

# Briefing Note

## For Decision

NOTE ID: BN002-02

March 11, 2024

**MEMO TO:** The Deputy Minister

**FROM:** Experimental AI-Powered Policy Advisor

**SUBJECT:** Considerations for Setting up a National Committee of Experts on the Current Housing Crisis

### 1. OBJECTIVE

To propose a dynamic and multifaceted response to the current housing crisis in Canada, leveraging a National Housing Task Force (NHTF) alongside targeted initiatives.

### 2. SUMMARY

While the information provided offers valuable insights, solely establishing an NCE presents limitations. This proposal advocates for a broader strategy encompassing:

- National Housing Task Force (NHTF): A temporary, multi-disciplinary body focused on rapid analysis and solution development.
- Data-driven Policy Adjustments: Utilizing real-time data to inform policy changes and track progress.
- Regional Housing Observatories: Establishing regional bodies to address specific challenges and opportunities within diverse housing markets.
- Enhanced Public Engagement: Fostering open dialogue and incorporating citizen concerns into policy solutions.

### 3. RATIONALE

- Addressing Urgency: The NHTF provides a faster response mechanism compared to a permanent NCE, delivering actionable recommendations within a defined timeframe.
- Regional Nuances: Regional Housing Observatories cater to the unique dynamics of local housing markets, ensuring solutions address specific needs.
- Public Collaboration: Active public engagement fosters a sense of ownership and builds trust in the implemented solutions

### 4. NATIONAL HOUSING TASK FORCE (NHTF)

- Composition: Housing experts, economists, urban planners, social scientists, community advocates, and a representative from the construction industry.
- Focus Areas:
  - Analyze underlying causes of the crisis (e.g., speculation, foreign ownership, zoning restrictions).
  - Evaluate existing government initiatives and identify potential gaps.
  - Develop a comprehensive set of policy recommendations encompassing:
    - Supply-side measures: Streamlining development approvals, exploring innovative construction methods (e.g., mass timber), and incentivizing rental construction.
    - Demand-side measures: Introducing progressive taxation on vacant properties and implementing measures to curb speculative buying.
    - Financial stability measures: Enhancing support programs for first-time homebuyers and renters facing financial strain.
- Timeline: Deliver a comprehensive report with actionable recommendations within 6 months.

## **5. DATA-DRIVEN POLICY ADJUSTMENTS**

- Establish a centralized data hub collecting real-time information on housing starts, rental vacancy rates, and property ownership trends.
- Utilize this data to:
  - Monitor the effectiveness of existing policies.
  - Identify emerging trends and adjust policies accordingly.
  - Enhance transparency and accountability in policy implementation

## **6. REGIONAL HOUSING OBSERVATORIES**

- Establish regional bodies composed of local stakeholders (e.g., municipal leaders, community organizations, developers).
- Empower these bodies to:
  - Conduct in-depth analysis of regional housing challenges and opportunities.
  - Develop targeted solutions specific to their region's needs (e.g., densification initiatives in urban areas, affordable housing projects in rural communities).
  - Facilitate collaboration between regional stakeholders and the federal government.

## **7. ENHANCED PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

- Utilize online platforms and public forums to gather citizen input and concerns.
- Establish clear communication channels to inform the public about government initiatives and progress made.
- Partner with community organizations to raise awareness and encourage public participation in shaping housing solutions..

## **8. CONCLUSION**

This multifaceted approach acknowledges the urgency and complexity of the housing crisis. The NHTF provides a rapid response mechanism, while Regional Housing Observatories address

regional specificities. Continuous data analysis and public engagement are crucial for effective policy formulation and implementation.

## **9. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Exploring alternative housing models (e.g., co-operative housing, micro-apartments) to cater to diverse needs.
- Investigating the potential impact of immigration policies on housing affordability.
- Addressing the role of the financial sector in the housing market and considering regulations to prevent excessive speculation.

By implementing this comprehensive strategy, Canada can move towards a more sustainable housing system that ensures affordability, accessibility, and long-term stability for all citizens

**Signed:** Experimental AI-Powered Policy Advisor