



Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay

P.O. Box 40 Station B • Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, Newfoundland • AOP | E0 • 709-896-3321 • Fax: 709-896-9454

March 17th, 2021

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Hon. Ahmed Hussen, Minister Responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Yvonne Jones, MP for Labrador
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Hon. Seamus O'Regan, MP for St. John's South-Mount Pearl
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

To the Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Hon. Ahmed Hussen, Yvonne Jones, and the Hon. Seamus O'Regan:

On behalf of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, please accept this letter as an expression of concern over the severe lack of affordable housing in the region of Central Labrador and our recently rejected application to the Rapid Housing Initiative.

The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay was encouraged to see the announcement of the Rapid Housing Initiative through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in the fall of 2020 and the investment your government was making in affordable housing across Canada. While we were encouraged by the competition, it was disappointing to see a limit of \$1 billion on spending nationally, and, in particular, the limit placed on funding available to non-urban municipalities. As your government is keenly aware, homelessness is not solely a concern for major cities in this country but is devastating rural and Northern Canada at higher per capita rates, especially communities that are majority Indigenous, like Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

The Town applied to the Rapid Housing Initiative seeking funding for 25 units of affordable one-bedroom housing to serve our population of primarily Indigenous homeless residents. Our application spoke extensively of the great and historic nature of the need in our community, highlighting the gaps and waiting times in the public housing stock, the intense market pressures in our region, and the incredibly high instances of shelter use (1.3% per capita of our population makes use of the homeless



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shelter, significantly higher than some major cities, such as Toronto at 0.29% and Vancouver at 0.32%).

Our application noted how the need in our Town is reflective of the crisis of affordable housing across Labrador, as we act as a catchment area for folks from remote fly-in communities on the North and South coasts. Our neighbours on the coast must travel here for the services they cannot access in their home communities, and many remain in our Town for extended periods without housing. In short, Labrador desperately needs significant investment in housing, and our local and regional governments are simply not able to provide the resources to meet the demand on our own. Increased federal investment would save lives in our Town and across Labrador.

We, the 12th Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay therefore kindly ask that you please consider increasing the amount of funding allocated to the Rapid Housing Initiative in the upcoming Parliamentary budget, and that you kindly re-consider our request as one of upmost urgency.

If you require any further information, please contact Brenna Jarrar at cd@townhvgb.com or via telephone at (709) 899-0392. Thank you again for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Mayor Wally Andersen

Deputy Mayor Bert Pomeroy

Councillor Michelle Baikie

Councillor Shawn Crann

Councillor Jackie Compton-Hobbs

Councillor Lori Dyson-Edmunds

The 12th Council of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay