

Operationalizing the Federal HNA: Interdepartmental Coordination



AMO Webinar Series: HNA Support for Small Municipalities



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AMO – Interdepartmental Coordination

This document is a step-by-step checklist for integrating Housing Need Assessment (HNA) findings into asset management plans, capital budgets, and planning documents.

How to use this document: Items are marked with a checkbox for tracking.

The 'Notes' column outlines the details of each of the steps included in the checklist, including who should be involved, key considerations for interdepartmental coordination, and actions that can be undertaken as the Housing Needs Assessment is operationalized.

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Why Interdepartmental Coordination Matters

The findings from a HNA can be used across a municipality to align land use policy, zoning, and housing-enabling infrastructure planning to support the delivery of housing that aligns with a municipality's housing goals. Coordinated use of HNA data helps municipalities move beyond siloed decision-making toward smarter growth management and more complete, well-serviced communities.

HNAs provide a shared, evidence-based foundation that can be used by planning, housing, engineering, asset management, and finance departments to establish coordinated priorities. When departments work from the same housing needs data, municipalities are better positioned to align growth assumptions, infrastructure investments, and financial planning.

HNAs also support informed collaboration with upper-tier municipalities and service managers by grounding discussions about infrastructure timing, capacity, and funding in clearly identified housing needs. This interdepartmental and intergovernmental coordination strengthens infrastructure delivery, improves funding advocacy, and helps ensure that housing and infrastructure investments are mutually reinforcing over the long term.

This checklist provides municipalities with a step-by-step approach to integrate findings from the federal Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) template into asset management plans, capital budgets, and planning documents. It is designed to be practical for both small municipalities with limited staff capacity and larger municipalities with specialized departments.

Potential Departmental Roles and Responsibilities

This section focuses on establishing clear internal roles and responsibilities to support the effective use of HNA findings. While HNAs are often led by planning or housing staff, operationalizing their findings requires coordinated input from finance, engineering, asset management, economic development, and senior leadership. Without clear ownership and cross-departmental engagement, HNA findings risk remaining advisory rather than shaping decisions.

Confirming roles early helps ensure that housing needs data is consistently referenced in planning policies, infrastructure decision-making, capital budgeting, and funding advocacy. Establishing these governance foundations creates the conditions for coordinated action in subsequent sections of the checklist.

#	Detail	Status	Notes
1.1	Determine the department and team/staff leading the HNA	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	Determine which department and team/staff member(s) will be responsible for undertaking the HNA and ongoing stewardship of HNA findings.
1.2	Establish an internal working group	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	<p>Establish an inter-departmental working group (such as Planning, Finance, Engineering/Public Works, Asset Management, Economic Development, Social Services, as applicable).</p> <p>Ensure to document decision authority and accountability, and include responsibilities in divisional work plans. In smaller municipalities, a single representative may coordinate across departments.</p>
1.3	Translate HNA outputs into department-specific inputs	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	<p>Determine how departments can utilize the HNA outputs to inform their own service planning. Department specific inputs could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Planning</i>: Incorporate housing targets into Official Plan and land use planning. - <i>Engineering/Public Works</i>: Identify servicing and infrastructure needs tied to projected housing supply needed. - <i>Asset Management</i>: Update growth assumptions, capital and operating costs, and lifecycle planning for assets based on projected housing supply needed. - <i>Finance</i>: Reflect housing-driven infrastructure needs in financial forecasts and debt planning. - <i>Economic Development</i>: Ensuring employment areas and talent attraction objectives are aligned with housing need - <i>Social Services</i>: Align services provided, including homelessness prevention, housing outreach and supportive housing with housing gaps

#	Detail	Status	Notes
1.4	Embed accountability into municipal processes	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	Update departmental mandates and work plans to reference the HNA outputs and how they inform department inputs. Consider requiring relevant staff reports to include a section on alignment with HNA findings.

Points of Connection Between Departments

This section focuses on identifying where HNA findings intersect with the responsibilities of multiple municipal departments. Establishing explicit points of connection helps ensure that housing priorities are reflected consistently across asset management plans, capital budgets, and statutory planning documents. It also supports coordination between planning, engineering, finance, economic development, and social services, as applicable, by clarifying where collaboration is required and where decisions in one area have downstream impacts in another.

This section is particularly important for translating HNA findings from analysis into coordinated action.

#	Detail	Status	Notes
2.1	Integrate HNA findings into <i>Asset Management Plans</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	Align HNA population and household projections with AMP growth assumptions. Distinguish growth-related assets from state-of-good-repair assets. Adjust service levels or expansion triggers where housing demand is high. Integrate growth costs into capital and operating expenditure projections.
2.2	Identify <i>infrastructure capacity gaps</i> affecting housing and validate <i>engineering growth assumptions</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	Adjust Infrastructure Master Plans and servicing strategies to support areas where intensification is most appropriate and needed. Confirm that servicing studies, infrastructure master plans, and capacity models reflect the scale, location, and timing of housing needs

#	Detail	Status	Notes
			<p>identified (not solely market-driven growth forecasts).</p> <p>Flag water, wastewater, stormwater, transportation, or road capacity issues that may delay or prevent delivery of priority housing types or locations.</p> <p>Sequence infrastructure upgrades to support priority housing areas and forms.</p>
2.3	Align HNA findings with <i>Planning documents and approvals</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	<p>Review Official Plans, zoning by-laws, and related policies and plans for consistency with HNA findings and ensure land use designations and zoning permissions reflect housing types needed.</p> <p>Prioritize developments that fill identified housing gaps and align with existing or planned infrastructure capacity.</p> <p>Small municipalities can combine plan updates to reduce staff burden. Larger municipalities can use formal inter-departmental conformity reviews to incorporate findings.</p>
2.4	Link HNA priorities to the <i>Capital Budget</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	<p>Identify and flag capital projects that address priority housing needs.</p> <p>Sequence capital investments based on urgency of housing needs.</p> <p>Use HNA findings to support federal and provincial funding applications.</p>
2.5	Align housing priorities with the <i>Economic Development Strategy</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	<p>Confirm that housing targets and types support employment areas, downtown revitalization objectives, talent attraction, and sector-specific workforce needs.</p>
2.6	Tie housing gaps to <i>service provision</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	<p>Assess implications of housing gaps and needs for services such as homelessness</p>

#	Detail	Status	Notes
			prevention, supportive housing, wrap-around services, and outreach programs.

Working with Your Upper-Tier Municipality or Service Manager

This section of the checklist focuses on strengthening alignment between lower-tier municipalities and upper-tier governments or Service Managers whose responsibilities are closely linked to housing outcomes. While municipalities often control land use planning and local infrastructure, Counties, Regions, DSSABs, and regional utilities frequently play a central role in housing programs, social services, major infrastructure systems, and funding access.

Proactively sharing and coordinating around HNA data helps ensure that housing priorities identified at the local level are reflected in regional housing strategies, infrastructure master plans, and capital programs.

Establishing these connections early improves coordination on infrastructure sequencing, reduces duplication of effort, and strengthens joint funding advocacy. It also helps clarify where responsibilities sit between tiers, particularly for affordable housing, supportive housing, and community services, ensuring that housing delivery is supported by the right mix of planning policy, infrastructure, and services.

#	Detail	Status	Notes
3.1	Clarify roles between municipal tiers	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	Confirm housing and infrastructure responsibilities of the upper-tier or Service Manager. Coordinate with the upper-tier municipality where social, housing, and infrastructure services fall under their responsibility (e.g., transit, water, wastewater, and more). Align local HNA findings with regional housing and infrastructure plans.
3.2	Share data and findings early	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	Share local HNA data, assumptions, findings and gaps with the upper-tier municipality to improve coordination on infrastructure sequencing.

#	Detail	Status	Notes
			<p>Validate that regional forecasts and plans reflect local needs.</p> <p>Smaller municipalities can reach out to upper-tier municipalities for detailed modelling.</p>
3.3	Coordinate capital planning and funding advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete	<p>Align municipal and regional capital project priorities.</p> <p>Use consistent HNA-based narratives in joint funding submissions.</p> <p>Schedule regular coordination meetings to maintain alignment over time.</p>