

# City of St. John's **SENIORS HOUSING RESEARCH PROJECT**



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In association with:



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# Executive Summary

The results of a recent survey and forum in the City of St. John's identified affordable housing as a concern for residents of the City as well as housing that is appropriate for an aging population. As such, this research study aims to better understand the current trends in the local housing market and identify potential approaches to help meet the growing needs of the City's seniors today and in the future.

The data and information presented in this report are based on readily available data from Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), provincial websites, and data and information requests to various municipal, provincial and community agencies. This information has been supplemented by information from consultation activities undertaken as part of the project as well as an environmental scan of literature on best practices in seniors housing models and approaches to developing seniors housing.

## Demographic Profile

The number of seniors aged 60 years and older is increasing and is expected to continue to increase. As of 2011, the number of persons aged 60 years and older in the City of St. John's was 22,185, making up **20.9% of the total population of the City**. Population projections for the St. John's CMA show that seniors 60 years and older currently make up **19.9% of the total population of the CMA** but they are expected to increase and make up **28.0% of the population by 2035**. While some of these seniors currently do not live within the City, many have expressed the intention of moving into the City to be close to services and amenities. As the population continues to age, demand for housing will likely shift from traditional single-detached dwellings to smaller ownership and rental units. It is also likely that there will be an increase in demand for housing options which offer a range of support services.

While Canadian seniors are generally not affluent, they tend to be financially secure and many have assets in terms of investments and equity in an existing home. According to Statistics Canada, the median income of seniors 65 years and older in St. John's was **\$24,540 in 2012** and the median household income of couples 65 years and older was \$56,700 in 2010. The data also shows that seniors in St. John's tended to have lower debt-to-income ratios and higher median net worth values. This suggests that there is a group of seniors with assets, including single family homes, which they can leverage to downsize or to move into a living environment with supports. In spite of this, there are about **1,825 seniors with low incomes** (1.8%) who would likely find themselves facing housing affordability challenges without affordable housing options or financial aid opportunities.

## Housing Supply

The cost of housing in the City of St. John's has been increasing and becoming less affordable to individuals and households with lower incomes. The **median sale price for a single detached home** in the second quarter of 2014 was **\$399,900**; increasing by 17.6% from 2011 to 2014. Similarly, the **average sale price** in the second quarter of 2014 was **\$444,847**; increasing by 22.8% during the same time period. Average rents have also increased. The overall average rent in the City increased by 2.7% from 2013 to 2014 while the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased by 3.0%. The analysis shows that a senior earning the median income and without equity would only be able to afford a bachelor apartment in the City unless they spent more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Similarly, a senior wanting to purchase a single detached home would require an annual income of about \$98,000 if they only had the minimum 10% down payment.

Data for housing starts and building permits shows that while the housing supply is increasing, it is primarily focused on **single detached homes**, which may not be appropriate for an aging population. The proportion of condominiums being built has also increased but stakeholders have noted that the supply of condominiums in the City is starting to reach a saturation point and developers are starting to realize the growing demand for rental housing. This presents an opportunity for the City to facilitate this type of development.

## Development Potential

As of August 2014, there were 42,295 units/lots designated for residential development in the City of St. John's. While these lots represent a significant potential for development, the fact that more than **75%** of these residentially-zoned lots/units are **zoned as single family units** limits the housing options that can be built on these lots and would require a developer to go through a rezoning process if higher density units, which are generally more suitable for seniors, were to be built. Stakeholders have noted that the time and cost involved in rezoning land is increasingly becoming a barrier to residential development. In addition, having the majority of residential land in the City zoned for single family units may be a challenge to meeting the goals of the City's Municipal Plan of increasing densities, providing a range of housing options, and creating complete communities.

In addition to land designated for residential development, stakeholders noted that there are several provincially-owned and City-owned sites that may be appropriate for the development of housing. These surplus or underutilized lands and/or institutional buildings present an opportunity to develop housing, particularly affordable housing.

## Affordable Housing

The City of St. John's Non-Profit Housing Division currently owns or operates **455 affordable housing units** as well as rent-geared-to-income units. These units are available to both seniors and non-senior households and as of May 2013, there were **326 households on the waiting list** for these units. In addition, Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation has a total of **2,583 units** in the City of St. John's as well as 1,020 rent supplement units. Of these, 200 units are designated specifically for seniors although seniors are also eligible for the remaining NL Housing units. As of August 2014, there were **234 applicants on the waiting list** for these units. It should be noted that there is currently no centralized wait list for both the City's and NL Housing's affordable housing units. As such, there may be double-counting in terms of the number of households on both wait lists.

## Senior-Specific Housing

There are **362 seniors' housing spaces** in seniors housing facilities in the City and more than half of these are considered standard spaces<sup>1</sup>. The average rent for these spaces is **\$2,308** and the CMHC Seniors Housing Report for St. John's shows that there are no rents lower than \$1,500.

There are also **1,135 long term/nursing home beds** in the City of St. John's. As of August 2014, there were **101 people waiting for a bed** in one of these facilities. In addition, there were 63 people who had already

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<sup>1</sup> CMHC defines a 'standard space' as one where the resident does not receive high-level care (less than 1.5 hours a day) or is not required to pay an extra amount to receive high-level care.



been placed but who wanted to relocate to another facility. There are also 245<sup>2</sup> personal care home<sup>3</sup> beds in the City. As of August 2014, there were 42 people waiting for a bed and seven who had already been placed but were waiting to be transferred. This shows that while there are a number of senior-specific housing options in the City, these do not meet the current need.

## Housing Affordability

Seniors earning the median income would only be able to afford the average rent for a bachelor apartment in the City. A senior without equity from a previous home would require an income of about \$98,000 to afford the median sale price for a single detached home. A senior who requires both housing and some assistance for activities of daily living would require an income of more than \$85,000 to afford the average rent in seniors housing unless they received a subsidy. This suggests that while there are many seniors who have assets and are able to afford market rate housing, there are also many seniors who would require some financial assistance or affordable housing options.

## Seniors' Housing Preferences

The results of the consultation activities undertaken as part of this study as well as an environmental scan have identified housing preferences of seniors in the City of St. John's. These preferences include the following:

- Seniors want to age at home
- Seniors prefer seniors-only housing
- Seniors want to downsize to a home which will allow them to continue to live independently
- Seniors want to be close to services and amenities
- 'Affordable' is different for different groups of seniors
- Home maintenance is an issue for seniors
- Home modifications are not always possible
- Ideally, seniors want two bedrooms, accessible features and privacy

## Housing Options

The spectrum of housing options is based on cost, design and support service needs and ranges from mainstream housing to long term care accommodation.

### Mainstream Housing

Many seniors will stay in mainstream housing, either in the homes they currently occupy or they will downsize to smaller homes such as condominiums or rental apartments. Some mainstream housing options are seniors-only options or marketed to seniors. These options generally have design features, such as being on one level or having accessibility features, which would attract a senior or older adult clientele. These options are generally market rate housing and are targeted toward seniors who have equity in their current homes and who want to downsize.

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<sup>2</sup> These counts may be included in the counts for seniors housing spaces reported in the CMHC Seniors Housing Report

<sup>3</sup> Personal care homes are privately owned and operated residential homes for seniors and older adults who need assistance with daily living but who do not require on site health or nursing services.

## Independent Living and Active Lifestyle Accommodation

This is a housing option for seniors who require little to no assistance with their daily living needs. This type of housing usually combines accommodation with recreational amenities and can take a number of housing forms, such as single detached homes to units in multi-storey apartment buildings. The tenure options for these units also vary but the most common options are ownership and rental options. The difference between this housing option and mainstream housing is that these are generally seniors-only housing options<sup>4</sup>. There are different forms of independent living or active lifestyle accommodation including the following options.

- Shared home ownership
- Abbeyfield houses
- Life lease housing
- Co-operatives
- Flex-housing

## Assisted Living Accommodation

These are housing options for seniors who require some assistance with activities of daily living (ADL's<sup>5</sup>) but who do not require 24-hour care. The form and degree of care provided in different assisted living arrangements can vary and may include social and recreational activities; meal preparation, housekeeping and laundry; and, personal and health care services (e.g. bathing, grooming, taking medication). In all cases, the accommodation is designed for seniors who require only minimal to moderate care to be able to live independently although 24-hour supervision and emergency response are usually included. Accommodation is usually rental units in an apartment building or a small group residence. Retirement homes/residences and supportive housing are examples of assisted living accommodation.

## Long Term Care Accommodation

Long term care homes are designed for people who can no longer live independently and require 24-hour nursing care and supervision, sometimes within a secure setting, such as for those living with dementia. Long term care homes offer more personal care and support compared to that offered in retirement residences or supportive housing. Accommodation may be shared with more than two residents in a room or a private room. Supportive housing with higher level of supports is one alternative to long term care accommodation.

## Home Care

Home care services are support services provided to seniors living in their own homes, whether these are single family homes or in apartment buildings. This model facilitates aging in place by providing support services that would generally be provided in a supportive housing facility in a senior's own home. In addition to allowing seniors to stay in their own homes longer, this model is a cost-effective alternative to assisted living or even long term care. Research done by the Balance of Care Research Group from the University of Toronto found that there is considerable potential to support seniors who are at risk of

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<sup>4</sup> CMHC (2012). Housing for Older Canadians: The Definitive Guide to the Over-55 Market, Volume 2: Responding to the Market.

<sup>5</sup> ADL's are activities of daily living which are those activities necessary for day-to-day functioning such as cooking, walking, personal grooming and housekeeping. In assisted living models, supports are provided to seniors to be able to maintain these functions.

losing their independence safely and cost-effectively in the community. Estimates for the divert rate based on service-by-service delivery in the home resulted in a 14% overall divert rate or 33% divert rate if assisted living options were also considered. This means that between 14% and 33% of people could be effectively supported at home as opposed to a long term care facility or supportive housing at an equal or lesser cost to the public health care system<sup>6</sup>.

## Policy Framework

A review of relevant Municipal legislation and strategic documents was undertaken to identify potential opportunities and barriers to the development of a range of seniors housing options in the City of St. John's. The documents reviewed were the Envision St. John's Draft Plan (Municipal Plan), Development Regulations, Affordable Housing Business Plan, Seniors Housing Forum Report, and Integrated Community Sustainability Plan. This review found that the policy framework in the City of St. John's is generally supportive of the development of seniors housing options, including affordable housing options.

While the new Draft Envision St. John's Plan does not have specific policies for seniors housing, it encourages and supports the development of age-friendly housing. The draft Plan also encourages and supports the provision of affordable housing. In this regard, the City may want to consider going a step further by defining affordable housing and including the affordable housing targets identified in the City's Housing Business Plan within the draft Municipal Plan. There are also policies that are focused on creating healthy, complete neighbourhoods, including facilitating mixed development, encouraging a range of housing options, and promoting higher density development in and around transit service corridors.

The City's Development Regulations have definitions and policies related to seniors housing but the City may want to consider updating these definitions and broadening zoning provisions to facilitate the development of 'non-traditional' and innovative housing options, including options for seniors.

The City's Affordable Housing Business Plan sets out a target of 500 affordable homes in the next three years (2014-2017) which includes a target to create 100 age-friendly homes which are affordable to households below 65% of the median income. The objectives associated with this target of 100 age-friendly homes include encouraging the creation of affordable housing for seniors in mixed use developments, encouraging innovation in age-friendly home design and construction and supporting community organizations that facilitate home sharing partnerships. The 17 actions identified in the Housing Business Plan include several actions that may be expanded to support the development of seniors housing options.

The various strategic documents reviewed show that the City recognizes that with limited resources and changing demographics, innovative solutions are required to meet the needs of the current and future residents of St. John's. As such, the Development Regulations as well as development processes should reflect this by permitting more innovative developments without the need for lengthy and expensive planning processes.

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<sup>6</sup> Williams, P. And Watkins, J. (2009). The Champlain Balance of Care Project: Final Report.

## Recommendations

### Study Recommendations

The study recommendations are based on the demographic, housing supply and policy framework analyses as well as the examination of seniors housing preferences and housing options, stakeholder consultations and a scan of best practices in the development of seniors housing. These recommendations have been developed to enable the City to play a key role in meeting the identified needs and gaps with regard to seniors housing.

#### POLICY AND REGULATIONS

1. Consider including a definition of affordable housing in the Municipal Plan and identifying affordable housing targets such as those identified in the City's Housing Business Plan
2. Consider updating the definition of seniors housing and broadening zoning provisions to allow innovative, age-friendly housing options throughout the City
3. Consider pre-zoning lands that have been identified as suitable for residential development, particularly surplus lands suitable for multiple-dwelling developments, to reduce the time and cost involved with rezoning
4. Consider alternative development standards for affordable housing developments, including seniors housing projects
5. Explore the feasibility of streamlining planning and building permit approval processes for affordable housing projects, including seniors housing projects

#### PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES AND FUNDING

6. As part of the inventory of land for potential redevelopment for housing that was identified as an action in the Housing Business Plan, identify suitable land or existing, underutilized buildings, such as City-owned or provincially-owned institutional buildings, that may be appropriate for seniors or mixed-age housing and share this information with the development community
7. Consider providing incentives, such as waiving all or a portion of development and building permit fees for developments that increase the supply of affordable rental housing for seniors
8. Consider identifying funding, resources and incentives to support a seniors housing pilot project
9. Consider providing incentives, such as waiving all or a portion of development and building permit fees, for residential developments that go beyond the requirements of the National Building Code with regard to incorporating Universal Design and energy-efficient features

#### COMMUNICATION, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

10. As part of the workshop on innovative housing identified as an action in the Housing Business Plan, include education on innovative housing forms for seniors, including shared ownership and life lease housing options
11. Advocate to the provincial government to identify provincially-owned land that can be used for residential development and to provide this land at minimum cost to private and not-for-profit developers developing affordable housing, including affordable seniors housing
12. As part of an education campaign, increase awareness in the private development sector of the range of housing needs in the City of St. John's and the options that should be considered to help meet these needs by sharing the results of this Seniors Research Project
13. As part of an education campaign, share information on social impact bonds with community agencies and the private sector, including seniors

14. As part of an education campaign, work with the Seniors Resource Centre and other community agencies on initiatives to increase awareness of grants and funding available for home modifications to increase accessibility and energy efficiency and the application process
15. As part of an education campaign, work with the Seniors Resource Centre and other community agencies to increase awareness and develop material on the different home care options available to facilitate aging in place

#### COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

16. Work with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation and other affordable housing providers to establish a centralized waiting list for affordable housing in the City, including a centralized application process for these units
17. Consider partnering with Habitat for Humanity to build affordable ownership housing options specifically for seniors through financial or in-kind contributions
18. Encourage and support community organizations in the development of social enterprises that provide services and supports for seniors by facilitating partnerships and providing information as part of an education campaign
19. Encourage and facilitate partnerships between community organizations and post-secondary institutions to identify opportunities where students and recent graduates can provide support services to seniors as part of their training or requirements for certification
20. Explore the feasibility of working with community agencies and private investors to fund an affordable seniors housing pilot project through the use of social impact bonds

#### **Short List of Housing Options**

There are a number of housing options for seniors that may be more feasible in the short and medium term, particularly when considering a seniors housing pilot project for the City. These housing options are:

- Mainstream rental housing
- Affordable ownership housing for seniors
- Non-profit co-operative rental project
- Affordable supportive housing

#### **Moving a Pilot Forward**

While the four short-listed models would have the most impact in helping to address the current seniors housing needs, based on the work undertaken for this project, the City may want to undertake further assessment of the feasibility of selecting a non-profit rental housing co-operative or affordable supportive housing project as a pilot project.

The project can be developed in partnership with a not-for-profit organization, a private developer, the provincial and/or federal government, and seniors who may be future residents of the project. The next steps for the City would be to identify the scope of the pilot project and define its role, host a workshop or forum to increase awareness of the need for the project, and identify potential partners. The City would also have to undertake a more in-depth study of the financial feasibility of the selected model and to determine what resources, including in-kind and financial, it would be able to allocate to the project.

# 1.0 Introduction

The City of St. John's is the capital and largest city in Newfoundland and Labrador. As of 2011, 20.9% of the total population were aged 60 and older. While the proportion of older adults and seniors in St. John's is smaller than the proportion of seniors in the province as a whole, this population group is increasing and their influence on the local housing market will continue to increase as the population ages.

Housing, particularly affordable housing, is a concern for the City. In addition, research shows that the current housing stock is not appropriate for an aging population. As such, this research study aims to better understand the current trends in the local housing market and identify potential approaches to help meet the growing needs of the City's seniors today and in the future.

## Project Objectives

The objectives for this project are:

1. Create a comprehensive profile of the housing needs of local seniors focused on current and emerging gaps with regard to affordability, accessibility, aging in place and age friendly housing
2. Identify concrete opportunities to create new market niches; employ innovative building techniques; and better utilize existing homes/buildings/land to fill identified needs and gaps, as well as potential resources to develop potential innovative solutions
3. Provide specific recommendations on practical, short term and long term action that the City can take to engage stakeholders in collaborative action on research findings

## Data and Information Sources

The information presented in this report is based on readily available data from Statistics Canada, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), provincial websites, and data and information requests made to various municipal, provincial and community agencies. There is also information from consultation activities undertaken as part of the project. Further, information on housing options is based on an environmental scan of literature on best practices in seniors housing models and approaches to developing seniors housing.

For the purposes of this study, the term 'seniors' refers to individuals 60 years and older. However, in most cases, the term 'seniors' refers to individuals 65 years and older and most data from standard data sources is only readily available for this group. As such and unless otherwise specified, the majority of information presented in this report is for individuals and households 65 years and older.

## 2.0 Demographic Profile

### 2.1 POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

Over the ten year period between 2001 and 2011, the City of St. John's saw a far greater increase in total population (7.0%) than Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole (0.3%).

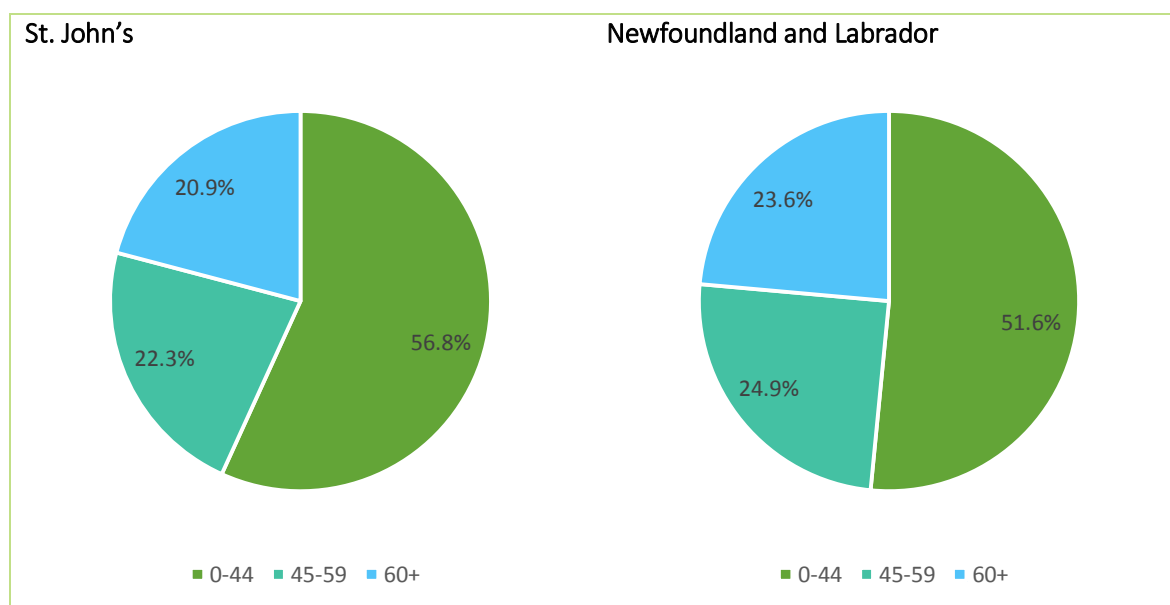
**Table 1:** Population Count; St. John's and Newfoundland and Labrador, 2001, 2006, 2011

	2001	2006	2011	% Change (2001-2011)
St. John's	99,182	100,646	106,172	7.0%
Newfoundland and Labrador	512,930	505,469	514,536	0.3%

Source: Statistics Canada Community Profile 2001, Census Profiles 2006 and 2011

In 2011, the proportion of the city's population aged 60 (20.9%) was slightly lower than that of the province (23.6%). More than one in five residents of St. John's are aged 45 to 59 and will therefore be in their senior years within the next few census periods. The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Finance reported a 12.7% increase in persons aged 60 and over in the St. John's CMA between 2011 and 2014. This suggests that while the proportion of seniors is increasing, there is still a large proportion of older adults who may be interested in downsizing but are not yet ready for a seniors-specific housing option.

**Figure 1:** Population Age Characteristics; St. John's and Newfoundland and Labrador, 2011

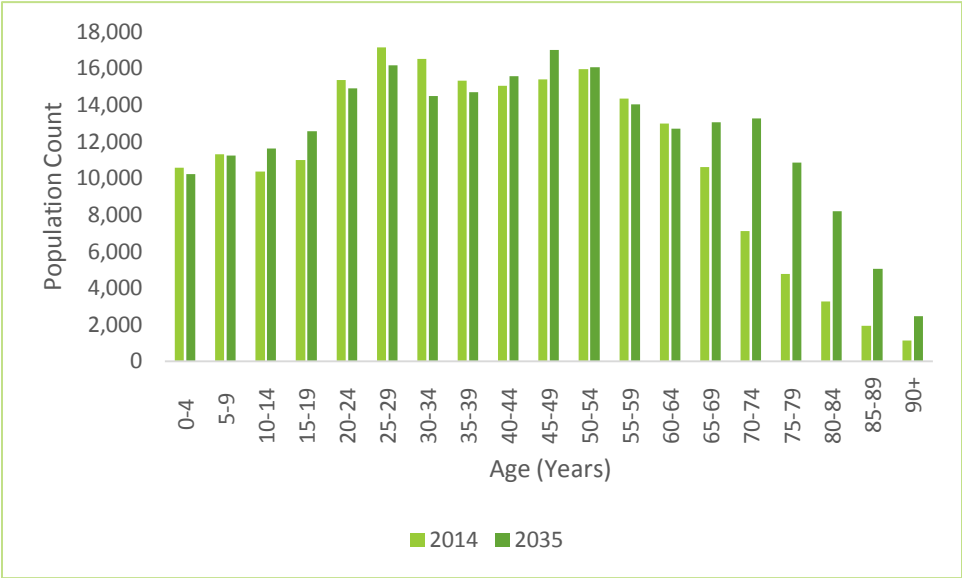


Source: Statistics Canada Census Profile 2011

The Department of Finance publishes population projections by age for the St. John's CMA. This data shows that young and middle-aged adults (between 20 and 39 years of age) will all see a decline in population. In contrast, seniors 60 years and over are expected to increase by 57.1% from 2014 to 2035.

Seniors 60 years and older who are living in the St. John’s CMA currently make up 19.9% of total population of the CMA. By 2035, they are expected to make up 28.0% of the population. These trends will exert growing pressure on the housing market to provide options for an aging population. While these individuals do not all live in the City of St. John’s, stakeholders, including seniors themselves, have stated that many seniors who are currently living outside the City plan to move to the City as they age to be close to services and amenities available in the City of St. John’s.

**Figure 2:** Population Age Characteristics; St. John’s CMA, 2014 and 2035



Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Finance, Economic Research and Analysis Division, 2014, Accessed from: <http://www.economics.gov.nl.ca/POP-projections.asp>

## 2.2 HOUSEHOLD TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

With the growing senior population in St. John’s comes a greater number of households containing seniors. In 2011, 13.6% of households in St. John’s contained at least one person aged 65 or older. These would include senior-led households and seniors living with caregivers. In comparison, 15.1% of Newfoundland and Labrador households contained at least one person aged 65 or older. This suggests that, in general, the household composition in St. John’s is younger than the province as a whole.

**Table 2:** Percentage of Private Households Containing at least one Person Aged 65+; St. John’s and Newfoundland and Labrador, 2011

	% of Households
St. John’s	13.6%
Newfoundland and Labrador	15.1%

Source: Statistics Canada Census Profile 2011



Based on the 2011 Statistics Canada National Household Survey, 18.8%, 11.6%, and 9.1% of households in St. John's contained a household maintainer aged 55 to 64, 65 to 74, and 75 and older, respectively. In Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole, Statistics Canada reported that proportions of households containing a household maintainer aged 55 and over were slightly greater for all three age groups.

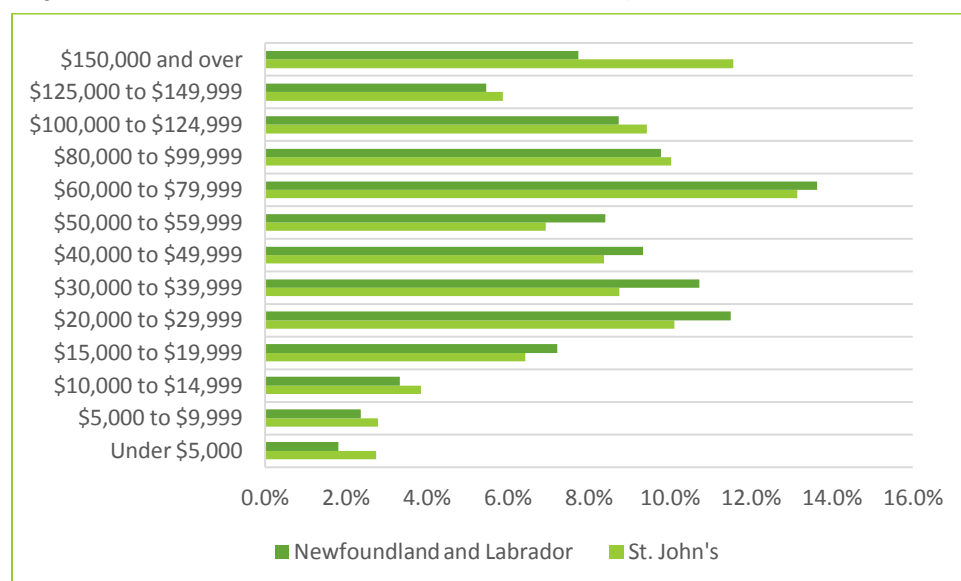
**Table 3:** Percentage of Households Containing a Household Maintainer Aged 55+; St. John's and Newfoundland and Labrador, 2011

	55-64 Years		65-74 Years		75+ Years	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
St. John's	8,470	18.8%	5,245	11.6%	4,115	9.1%
Newfoundland and Labrador	46,300	22.2%	29,335	14.0%	20,290	9.7%

Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011

The following figure illustrates income levels of households in St. John's and in Newfoundland and Labrador. The data show that income inequality is more prominent in St. John's than in the rest of the province, as a greater proportion of households can be found at the low end of the income bracket (earning \$14,000 and less) and at the high end of the income bracket (earning \$80,000 and over). Income inequality tends to have negative effects on the population as a whole since it is one of the most prominent social determinants of overall population health and wellbeing. With regard to housing, this data suggests that there may be a need for both ends of the income continuum. Many of those at the lower ends of the income scale are seniors on fixed incomes whose housing options are severely limited.

**Figure 3:** Gross Household Income by Income Range; St. John's and Newfoundland and Labrador, 2011



Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011

## 2.3 SENIORS' INCOME

According to a Conference Board of Canada study, the country ranks third best globally in terms of poverty among the elderly, with a seniors poverty prevalence of only 6.7%. While Canadian seniors are not often affluent, they tend to be financially secure. In 2006, the median after-tax income of senior couples was \$41,400, which increased by 18% since 1996. Median income for senior individuals was \$20,800.

**Table 4:** Income of Individuals Aged 15 Years and Over; St. John's, 2011

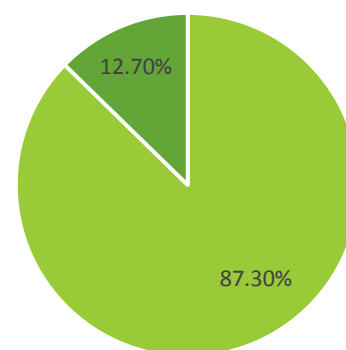
Income Range	#	%
Under \$5,000	6,915	8.0%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	7,385	8.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	8,065	9.4%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	8,160	9.5%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	13,040	15.2%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	10,780	12.5%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	7,990	9.3%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	5,795	6.7%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	8,095	9.4%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	4,560	5.3%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	2,265	2.6%
\$125,000 and over	2,935	3.4%

Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011

In 2011, 87.3% of income earned by St. John's residents came from market income sources such as employment, investment, retirement pensions, and other money income sources. St. John's residents earned 12.7% of their income from government transfer payments, which included Canada/Quebec Pension Plan, Old Age Security pensions, guaranteed income supplements, employment insurance benefits, child benefits, and other government sources.

**Table 5:** Income of Individuals Aged 15 and Over by Source of Income; St. John's, 2011

<b>Market income</b>	<b>87.3%</b>
Employment income	75.4%
<i>Wages and salaries</i>	71.3%
<i>Self-employment income</i>	4.1%
Investment income	2.3%
Retirement pensions, superannuation and annuities	8.3%
Other money income	1.3%
<b>Government transfer payments</b>	<b>12.7%</b>
Canada/Quebec Pension Plan benefits	3.7%
Old Age Security pensions and Guaranteed Income Supplement	2.9%
Employment Insurance benefits	2.3%



■ Market income

Child benefits	1.1%	
Other income from government sources	2.6%	

Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011

## 2.3.1 INDIVIDUAL INCOME BY AGE

The following table highlights population and income growth by age group in St. John's between 2002 and 2012, comparing soon-to-be seniors and those aged 65 and over. Over the ten year period, median income for seniors aged 65 and over increased by 46.1% from \$16,800 to \$24,540, whereas the median income for those aged 55 to 64 increased by 61.3% to \$39,690. While the lower incomes of those aged 65 and older may be partly due to the fact that many retire at age 65, this data still shows that the growth in seniors' incomes is not keeping up with the rest of the population.

**Table 6:** Population and Income Growth by Age; St. John's, 2002 to 2012

Age	Variable	2002	2012	% Change
Ages 55 to 64	Number of Persons	16,230	24,550	51.3%
	Median Income	\$24,600	\$39,690	61.3%
Ages 65 and Over	Number of Persons	18,640	25,870	38.8%
	Median Income	\$16,800	\$24,540	46.1%

Source: Statistics Canada Seniors' Characteristics by Age Group and Source of Income (Table 111-0035) 2012

## 2.3.2 HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE

In Canada, senior households (aged 65+) containing a couple earn only 74.2% of the median national household income. Those containing a lone-parent or a person not in a census family earn only 32.2% of the median national household income. This may leave less disposable income available to meet other demands, including those related to health, once housing costs are paid for. This data is supported by the feedback from consultations where stakeholders noted that after paying for housing costs, whether rent or homeownership costs, many seniors are left with very little income for other necessities.

**Table 7:** Income Earned by Households with one or more Family Members Aged 55 Years or Older; Canada, 2011

	COUPLE FAMILIES		LONE-PARENT FAMILIES AND PERSONS NOT IN CENSUS FAMILIES	
Age of Oldest Household Member	55-64 Years	65+ Years	55-64 Years	65+ Years
Population (# of persons in all households)	1,657,340	1,737,200	1,053,540	1,955,560
Median Household Income	\$89,050	\$56,700	\$32,720	\$24,620
Household Income as a % of Median Household Income for all Canadian Households	116.5%	74.2%	42.8%	32.2%

Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey, 2011; Statistics Canada Seniors' characteristics by family type, age of oldest individual, and source of income (Table 111-0034); 2011

The following table depicts the median net worth and debt-to-asset ratios of families in Canada in 1999 and 2005. Households consisting of seniors aged 65 and older have tended to have lower debt-to-income ratios than all other households, and higher median net worth values than the average for all age groups.

This indicates that while there are a significant number of seniors who require affordable housing, there is also a group of seniors who have assets, including single family homes, which can be used toward market rate housing options that are more appropriate for seniors.

**Table 8:** Net Worth and Debt-to-Asset Ratio of Family Units; Canada, 1999 and 2005

	1999		2005	
	Median (\$)	Debt-to-Asset Ratio	Median (\$)	Debt-to-Asset Ratio
<b>Both sexes, all ages</b>	120,451	0.13	148,350	0.14
<b>Less than 65</b>	97,251	0.16	120,200	0.17
<b>55 to 64</b>	311,509	0.06	407,417	0.07
<b>65 and older</b>	238,060	0.02	303,167	0.02

Source: Statistics Canada Seniors Income, Pensions, and Wealth Tables 2006

### 2.3.3 SENIORS' BENEFITS AND REBATES

There are a number of income and funding sources, both private and public, that are available to seniors. This section provides a brief overview of these income and funding sources.

#### Private Income Sources

Employment and Social Development Canada reported that the Atlantic Provinces and Quebec showed lower proportions of seniors with investment income than the rest of the country. In fact, residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are far less likely to receive income from private investment sources (only 25.3% of seniors) than any other Canadian province (most being in the 50% to 60% range). Seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador are also less likely than many provinces to receive income from private pensions and RRSPs. This suggests that there may be more seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador who will be relying on modest government pension benefits compared to other provinces.

#### Pension Benefits

In 2011, almost all seniors (96.6%) in Canada received Old Age Security (OAS) benefits, and 92.1% of seniors had Canada or Quebec Pension Plan benefits (CPP or QPP). Over the last 35 years, the proportion of seniors with private pensions has increased considerably.

The proportion of seniors receiving OAS varied little among provinces in 2011, with 97.5% of Newfoundland and Labrador residents receiving OAS benefits. The proportions of residents receiving OAS and CPP/QPP were lower in Canada's urban areas than in the rest of the country (95.5% versus 98.1%). According to Employment and Social Development Canada, St. John's is considered one of Canada's 20 "large urban areas". This may suggest that while a larger proportion of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador rely on pension benefits compared to other provinces, a lower proportion of seniors living in St. John's may be relying on government pension benefits compared to the rest of the province.

#### Low Income Seniors' Benefit

The Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Benefit is a refundable tax credit for low income seniors, indexed annually (based on the Consumer Price Index). In October 2014, seniors with a net income of \$28,654 or less were eligible to receive a maximum benefit of \$1,036. To qualify, the person must be

aged 65 years or older. The benefit is paid in October and is based on the family's net income of the previous year.

### Harmonized Sales Tax Credit (HST)

Low income residents in Newfoundland and Labrador can receive an HST refund of \$40 per adult and \$60 per child for taxpayers with net family incomes of \$15,000 or less. The credit is reduced by 5% when net family income exceeds \$15,000. The credit is provided under Section 34 of the Income Tax Act.

### Home Heating Rebate Program

This rebate is available to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador whose adjusted family income in 2012 was \$40,000 or less and have directly incurred costs to heat their home. The household will receive a maximum rebate of \$250, where adjusted family income is \$35,000 or less.

## 2.3.4 PROPORTION OF SENIORS WITH LOW INCOMES

Seniors in the City of St. John's fare well compared to those in the province as a whole, as only 1.8% of seniors in the City are considered "low-income" based on the After-Tax Low-Income Measure, compared to 3.4% of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole. Nevertheless, this does represent close to 2,000 seniors in St. John's.

**Table 9:** Individuals aged 65+ in Low Income based on the After-Tax Low-Income Measure (LIM-AT); St. John's and Newfoundland and Labrador, 2010

	#	%
St. John's	1,825	1.8%
Newfoundland and Labrador	16,975	3.4%

Source: Statistics Canada National Household Survey 2011

## 2.4 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE SUMMARY

The senior and older adult populations are growing in St. John's.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Finance projects that the population aged 60 and older in the St. John's CMA will increase from 41,649 in 2014 to 65,421 by 2035. This would represent an increase of 57.1%. In 2011, 13.6% of St John's households contained at least one person aged 65 or older, compared to 15.1% in Newfoundland and Labrador. In St. John's, 9.1% of households contain a household maintainer aged 75 or older.

As the population ages over the next few decades, demand for housing will likely shift from traditional single-detached dwellings to smaller ownership and rental units. There will also be an increase in demand for housing options that offer a range of support services.

There is a need for a mix of housing options for seniors in St. John's.

The number of households in the lower income brackets in St. John's is increasing. Between 2002 and 2012, the St. John's population aged 65 and older increased by 38.8%, with the group's median individual

income remaining at only \$24,540. This suggests that more seniors require affordable housing options. Research also revealed that seniors in St. John's tended to have lower debt-to-income ratios and higher median net worth values. This indicates that there is a group of seniors with assets, including single family homes, that they can leverage to downsize or to move into a living environment with necessary supports.

### Housing is still a major cost burden for seniors in St. John's.

While more and more households in St. John's move up the socioeconomic ladder, housing remains a major cost burden to seniors. Older adults often need additional disposable income for necessities such as support services and medical needs. Fewer residents of Newfoundland and Labrador receive income from private sources than all other Canadian provinces, and fewer people in St. John's receive CPP and OAS benefits than elsewhere in the province. There still remains about 1,825 low-income seniors in St. John's who would likely find themselves in core housing need without affordable housing options or financial aid opportunities.

## 3.0 Housing Supply

### 3.1 PRIVATE HOUSING MARKET

This section outlines the characteristics of the supply of private (market-rate) housing in St. John's, distinguishing between the ownership market and the rental market, which is often more accessible to lower-income earners.

#### Ownership Market

In addition to having a safe and comfortable place to live, home ownership is the most important non-financial asset for seniors. Approximately 70% of Canadian seniors were homeowners in 2011. However, housing still tends to be the highest expense for seniors, with property tax, maintenance, and fuel costs driving up their monthly dues, even for those with little or no mortgage debt.

CMHC's Housing Now data indicates that the average price of a single-detached unit in St. John's has been increasing significantly. The proportion of homes that sold for less than \$250,000 declined from 5.0% in 2011 to a mere 0.5% in 2014. In fact, the proportion of all units sold at \$349,000 and lower has declined over the last three years overall. On the other hand, the proportion of dwellings sold between \$350,000 and \$399,999 increased from 20.1% to 30.9% and the proportion of dwellings sold at a price of \$400,000 or more increased dramatically from 24.7% to 49.5% in 2014 (year-to-date). This data suggests that homeownership is becoming less affordable for households in St. John's.

**Table 10:** Proportion of Sold Single-Detached Units by Price Range; St. John's, 2011 to 2014

	YTD 2011	YTD 2012	YTD 2013	YTD 2014
<\$250,000	5.0%	2.6%	0.0%	0.5%
\$250,000-\$299,999	17.0%	13.7%	6.5%	2.5%
\$300,000-\$349,999	33.2%	25.3%	26.0%	16.7%
\$350,000-\$399,999	20.1%	21.6%	32.5%	30.9%
\$400,000+	24.7%	36.8%	35.1%	49.5%

Source: CMHC Housing Now, St. John's CMA 2013 and 2014

Median and average sale prices of single-detached units in St. John's have both increased since 2011. The median sale price increased by 17.6%, and the average price by 22.8%, indicating an even greater divergence between the most and least expensive houses occupied by St. John's residents.

**Table 11:** Median and Average Sale Prices of Single-Detached Units; St. John's, 2011 to 2014

	YTD 2011	YTD 2012	YTD 2013	YTD 2014	% Change (2011 to 2014)
Median Price	\$ 340,000	\$ 374,157	\$ 365,000	\$ 399,900	17.6%
Average Price	\$ 362,302	\$ 424,374	\$ 417,955	\$ 444,847	22.8%

Source: CMHC Housing Now, St. John's CMA 2013 and 2014

Housing starts in the St. John's CMA slowed down dramatically, especially in terms of new starts for multiple residential units (a decrease of 12.2% in new housing starts between 2004 and 2013). Overall, housing starts in St. John's CMA decreased by 5.5% between 2004 and 2013. This decline in new

construction has been limiting the supply of housing in the CMA for the past ten years, which could be in part responsible for the hike in prices of dwellings. In addition, the significant decrease in housing starts for multiples (12.2% from 2004-2013) suggests that the range of housing options that are being built in the CMA is still quite limited and focused heavily on single family homes.

**Table 12:** Housing Starts; St. John's CMA, 2004 to 2013

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% Change
<b>Singles</b>	1,275	1,096	985	1,174	1,485	1,385	1,479	1,304	1,292	1,243	-2.5%
<b>Multiples</b>	559	438	290	306	378	318	337	619	861	491	-12.2%
<b>Total</b>	1,834	1,534	1,275	1,480	1,863	1,703	1,816	1,923	2,153	1,734	-5.5%

Source: CMHC Housing Now, St. John's CMA Q1 2013

Similar to the trends seen in housing starts for the CMA, building permit approvals for single family dwellings in the City of St. John's took a sharp decline from 541 in 2009 to 263 in 2013 and the number of permits for year-to-date 2014 suggests this trend will continue. However, building permit approvals for condominiums have generally been on the rise, moving from 59 approvals in 2009 to 259 in 2013 and 181 by mid-2014. In contrast, building permit approvals for apartments have been negligible for the last five years. This data suggests that there are limited housing options for seniors in the current housing market, including the units currently being built. While condominiums may be a viable option for some seniors, they are not appropriate for all seniors, including those who would prefer to rent. A recent American study found that most housing that was built in the United States is not appropriate for either seniors or younger adults. Most of this housing is made up of larger single detached dwellings which are generally less affordable to first-time home buyers and young families. This type of housing is also not appropriate for an aging population as most of these homes are not accessible (for example, with narrower doorways and stairs to multiple levels) and require significant maintenance<sup>7</sup>. This trend is seen in most parts of Canada as well, including the City of St. John's, and further supports the need to build a wider range of housing options to accommodate the changing demographics.

**Table 13:** Building Permit Approvals; City of St. John's, 2009 to 2014

	Single Family Dwellings	Apartments	Semi-Detached Dwellings	Town Houses	Condominiums
<b>2009</b>	541	0	5	55	59
<b>2010</b>	462	0	15	24	23
<b>2011</b>	493	0	9	24	175
<b>2012</b>	457	1	10	18	102
<b>2013</b>	263	0	7	42	259
<b>2014 (to date)</b>	147	0	10	1	181

Source: City of St. John's

<sup>7</sup> Capps, K. (September 2, 2014). Where Are the Baby Boomers Going to Live Out Their Golden Years? Accessed from: <http://www.citylab.com/housing/2014/09/where-are-all-the-baby-boomers-going-to-live/379477/>.



CMHC housing data for the St. John's CMA indicates that more singles and multiple dwellings were completed in 2013 than in almost every year between 2004 and 2013. The increase in housing completions is likely due to economic and population growth. The lower numbers of building permit approvals in recent years will likely cause these completion counts to decline over the next few years. The data also shows that, similar to the data on housing starts, the current housing market is still very focused on single family dwellings. This trend indicates that the housing options for smaller households, including seniors and older adults who would like to downsize, are very limited.

**Table 14:** Housing Completions; St. John's CMA, 2004 to 2013

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	% Change
<b>Singles</b>	1,162	1,172	1,054	997	1,158	1,304	1,458	1,399	1,228	1,377	18.5%
<b>Multiples</b>	501	500	365	294	286	344	300	442	597	572	14.2%
<b>Total</b>	1,663	1,672	1,419	1,291	1,444	1,648	1,758	1,841	1,825	1,949	17.2%

Source: CMHC Housing Now, St. John's CMA Q1 2013

## Rental Market

Rental housing offers a flexible form of tenure, requires less maintenance by the occupant and often provides more modest unit sizes. Additionally, rental housing is generally more affordable than home ownership since homeowners commonly have mortgage payments, utilities, maintenance costs and taxes. While the gap between the cost of home ownership and rental housing narrows when mortgages are paid down, rental housing usually still remains more affordable, particularly since maintenance costs and property taxes are included in the monthly rent.

The rental housing stock in the City of St. John's saw a slight increase between April 2013 and April 2014; increasing by only 1.2% or 43 units. The number of two bedroom units saw the largest increase; increasing by 37 units or 2.1% while bachelors decreased by four units or 1.1%. Stakeholders have noted that developers are becoming more aware of the need for rental housing options in the City, particularly for the growing number of seniors and are shifting their interests from building condominiums to building rental housing. However, there are several barriers to building rental housing in the City. Local developers have noted that City fees associated with developing rental housing as well as the processing times for development-related applications are significant barriers.

For example, the cost of building permit fees for a recently completed 15-unit rental project for seniors was \$8,100. The implementation of changes in building permit fees in late 2013 will result in the cost for building permit fees for a similar building being \$34,000. Similarly, the cost of development fees, including fees to upgrade an existing road, is putting significant pressure on the development of two rental buildings in the City. In addition, the lengthy wait times to process rezoning and development applications increases the costs associated with developing housing in the City. These costs increase the cost of building rental housing making it less feasible for developers and less affordable for tenants as these are then passed on in the form of higher rents.

**Table 15:** Rental Market Universe; St. John's, 2004 to 2013

	Apr-13	Apr-14	# Change	% Change
Bachelor	366	362	-4	-1.1%
1-Bedroom	1,108	1,117	9	0.8%

2-Bedroom	1,723	1,760	37	2.1%
3+ Bedroom	281	282	1	0.4%
Total	3,478	3,521	43	1.2%

Source: CMHC Housing Market Information Portal, Primary Rental Market Statistics 2014

Average rents for all bedroom types in the St. John's CMA have been increasing steadily since 2004. Between 2009 and 2013, all rents showed a slightly accelerated increase, with 2-bedroom units increasing to the price of the average 3-bedroom unit at roughly \$864 monthly. In 2013, average rents for 1-bedroom units were \$739 and rents for bachelor units at \$649 monthly.

**Figure 4:** Trends in Average Rents; St. John's, 2004 to 2013



Source: Data request from CMHC based on Rental Market Reports

Over the 9-year period of 2004 to 2013, rents for bachelor apartments increased by the greatest percentage (43.3%), followed by one-bedroom units (41.8% increase). Rents for all bedroom types increased by at least 39.4%, which increases tenants' monthly expenses by between \$196 and \$246. When the growth in average rents is compared to the growth in seniors' incomes, incomes of seniors 65 years and older have seen a slightly larger increase (46.1%). This suggests that while average rents have increased, median incomes seem to have kept up with this increase. The issue of housing affordability comes for those with incomes less than the median.

**Table 16:** Change in Average Rent between 2004 and 2013; St. John's CMA

	\$	%
3-Bedroom	\$246	39.4%
2-Bedroom	\$246	39.8%
1-Bedroom	\$218	41.8%
Bachelor	\$196	43.3%

Source: Data request from CMHC based on Rental Market Reports

Overall, average rents in the City of St. John's increased by 2.7% between April 2013 and April 2014. Rents for bachelor and 3-or-more-bedroom units both decreased slightly, with 1- and 2-bedroom units seeing greater changes with 3.5% and 3.0% increases, respectively.

**Table 17:** Change in Average Rent; St. John's, April 2013 to April 2014

	Apr-13	Apr-14	% Change
<b>Bachelor</b>	\$620	\$609	-1.8%
<b>1-Bedroom</b>	\$708	\$733	3.5%
<b>2-Bedroom</b>	\$832	\$857	3.0%
<b>3+ Bedroom</b>	\$885	\$879	-0.7%
<b>Total</b>	\$778	\$799	2.7%

Source: CMHC Housing Market Information Portal, Primary Rental Market Statistics 2014

Rental market vacancy rates for all bedroom types increased leading up to 2006 and then began a sharp decline between 2007 and 2008. In harsh economic times, residents of St. John's were likely seeking more affordable housing options. Since 2009, vacancy rates for all bedroom types began a slow increase, with 3-bedroom units now showing the highest vacancy rates, at 6.0%. Vacancy rates for bachelor and one-bedroom units are the lowest, at 3.0% and 2.4%, respectively, which are reflected in their higher relative market rent prices compared to other bedroom types.

**Figure 5:** Rental Market Vacancy Rates; St. John's CMA, 2004 to 2013

Source: Data request from CMHC based on Rental Market Reports

Vacancy rates for rental units in the City of St. John's increased from 1.5% to 4.8% between April 2013 and April 2014. The CMHC Rental Market Report for St. John's notes that while increasing house prices and solid economic activity have continued to support rental demand, this was not enough to keep the vacancy rates from increasing. An increase in the supply of rental housing, including competition from the secondary rental market, has resulted in an increase in vacancy rates for the primary rental market.

**Table 18:** Change in Vacancy Rates; St. John's, April 2013 to April 2014

	Apr-13	Apr-14	Change
<b>Bachelor</b>	1.1%	**	**
<b>1-Bedroom</b>	0.9%	3.8%	+
<b>2-Bedroom</b>	1.6%	5.1%	+
<b>3+ Bedroom</b>	3.6%	**	**
<b>Total</b>	1.5%	4.8%	+

\*\* indicates no data available

Source: CMHC Housing Market Information Portal, Primary Rental Market Statistics 2014

## Market Rate Rental Units for Seniors

St. John's has market-rate seniors' apartment buildings where rents are not subsidized. These dwellings do not generally offer any additional support services or meals to tenants.

**Table 19:** Market Rate Seniors Apartments; St. John's, 2014

Address	Details	Accessibility
<b>Columbus Terrace</b> 13, 15, 17, 19 Crosbie Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All ages</li> <li>- Pets permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Regency Towers</b> 80 The Boulevard		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Pleasantville Apartments</b> Charter Court and Veteran's Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All ages (some units adults only)</li> <li>- No pets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Forbes Street Manor</b> 9 Forbes Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adult only</li> <li>- No smoking</li> <li>- No pets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> <li>- 1-3 bedrooms</li> </ul>
<b>Freshwater Road Apartments</b> 279 Freshwater Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adult only</li> <li>- Mostly students</li> <li>- Some seniors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Grenfell Court</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All ages</li> <li>- Small pets allowed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Rockcliffe Heights</b> 225 Blackmarsh Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No pets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> </ul>
<b>PLeasantview Manor</b> 177 Forest Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No pets</li> <li>- No smoking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Highland Park</b> 251 Anspach Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All ages</li> <li>- Pets permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Rutledge Manor</b> 2 The Boulevard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adults only</li> <li>- No smoking</li> <li>- No pets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Southview Manor</b> 23 Kennedy Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adult only</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Morgan Hollow</b> 211 Blackmarsh Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Adult only</li> <li>- No pets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elevator</li> </ul>
<b>Kelly's Brook Apartments</b> 346 Empire Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No pets</li> <li>- No smoking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Elevator</li> </ul>

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors Resource Centre 2014

## Development Potential

As of August 2014, there were 42,295 units/ lots designated for residential development in the City of St. John's. Of these, 32,544 are zoned for single family units while 8,034 are zoned for multiple-family units and 1,717 are vacant land. While these lots represent significant potential for development in the City, the fact that more than 75% of these residentially-zoned lots/units are zoned as single family units limits the housing options that can be built on these lots and would require a developer to go through a

rezoning process if higher density units that are generally more suitable for seniors were to be built. This may also be a challenge to meeting the goals of the City's Municipal Plan of increasing densities, providing a range of housing options, and creating complete communities. In addition, consultations with various stakeholders, including local home builders in St. John's, indicates that the time and cost involved in rezoning land or developing non-traditional housing forms is increasingly becoming a barrier to residential development, including housing for seniors.

Stakeholders have also noted that there are several provincially-owned and City-owned sites that may be appropriate for the development of housing, particularly affordable housing for seniors. These surplus or underutilized land and/or institutional buildings present an opportunity to develop housing, particularly affordable housing.

## 3.2 SECONDARY RENTAL MARKET

In addition to the rental units in the primary rental market, there are rental housing options available in the secondary rental market. The secondary rental market includes rented single detached, semi-detached, townhouses, duplex apartment (i.e. one above the other), and accessory apartments (separate dwellings that are located within the structure of another, primary, dwelling).

In the St. John's CMA the majority of the 15,464 (as of 2013) secondary rental market units (up from 15,376 units in 2012) are semi-detached, row, and duplex dwellings. There are also 1,581 single detached homes for rent.

**Table 20:** Supply of Secondary Units; St. John's, 2012 and 2013

	Oct-12	Oct-13
Single-detached	1,444	1,581
Semi-detached, row and duplex	7,595	7,994
Other primarily accessory suites	**	**
Total	15,376	15,464

Source: CMHC Rental Market Report: St. John's CMA, Fall 2013

Based on CMHC rental market data, average rents for the secondary rental market are generally more affordable compared to rents in the primary rental market. In the St. John's CMA, the overall average rent in the secondary rental market in 2013 was \$734 compared to the overall average rent of \$804 in the primary rental market for the same time period. The average rent for the secondary rental market ranged from \$1,090 for a rented single detached home to \$665 for other – primary accessory suites.

Secondary suites, called subsidiary apartments in the City of St. John's, are another housing option for seniors. These provide opportunities for seniors to remain in their own home while supplementing their income with rent from the subsidiary apartment. It is also an option for a senior with a live-in caregiver or a family who would like to have their senior relative live with them. On the other hand, most stakeholders who were consulted did not like the idea of living in a secondary suite/ subsidiary apartment, even if this meant living with family. They generally preferred having their own separate housing unit which is within walking distance to family and friends.

Building permit approvals for single-family dwellings with secondary or subsidiary apartments increased significantly between 2009 (95 approvals) and 2010 (136 approvals). Approvals remained in the range of 136 to 184 approvals, until 2014. This year, there have only been 77 approved secondary or subsidiary units to date.

**Table 21:** Building Permit Approvals for Single Family Dwellings with Secondary or Subsidiary Apartments; St. John's, 2009 to 2014

	Building Permit Approvals
2009	95
2010	136
2011	149
2012	184
2013	142
2014 (to date)	77

Source: City of St. John's

### 3.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

#### City of St. John's Non-Profit Housing Portfolio

The City of St. John's Non-Profit Housing Division currently owns or operates 455 affordable housing units in the City. These rental units include Lower End of Market Housing (LEMS) units where tenants pay the lower end of market rent as determined annually by Newfoundland Labrador Housing. Utility costs in these units are the responsibility of the tenant.

There are also Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) units which are targeted specifically for individuals and families with low incomes. Rents in these units are based on 25% of the household's net monthly income. Heat is included in the rent and there is a small surcharge for lights.

Most of these units are available to both seniors and non-senior households. There are a total of 12 units that are wheelchair accessible, three of which are in one-bedroom units. As of May 2013, there were 326 households on the waiting list for these units, including senior applicants.

**Table 22:** Rent -Geared-to-Income Seniors Apartment Units Subsidized by City of St. John's Non-Profit Housing; St. John's, 2014

Address	Details	Accessibility
174 Campbell Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seniors and persons in wheelchair only</li> <li>No smoking</li> <li>No pets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevator</li> <li>Wheelchair accessible</li> </ul>
1-15 Bastow Court 1-11 Mifflin Court		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No elevator</li> </ul>
New Pleasantville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24 units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevator</li> </ul>

<b>Apartment Building</b> 77 Charter Avenue	– No smoking – No pets	– Some accessible units
<b>Cochrane Manor</b> 47 Cochrane Street	–	– Elevator – 3 accessible units

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors Resource Centre 2014

## Newfoundland Labrador Housing Portfolio

Newfoundland Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) has a total of 2,583 units in the City of St. John's that they own and an additional 1,020 rent supplement units. These totals include seniors and non-senior units. Of these units, 200 are designated seniors-only units although seniors are also eligible for the remaining NL Housing units. As of August 7, 2014, there were 234 applicants on the waiting list for NL Housing units, including senior households. It should be noted that there is currently no centralized wait list for both the City's and NL Housing's affordable housing units. As such, there may be double-counting in terms of the number of households on both wait lists. The rent supplement units also benefit seniors but different landlords have different definitions for 'senior', with some landlords accepting individuals 50 and over while others accept 65 and older. Estimates put the number of rent supplement units for individuals aged 50 and over at about 550 units.

The senior-appropriate apartments listed in the table below have a select group of units which are subsidized through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC).

**Table 23:** Seniors Apartments containing limited Affordable Units in St. John's, 2014

<b>Barachois Grove Apartments</b> 10 Pasadena Crescent	– No pets	– Elevator
<b>Caribou Legion Manor</b> 570 Roosevelt Avenue	– Must be 55+ – No pets	– Elevator
<b>Kenny's Park Apartments</b> 35 Tiffany Lane	– No pets	– Elevator
<b>Keane Place Apartments</b> 50 Keane Place	– Cats permitted	– Elevator
<b>Kelly's Brook Apartments</b> 346 Empire Avenue	– No smoking – No pets	– Elevator
<b>Torbay Road Apartments</b> 40 St. Laurent Street	– One seniors only building – No pets	
<b>Maplewood Place</b> 75 Shaw Street	– Must be 60+ – No smoking – No pets – \$50 deposit for the waitlist	– Elevator
<b>Parkview Manor</b> 61 Brookfield Road	– No smoking – No pets	– No elevator
<b>St. Clare Manor</b> 66 St. Clare Avenue	– No pets	– Elevator
<b>St. George's Court</b> 2 St. George's Court (Field St.)	– No dogs	– No elevator

<b>The Bristol</b> 12 Blackmarsh Road	– No dogs	– No elevator
<b>New Pleasantville Apartment Building</b> 77 Charter Avenue	– No smoking – No pets – 12 units	

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors Resource Centre 2014

St. John's is home to seven seniors apartment buildings in which every unit is subsidized by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation. Prospective tenants must apply for these units through the NLHC and must show proof of need.

**Table 24:** Seniors Apartment Units Subsidized by NLHC; St. John's, 2014

Address	Accessibility
<b>Beothuck Manor</b> 15 Beothuck Street	– No elevator – 6/8 units on ground floor
<b>Cochrane Manor</b> 47 Cochrane Street	– Elevator – 3 fully accessible units
<b>Ricketts Manor</b> 58 Campbell Avenue	– No elevator – Lower floor apartments are all on one level
<b>Victoria Manor</b> 61 Alexander Street	– Elevator – 3 fully accessible units
<b>New Pennywell Manor</b> 5 Beothuck Street	– No elevator – Lower floor apartments are all on one level
<b>Thomas Estates</b> 32 Brookfield Road	– Elevator
<b>Wigmore Manor</b> Building 11, Wigmore Court	– Elevator

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors Resource Centre 2014

The NLHC also provides seniors with the option to apply for rent-geared-to-income units in one of nine apartment buildings in St. John's. Residents in these units pay rent to the landlord based on their level of household income.

**Table 25:** Rent-Geared-to-Income Seniors Apartment Units Subsidized by NLHC; St. John's, 2014

Address	Details	Accessibility
<b>Bishop Meaden Manor</b> 29-61 McLaughlin Street	– No pets – No smoking	– 22 townhouses on ground level – Apartment building with elevator
<b>St. Luke's Cottages</b> 24 Road Deluxe	– Low/controlled rent – No smoking – Small pets	– Single storey
<b>Glenbrook Villa</b> 105 Torbay Road	– Must be 55+ – No smoking – No pets	– Elevator
<b>Rotary Manor</b> 11 Lynch Place	– No smoking – No pets – 11 rooms for seniors with disabilities and	– Ground level



	their caregivers	
<b>Golden Vista</b> 161 Blackhead Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No smoking</li> <li>– No pets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Single level</li> </ul>
<b>Eastern Gate Manor</b> 763 and 767 Empire Avenue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No smoking</li> <li>– No pets</li> <li>– Must be rented to households with annual income under \$32,500</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 buildings with 12 units each</li> <li>– 2 units are fully accessible</li> <li>– One building has an elevator</li> </ul>

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors Resource Centre 2014

The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Private Sector Affordable Housing program provides funding to private developers to create modest affordable rental housing to benefit low-income households. The housing providers have agreed to keep the rental rates, as indicated, for 10 years after their application is approved. There are currently four private buildings offering affordable rental units in St. John's.

**Table 26:** Private Sector Affordable Housing; St. John's

Address	Details	Accessibility
<b>Donovan Homes</b> St. John's East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 12 apartments (6 single detached units with a subsidiary apartment)</li> <li>– No age limit</li> <li>– Family income must be less than \$37,000</li> <li>– 3 out of the 12 households are seniors</li> <li>– There are currently 14 households on the wait list for these units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 2 units are wheelchair accessible</li> </ul>
<b>Erco Homes</b> St. John's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– 6 units</li> <li>– Must be 55+</li> <li>– Family income must be less than \$32,500</li> <li>– Does not keep a waiting list but rarely have vacancies</li> </ul>	
<b>New Victorian Homes</b> St. John's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– No age limit</li> <li>– Family income must be less than \$37,000</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Some accessible units</li> </ul>

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors Resource Centre 2014 and phone interviews with housing providers

### 3.4 SENIORS HOUSING<sup>8</sup> UNITS

There are 362 seniors' housing spaces in the City of St. John's, down from 472 in 2013. More than half of those units are considered "standard spaces". A standard space is a dwelling where the resident does not receive high-level care (less than 1.5 hours of care per day) or is not required to pay an extra amount to receive high-level care.

**Table 27:** Universe of Seniors' Housing Spaces; St. John's, 2013 and 2014

	2013	2014
Standard	358	213
Non-Standard	114	149
Total	472	362

Source: CMHC Seniors Housing Market Report, St. John's 2014

Vacancy rates for non-standard spaces have increased significantly (from 3.5% to 10.7%) between 2013 and 2014, while vacancy rates for standard dwellings declined.

**Table 28:** Vacancy Rates of Standard and Non-Standard Seniors' Housing Spaces; St. John's, 2013 and 2014

	2013	2014
Standard	6.4%	3.8%
Non-Standard	3.5%	10.7%
Total	5.7%	6.6%

Source: CMHC Seniors Housing Market Report, St. John's 2014

The following table provides a profile of bachelor and private rooms with meals included in the rent in St. John's in 2014. Vacancy rates for these units are fairly low, at 2.7%, and average rent is \$2,308. The relatively small supply of units in this category (110 units) is likely a contributor to the high average rents and low vacancy rates.

**Table 29:** Profile of Bachelor and Private Rooms with Meals included in Rent; St. John's, 2014

	2014
Vacancy Rate	2.7%
Average Rent	\$2,308
Total Number of Units/Spaces	110

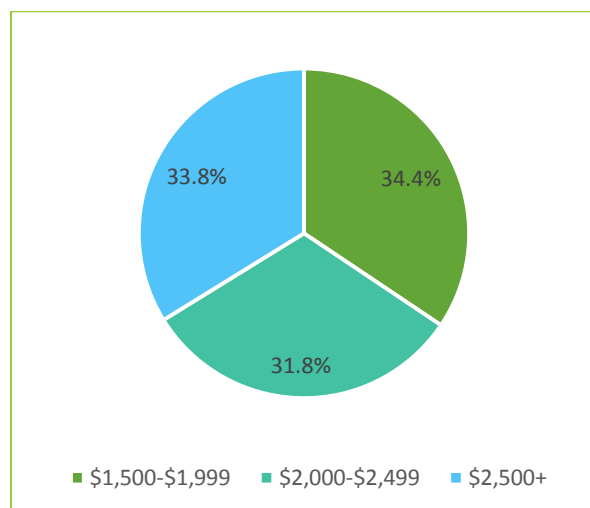
Source: CMHC Seniors Housing Market Report, St. John's 2014

According to the CMHC Seniors Housing Market Report, there are no seniors' standard spaces with rents lower than \$1,500. The rent mix is split almost equally between units with average rents between \$1500 and \$1,999, between \$2,000 and \$2,499, and at \$2,500 and higher.

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<sup>8</sup> To be eligible for inclusion in this CMHC survey, a residence must have at least one unit that is not subsidized; have been in operation for at least one year; have at least ten rental units in Quebec, Ontario and the Prairies or five rental units in the Atlantic Provinces and B.C.; offer an on-site meal plan; not mandate high levels of health care to all of its residents (as such, nursing homes and long term care homes are not included); offer rental units (life lease and ownership units are excluded); and, have at least 50% of its residents who are 65 years of age or older.

**Figure 6:** Proportion of Standard Spaces for Seniors by Rent Range; St. John's, 2013



Source: CMHC Seniors Housing Market Report, St. John's 2014

There are two market-rate seniors' apartment buildings in St. John's, in addition to two retirement living residents. These units are not subsidized and offer minimal to moderate personal care and supervision to seniors who are independent in most activities of daily living.

**Table 30:** Market Rate Seniors Apartments; St. John's, 2014

	Conditions	Accessibility
<b>King's Bridge Court Apartments</b> King's Bridge Court		- No elevator
<b>Forest Manor</b> 143 Forest Road	- No pets	- Elevator
<b>Tiffany Village Retirement Living</b> 50 Tiffany Court		
<b>Kenny's Pond Retirement Residence</b> 135 MacDonald Drive		

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors Resource Centre 2014

## 3.5 LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES AND PERSONAL CARE FACILITIES

Long term care facilities provide 24-hour nursing care in addition to a range of medical, rehabilitative, social work, pastoral care, palliative care, respite and recreation programs. Some facilities maintain specialized programs and units for groups with special needs, such as seniors with Alzheimer disease. Admission to a long term care bed is based on an assessment conducted by staff of the regional health authorities. A financial assessment is also completed to determine if and how much the individual must pay.

There are a total of 1,135 long term care/ nursing home beds in the City of St. John's. As of August 13, 2014, there were 101 people waiting for a bed in one of these facilities. In addition, there were 63 individuals who had already been placed but who wanted to relocate to another facility.

**Table 31:** Long-Term Care Facilities; St. John's

<b>The Agnes Pratt Home</b> 134 beds	<b>Glenbrook Lodge</b> 104 beds
<b>Hoyles-Escasoni Complex</b> 460 beds by September 2014	<b>Saint Luke's Homes</b> 117 beds
<b>St. Patrick's Mercy Home</b> 210 beds	<b>Masonic Park</b> 40 beds
<b>Chancellor Park</b> 70 beds	

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services

Personal care homes are privately owned and operated residential homes for seniors and older adults who need assistance with daily living. Individuals who are admitted to personal care homes do not require on site health or nursing services but may require the services of a visiting professional. These homes are licensed by the regional health authorities. Individuals moving to these homes apply through and are assessed by staff from the regional health authority. If a subsidy is requested, a financial assessment is completed to determine the amount of the subsidy.

The following table lists the personal care homes in the City of St. John's. These projects may be included in the number of seniors housing spaces data from CMHC that is discussed in a previous section. There are 245 beds in personal care homes in the City of St. John's. As of August 13, 2014, there were 42 people waiting for a space in one of these homes and 7 who are already placed but waiting for a transfer.

**Table 32:** Personal Care Homes; St. John's

<b>Cambridge Estates</b>	100 beds
<b>Katherine House</b>	15 beds
<b>Kelly's Personal Care Home</b>	19 beds
<b>Linda's Personal Care Home</b>	15 beds
<b>Maloney's Personal Care Home</b>	10 beds
<b>Bonaventure Retirement Home</b>	45 beds
<b>Ruby Manor</b>	41 beds

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Health and Community Services

## 3.6 AFFORDABILITY ANALYSIS

The table below indicates the affordability of different housing options for seniors based on calculations that took into account a 10% down payment, 25-year amortization period and 4.24% interest rate for ownership housing and 30% of income spent on housing.

A bachelor apartment is the most affordable option for seniors in St. John's. For seniors to be able to afford 1-bedroom apartments, they would have to earn \$29,450 annually, slightly more than the median seniors' income of \$26,500. Two- and three-bedroom units are farther out of reach financially. For a person in St. John's to afford a single-detached dwelling, their household income would have to be upwards of \$109,985. Seniors' bachelor and private rooms with meals and other standard spaces in seniors housing projects (usually with low-to-medium levels of care) are also much less affordable than the standard bachelor or one-bedroom unit. It should be noted that these calculations are based on a 10% down payment. Considering that some seniors would have equity from their existing homes, these housing prices become more affordable for these seniors.

**Table 33:** Average Rents and Sale Prices Compared to the Median Seniors' Income; St. John's

	Average Rent	Average Sale Price	Income Required to Afford Housing	Income Required as a % of Median Seniors' Income (\$26,500)
<b>Bachelor</b>	\$609	-	\$24,400	92.1%
<b>1-Bedroom</b>	\$733	-	\$29,450	111.1%
<b>2-Bedroom</b>	\$857	-	\$34,250	129.2%
<b>3+ Bedroom</b>	\$879	-	\$35,200	132.8%
<b>Single-Detached Dwelling</b>	-	\$444,847	\$109,985	415.0%
<b>Seniors' Bachelor and Private Rooms with Meals Included</b>	\$2,308	-	\$92,300	348.3%
<b>Standard Seniors' Space (all bedroom types)</b>	\$2,130	-	\$85,250	321.7%

Source: CMHC Housing Market Information Portal, Primary Rental Market Statistics 2014, CMHC Housing Market Outlook 2013 and SHS Calculations based on a 10% down payment, 25-year amortization period, 4.24% interest rate, and 30% of income spent on housing.

## Income Spent on Shelter

More than one in five households (24.9% or 11,205 households) in St. John's spends 30% or more of their total household income on shelter, compared to 17.9% of households in Newfoundland and Labrador as a whole. This suggests that housing costs in the City of St. John's are less affordable compared to the province as a whole.

## Core Housing Need

Core housing need is a measure that integrates CMHC's standards for housing adequacy, suitability, and affordability. A dwelling unit is adequate if it doesn't require any major repairs, it is suitable if there are enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of the resident households, and it is affordable if housing costs are less than 30% of the household's gross total income. A household is in core housing need if its housing does not meet these standards and if the residents spend 30% or more of their before-tax income on housing.

In 2006, CMHC reported that there were 9,250 households in core housing need in St. John's. Of those households, 69% were renters, with the remaining being homeowners. The average gross household income of households in core housing need was \$16,462, meaning that roughly 84.3% of St. John's households earned more than the average household in core housing need. A household earning \$16,462

annually would only be able to afford a house priced at \$66,582 or \$412 of rent per month. However, the average household in core housing need was spending \$625 on monthly rent, pushing their shelter-to-income ratio up to 49.0%.

**Table 34:** Households in Core Housing Need by Tenure; St. John's, 2006

	All Households	Owners	Renters
Households in core housing need	\$9,250	\$2,895	\$6,355
Average gross household income	\$16,462	\$17,775	\$15,865
Average monthly shelter costs	\$625	\$725	\$580
Average shelter-to-income ratio	49.0%	51.0%	48.0%

Source: CMHC Housing Market Information Portal, Core Housing Need 2006

Almost 18% of the 12,685 seniors' households in the St. John's CMA were in core housing need in 2006. The average household income of those in core housing need was \$17,114. Based on an average shelter cost of \$627 monthly, those in core housing need spend an average of 45% of their income on housing costs.

**Table 35:** Comparison of Average Household Income, Shelter Cost, and Shelter-to-Income-Ratio across Seniors in Core Housing Need and those not in Core Housing Need; St. John's CMA, 2006

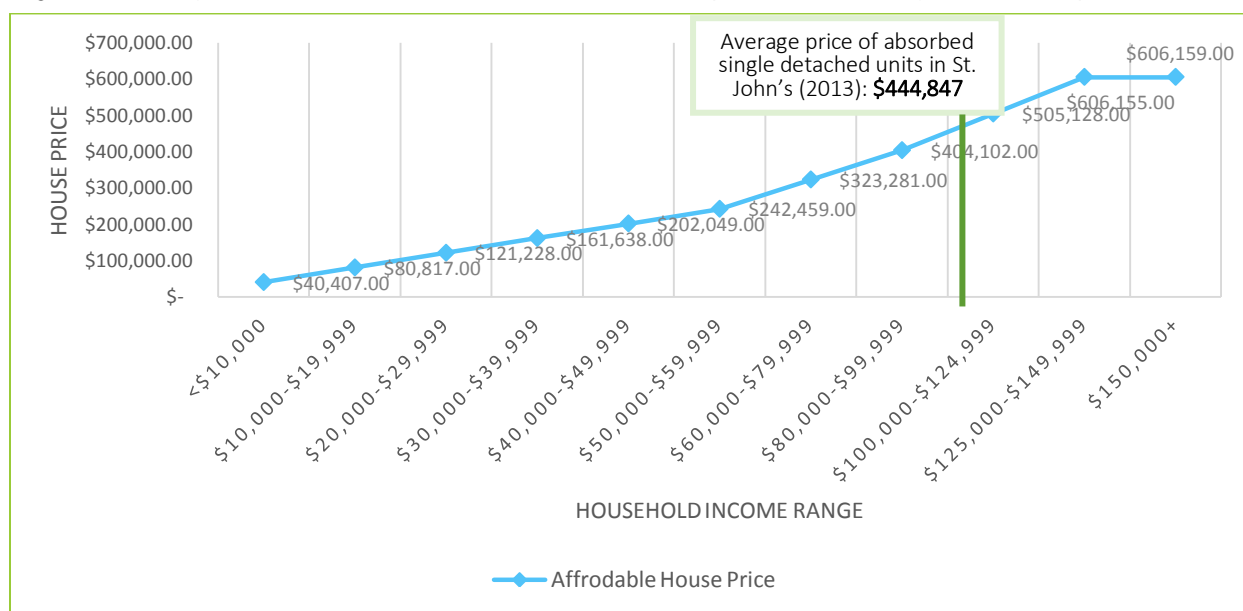
	Household Count	Average Household Income	Average Shelter Cost	Average Shelter-to-Income Ratio
Seniors (65+) not in Core Housing Need	10,430	\$53,452	\$575	16.5%
Seniors (65+) in Core Housing Need	2,255	\$17,114	\$627	45%

Source: CMHC Housing in Canada Online Beyond 20/20 Core Housing Need Data 2006

## Household Affordability

CMHC reported that, as of the second quarter of 2014, the average price of single detached units that have been sold in the City of St. John's was \$444,847. Based on a household spending 30% of household income on housing costs (a generally accepted threshold for affordability), a household would need to earn approximately \$109,992 annually to afford the average-priced single detached unit in St. John's. Similarly, the median house price during the same time period was \$399,900 which would require an income of about \$97,700 if the household were to spend only 30% of its income on housing costs. Based on the 2011 Census, there were 32,930 households in St. John's (73.1% of households) that earned less than \$100,000 annually. This suggests that if these households were entering the home ownership market for the first time, these house prices would be unaffordable. On the other hand, many seniors are already homeowners. As such, these seniors would have equity from their current homes and may be able to purchase smaller, age-friendly homes if they chose to. However, some stakeholders noted that while there are some homes that are affordable to them if they sold their current homes, these are much smaller and of lower quality.

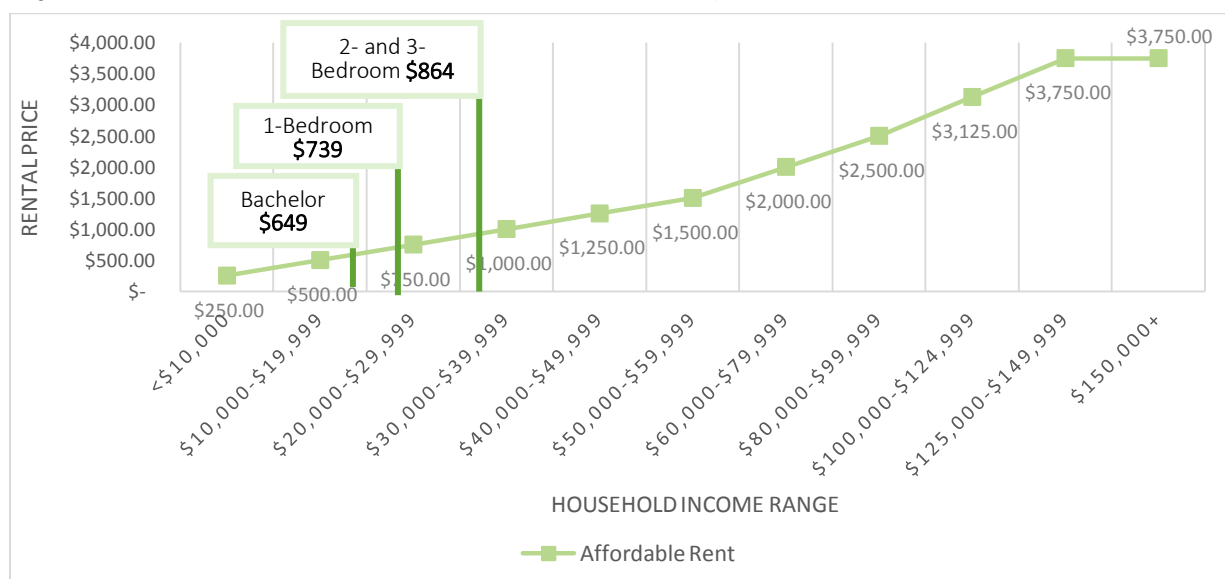
**Figure 7:** Comparison of Affordable House Prices to Average House Prices by Income Range; St. John's



Source: CMHC Housing Market Outlook – St. John's – Second Quarter 2014 and SHS Calculations based on a 10% down payment, 25-year amortization period, 4.24% interest rate, and 30% of income spent on housing.

Looking at the private rental market, a household would need to earn approximately \$29,500 per year to afford the average market rent of a one bedroom unit or \$34,500 to afford a two-or-more bedroom unit in St. John's. Seniors with pensions or monthly budgets from other sources of income that are lower than \$2,460 per month would not be able to afford the average market rent for a one-bedroom unit in St. John's. This and the previous data on the affordability of ownership housing suggests that there is a need for housing options for lower income households that cost less than the average housing costs in the private housing market.

**Figure 8:** Comparison of Affordable Rental Prices to Average Rental Prices by Income; St. John's



Source: CMHC Rental Market Report 2013 and SHS Calculations based on 30% of income spent on housing.

## 3.7 SUPPORT SERVICES FOR SENIORS

In addition to the seniors housing options discussed above, there are community based services that are available for seniors who may need some assistance with activities of daily living but who are currently living in their own homes.

### Provincial Home Support Program

The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador offers home support services that include personal and behavioural supports, household management, and respite at the minimum level to maintain individual independence. These support services are intended to act as supplementary support for seniors and are not inclusive of all wrap-around services that an older adult might require. Subsidies for support services are available through the program, should the applicant prove to be in financial need.

### Paid Family Caregiving Option

The Paid Family Caregiving Option, under the Provincial Home Support Program, helps support new home clients and will assist them to age in place in their homes and communities. The program provides up to 250 subsidies over an 18-month period for both seniors and adults with disabilities to pay a family member for approved in-home support services. There are seven eligibility criteria that applicants must meet:

- Must be a new client to one of the Adult Home Support Programs
- Must have a long-term need for home support subsidy
- Must meet the eligibility requirements for publically funded home support services as outlined by the provincial standards (2005)
- Must be eligible for service under the Adults with Disability Home Support Program or the Seniors Home Support Program
- Must meet the clinical and financial assessment for service
- Must have a clinical assessment that indicates a care need for personal care/behavioural support and that care can be appropriately provided by a family member
- Must agree to the financial contribution, if any, as indicated by the financial assessment

### Home and Community Care Program

The Home and Community Care Program offered by Eastern Health has a goal of supporting individuals and families living in the community who need additional care and professional services to manage an illness. The support provided by this program helps individuals avoid admission to a healthcare facility or reduce the length of their stay in the hospital. Home and Community Care services are provided to individuals based on their specific needs and these are determined based on standardized assessment procedures.



## 3.8 HOUSING SUPPLY SUMMARY

### The housing options for seniors in the private housing market are limited

While there are rental and ownership housing options in the private housing market in St. John's, these are limited to mostly single detached homes and condominiums, with single detached homes being the predominant dwelling type. There are also options for seniors in the secondary rental market but most of these are semi-detached, row and duplex dwellings which may not be appropriate for an aging individual as these dwelling forms typically have stairs. This suggests a need for a wider range of age-friendly housing options.

### The number of affordable housing units for seniors does not meet the demand

There are affordable housing units that are available for seniors through the different non-profit organizations in the City but these units are limited and have significant waiting lists. As of May 2013, there were 326 households on the waiting list for the 455 affordable housing units that the City's Non-Profit Housing Division operates. There were also 234 applicants on the waiting list for the 2,583 units owned by NL Housing. This indicates a need for affordable housing units for low- and moderate-income seniors.

### House prices are increasing and becoming unaffordable

The average house price and average rent in the City are increasing and becoming unaffordable to seniors with low- and moderate-incomes. For example, a senior earning the median income and without equity would only be able to afford a bachelor apartment in the City. While research indicates that there is a large proportion of seniors who have assets that they can leverage, there are still a large number of seniors who require financial assistance to be able to afford a home in St. John's.

## 4.0 Seniors' Housing Preferences

The following discussion is a result of the consultation sessions undertaken as part of this study as well as an environmental scan of seniors housing preferences.

### Seniors want to age at home

The majority of seniors would prefer to age in their own homes in their own community. As of 2011, 92% of all Canadian seniors 65 years and older lived in private households and only 8% lived in collective dwellings. Of those living in collective dwellings, at least half were 85 years or older<sup>9</sup>. A survey of Atlantic Canadian seniors found that 87% of respondents have no plans to move from their current dwelling<sup>10</sup>. Similarly, a study of Canadian veterans found that, if a home care alternative was available, 90% of respondents would prefer to remain at home<sup>11</sup>. This is supported by feedback from consultation activities undertaken as part of this project. Stakeholders prefer to age in their own homes, close to family and friends. Even if they downsize, they would still prefer to live in the same neighbourhood. This suggests a need to explore infill housing options as well as reusing existing buildings to allow seniors to stay in established neighbourhoods that may no longer have vacant or greenfield lots that can be developed.

### Seniors prefer seniors-only housing

The survey of Atlantic Canadian seniors also found that if seniors moved, most of them would prefer seniors-only housing<sup>12</sup>. More than half of the respondents to the survey (53.4%) noted that their primary choice of accommodation would be senior citizen housing, 41.0% would choose an apartment, 26.8% would prefer a single-family detached house, 18.0% would choose a semi-detached, duplex or townhouse, 10.7% would choose a mobile home, and 10.2% would move to a nursing or special care home<sup>13</sup>. A survey of older adults and seniors (aged 53-97 years) conducted in Prince George, British Columbia showed that if a single detached home was not an option, the majority of respondents (63.9%) would prefer seniors housing. Other housing preferences included congregate housing (36.7%), garden suites (26.1%), and residential care facilities (21.1%). This is supported by feedback gathered from the focus group for seniors. Most of the participants of that focus group did not like the idea of a mixed-age housing project and preferred to be in a building with other seniors.

### Seniors want to downsize to a home which will allow them to continue to live independently

The survey of Atlantic Canadian seniors found that the reason 50.0% of respondents would move was to downsize<sup>14</sup>. This is supported by consultation results where many stakeholders were considering a move because they wanted to downsize. For some of these stakeholders, they were not yet ready for a seniors-

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<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada (2011). Emerging trends in living arrangements and conjugal unions for current and future seniors, 1981 – 2011 Retrieved June 1, 2014 at: <http://statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/140224/dq140224a-eng.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Shiner, D. (2007). Report on the Atlantic Seniors Housing and Support Survey.

<sup>11</sup> Pedlar, D., Lockhart, W., and Macintosh, S. (2009). Canada's Veteran's Independence Program: A Pioneer of "Aging at Home". Healthcare Papers, Vol. 10(1) pp. 72-77.

<sup>12</sup> Atlantic Seniors Research Alliance (ASHRA) (2010). Seniors' Housing: Challenges, Issues, and Possible Solutions for Atlantic Canada – Final Report.

<sup>13</sup> Shiner, D. (2007). Report on the Atlantic Seniors Housing and Support Survey.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

only housing option such as a retirement home. They were looking for a home that was smaller than their current home to ease the burden of home maintenance and housekeeping.

Another reason to move in the future was to have a better/ more suitable home. This was cited by 41.1% of the respondents to the survey of Atlantic Canadian seniors<sup>15</sup>. Similarly, stakeholders noted that while their health was still good, they were starting to have issues with the accessibility of their homes, such as the presence of stairs and the absence of grab bars in the bathroom. While some stakeholders stated that, ideally, they would like to live in ground level housing that was smaller than their current homes others preferred condominium or apartment buildings. Both groups agree that they would want a home with some accessibility/ age-friendly features. These features would include walk-in showers, plugs that were placed higher, door knobs that were easier to turn, grab bars, and other such features that would allow them to live independently in their own home. This suggests the need for housing options, both in buildings and ground-level options, which are smaller than the typical single detached home and that have accessibility/ age-friendly features that may not necessarily offer health care services.

### Seniors want to be close to services and amenities

Most stakeholders want to remain in the City close to services and amenities. Stakeholders who currently live in the surrounding areas outside of the City of St. John's indicated that they would like to move to St. John's if they could find housing. Being close to hospitals was the main reason cited for this preference. Another reason for wanting to live in the City was related to transit and the ability to move around on their own. This suggests a need to explore housing options in established neighbourhoods close to services and amenities, including hospitals, doctors' offices and public transit.

### 'Affordable' is different for different groups of seniors

The demographic and housing supply analysis show that there are a large number of seniors who cannot afford average house prices or rents in the private housing market. These seniors would need housing options that are below average market rates or financial assistance to afford market rates. On the other hand, there are seniors who do have assets and higher incomes. For these seniors, 'affordable housing' may not necessarily mean below market rates. As some of the stakeholders noted, an affordable housing option would be something they could afford with income from selling their single detached home or with income from their investments and pensions. This suggests a need for a range of seniors housing options for different income levels.

### Home maintenance is an issue for seniors

The survey of Atlantic Canadian seniors found that over half of seniors' homes need some form of repair. It also noted that many seniors have safety and accessibility concerns<sup>16</sup>. Difficulty maintaining a home or garden was identified by 38.9% of respondents to the survey (the third highest number of respondents)<sup>17</sup>. Other issues include financial concerns related to home maintenance, issues related to finding hired help, and difficulties with landlords over maintenance and repairs<sup>18</sup>. This is supported by feedback from

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 26.

<sup>16</sup> Atlantic Seniors Research Alliance (ASHRA) (2010). Seniors' Housing: Challenges, Issues, and Possible Solutions for Atlantic Canada – Final Report.

<sup>17</sup> Shiner, D. (2007). Report on the Atlantic Seniors Housing and Support Survey.

<sup>18</sup> Atlantic Seniors Research Alliance (ASHRA) (2010). Seniors' Housing: Challenges, Issues, and Possible Solutions for Atlantic Canada – Final Report.

interviews and the focus group with seniors where stakeholders noted that many seniors consider moving because they can no longer maintain their own home. Stakeholders noted that home maintenance tasks, such as snow clearing and lawn mowing, were becoming a burden but that they could not afford to hire someone to do these chores. Some stakeholders stated that, ideally, they would like to live in a home where they would not have to worry about home maintenance and landscaping chores.

Other stakeholders were planning to move because they were having issues with landlords who did not keep their apartments well-maintained. These stakeholders also stated that many seniors do not complain about maintenance issues as they are afraid of being evicted. This suggests a need for housing options where home maintenance would be part of a services package or would otherwise not be a concern for seniors.

### Home modifications are not always possible

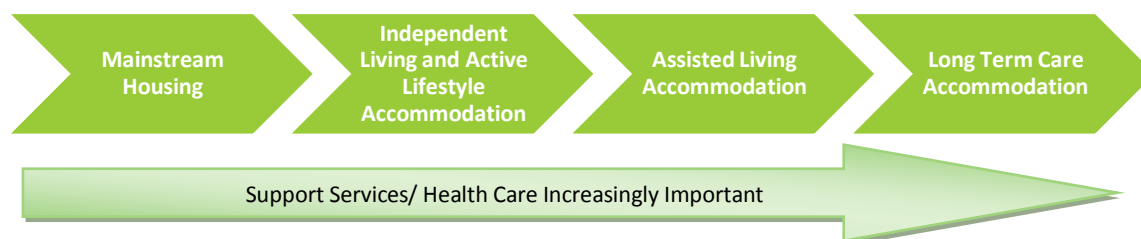
Some stakeholders were willing to undertake modifications to their home to allow them to live there longer but were concerned about the cost of these modifications. They noted that even if they qualify for grants, many do not have the funds to pay for the costs upfront. The application process for funding and grants for accessibility modification and energy efficiency renovations was also an issue as many stakeholders agreed that the process was difficult and often not worth it. Another issue that was brought up was related to dealing with contractors. This was an issue specifically for women living alone as they felt they were treated differently and taken advantage of. Other stakeholders were not willing to make modifications at all as they felt their current homes were too big and would not be suitable for aging, even with modifications.

### Ideally, seniors want two bedrooms, accessible features and privacy

When asked to describe their ideal home, most stakeholders said they would want two bedrooms and storage for things they would like to keep even after downsizing. This was supported by the waiting list for St. John's Non-Profit Housing units where most seniors applied for a two-bedroom unit. They would also like a home with accessibility features, such as a walk-in shower. They also valued privacy. Accordingly, home sharing options, such as sharing a house with other seniors or living in a secondary suite/ subsidiary apartment with family, were not popular among the stakeholders consulted for this project. Soundproofing was also an important element that was identified.

## 5.0 Housing Options Analysis

The spectrum of seniors housing options is based on cost, design and support service needs and ranges from mainstream housing to long term care accommodation. Below we provide examples of a range of housing options that may be suitable for the current and future seniors population in St. John's.



Source: CMHC (2012). *Housing for Older Canadians: The Definitive Guide to the Over-55 Market, Volume 2: Responding to the Market*.

### 5.1 MAINSTREAM HOUSING

Many seniors will stay in mainstream housing, either in the homes they currently occupy or they will downsize to smaller homes such as condominiums or rental apartments. As discussed in the previous section, most seniors would like to stay in their own homes and their own communities. Many of these seniors are healthy enough that they do not need support services to remain independent. In addition, many of these seniors have informal supports in place in the form of family, friends and neighbours<sup>19</sup>.

There are an increasing number of communities that are largely made up of seniors aging in place. These are called Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCS). These are mostly seen in the United States where neighbourhoods that were not specifically built for seniors now have a large proportion of senior residents<sup>20</sup>. Most of the stakeholders stated that they would like to remain in St. John's due to the access to services and amenities as well as to be close to family and friends. This suggests that there are opportunities for certain neighbourhoods in the City to become NORCS if the appropriate housing options and support services were available.

#### Village-to-Village Network – Boston, Massachusetts

The Village-to-Village approach occurs in regular neighbourhoods where a significant proportion of the residents are seniors. Membership-driven organizations are established and run by small staffs and volunteers who coordinate affordable services, such as transportation, in-home medical care, home repairs, and other day-to-day needs to help seniors receive care at home.

There are also mainstream housing options which are not seniors-only options but are marketed to seniors. These options generally have design features, such as being on one level or having accessibility features, which would attract a senior or older adult clientele. These options are generally market rate

<sup>19</sup> CMHC (2012). *Housing for Older Canadians: The Definitive Guide to the Over-55 Market, Volume 2: Responding to the Market*.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

housing and are targeted toward seniors who have equity in their current homes and who want to downsize while still being home owners.

#### **Condominium Development – La Crete, Alberta**

These ground-level bungalows are part of a condominium and priced at the lower end of market rate home ownership to appeal to seniors who will be selling their single detached homes and farms to downsize. There is a small condominium fee which pays for landscaping, snow clearing and the maintenance of the external elements of the bungalows. Each home has two-bedrooms and two bathrooms with the master bath having a walk-in shower stall. Doors are wider to accommodate a wheelchair in the future and everything is on ground level. While there is no age requirement to purchase these condominiums, the design of the homes is specifically geared toward seniors who are still independent and have some equity/ assets.

## **5.2 INDEPENDENT LIVING AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLE ACCOMMODATION**

Independent living or active lifestyle accommodation is a housing option for seniors who require little to no assistance with their daily living needs. This type of housing usually combines accommodation with recreational amenities and can take a number of housing forms, such as single detached homes to units in multi-storey apartment buildings. The tenure options for these units also vary but the most common options are ownership and rental options. The difference between this housing option and mainstream housing is that these are generally seniors-only housing options<sup>21</sup>. There are different forms of independent living or active lifestyle accommodation including the following options.

### **Shared Home Ownership**

Shared home ownership is one option for seniors who are independent but who would benefit from having someone help them with shopping, meal preparation and general housekeeping. This option would be appropriate for seniors who are social and would enjoy the company of other seniors but who would like to own their own home.

In this model, a house would be shared by four to six residents who would share the ownership of the home, responsibility for making decisions, all expenses, and staffing. Each owner would have their own bed-sitting room but share common areas, such as a kitchen, dining room, living room and laundry.

This model can be adapted to existing housing stock, thus greatly decreasing the time and cost associated with new construction. This model would also allow seniors to remain in their community, close to family, friends and the services and amenities that they are used to. As the residents age, home care services can be provided at lower costs due to the efficiencies created by having several clients under one roof. One other advantage of this model is that it allows seniors to continue to be home owners while reducing their housing costs, having someone to take care of home maintenance and housekeeping, and ensuring companionship.

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<sup>21</sup> CMHC (2012). Housing for Older Canadians: The Definitive Guide to the Over-55 Market, Volume 2: Responding to the Market.

**Solterra Co-Housing – Bracebridge, Ontario**

Solterra is a shared home ownership option for seniors who are independent, self-sufficient and social. The house is shared by four to six residents who share ownership of the home. Owners have their own bed-sitting room but share common facilities. Each owner has a percentage interest in the home and is registered as a Tenant in Common on the title/deed. Owners control all aspects of operating the entire home and each resident contributes to and is accountable for household decisions. Each home has a staff member who takes care of shopping, meal preparation and general housekeeping.

**Home Share Program, Newfoundland and Labrador**

Home Share is a community based program where an unrelated student and a person 50 years and older share a house or apartment. Each has a private bedroom but share common areas. In exchange for a reduced rent, the student is expected to share in household responsibilities. The advantage for the person 50 years and older is that they receive help maintaining their home, which allows them to stay in their own home longer.

## Abbeyfield Houses

Abbeyfield houses are small-scale accommodation for seniors who live like a large “family” in one house, each with their own bed-sitting room but who share facilities such as a communal living room, kitchen and dining room. In general, there are about seven to ten people in one Abbeyfield house with residents sharing two meals a day in the communal dining room. A live-in housekeeper attends to the daily running of the house, the shopping and the preparation and serving of meals.

Abbeyfield is an international society dedicated to providing older people with affordable, companionable and secure housing in a family-type household within their local community. There are more than 1,100 Abbeyfield Houses worldwide and 30 houses currently operating in Canada<sup>22</sup>. This model is very similar to the previous one and has very similar advantages in terms of being able to use existing housing stock and efficiencies with regard to home care services. The difference with this model is that it is geared toward seniors with lower incomes as units are rented, not owned, and the houses are set-up and run on a not-for-profit basis under the management of a volunteer board of directors. Costs, including all meals, are shared by the residents.

**Abbeyfield House – Caledon, Ontario**

Abbeyfield House in Caledon is located in a rural area of the Town of Caledon. The house can accommodate 12 residents, each with their own bed-sitting room and ensuite bathroom. The common areas include a kitchen, dining room and great room. A house manager is responsible for all meals, regular cleaning and maintenance of all common areas and acts as a support to the residents. Costs are shared equally by the residents and, as a not-for-profit residence, all income is applied to operating costs. The current rate for each resident is \$1,800 per month, which includes accommodation, meals and all utilities except phone and cable. The house has several energy efficient features and is barrier free.

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<sup>22</sup> Abbeyfield Houses Society of Caledon (2014). What is Abbeyfield. Accessed from: <http://www.abbeyfieldcaledon.org/>



## Life Lease Housing

Life lease housing offers seniors the flexibility of a rental unit with the stability of home ownership. Residents generally pay one lump sum to occupy a unit for life or until they are no longer able to live there. The initial investment as well as the interest earned from it are used to keep rents at a certain level and pay for any home adaptations that may be necessary as the occupant ages. The resident also pays a small monthly fee for maintenance costs and some developments offer services such as meal preparation and housekeeping for an additional fee.

This model would be appropriate for seniors who wish to be homeowners without worrying about the day-to-day upkeep of their homes. While this may be a viable option for market rate housing, it may not be affordable for seniors with low and moderate incomes. In addition, some community agencies have experienced some challenges in developing life lease housing particularly related to start-up costs. There are also some concerns about the lack of knowledge of this type of housing and there is considerable variation in the legal agreements related to how people are compensated if they decide to move out.

This model may be replicated for a small-scale project as a housing option for seniors who can no longer keep up with the daily maintenance of their home but who are still able to live independently. In addition, this model would be appropriate for seniors who may have equity in their current homes which, when sold, would allow them to pay the lump sum as well as the monthly costs. Considering that the demographic profile analysis shows that there are a group of seniors in St. John's with high incomes, this may be an option that merits further examination to address the housing needs of that group.

### **Bethel Green – Toronto, Ontario**

This is a project of the Bethel Baptist Church and was a result of an aging congregation and church. The church was redeveloped as a four-storey building which included a smaller church and 19 life lease units for seniors. The building incorporates energy efficient features and some elements to allow for aging in place.

## Co-operatives

Many independent living and active lifestyle projects are developed as for-profit co-operatives. Equity co-operatives are member-controlled corporations which own both the land and the building in a multi-unit residential project. Residents make decisions on how the co-operative operates and the owners of an equity co-operative own shares of the corporation and a proprietary lease or right to occupy a particular unit within the project. Unlike a condominium, owners of an equity co-operative do not acquire a deed to a particular unit. The developer of an equity co-operative completes construction of the project then sells the shares to the co-operative and does not retain any residual interest.

Non-share or non-profit co-operatives are different from equity co-operatives in that members do not acquire an ownership share in the corporation and cannot sell their shares. Occupancy in this type of co-operative is similar to a conventional rental arrangement although the residents/ members are expected to participate in the business and operation of the co-operative. This includes electing the board of directors, approving the annual budget and maintaining the development. Many non-profit co-operatives are developed by charitable or community agencies and, in some cases, receive capital or ongoing operational subsidy from the government. If this is the case, the co-operative must operate in accordance with both its bylaws as well as the operating agreement with the funding government



partner. The sponsor of a non-equity co-operative will see the project to completion and generally retains an ongoing interest as a member.

A non-profit co-operative model provides an affordable housing option for seniors while providing them with security of tenure that may not be present in a private rental project. Co-op housing provides seniors with more control over their housing as they make decisions about the co-op as a collective. This model may help address the issues that some stakeholders noted with regard to the way their current rental units were being managed and maintained.

#### **Crestview Housing Co-operative – Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan**

Crestview Manor is a 43-unit co-operative for seniors. There are one- and two-bedroom units as well as a common lounge for members/residents. Residents have to be in good health and be willing to contribute to the management of the co-operative. Residents are also required to become shareholders. Applicants pay \$100 when they apply and another \$400 when they become a resident although this full amount is refundable when they leave Crestview Manor. The housing charge/rent includes utilities.

## **Flex Housing**

Flex housing is a concept that incorporates, at the design and construction stage, the ability to make future changes to a home easily and with minimum expense to meet the evolving needs of its occupants. Flex housing allows homeowners to occupy a dwelling for longer periods of time while adapting to changing circumstances and meeting a wide range of needs. Similar concepts are referred to as Universal Housing in the United States and Lifetime Homes in the United Kingdom.

This type of housing allows homeowners to adapt their dwellings to their current circumstances without having to move. The advantages of flex housing are not limited to individual homeowners. By making it possible for people to remain in their homes despite changes in their lives and personal needs, the concept can contribute to neighbourhood stability.

The four principles of flex housing are:

- Accessibility – Homes are user friendly and a fundamental consideration is the reduction of potential hazards
- Adaptability – Homes are designed for a variety of possible arrangements
- Affordability – Although the initial cost of a flex house is slightly more than a conventional home, this investment is recovered over the long term as pre-engineered features allow for easy and inexpensive change and renovation
- Healthy Housing – The design of flex housing integrates healthy building materials with innovative housing design<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> CMHC (2009). FlexHousing. Accessed from: <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>

#### **Richmond Flex House – City of Richmond, British Columbia**

Based on the CMHC Flex housing concept, this home is designed to accommodate the growth needs of families and the changing requirements of owners throughout their lifecycle. It is a two storey, 2,178 square foot, wood frame home that offers a flexible design, where bedrooms may be enlarged and bathrooms may be added or removed. It is designed to be energy efficient with PowerSmart appliances and is fully accessible to meet the changing needs of its occupants. It can also accommodate an elevator and wheelchair ramps, has light and electrical switches in easy-to-reach places, and can provide separate accommodation for adult children and elderly parents.

## **5.3 ASSISTED LIVING ACCOMMODATION**

Assisted living accommodations are housing options for seniors who require some assistance with activities of daily living (ADL's<sup>24</sup>) but who do not require 24-hour care. The form and degree of care provided in different assisted living arrangements can vary and may include social and recreational activities; meal preparation, housekeeping and laundry; and, personal and health care services (e.g. bathing, grooming, taking medication). In all cases, the accommodation is designed for seniors who require only minimal to moderate care to be able to live independently although 24-hour supervision and emergency response are usually included. Accommodation is usually rental units in an apartment building or a small group residence.

### **Retirement Homes/ Residences**

Retirement homes/residences are the most common form of assisted living accommodation. Most residences are privately owned and operated but some are owned by non-profit organizations such as faith groups, seniors' organizations, service clubs and cultural groups. Residents are generally responsible for the cost of their accommodation and support services. Accommodation in most retirement residences includes different sized units and common areas, which include a dining room and lounge. Residences that are targeting more affluent seniors may include other amenities similar to those found in a hotel, such as beauty salons, swimming pools, libraries, and gift shops.

#### **Heritage Glen Retirement Residence – Mississauga, Ontario**

This retirement community has a total of 323 one- and two-bedroom apartment suites for older adults 55 years and older. Services that are included in the monthly rent include health care monitoring, 24-hour security monitoring, access to recreational programs, scheduled transportation for local shopping and weekly housekeeping. Additional services for additional fees include medication assistance, laundry service, weekly bath, incontinence management, daily housekeeping, assistance with activities of daily living, and other customized specialized care.

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<sup>24</sup> ADL's are activities of daily living which are those activities necessary for day-to-day functioning such as cooking, walking, personal grooming and housekeeping. In assisted living models, supports are provided to seniors to be able to maintain these functions.

### **The Ultimate Goal Retirement Village – Lewisporte, Newfoundland**

This is an eighteen unit housing complex for seniors. Eight units are funded by NL Housing and CMHC through the Affordable Housing Program (AHP). Residents of these units must meet the criteria set by the AHP. Ten units are financed through the organization's "Life Rent" program and are available to any senior regardless of social or financial status. All eighteen units have below-market rents.

## **Supportive Housing**

Supportive housing is a housing option that combines a physical environment that is specifically designed to be safe, secure, enabling and home-like with support services such as meals, housekeeping and social and recreational activities. The goal of supportive housing is to allow residents to maximize their independence, privacy, dignity and decision-making abilities. Supportive housing can be developed in many forms dependent on the types and level of services to be provided, the project size desired, the types of accommodation and tenure, and the sponsorship available. Services can be provided through a combination of on-site and off-site arrangements and can be made available to both residents of the supportive housing facility and those living in the surrounding neighbourhood. There are some forms of supportive housing that provide a high level of services and are therefore an alternative to a nursing home or long term care facility<sup>25</sup>.

### **Residence Parc Jarry – Montreal, Quebec**

This affordable supportive housing project for low income seniors was developed by a local private developer who acquired an abandoned building in an old Montreal neighbourhood and converted it to a 160-unit retirement residence. Half of the units are affordable while the other half are at market value. The local provincial health authority reserved 34 of the units for its clients under a ten-year agreement with the developer. Seniors living in the affordable units pay rents that are approximately \$600 below market value. All the residents have access to personal care services, three meals per day, laundry service, room cleaning, and access to common areas and activities.

### **McKenzie Heights – Pembroke, Ontario**

McKenzie Heights is an old school that was redeveloped as an 18-unit home for low-income seniors. There are one- and two-bedroom units most of which have exits directly to the parkland outside. Many of the units have gardens that the residents work on themselves. There is also a central 200-foot corridor as a common area where residents can walk and socialize in the winter or through which they can enter their units. Each unit is fully accessible and some units are customized to the needs of their residents, such as one with extra-bright lighting for its visually impaired resident or one that has the fire alarm system connected to a strobe light for the hearing impaired resident. Rents are below market rate. The March of Dimes rents the former principal's office and provides support services to six of their clients in the building as well as clients in the surrounding area. Residents have easy access to a hospital, grocery store and public transit.

The preceding two best practices for supportive housing illustrate how existing buildings can be reused to develop affordable housing. In addition to the savings resulting from reusing an existing building,

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<sup>25</sup> CMHC (2011). Canadian Housing Observer.

converting structures that may be vacant or underutilized but that are located in established neighbourhoods ensures that the residents of the housing project are close to services and amenities that may not be present in a greenfield location.

## 5.4 LONG TERM CARE ACCOMMODATION

Long term care homes are designed for people who can no longer live independently and require 24-hour nursing care and supervision, sometimes within a secure setting, such as for those living with dementia. Long term care homes offer more personal care and support compared to that offered in retirement residences or supportive housing. Accommodation may be shared with more than two residents in a room or a private room.

Long term care homes are subject to government regulation and typically require a license to operate. In turn, sponsors receive some form of fixed government funding, calculated on a per diem basis to provide accommodation and health care services. In most cases, residents pay a government regulated co-payment for their accommodation. Accommodation costs include basic services such as meals, housekeeping, laundry, property maintenance and administration. In some instances, the cost of the co-payments is paid by the province or the health authority for the area if the resident has very low income.

### Supportive Housing with Higher Level of Supports

This model is a supportive housing/ assisted living facility with higher level of supports that provides seniors who require 24-hour nursing care an alternative to living in a long term care home. It includes multi-skilled staff available 24 hours a day, including a registered nurse and assisted living support workers to support residents with their personal care needs such as bathing, toileting, dressing, meal preparation and feeding, and medication administration.

This model is different from a long term care facility as residents would be in suites as opposed to rooms. Suites would have their own bathroom and kitchenette as well as a staff call system. Each suite would be wheelchair accessible. Admission requirements would be similar to those for a long term care facility and the cost of care may be partially subsidized by government funding. Separating the cost of care from the cost of accommodation would allow residents to choose the type of housing unit and service package they want based on their needs.

One advantage of this model is that it allows couples to stay together even if they have different care needs. Larger suites would allow a couple to live together and avoid the separation that generally occurs when one partner has to go into long term care. Considering that data on life expectancy shows that the gap between men and women is decreasing, there will be more couples aging together rather than the trends in past years where the oldest seniors were mostly female.

One challenge to the replication of this model is that it may not be financially feasible to provide or sustain the level of services of a long term care home for a smaller project. On the other hand, if the services can be extended to seniors in the community, this may create economies of scale and not only allow the necessary services to be provided within the project but also allow more seniors in the community to receive a higher level of services in their own homes.

### **Laurier House – Edmonton, Alberta**

Laurier House is an innovative form of supportive housing that can fully substitute for a traditional long term care facility. It was designed to allow senior couples to continue to live together while receiving services that were equivalent to those offered in a long term care home. There are 21 one-bedroom and 21 two-bedroom suites. It utilizes life leases to separate or “unbundle” the costs of various services that are provided, allocating them to either the client or the public health care system. A lump sum is paid upon admission for the lease and a monthly fee covers building upkeep, housekeeping, facility laundry, utilities and meals. When the resident no longer needs the suite, the initial payment is returned minus a small percentage. The care plans are individualized and adapted as a resident’s needs change. Admission is through Alberta Health Services Community Care Access.

All the suites are wheelchair accessible and have a staff call system. Residents can continue to see their own doctor or choose a doctor on call at Laurier House. Staff are available 24 hours a day to provide assistance with personal care services such as bathing, toileting, dressing, and medication administration.

## **Housing for Seniors Living with Dementia**

This model is for seniors who do not have any physical health issues but who can no longer live safely in their own homes due to the symptoms of dementia. Seniors with dementia may not qualify for an assisted living facility due to the type of care they require so without housing options specifically geared for their needs, many may end up in long term care facilities.

In 2010, the Alzheimer Society of Canada estimated that approximately 500,000 Canadians had Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia. Due to the aging of the population, it was estimated that by 2038, there will be 257,811 new dementia cases per year, 2.5 times the estimated number of new cases in 2008 and that a total of 1,125,200 Canadians will be living with dementia in 2038, making up 2.8% of the estimated Canadian population<sup>26</sup>. As such, it is important to ensure that housing options for seniors living with dementia are available in a community.

### **Sluggett House – Vancouver Island, British Columbia**

Sluggett House is a 16-unit licensed dementia housing site owned and operated by Beacon Community Services. It is a single level building with secure facilities and two main common areas with a shared combination kitchen/ dining/ living room and smaller fireside lounge. Each unit is a private bed-sitting room with an accessible ensuite bathroom. The Vancouver Island Health Authority provides funding for annual operating costs.

The residents who live in the home do not have physical health issues but can no longer live safely in their own home. The house has specialized care professionals 24/7 to ensure that residents are in a secure and supervised environment.

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<sup>26</sup> Alzheimer Society of Canada (2010). Rising Tide: The Impact of Dementia on Canadian Society

## 5.5 HOME CARE

Home care services are support services provided to seniors living in their own homes, whether these are single family homes or in apartment buildings. This model facilitates aging in place by providing support services that would generally be provided in a supportive housing facility in a senior's own home. In addition to allowing seniors to stay in their own homes longer, this model is a cost-effective alternative to assisted living or even long term care. Research done by the Balance of Care Research Group from the University of Toronto found that there is considerable potential to support seniors who are at risk of losing their independence safely and cost-effectively in the community. Estimates for the divert rate based on service-by-service delivery in the home resulted in a 14% overall divert rate or 33% divert rate if assisted living options were also considered. This means that between 14% and 33% of people could be effectively supported at home as opposed to a long term care facility or supportive housing at an equal or lesser cost to the public health care system<sup>27</sup>.

### **Choice in Support for Independent Living (CSIL) – British Columbia**

CSIL is a self-managed model of care in which individuals with disabilities and high levels of care needs are funded directly by government to hire workers to provide home support services. Individuals assume full responsibility for covering wages, mandatory employer payments such as Canada Pension Plan and WorkSafeBC, and allowable expenses such as costs for advertising and recruiting, and hiring a bookkeeper for financial reporting purposes. This gives individuals access to a range of home and community-based health services to meet their needs and to support them in maintaining their independence. One of the main benefits of the program is that it allows individuals to customize and manage delivery of their own home support services, allowing them to maintain independence and to continue to live in the community, close to family and friends.

## 5.6 SUMMARY OF HOUSING OPTIONS

The preceding sections show a range of housing options that are appropriate for seniors with various levels of care needs and, if made available in the City, may help address the identified need and demand for a range of housing options for seniors in the City of St. John's. As such, the City may want to consider playing a key role in facilitating the development of these housing options. As a first step, the City may consider further exploring these housing options, perhaps as part of a workshop with builders, housing providers and other stakeholders, to determine how these different options can be provided in the City.

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<sup>27</sup> Williams, P. And Watkins, J. (2009). The Champlain Balance of Care Project: Final Report.



## 6.0 Policy Framework Analysis

This section provides a brief discussion of relevant Municipal legislation and strategic documents to identify potential opportunities and barriers to the development of a range of seniors housing options in the City of St. John's.

### 6.1 MUNICIPAL PLAN

Municipal Plans are a legislative tool to guide the growth and development of communities and are intended to reflect the vision for the community. Housing is the cornerstone of any community and these land use plans typically provide direction for how local housing needs are to be addressed, including the housing needs for senior citizens. The legislated status of Municipal Plans can provide important support for housing initiatives and policies but they may also act as barriers to the provision of a range of housing options. The existing Municipal Plan has been in place since 2003 but a new draft Plan has been recently completed. To make this review more relevant, the draft Envision St. John's Plan (July 2, 2014) was used for this review.

The Envision St. John's Draft Plan uses several approaches that aim to increase housing options. One of these approaches is a return to secondary planning on the neighbourhood level to protect established neighbourhoods from inappropriate development and to recognize that neighbourhoods change and evolve over time and it is necessary to encourage this change to accommodate the housing needs of a wide range of households. The Plan is also focused on creating healthy, complete neighbourhoods and this is further supported by strategic objectives that include facilitating mixed use development, encouraging a range of housing options, and promoting higher density development in and around transit service corridors.

With regard to housing policies, the Draft Plan promotes a broad range of housing options for all ages, income groups and family types. It also has a policy that encourages working with other levels of government and non-government agencies to encourage the construction of age-friendly housing. There is also a policy on implementing incentives for affordable housing units and identifying surplus lands for affordable housing projects. The Draft Plan does not have policies that specifically encourage or support the development of housing and other facilities for senior citizens although it does promote age-friendly housing. With regard to affordable housing, the Draft Plan does not have a specific definition of affordable housing nor does it identify affordable housing targets although the City's Housing Business Plan identifies these targets, including housing options for seniors.

### 6.2 DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

The St. John's Development Regulations set out standards and land-use zones for the City. They implement the policies of the Municipal Plan and regulate the use of land and property throughout the City. The current Regulations were approved by Council in 1994 and the version discussed in this review was revised in June 2014.

Development Regulations can have a significant effect on the ability to develop appropriate forms of housing for senior citizens. The regulations and standards that would typically have an impact on the

provision of housing for seniors include those related to personal care homes and homes for the aged, subsidiary apartments/ secondary suites, parking standards, and accessibility standards.

### Personal Care Homes, Homes for the Aged and Seniors' Apartment Buildings

The Development Regulations have definitions for personal care homes, Homes for the Aged and seniors' apartment buildings. Seniors' apartment buildings are permitted in apartment zones and some commercial zones throughout the City. Homes for the Aged are permitted in institutional zones while personal care homes are permitted in residential mixed zones. Given the range of potential housing options for seniors and the focus on encouraging age-friendly housing as stated in the Municipal Plan, there may be some benefit in updating the definition of seniors housing and broadening zoning provisions that support aging in place and innovative age-friendly housing options.

### Subsidiary Apartments/ Secondary Suites

The current Development Regulations have a definition for a 'subsidiary apartment' which is a suite within a single detached dwelling whose floor area does exceed 40% of the gross floor area of the dwelling. This land use is permitted in most residential zones throughout the City.

### Parking Standards

Parking requirements may pose a barrier to the creation of affordable housing units as these may result in increased development or construction costs. They may also prevent the creation of housing in certain areas where parking is not readily available. In addition, seniors typically use cars less frequently than other households so reducing parking requirements for seniors' housing in certain designated areas may be an effective way to help reduce the cost of development and is an approach commonly used in communities across Canada.

Section 9 of the Development Regulations identifies the minimum number of required off-street parking spaces for different land uses including requirements for Homes for the Aged (no specific requirements; leaves it to the operator to determine need), personal care homes (1 space per 20 m<sup>2</sup> utilized as wards or suites) and seniors' apartment buildings (1 space per 20 m<sup>2</sup> or per self-contained unit). The regulations also allow Council to waive up to 50% of the required parking for a seniors' apartment building if the applicant is able to show that the parking requirements will be lower for the foreseeable future. In addition, 4% of every 24 spaces is required to be allocated for persons with disabilities.

There are also provisions for Council to waive parking requirements for certain residential developments, such as those for infill housing. Considering that the new Draft Municipal Plan promotes sustainable, walkable neighbourhoods and using public transit, there is an opportunity to develop alternative development standards and alternative parking requirements, particularly for housing for seniors and affordable housing developments.



## 6.3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING BUSINESS PLAN

The City's Housing Business Plan, *Creating Opportunities: Housing Our Community*, was created by the Mayor's Advisory Committee of Affordable Housing (MACAH) and adopted by Council in 2014. The Plan includes 17 actions, including conducting a seniors housing market survey.

This Housing Business Plan sets out a target of 500 affordable homes for the period 2014-2017. Of these 500 homes, there is a target to create 100 age-friendly homes which are affordable to households below 65% of the median income, including those with incomes below the median seniors income (\$26,500). The objectives associated with this target of 100 age-friendly homes include encouraging the creation of affordable housing for seniors in mixed use developments, encouraging innovation in age-friendly home design and construction and supporting community organizations that facilitate home sharing partnerships.

The Plan focuses on creating housing that is affordable to households who have incomes that are too high to qualify for subsidized housing but too low to afford market rate housing options. These households include seniors, working families, students, new Canadians, and persons with disabilities. While a definition of affordable housing is not included in the Draft Municipal Plan, the Housing Business Plan includes a definition of affordable housing which is housing that costs less than 30% of pre-tax household income.

Of the 17 actions identified in the Housing Business Plan, there are several actions that may be expanded to support the development of seniors housing options, including innovative options, as well as developing a better understanding of the seniors housing needs in the City. The actions that can be expanded to help address seniors housing needs include:

- Convene a partnership forum
- Convene an innovative housing workshop
- Align the City and NL Housing waiting lists and create a City-wide housing registry
- Adopt alternative development standards
- Create an inventory of land for potential redevelopment as housing
- Establish a housing catalyst fund
- Facilitate a housing design competition
- Promote mixed use development
- Promote an affordable condominium pilot project

## 6.4 SENIORS HOUSING FORUM REPORT

This report provides an overview of the results of the Seniors Housing Forum held on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2012. The purpose of the forum was to learn more about best practices for addressing the need for seniors housing options and to determine priorities for local action. The top three priorities that were identified were:

- Make serviced land available for seniors housing
- Explore options to support seniors to stay at home

- Encourage builders to create strategies for mixed use development for seniors

The following recommendations are the result of participant feedback:

- Create a comprehensive list of local land and buildings which have potential for redevelopment as affordable housing for seniors
- Convene a cross sectoral team to explore the most cost effective means for the City and its partners to promote healthy aging in place
- Convene a meeting of the City and members of the Canadian Home Builders Association – NL to create a mixed use development strategy for seniors housing
- Make follow-up on these action items a standing item on the agendas of the Mayor’s Advisory Committees on both Seniors and Affordable Housing.

## 6.5 INTEGRATED COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

The City prepared an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) as part of the Local Gas Tax Agreement between the City and the Provincial government. The ICSP is an addendum to the St. John’s Municipal Plan which has sustainability as its basis. The five pillars of sustainability identified in the St. John’s ICSP are: environmental, cultural, social, economic, and governance sustainability. The main sustainability outcomes that were identified as part of this process are: cleaner air, cleaner water, and reduced emissions of greenhouse gases.

## 6.6 SUMMARY OF POLICY FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

The preceding analysis shows that the policy framework in the City of St. John’s is generally supportive of the development of seniors housing options, including affordable housing options. While the new Draft Envision St. John’s Plan does not have specific policies for seniors housing, it encourages and supports the development of age-friendly housing. The draft Plan also encourages and supports the provision of affordable housing. In this regard, the City may want to consider going a step further by defining affordable housing and including the affordable housing targets identified in the City’s Housing Business Plan within the draft Municipal Plan.

The City’s Development Regulations have definitions and policies related to seniors housing but the City may want to consider updating these definitions and broadening zoning provisions to facilitate the development of ‘non-traditional’ and innovative housing options, including options for seniors. The various strategic documents reviewed show that the City recognizes that with limited resources and changing demographics, innovative solutions are required to meet the needs of the current and future residents of St. John’s. As such, the Development Regulations as well as development processes should reflect this by permitting more innovative developments without the need for lengthy and expensive planning applications.

## 7.0 Additional Best Practices

In addition to the housing options discussed in Section 5.0, there are a number of other best practices to consider in increasing housing options for seniors.

### Accessible Design

Accessible design and Universal Design concepts generally refer to the ability of something to be used by anyone, regardless of their physical abilities. Accessible design is usually associated with improving accessibility for those with disabilities, while Universal Design takes a broader, more inclusionary scope that is aimed at simply ensuring that there are no barriers for anyone – that the products and environments be usable by all people, without a need for adaptation or specialized design<sup>28</sup>. Both are aimed at removing barriers to daily life to ensure that individuals, with or without disabilities, can live better.

#### City of London's Facility Accessibility Design Standards

The City of London developed its own Facility Accessibility Design Standards in 2001 and has since updated it. The goal of these standards was to help City staff enhance accessibility beyond the minimal requirements of the Building Code when planning and designing municipal facilities. The document was created in consultation with stakeholders familiar with challenges faced by persons with disabilities, including the March of Dimes and the CNIB.

#### Visitable Housing Guidelines – Prince George, British Columbia

Visitable housing is housing that is designed to permit the safe use by visitors with mobility challenges. At a minimum, visitable housing has three accessible features: a zero-step entrance at the front, side or back entrance of the house; wider doorways on all main floor doors; and a half bath (i.e. toilet and sink) on the main floor that is wheelchair accessible.

With the help of an ACT grant, the City of Prince George initiated the Visitable Housing Project with the objective of compiling a comprehensive information package to assist the City in developing policies, guidelines or mandatory regulations to address visitable housing for new single and semi detached homes.

### Energy Efficient Housing

Building energy efficient homes or renovating existing homes to improve energy efficiency is not only good for the environment but it lowers housing maintenance costs. For example, a study by CMHC found that undertaking recommended energy-saving measures can result in energy savings of about 22% for a post-60s two-storey home or 41% for a pre-World War II home or 31% for a row house in the Atlantic

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<sup>28</sup> Centre for Universal Design (2008). About Universal Design. North Carolina State University. Accessed from [www.design.ncsu.edu](http://www.design.ncsu.edu).

provinces<sup>29</sup>. There are programs to assist households, particularly low income households, in Newfoundland and Labrador to undertake energy efficient retrofits to their homes.

#### **Residential Energy Efficiency Program (REEP) – Newfoundland and Labrador**

REEP is a provincial initiative administered by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC). Owners of single detached, semi detached and row housing and who have incomes of \$32,500 or less may be eligible for a one-time grant of up to \$3,000 per unit. Condo owners are not eligible for REEP assistance. The repairs and renovations that qualify for this program will be determined through an energy evaluation and include such things as basement and attic insulation and draft-proofing. A post-energy evaluation will also be required to confirm that identified work was completed.

#### **takeCHARGE Program – Newfoundland and Labrador**

Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro and Newfoundland Power joined together in 2008 to help raise awareness of the benefits of using energy wisely. There are several rebate programs associated with this program, including instant rebates for buying Energy Star<sup>R</sup> light bulbs and motion sensors, the Insulation Rebate Program, Thermostat Rebate Program, and Window Rebate Program.

In addition to retrofitting existing homes to make them more energy efficient, there are multiple advantages to building new homes which include energy-efficient measures. These advantages include lower energy costs, environmental benefits, and improved comfort for the occupant through improved air quality. While the cost of building energy-efficient housing can be up to 10% more than conventional housing, total energy usage can be decreased by up to 60% and the increased cost of construction is expected to pay for itself within five to eight years<sup>30</sup>.

#### **Sir Sam Steele Project – Winnipeg, Manitoba**

Habitat for Humanity Winnipeg purchased the former Sire Sam Steele school grounds with the goal of creating the most energy-efficient, sustainable and affordable housing development in Canada. The old school was sold and 32 affordable homes were built on the remaining school grounds. These homes were built to Manitoba Hydro Power Smart Gold standard and to standards set by the LEED program of the Canada Green Building Council. To minimize maintenance costs on the homes, all technology installed was easy to use and easily replaceable. Wider doorways were also incorporated for wheelchair accessibility to avoid the need for renovations in the future. In addition, the development is located on a major bus route, which will encourage the use of public transit.

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<sup>29</sup> CMHC (2004). Renovating for Energy Savings Case Studies. Accessed from: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/grho/reensa/index.cfm>

<sup>30</sup> CMHC (2014). Advantages and Issues: Building Energy Efficient Housing. Accessed from: [http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/afhoce/afhoce/afhostcast/afhoid/cote/buenefho/buenefho\\_002.cfm](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/afhoce/afhoce/afhostcast/afhoid/cote/buenefho/buenefho_002.cfm)

## Social Impact Bonds (SIB)

A social impact bond is a bond bought by investors who are interested in both a social and financial return. The investment capital is used to fund service providers, usually non-profit organizations, and the return on the bonds is determined by how successful the project is based on established outcome measures. The returns are paid out by governments based on what they save due to the program/project. The SIB model would be useful for programs/projects that would have the potential to put a dollar value on the social outcome by weighing the cost of prevention against the cost of remediation in the future. One issue with this model is the need for a standard, reliable set of metrics to quantify social impacts which would be the basis for returns on investments. This must be decided by all stakeholders before the program is started. In addition, this model would benefit larger non-profit organizations that have more capacity to undertake suitable initiatives. This model also puts pressure on non-profit organizations to bear even more responsibility for social programs that may have been the responsibility of governments in the past<sup>31</sup>. Social impact bonds may be one way to help fund affordable housing projects, including housing for seniors.

### **Sweet Dreams – City of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan**

Sweet Dreams is a supported living home for at-risk single mothers that was funded through a social impact bond agreement among the provincial government, Connexus Credit Union, Wally and Colleen Mah, and EGADZ.

EGADZ, the service provider, provides single mothers with children under eight years who are at risk of requiring services from Child and Family Services with affordable housing and support while the mothers complete their education, secure employment, or participate in pre-employment activities such as life skills training and parenting classes. The goal of the program is to help these families transition back into the community. Under the social impact bond agreement, EGADZ will receive \$1 million from private investors to deliver the program and achieve the desired social outcome, which is to keep children out of foster care. The Government of Saskatchewan will reimburse the investors based on the degree to which the social outcome is met. The degree to which the social outcome is met will be measured by an independent assessor at the end of the second, fourth and fifth years of the agreement.

The Sweet Dreams project is expected to result in savings to the provincial government of between \$540,000 and \$1.5 million over five years. These savings are based on the cost of children in care of the Minister of Social Services and do not include any potential savings related to health, criminal justice and future social assistance. The house for the project also received funding from the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (\$320,000), the City of Saskatoon (\$140,000) and other private donors (\$75,000).

The house is expected to accommodate between eight and eleven adults and eight to 15 children. Families will participate in the program for a minimum of two months to a maximum of two years, depending on the level of support required.

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<sup>31</sup> MaRS Centre for Impact Investing (2010). Social Impact Bonds. Accessed from [www.socialfinance.ca/social-impact-bonds](http://www.socialfinance.ca/social-impact-bonds).

## Social Enterprise

Social enterprise is a business engaging in the sale of goods and services to work toward a primarily social purpose. It is different from a conventional business in that its social mission is central to the business. In addition, it is unlike the work of a traditional non-profit organization because it directly engages in the market to provide a social benefit. The reasons for starting a social enterprise generally fit in three categories: market, mission and money<sup>32</sup>. “Market” refers to filling a community need that the market does not meet, such as providing jobs for individuals who face barriers to employment. “Mission” refers to advancing the mandate of an organization, such as utilizing current organizational assets to provide services to a new group of clientele. “Money” refers to generating revenue to provide more control over services, create profits to support an organization’s social mission, or diversify funding sources to improve financial stability. The benefits of a social enterprise go beyond the financial value of the goods and services it provides. It also generates positive social impact creating “blended value”.

While a social enterprise would not be able to fully fund an affordable housing project, it may be one way to make rents more affordable by providing additional revenue for operating expenses. A social enterprise may also help provide affordable support services to seniors with lower incomes who would still be able to live at home if they had access to some non-health related support services, such as housekeeping and snow clearing.

### **Career Development Services – Trail, British Columbia**

Career Development Services is a hub of social enterprises employing people who experience barriers to employment including people with mental illness. Their ventures include property maintenance services, the operation of a small concession stand, a wood shop, janitorial services, a thrift shop, and a landscaping contract with the City of Trail.

### **Katherine Sanford Housing Society – Vancouver, British Columbia**

The Katherine Sanford Housing Society (KSHS) works to provide supported housing to persons with mental illness and addictions. The organization manages 19 buildings with a total of 217 units and provides both short term emergency housing and longer term supported housing. For over ten years, the KSHS has been operating a for-profit property management company, Sanford Property Management, with the aim of generating a profit which can be transferred back to KSHS to support the organization’s mandates. While Sanford Property Management’s profits are only in the range of \$20,000 to \$25,000 and is a small amount of the overall annual operating budget of \$2.4 million, the benefits of the social enterprise have gone beyond the financial benefits. The venture has increased the staff’s capacity and fostered an entrepreneurial spirit.

## Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity builds and rehabilitates housing with the help of partner families. The homes are sold to the partner families at no profit and are financed with affordable, no-interest mortgages. The homeowner’s monthly mortgage payments go into a revolving fund, which is used to build more homes. Habitat for Humanity’s mode allows them to build homes with a smaller amount of government funding

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<sup>32</sup> Enterprising Non-Profits (2005). Canadian Social Enterprise Guide.



due to financial and in-kind donations and volunteer labour. This is one model that can be further explored to provide affordable ownership housing for seniors.

#### **Habitat for Humanity**

For example, a grant of \$200,000 for Habitat results in the creation of eight new homes and eight new tax revenue residential properties. Additionally, this would be a one-time funding requirement and would incur revenue as the Habitat family pays back their mortgage. Eight grants may result in the equivalent of an additional 56 grants over the next 27 years as \$52,000 revenue per year from principal payments multiplied by 27 years equals \$1.4 million. Thus, \$200,000 will actually build 64 new homes, create more than \$12.8 million in equity for 64 low income individuals or families and create property tax revenues from 64 homes.

### **Public Education and Awareness**

NIMBY, or not-in-my-backyard, can represent a significant roadblock to certain forms of development in communities. In some circumstances, NIMBYism has resulted in some projects being delayed and sometimes even cancelled. In many cases the opposition to a project is driven by unfounded fears based on erroneous assumptions, misconceptions and lack of information. Studies have shown that having open communications beginning in the early stages of the development of a project as well as developing good relationships with local politicians are important elements for success.

#### **Building “Yes”: A Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) Toolkit, Canadian Home Builders’ Association – Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, St. John’s Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness, and Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network**

This toolkit was developed to provide housing proponents with tools and best practices to support the development of different housing options through community engagement and education. The toolkit includes approaches for community engagement and communication strategies for housing proponents as well as for municipalities. It also includes Newfoundland and Labrador specific case studies. The section on responding to concerns addresses topics such as property values, crime and safety, increase in traffic and impact on the character of the neighbourhood.

## 8.0 Recommendations

### 8.1 STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

The demographic analysis and housing supply analysis show that the population of the City of St. John's is aging. The analysis also shows that while a proportion of the seniors population have assets and equity that can be used for more appropriate, age-friendly housing options, a large number of seniors have low, fixed incomes and would require financial subsidies and affordable housing options to be able to remain in the City. For seniors who do have equity and moderate to high incomes, the options, particularly those that would allow them to age in place, are very limited.

The housing supply analysis demonstrates that while there are options for seniors in the City, these are limited and do not meet the current or future need. The current housing stock also limits the ability of seniors to age in place as most dwellings are single detached homes that may not be age-friendly.

The policy framework analysis and stakeholder consultations show that while the City's policies are supportive of the provision of a range of housing options for its aging population, its regulations and processes may act as barriers to the development of housing, particularly affordable and non-traditional housing options.

Based on the preceding analyses, the research and consultations undertaken on the housing preferences of seniors, as well as a scan of best practices in the development of seniors housing, the following draft recommendations have been developed to enable the City to play a key role in meeting the identified needs and gaps.

#### Policy and Regulations

1. Consider including a definition of affordable housing in the Municipal Plan and identifying affordable housing targets such as those identified in the City's Housing Business Plan
2. Consider updating the definition of seniors housing and broadening zoning provisions to allow innovative, age-friendly housing options throughout the City
3. Consider pre-zoning lands that have been identified as suitable for residential development, particularly surplus lands suitable for multiple-dwelling developments, to reduce the time and cost involved with rezoning
4. Consider alternative development standards for affordable housing developments, including seniors housing projects
5. Explore the feasibility of streamlining planning and building permit approval processes for affordable housing projects, including seniors housing projects

#### Programs, Initiatives and Funding

6. As part of the inventory of land for potential redevelopment for housing that was identified as an action in the Housing Business Plan, identify suitable land or existing, underutilized buildings, such as City-owned or provincially-owned institutional buildings, that may be appropriate for seniors or mixed-age housing and share this information with the development community
7. Consider providing incentives, such as waiving all or a portion of development and building permit fees for developments that increase the supply of affordable rental housing for seniors
8. Consider identifying funding, resources and incentives to support a seniors housing pilot project



9. Consider providing incentives, such as waiving all or a portion of development and building permit fees, for residential developments that go beyond the requirements of the National Building Code with regard to incorporating Universal Design and energy-efficient features

### Communication, Education and Advocacy

10. As part of the workshop on innovative housing identified as an action in the Housing Business Plan, include education on innovative housing forms for seniors, including shared ownership and life lease housing options
11. Advocate to the provincial government to identify provincially-owned land that can be used for residential development and to provide this land at minimum cost to private and not-for-profit developers developing affordable housing, including affordable seniors housing
12. As part of an education campaign, increase awareness in the private development sector of the range of housing needs in the City of St. John's and the options that should be considered to help meet these needs by sharing the results of this Seniors Research Project
13. As part of an education campaign, share information on social impact bonds with community agencies and the private sector, including seniors
14. As part of an education campaign, work with the Seniors Resource Centre and other community agencies on initiatives to increase awareness of grants and funding available for home modifications to increase accessibility and energy efficiency and the application process
15. As part of an education campaign, work with the Seniors Resource Centre and other community agencies to increase awareness and develop material on the different home care options available to facilitate aging in place

### Collaboration and Partnerships

16. Work with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation and other affordable housing providers to establish a centralized waiting list for affordable housing in the City, including a centralized application process for these units
17. Consider partnering with Habitat for Humanity to build affordable ownership housing options specifically for seniors through financial or in-kind contributions
18. Encourage and support community organizations in the development of social enterprises that provide services and supports for seniors by facilitating partnerships and providing information as part of an education campaign
19. Encourage and facilitate partnerships between community organizations and post-secondary institutions to identify opportunities where students and recent graduates can provide support services to seniors as part of their training or requirements for certification
20. Explore the feasibility of working with community agencies and private investors to fund an affordable seniors housing pilot project through the use of social impact bonds

## 8.2 SHORT LIST OF HOUSING OPTIONS

The City of St. John's is urban in character and relatively built up with only a small proportion of vacant land designated for residential purposes. As such, any new housing options for seniors should be able to fit into the character of existing neighbourhoods. It is also important to consider reusing any underutilized or vacant buildings or land for the development of seniors housing. This approach will not

only build servicing efficiencies and support the objectives of the draft Municipal Plan to focus growth along transit corridors, it also ensures that seniors housing is near services and amenities.

The housing options identified in Section 5.0 of this report are all relevant for the City of St. John's and should be further explored as part of the goal of providing a wide range of seniors housing options. There are some options that may be more feasible, particularly when considering a seniors housing pilot project for the City. These options are discussed below.

### Mainstream Rental Housing

A mid-sized rental building with accessibility/ Universal Design features and market rate rents is one model that can be further explored to increase the supply of seniors housing in the City. While residency in the building would not be limited to seniors, having accessibility features would allow residents to age at home even as their needs change. This model would address the need for rental housing options for seniors who have moderate incomes and/or equity in the current homes and are able to pay market rates.

### Affordable Ownership Housing for Seniors

An affordable ownership project developed either through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity or with a private developer as part of the affordable condominium pilot project identified as one of the actions in the City's Housing Business Plan can be further explored to increase the supply of affordable ownership options for seniors. The project can be ground level housing or units in a multi-unit building. It is important to ensure that maintenance of common elements, including yards and walkways, is provided.

### Non-Profit Co-operative Rental Project

This model would increase the supply of affordable rental housing for seniors in the City while providing them with security of tenure that may not be present in a private rental project. It would also provide residents with more control over their housing as decisions about the co-op would be made collectively. The capital cost of the project can be partly funded through social impact bonds. Examining the feasibility of using existing surplus or underutilized institutional buildings should be explored to reduce capital costs. Social enterprise initiatives operated as part of the co-op may also help with overall operating costs, thus ensuring sustainability for the project.

While this project may not have support services, ensuring that the building includes accessibility/ Universal Design features would allow seniors to stay in their units longer. Seniors can arrange to have home care services through an outside agency as their needs change.

### Affordable Supportive Housing

An affordable supportive housing project developed in partnership with different levels of government, the private sector and the not-for-profit sector is another model to be explored to increase the supply of affordable housing for seniors in the City. This may also partially address the need for long term care and personal care home beds as demonstrated by the waiting lists for these facilities.

The capital cost of the project can be partly funded through social impact bonds. Examining the feasibility of using existing surplus or underutilized institutional buildings should be explored to reduce capital costs.

Social enterprise initiatives may help with operating costs, thus ensuring affordability. The cost of supports should be separate from the cost of accommodation. This will allow residents to stay in their units longer even as their health care needs change. Reusing an existing building in an already established neighbourhood would not only ensure that seniors are close to services and amenities but it would also increase efficiencies with regard to providing support services to residents in the building as well as those in the surrounding area.

## 8.3 MOVING A PILOT FORWARD

While the four short-listed models presented above would have, based on the work undertaken for this project, the most impact in helping to address the current seniors housing needs, the City may want to undertake further assessment of the feasibility of selecting a non-profit rental housing co-operative or affordable supportive housing project as a pilot project.

The project can be developed in partnership with a not-for-profit organization, a private developer, the provincial and/or federal government, and seniors who may be future residents of the project. The next steps for the City would be to host a workshop or forum to increase awareness of the need for the project and identify potential partners. The City would also have to undertake a more in-depth study of the financial feasibility of the selected model and to determine what resources, including in-kind and financial, it would be able to allocate to the project.

Once a model is selected for a pilot project and partners have been selected, there are a number of significant milestones in moving a project forward from its initial concept through to construction and operation. The following steps provide a brief overview of the key activities to be undertaken:

1. Concept Development – Establishing an initial project team, defining an approach to development and the involvement of potential partners including identifying the owner/operator of the project, and creating a working concept
2. Securing a site for the project – identifying a suitable site that would be available at little or no cost for the project
3. Proof of Concept – Establishing the demand for the project, refining the working concept, identifying development and procurement options
4. Preliminary Business Plan – Testing the development potential and financial feasibility, determining the ability to obtain funding, and assessing capacity to sustain the project over the long term
5. Initial Funding Commitment – Securing financial resources to move the project through the pre-development phase and finding a project site/ location
6. Pre-Development Activities – Undertaking due diligence, required technical studies and formal design work, gathering resources or financing to construct the project
7. Construction – Construction would proceed through a predetermined procurement process
8. Pre-Occupancy Planning – Organizational preparation for operation of the project, transition of financing
9. Post-Occupancy Wrap-Up – Completing construction-related matters with the project / development team.

Moving from the concept of a project through design, construction and operation is a progressive process with multiple decision points along the way. To help ensure project success, there are a number of critical elements that can help minimize issues. These include the following:

- Clear and articulated project vision – Establishing a clear project scope/ vision at the outset to guide the process and ensuring that the entire project team is aware of this vision
- Experienced development team – Having a team that is knowledgeable is vital to the success of a project
- Dedicated project sponsor – An experienced and reliable project partner is critical to long term success
- Secured location / facility – Having a site or facility can significantly reduce development times
- Solid business case demonstrating feasibility – Rigorous financial testing using realistic assumptions to demonstrate the viability and sustainability of the project
- Funding and/or financing – Having sufficient resources for pre-development activity and committed funding or financing to complete the project before starting construction is essential

To be able to move forward on a viable seniors housing pilot project, the City would need to:

- Identify the scope of the seniors pilot project it wishes to pursue and define the City's role
- Establish financial authorities and tools as well as committing financial and/or in-kind resources for the project
- Seek out interested not-for-profit and private sector partners to advance the proposed pilot project through to development
- Create an attractive development environment for appropriate seniors housing projects

# Appendix– Consultations

## STAKEHOLDERS

### Seniors Housing Providers Focus Group Participants and Interviewees

1. Office for Aging and Seniors – Pamela Dawe
2. Newfoundland Labrador Housing – Valerie Penton Power
3. Seniors Resource Centre – Michele LeDevehat (focus group and interview)
4. Seniors Resource Centre – Jillian Freeman
5. Home Share NL – Frankie Aylward, Sharri Breen
6. St. Luke’s Homes – Robert Sexty
7. Tiffany Village – Pat Evans, Edwina Kirkland
8. Northern Property REIT – Melvin Nash
9. Institute for the Advancement of Public Policy Inc. – Colleen Hanrahan
10. Community Services Council – Ruth MacDonald, Ron Day
11. NHCC – Denise Miller
12. Coalition on Diversity – Barbara Burnaby

### Local Developers/ Builders Focus Group Participants and Interviewees

1. ND Dobbin – Gail Boggan (focus group and interview)
2. Donovan Homes – Jack Jardine
3. CHBA – NL – Victoria Belbin (interview)

### Seniors Focus Group Participants and Interviewees

1. Lorraine Best
2. Sharon Callahan
3. Anne Marie Moore
4. John Eddy
5. Sharon Keough
6. Anne Keough
7. Pauline Puddicome
8. Brenda Carter
9. Betty Lou Kennedy
10. Allan Miller (interview)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Discussion Guide for Housing and Support Service Providers Focus Group

1. In your opinion, what are the key housing issues and challenges faced by seniors in the City of St. John’s?
2. Are the housing and support needs of seniors being met? If not, what are the gaps?
3. What strategies and opportunities can you suggest to help address these gaps?

- *Separate long term and short term strategies if possible*
- 4. What are the barriers to the creation of affordable rental and ownership housing options, including innovative, age-friendly and accessible housing options, for seniors in the City?
- 5. Can you think of opportunities, through changes in the City's bylaws or other policies, which may stimulate the creation of additional affordable rental and ownership housing?
- 6. What other strategies or actions can the City undertake to encourage the development of a range of housing options for seniors in St. John's?

### Discussion Guide for Local Developers/ Builders Focus Group

1. In your opinion, what are the key housing issues and challenges faced by seniors in the City of St. John's?
2. How can the City facilitate the development of age-friendly, accessible and innovative seniors housing options?
  - *Probe for both affordable housing options and market rate options*
3. What key factors should be in place to encourage the development of both rental and ownership housing for seniors?
  - *Probe for financial incentives, development policies (by-laws, alternative development standards), etc. that would facilitate developing seniors housing in the City*
4. If you were considering another project, what type of information would you need to make a decision on where to locate?
5. Are there opportunities for partnerships among the private sector, non-profit sector and different levels of government to develop housing options for seniors? If yes, what can the City do to facilitate these partnerships?
6. Do you have suggestions for how the City can encourage developers to build seniors housing options, including innovative housing options?

### Discussion Guide for Seniors Focus Group

1. What do you think are the key housing issues and challenges you face as a senior in the City of St. John's?
2. Do you have suggestions for how these issues and challenges can be addressed?
3. What type of home do you currently live in?
  - Probe: single detached, semi, town/row, condo, other
  - Probe: rental or ownership
4. Do you plan to retire in the City of St. John's? If yes, what type of home would you like to live in?
  - Probe: current home, sell and move to rental, sell and buy a condo, etc.
5. Would you consider modifications to your home to be able to stay in your current home?
  - Probe:
    - i. What kind of modifications would they be willing to make?
    - ii. Are they aware of government grants/funding for modifications?
6. If you moved, what would be the reasons for your moving?

- Probe: downsizing, more suitable/accessible housing, difficulty maintaining current housing/garden, decline in personal health, decline of health of spouse/partner, to be closer to family/friends, to have better access to health care services, more affordable housing, etc.
7. What type of home would you be willing to move to?
    - Probe: personal care home, group home/shared home with other seniors, apartment with only seniors or apartment with mixed ages, condominium, single detached house, townhouse/row, semi, retirement home, secondary suite/ garden suite close to family/friends
  8. What type of services/amenities would you like to have in your home as you age?
  9. How can the City encourage the development of a range of housing options for seniors?
  10. Do you have any other comments you would like to share with us?