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**For Information**

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**REPORT TITLE:**      **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Solutions Lab – Region of Peel Participation**

**FROM:**                 Janice Sheehy, Commissioner of Human Services

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**OBJECTIVE**

To provide Regional Council with information regarding the Region of Peel’s participation in the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Solutions Lab.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Solutions Lab funding is one of five funding streams under the National Housing Strategy.
  - The Region of Peel applied for \$207,374 of funding for a Solutions Lab focused on affordable housing options for seniors.
  - In November 2019, the Region was advised our application was approved for a March 2020 start.
  - The Solutions Lab project started in March and will take up to twelve months to complete. Timelines may need to be extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - The lab process will use participatory, ethnographic and human-centered tools and design principles to define, discover and prototype the delivery of new innovative affordable housing options for seniors in urban and rural settings.
  - A variety of stakeholders, senior’s advocacy groups and seniors themselves will participate in the process.
  - The Solutions Lab process supports two 2018-2022 Term of Council Priorities:
    - Transform Housing Service Delivery
    - Enhance Seniors’ Supports and Services
  - Staff will return to Council with the recommended solutions once the lab process is complete.
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**DISCUSSION**

**1. Background**

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Solutions Lab funding is one of five funding streams under the National Housing Strategy. Solutions Lab funding is intended to foster and enhance innovation across the affordable housing sector in Canada.

## Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Solutions Lab – Region of Peel Participation

In July 2019, the Region of Peel applied to CMHC for \$207,374 of Solutions Lab funding. In November 2019, the Region was advised the application was approved for a March 2020 start date.

This report provides Council with information about the Solutions Lab process and the focus of this work.

### 2. Region of Peel's Solutions Lab

In Peel, seniors comprise approximately 12 per cent of the population and are a highly diverse group. Overall, between 2011-2016 the population of people aged 65 years and older increased at a rate of 30 per cent across the Region.

The Region of Peel's Solutions Lab aims to create new innovative housing solutions for seniors and older adults who live in urban and rural settings. The lab supports two Term of Council Priorities for the 2018-2022 term, namely "Transform Housing Service Delivery" and "Enhance Seniors' Supports and Services".

#### a) Design Challenge

As part of the Solutions Lab, a design challenge must be proposed for which focused solutions will be sought. The Region of Peel's Solutions Lab design challenge has been defined as:

*"How might we enable seniors from diverse backgrounds living in urban and rural settings and system stakeholders to participate in a design process that increases the suite of innovative and diverse affordable housing options available to seniors that promote community inclusion and proactive responses to affordability issues?"*

#### b) Process

The Region's Solutions Lab will focus on:

- Enabling seniors living in urban and rural settings and associated system stakeholders to participate in a design process that will lead to a suite of innovative and diverse affordable housing options available to seniors, which will promote community inclusion and proactive responses to affordability issues facing this priority population group;
- Encouraging and supporting the social and economic inclusion of senior-led households, including low-income households, by enabling the emergence of more inclusive, vibrant and productive housing models and options in rural and urban communities; and,
- Promoting the inclusion of seniors by providing local Peel residents experiencing various housing challenges with the opportunity to participate in a large-scale co-design initiative, leading to new solutions for their community.

The Solutions Lab process has five phases:

1. Definition
2. Discovery

## Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Solutions Lab – Region of Peel Participation

3. Development
4. Prototype and Test/Delivery
5. Roadmap

Part of the Solutions Lab project requires the funded applicant to work with a CMHC approved consultant who is skilled and experienced in the Solutions Lab process. The Region of Peel is working with SHS Consulting, who is a well-known and long-standing consultant in the area of housing. SHS Consulting has worked with the Region many times in the past to conduct studies, research, and engagement activities that have informed housing strategies.

The Solutions Lab project began in March 2020 and will take up to twelve months to complete, although the current COVID-19 pandemic may affect the project schedule. The lab process will use participatory, ethnographic and human-centered tools and design principles to define, discover and prototype the delivery of new innovative affordable housing options. By incorporating ethnographic research where participants are observed in their real-life environment, unexpected issues can be more effectively identified and resolved as they arise. In addition to the various stakeholders and community agencies who are active lab partners, several public events will be held throughout the lab process to invite ideas and feedback directly from seniors and other members of the community.

Measurements and outcomes for both Term of Council Priorities will be integrated into this work to ensure it captures the collaborative efforts to create new and diverse affordable housing options for both urban and rural seniors living in our community.

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The \$207,374 of funding approved by CMHC will pay for all costs associated with the Solutions Lab process to run from March 2020 to April 2021, including the costs of working with SHS Consulting Ltd. The 2020 Housing Support budget includes \$141,015 of expenses and revenues associated with this project and the remaining \$66,359 will be incorporated into the 2021 budget with no net impact to the Region.

### CONCLUSION

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Solutions Lab funding is one of five funding streams under the National Housing Strategy. In July 2019, the Region of Peel applied to CMHC for \$207,374 of Solutions Lab funding. In November 2019, the Region was advised our application was approved.

The Region's Solutions Lab supports two Term of Council priorities and aims to create new innovative housing solutions for seniors and older adults. Seniors and system stakeholders will participate throughout the process.

Staff will return to Council with the proposed solutions once the lab process is complete.

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*For further information regarding this report, please contact Aileen Baird, Director, Housing Services, Ext. 1898, [aileen.baird@peelregion.ca](mailto:aileen.baird@peelregion.ca)*

**Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Solutions Lab – Region of Peel Participation**

*Authored By: Laura Tribble, Advisor, Housing Services*

***Reviewed and/or approved in workflow by:***

Department Commissioner, Division Director and Financial Support Unit.

Final approval is by the Chief Administrative Officer.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Polsinelli". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'N' and a long, sweeping underline.

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N. Polsinelli, Interim Chief Administrative Officer