

Executive Summary

The housing report establishes background on several aspects of housing on Takla Lake First Nation (TLFN)'s main reserves and satellite communities over the last 38 years, to help with future decision making. The purpose of this report is to provide baseline data on housing that will be helpful to the Chief and Council, the Housing Department, and the Housing Committee in long-term housing planning and decision making on-reserve.

- TLFN is a community of 828 people with about 207 people living on-reserve currently and more anticipated, 12 registered people living on other First Nations reserves, and 609 people living off-reserve. The registered population of TLFN has grown over the years. From 2011 to 2019, the registered population of Takla has grown by 17.45% or at a rate of 2.5% annually. While most of the population growth is based on birth and death rate, a significant proportion of the growth is also because of new members transferring in to the band based on their heritage. For instance, in 2018 Annual General Assembly, about 25 members transferred in to the Takla band. With a growing population and an expected increase in members moving back to Takla due to increase in work opportunities, managing housing will become more crucial in the coming years.
- TLFN owns about 87 residential units in the main reserve of Takla Landing. This includes 70 portfolio houses, 5 teacherages, and 12 TLFN-owned CMHC-assisted Section 95 rental houses. The band also has 6 new residential units (New Metric Modular Passive duplexes) and a 6-plex that is in the planning stage. Among the 87 units in Takla Landing, 68 units were built before 1995 and the rest between 1995 and 2018. The community has a mix of housing variety with single-family dwellings being the most common, followed by duplexes and triplexes.
- From 2017 to 2018, the Housing Department of TLFN increased the number of houses occupied from 71 to 81. By 2019, the Housing Department aims to increase the number of occupied houses to 94. All the houses in Takla Landing are band-owned and funded either through ISC and Ministerial loan or through ISC and CMHC subsidy (these houses are also known as TLFN-owned CMHC-assisted Section 95 rental houses). There are no privately built houses on these two reserves.
- Most of the pre-1995 homes in Takla Landing need major renovations. Between 2017 and 2018, TLFN accessed renovation subsidies from ISC, CMHC and supplemented the amount through its own source revenue to carry out major emergency renovations. The band also covers other housing-related expenses such as wages, property insurance, outstanding loans, minor repairs, preventative maintenance among others. About half of the residential units pay a monthly maintenance fee which helps with some of the overhead housing expenses.

The Housing Department is working on implementing maintenance fees on all the houses by next year, or establishing exceptions.

- TLFN is forming a Housing Committee in 2019 to assist with future housing decisions. This committee appointed by the Chief and the Council will support the Housing Department's efforts to administer costs, promote understanding and enforcement of Community Housing Policy (CHP), participate in community consultations regarding CHP and housing issues in the coming years. The committee will also advise the Council and the Housing Department about community housing concerns, apply fair and equitable methods to recommend to Council to allocate housing resources including vacant units and maintenance budgets, and lastly gather housing information to enhance strategic planning for the community. The band aims to promote the prudent stewardship of community housing assets, promote clarity in how housing decisions are made, and to ensure members have access to healthy, safe and adequate shelter for living at Takla Landing.
- Apart from the main reserve of Takla Landing, there are also 50 houses and 4 trailers in other Takla satellite communities. All these houses are privately-owned and built by families themselves using their own funds or sometimes through partial funding provided by the Nation's own source revenues, especially when the housing demonstrates on-going occupation of the traditional territory, which is highly relevant to the Nations rights, title and interests on the land. The houses have been stick-built, that is, built on site and have no plumbing or hydro and are mostly used in summer by families for hunting and fishing. However, there are a few houses where families live year-round.
- There are various short-term and long-term housing options available for the community. The Housing Department is looking into short-term housing options such as categorizing vacant lots in Takla Landing, small senior's houses and construction of a new subdivision. As the Housing Committee begins its work in the next year, some of the long-term options include expanding the main community of Takla Landing, extending housing support to members in the satellite communities, rent to ownership of houses, private ownership of houses and tiny houses for singles and couples. All these options will be assessed in conjunction with the Capital Committee and the Council.
- TLFN is also exploring water treatment options in the satellite communities that have a significant number of houses such as IR# 4 Bear Lake (Fort Connelly), IR# 10 North Takla Lake (Bates Creek/Buckley House), IR# 12 North Takla Lake (Germansen Landing), and IR# 1A Bear Lake (Upper Driftwood River). There are 9 houses in IR #4, 7 houses and a trailer in IR#10 and 6 houses each in IR#12 and IR# 1A. Members live year-round in some of the houses in IR # 10, IR#12 and IR# 1A but have no hydro or plumbing. The Public Works Department identified that a feasibility study is important to assess the water source, help with waste water allocation and treatment of the existing septic tank system at the reserve, and identify

training, along with operation and maintenance requirements of the water utilities. However, as the houses are privately built, funding from ISC to actually construct a water treatment system is not possible at this time. However, in the future, if TLFN decides to construct houses in these communities, ISC funding for water and waste water system would be accessible.

- Bill C-31 did not have a major impact on the community and the housing portfolio as there were only a small number of immediate registrants, unlike some other large First Nation communities. However, the bill created a lot of member assumptions in the community about housing ownership that should be dealt with. TLFN had about 7 Bill C-31 registrants who received Status and membership immediately. The band provided these members with immediate access to regular housing on-reserve and other forms of support in education and healthcare. Because there was an increase in the population on-reserve due to Bill C-31 members, the federal government provided additional housing subsidies to build more houses in reserve communities. However, the houses are still regular band houses and the Bill C-31 members do not own them. Furthermore, the additional housing subsidies were provided for the Bill C-31 registrants but not their descendants.

To summarize and conclude, housing is an important factor in the growth and development of TLFN. As the Nation grows, more members would move back to Takla Landing because of increase in employment opportunities with the Nation, small business development, and industry in the area. This means that the band needs to focus on better housing management and governance.

Critical first steps have been made with Councillor Wilma Abraham focusing on capital construction, including housing, and improving the overall housing situation on-reserve. A key decision was to hire George Richardson, a professional Housing Manager with First Nations experience, and Cody Johnny as the Housing Assistant. Council's approval of the Housing Policy, including the establishment of a Housing Committee, ensure resources to undertake engagement on the next stages of housing development.

Recommendations:

1. Form the Housing Committee, implement the Community Housing Policy, and engage members to tackle housing management and governance issues on-reserve.
2. Develop a comprehensive housing plan for housing on-reserve.
3. Continue construction of new energy-efficient houses on-reserve and renovate old houses for energy efficiency.