

BRIEFING NOTE HS24-22

For Information or For Approval

Date: May 25, 2022

Purpose: **Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) & Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) – 2022-2023 Investment Plan**

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Director, Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Justin Avery, Manager of Finance

Approved by: Catherine Matheson, Chief Administrative Officer

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Healthy, Sustainable Communities

Maximize Impact Remove Barriers Seamless Access Learn & Grow

RECOMMENDATION:

That the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB) approve the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) & Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) – 2022-2023 Investment Plan for the District of Nipissing and as set out in report HS24-22; and

Furthermore, that the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board authorizes staff to reallocate funds throughout the 2022/23 fiscal year to qualifying projects, up to the CAO delegated authority based on emerging priorities in the district.

BACKGROUND:

- Announced in April 2019, the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) & Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) are joint initiatives between the federal and provincial government for the delivery of affordable and social housing.
- COCHI funding represents a re-investment of federal funding that has been declining under the Canada-Ontario Social Housing Agreement. As such, Service Managers are encouraged to use COCHI funds for:
 - Protecting rent-geared-to-income tenants in non-profit and co-operative housing projects with expiring operating agreements/mortgages;
 - Preserving social housing supply through repairs and renovations; and/or

- Supporting social housing providers that can demonstrate their potential for long-term financial sustainability through transitional operating funding.
- OPHI, in turn, is designed to address local housing priorities through a suite of program components. The following OPHI program components are available to Service Managers:
 - Rental Housing component
 - Homeownership component
 - Ontario Renovates component
 - Rental Assistance component
 - Housing Support Services component
- In a letter received on May 2, 2022 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing confirmed DNSSAB's 2022-2023 fiscal year allocations. The confirmed allocations are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1- 2022-23 Fiscal Year Confirmed Funding Allocations for COCHI and OPHI.

Program	2022-23 Confirmed Allocations
Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)	\$1,367,590
Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)	\$575,400

- The signed amended Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) and Investment Plan are required to be submitted to the Ministry by no later than May 31, 2022.

CURRENT STATUS/STEPS TAKEN TO DATE:

COCHI

Component	Proposed Allocation
Capital Components	
New Build	\$0
Repair	\$749,210
Operating Components	
Rent Supplement	\$170,000
Transitional Operating Funding	\$380,000
Administration Fees	
Administration Fees	\$68,380
TOTAL	\$1,367,590

In the 2022-23 fiscal year, \$380,000 will be allocated to the Transitional Operating Funding component to assist housing providers with expiring operating agreements. This can provide various options to providers including short-term operating subsidy, technical building assessments, building condition audits, and acquisition and merger costs. This commitment conforms to the District's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan by providing additional funding to sustain the social housing portfolio.

Under the Rent Supplement component, \$170,000 will be allocated to subsidize 18 expiring Urban Native housing units as well as continue to subsidize 15 units that have previously

expired. This will ensure that there is no net loss in Urban Native units as required under COCHI while also contributing to Service Level Standards. This commitment aligns with the District’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan by providing rental subsidy programs and maintaining Nipissing’s service level standards in social housing.

DNSSAB also plans to allocate \$749,210 under the Repair component to repair and renovate the social housing supply to preserve and extend the functional lifespan. Funding can be used for a wide range of work including core building systems (e.g. heating/cooling, roofs) and health and safety repairs (e.g. accessibility renovations). This commitment conforms to the District’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan by providing additional funding to sustain the social housing portfolio.

OPHI

Component	Proposed Allocation
Capital Components	
Rental Housing	\$367,860
Homeownership	\$45,000
Ontario Renovates	\$75,000
Operating Components	
Rent Supplement	\$0
Housing Allowance – Direct Delivery	\$30,000
Housing Support Services	\$28,770
Administration Fees	
Administration Fees	\$28,770
TOTAL	\$575,400

The Homeownership Program delivered by the DNSSAB provides down-payment assistance to renters that will assist households in making the transition to homeownership. The allocations for the Homeownership component will be \$45,000 and will assist a minimum of two households. This continued commitment to the Homeownership component conforms to the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan as the plan specifically states the need to increase opportunities for affordable homeownership.

The Nipissing Ontario Renovates component will be allocated \$75,000 to assist a minimum of three households with needed home renovations and repairs. This commitment conforms to the District’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan by providing additional funding to maintain/retrofit homes, and improve senior citizen’s ability to age in place.

Furthermore, \$367,860 will be allocated to the Rental Housing component towards a range of eligible work including new construction, acquisition, rehabilitation of existing residential buildings, and conversion of non-residential buildings to residential. This commitment aligns with the District’s 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan by increasing the supply of affordable rental housing and renewing and/or redeveloping social housing assets.

An allocation of \$30,000 under the Housing Allowance component will allow for the continuation of the program. The allocation will support a minimum of 10 households with up to \$250 per month towards rental costs as they wait for Rent Geared to Income (RGI) assistance on the Centralized Waiting List. This commitment aligns with the District's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan by providing additional funding for rental subsidy programs.

Additionally, the maximum 5% of the 2022-23 OPHI allocation will be allocated to Housing Support Services which assists in providing needed supports to tenants in social housing projects. These commitments align to the District's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan by providing additional funding for community housing workers that are available to provide advocacy and support services to tenants.

Finally, the DNSSAB intends to allocate the maximum of 5% annual under both programs for administration fees. This will ensure that the program components are delivered efficiently and effectively while maintaining program deadlines.

RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MITIGATION:

COCHI and OPHI funding allocations are provided on a 'use it or lose it' basis, therefore, funds that are not committed by the required timelines may be reallocated to other Service Manager areas. The DNSSAB does have the flexibility to move funds to certain other program components to ensure that funds are fully committed.

CONCLUSION:

In summary, the COCHI and OPHI programs represent an opportunity for the DNSSAB to address housing needs as represented in the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. The planned allocations will assist non-profit housing providers with the preservation of units, as well as ensuring a sustainable operating model following the end of their operating agreements. Additionally, this investment plan will serve multiple demands including the need for housing repair and renovations, new affordable housing construction, down-payment assistance, rental assistance and housing support services.