



**The Corporation of the
City of Sault Ste. Marie**

C O U N C I L R E P O R T

June 23, 2025

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council
AUTHOR: Steve Zuppa, Junior Planner
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services
RE: Federal Housing Needs Assessment

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to adopt the newly completed Federal Housing Needs Assessment as the City's official housing needs assessment, replacing the previous City of Sault Ste. Marie Housing Needs Assessment 2023-2025.

Background

On July 31, 2023 Council received the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Housing Needs Assessment 2023-2025 (CHNA). This assessment was completed as part of the City's application to the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), as municipalities with a completed needs assessment received higher scores in the evaluation process. The CHNA also supported the Affordable Housing Task Force and staff in the development of the City's Housing Action Plan.

In October 2024, the federal government introduced a new requirement: all municipalities with a population of 30,000 or more, as well as those that received HAF funding, must complete a standardized Federal Housing Needs Assessment (FHNA) and submit it to Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC). The FHNA submitted by each municipality must conform to the federal template to ensure standardization, data quality, and comparability with other municipalities.

Originally due on March 31, 2025, the deadline was later extended to June 30, 2025. Completion of the HNA is a prerequisite for municipalities to be eligible for federal funding programs, including the Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF).

Analysis

The completed FHNA for Sault Ste. Marie is attached to this report and is also posted on the City's [website](#). This document was also submitted to HICC for review and approval. On June 11, 2025, HICC confirmed that the City of Sault Ste. Marie's FHNA has been completed to their satisfaction and that the City's HNA requirement under all applicable federal infrastructure funding programs is considered met.

In October 2024, City staff asked HICC whether the previously completed CHNA met federal requirements; however, HICC confirmed that the City would have to use the standardized federal template. Although the FHNA template primarily uses 2021 census data to ensure a minimum recency standard, municipalities were encouraged to provide more recent data where available. This is important for Sault Ste. Marie, as more recent population estimate data from Statistics Canada indicates considerable population growth since 2021.

With the inclusion of the post-2021 data, the FHNA's findings are largely consistent with the CHNA; however, the FHNA includes additional information not found in the CHNA, such as data specific to priority populations, more qualitative information gathered through stakeholder and public engagement, and population projections to 2031 (as opposed to 2036 in the CHNA).

Once an FHNA has been completed, it will only need to be updated every five years. While the CHNA was originally scheduled for review in July 2025, the completion of the FNHA makes it more practical to maintain and update a single housing needs assessment going forward.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications related to this report. Having a completed FHNA on the City's website is an eligibility requirement for federal infrastructure funding.

Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact

This item aligns with the "Social Equity: Implement a Housing Action Plan to deliver affordable housing" goal of the Corporate Strategic Plan. The FHNA will be useful for ongoing monitoring and evaluation, helping determine whether housing policies, actions, and priorities remain aligned with community needs, or if adjustments are required. The HNA will be used to track progress over time by benchmarking and evaluating the impact of housing policies and actions specific to the Housing Action Plan, the Housing CIP, and other initiatives.

There is no climate impact.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following action:

Resolved that the report of the Junior Planner dated June 23, 2025 concerning the Federal Housing Needs Assessment be received and that Council adopt the assessment as the City's sole official housing needs assessment.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Zuppa

Junior Planner

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