. Canoe Lake Cree First Nation
4. Clearwater River Dene Nation
5. English River First Nation
6. Flying Dust First Nation
7. Makwa Sahgaiehcan First Nation
8. Ministikwan Lake Cree Nation
9. Waterhen Lake First Nation

All 9 Nations struggle with a variety of social, economic, and environmental challenges. The communities are in North West Saskatchewan, some located in the Far North with challenging access

and significant power, energy and food security issues. Each community is unique, in culture, location, leadership, language, and experience with economic and community development.

Meadow Lake First Nations Chiefs identify housing as a priority issue since the early 80's and housing continues to be an issue. The leaders state that current practises in delivering and managing housing on reserve needs to be addressed.

### **Current Situation**

- Administrative practices still lack a cohesive approach to records keeping, budgets planning and tracking, housing stock data collection and retention, project management procedures, construction management and maintenance plans
  - FN Housing administration is not funded in itself and, salaries and other staff related costs are a factor resulting in understaffing and limited capacity to fully deliver and maintain a strong housing administration in each community
  - Often the project delivery, housing program administration and the political portfolio is, by necessity, undertaken by the same individual leading to lack of dedicated time to learn or, even apply what is known, in operating requirements of the funding agencies and in project management skills to adequately administer the housing program
- Current housing stock is still inadequate
  - Houses are in poor condition and depreciate rapidly due to a combination of reasons such as:
    - poor construction
      - contractor and local labour capacity and work ethic
      - rising cost of lumber and delivery costs to communities
      - building supplier and trades integrity and availability
      - timeliness of inspections along with housing department observance of deficiency reports and enforcement of actions required in follow up from an inspection
    - deferred maintenance due in part to staffing limitations and budget limitations
      - reacting as opposed to planning
      - always playing catch up
      - leads to poor and unhealthy housing conditions and chronic housing shortage
    - funding availability and levels
      - Overcrowding – 7.4 people per unit

- No increases in funding for social housing in the last 30+ years
- First Nations assume financial responsibility for financing and managing maintenance and repairs in order to meet the demand for treaty right to housing
- Population and needs continue to grow at a considerable and unmanageable rate
  - Waitlists are increasing – 2017 housing waitlist for the nine First Nations at 1400 units
  - Will there be an impact from the gender equality legislation (Bill S-3 Corbier/McIvor/desnoes cases increase of the status population in Canada)
- Treaty Right to housing has not been pursued in the courts by any First Nation or by provincial organizations or the AFN (concern for response from a Supreme Court ruling)
  - Burden of providing an unestablished treaty right to housing falls on each First Nation
  - Costs of housing administrative requirements are not funded leading to lack of capacity to deliver and administer programming
  - End result is the housing deficit situation described herein
- Have yet to implement a different approach to housing
- Still posing the question of what viable and potentially sustainable options might be acceptable
  - Proposed housing continuum; a spectrum of social, rental and home ownership approaches
    - Additional funding options
    - Options for housing authority structure

### **In Summary:**

Shortages of Housing in all of the 9 First Nations of Meadow Lake Tribal Council. Overcrowding and ramshackle homes dorm on many reserves.

Many of our First Nations, if not all, are struggling with housing shortages and substandard living conditions and it is only getting worse.

Mold-infested dwellings, housing shortages, inconsistent housing quality, culturally inappropriate homes, a lack of community housing and high construction and maintenance costs worsen the situation.

Housing on reserves falls short by almost any measure when compared to off-reserve.

The homes are in dire need for major repairs. Furthermore, 43% of First Nations houses on reserve need major repairs, compared to 7% of Canadian houses.

Rates of over-crowding on reserves are six times greater than off reserve, and it is uncommon that three (3) generations are living under the same roof; not by choice, but by necessity.

The effects of overcrowding have not only affected just the households itself, but also mental and physical of the people living there, most especially children tend to do poor in school under such living conditions.

The poor housing conditions in which many on-reserves First Nations children live are contributing to many health and social problems. This includes increased prevalence of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, bronchitis and influenza; increased social challenges associated with having less success at school; as well as increased vulnerability to injury or death resulting from an unsafe home environment, such as from fires.

It is estimated that First Nations people are 10 times more likely to die in house fires than Canadians overall

#### **CMHC Loans:**

Loan amount from CMHC was increased to \$215,000.00 per unit last year and will remain at this amount again this year, up from \$195,000.00 the previous years, but total amount the Tribal Council has not changed over the past few years. It is still at \$2.7 million. We had only got an increase of \$200,000.00 from what it was before. \$2.7million works out to about 10 new houses for our 9 First Nations and 14 communities that are part of the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. Between 450 and 1,000 new homes are needed in our First Nations communities. There are many challenges to reaching this goal – including laws pertaining to on-reserve housing, unclear band regulation powers, increasing band debt, and issues such as population growth rates, low income and unemployment. **Also, the cost of lumber has gone up significantly, which has affected the Northern Communities of which MLTC and several other communities are part of.**

**No Shelter allowance** – for non-CMHC housing unit in Saskatchewan. Shelter Allowance needs to be applied nationally (not just in the east).

- \* population growth – 3% per year (new gender equity legislation increased the population numbers and expectation of services from First Nation)
- \* housing stock depreciating at 5% per year
- \* housing allocation unchanged at \$2.7 million for all nine First Nations
- \* housing construction program requires additional \$20 million
- \* **overcrowded units effecting and contributing to mold/moisture, not enough ventilation for number of people living in a housing unit, health and mental health issues, overuse of building**

products such as doors, showers, water closets, kitchen range, sink/water use. Etc. overcrowding was estimated to increase from 5.2 to 7.6 in the following years.

#### MLTC Housing Conditions Sept 2021 Data

First Nation	Adequate	Major Renovations Required	Replacement Required	Total Units
BNDN	89	26	6	121
BRDN	217	32	6	255
CLCFN	244	28	12	284
CLCFN – EAGLE’S	29	6	3	36
CRDN	8	5	1	14
ERFN	157	18	3	178
FDFN	2	1	1	2
MLCN	31	14	4	49
MSFN	202	74	14	290
WLFN	174	52	8	234
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1153</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1463</b>

First Nation	Total Housing Units	Population on-Reserve
Birch Narrow Dene Nation (BNDN)	129	503
Buffalo River Dene Nation (BRDN)	277	825
Canoe Lake Cree First Nation (CLCFN) & Eagles Lake	281	1,018
Clearwater River Dene Nation (CRDN)	191	1,112
English River First Nation (Patuanak/LaPlonge)	223	849
Flying Dust First Nation (FDFN)	201	599
Ministikwan Lake Cree First Nation (MLCFN) & Mudie Lake	224	1,087
Makwa Sahgaiehan First Nation (MSFN)	246	1,307
Waterhen Lake First Nation (WLFN)	224	1,002
<b>Total</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>8302</b>

#### Summary of Past Work related to Housing

- 1993 Mar MLTC Housing Needs Assessment
- 2005 Aug Housing Proposal submitted to INAC (attached)

- Total budget request \$81,670.00
- **Budget Points:**
  - Hire Western Management Consultants (Bob Barret)
  - Field condition reporting (housing assessments)
  - Workshops for 2 MLFN reps each
  - **Steering Committee**
    - Chaired by director of planning
    - Manager tech services
    - Manager finance and admin
    - A/manager programs
    - Coordinator of the management development unit
    - Consultative support
- **Proposal Concepts**
  - Strategic Housing Model
  - Proposed inclusion in the Self Government Negotiations
- 2006                      Housing Included in Self Government Negotiations (attached Sept 6/06)
  - Treaty Right to Housing Discussion paper, Jerome Slavic
    - No legal establishment of treaty right to housing at this time
    - MLFN Housing Policy a separate issue without prejudice to treaty rights. (no legal precedent that collecting rent or taking out mortgages for reserve housing jeopardizes potential future court findings of treaty right to housing)
- 2006                      Rational paper for basis of the Business Plan Model – Bob Barret
  - Model
    - Home ownership