



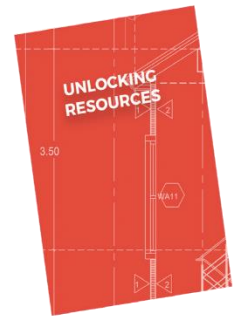
City of St. John's Affordable Housing Strategy Annual Update- November 2019

The City of St. John's approved the Affordable Housing Strategy, 2019-2028, in November 2018. The strategy will address the municipality's housing needs by working in step with partners, stakeholders and residents to create and maintain safe, suitable and affordable housing throughout the city.

The following is an annual update on the Affordable Housing Strategy's main areas of work.

Unlocking Resources

Identify and draw on the City's resources and assets to advance housing initiatives and create new opportunities.



- Create an Interdepartmental Committee to coordinate internal components of this strategy

An Interdepartmental Committee has been established to lead internal components of the Affordable Housing Strategy. Representation includes Transportation, Communications, Family & Leisure Services, Planning, Regulatory Services and Housing. Additional Divisions are brought in as necessary. The committee meets on a quarterly basis.

- Continue to create a list of city-owned vacant land and buildings and evaluate the inventory for potential redevelopment as affordable housing

The Legal Department has been working with Non-Profit to identify parcels of City owned land for potential projects. Four parcels of land have been identified as viable options for redevelopment as affordable housing.

Recommendations were presented to Council on one parcel of land- 28 Eric Street. A letter of Intent with Habitat for Humanity has been formalized which outlines the intended gifting of the property subject to successful rezoning, development approval and collaboration with the Eric Street Community Garden located on this site to either leave the garden undisturbed or to incorporate the garden into the design. The garden is to remain on this property owned by the City and retain open space zoning.

- Work with the Provincial and Federal Governments on identifying land and surplus buildings in St. John's

The City of St. John's provided support to the Federal government in the assessment of parcels of land located in Pleasantville under the Federal Lands Initiative.



Building Homes

Increase the stock and sustainability of Affordable rental and home ownership opportunities.

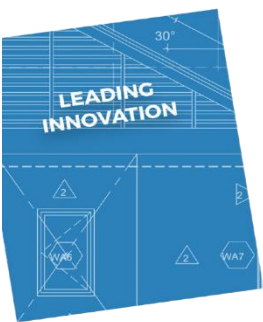
- Make creating successful tenancies a priority

The Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Tenant document developed by the City and our affordable housing partners, has been updated by to reflect the Residential Tenancies Act changes that came into effect in 2019. The document is posted on the City website and was widely circulated through the help of our partners. Efforts are underway to translate this document into other predominant languages.

- Focus on producing sustainable rental opportunities

There is continued work with NL Housing on their Rent Supplement Inspection Program. The Department of Regulatory Services provides inspections for NLHC rent supplement units upon move in and with any change in tenancy. The Dept. of Regulatory Services is now also inspecting all private emergency shelters every 6 months and nonprofit emergency shelters annually. They also provide the inspection for all new shelters as they are established.

A 'Safe and Healthy Housing' presentation has been developed to engage service providers in a collaborative approach to address inadequate housing in St. John's. The first session was delivered in September and outreach efforts are underway for presentation bookings for 2020.



Leading Innovation

Inspire and facilitate creativity in affordable housing projects.

- Continue to offer the Housing Catalyst Fund grants yearly for affordable housing projects

Four Housing Catalyst Grants were awarded in 2019

- ✓ First Light NL: Concept and consultation work to develop affordable supportive housing
- ✓ Fresh Fruit & Architecture: Creating a catalogue of building envelope assemblies to support reduced cost and increased energy efficiency in affordable housing development
- ✓ Future Housing Co-operative Society Limited: Energy efficiency upgrade for affordable housing units
- ✓ Yorabode: Design work for the construction of affordable rental dwellings

Applications for the 2020 Housing Catalyst Fund grants are being accepted until the last Friday of November.

- Facilitate an Energy Efficiency Pilot Project, bringing partners together on a collaborative project that is aimed at reducing power costs and increasing affordability.

An energy audit was conducted on a vacant Non-Profit unit targeted for an energy retrofit project. Energy upgrades are now beginning to be implemented.



Revitalizing Policy

Create municipal policy and plans that strive to meet affordable housing needs of residents

- Support building a diverse and inclusive housing stock.
- Support intensification and mixed-use developments throughout the City of St. John's

Envision St. John's, prepared as a result of a comprehensive review, will replace the current St. John's Municipal Plan (2003) and Development Regulations (1994). The Envision St. John's Development Regulations were presented at Council on March 4, 2019 for adoption-in-principle. With the formal adoption-in-principle, the draft Municipal Plan and Development Regulations documents have been sent to Municipal Affairs for provincial review and release.

The following is reflected in Envision St. John's:

- ✓ Allow subsidiary dwelling units in as many residential zones as possible
 - ✓ Incorporate provisions for tiny homes
 - ✓ Support intensification and mixed-use development
 - ✓ Allow small apartment buildings in some residential zones
 - ✓ Make best use of land base to provide affordable housing
 - ✓ In new neighbourhoods, plan development around the parks and open space network, with an emphasis on compact, walkable residential neighbourhoods, with a mix of uses and employment areas along primary transportation corridors
 - ✓ Continue to require new developments to consult with the St. John's Transportation Commission regarding public transit infrastructure requirements.
- Provide incentives for affordable housing developments.

Parking Requirements: when affordable housing applications are received, flexibility for parking requirements is considered on a case by case basis.

Municipal Fees: an exemption of municipal fees is given to all registered charities. The exemption has expanded in 2019 to include private developers of affordable housing who have confirmed:

- ✓ 'Investment in Affordable Housing' funding from NLHC
- ✓ 'National Housing Co-Investment' funding under the National Housing Strategy
- ✓ 'Federal Lands Initiative' investment under the National Housing Strategy
- ✓ 'Innovation Fund' funding under the National Housing Strategy

Property Taxes: registered charities are exempt from municipal real property taxes where the property is held and used by the charity.

- Advocacy effort

An advocacy letter was prepared for Federal Election candidates urging them to make affordable housing a campaign priority. Specifically, to include within their campaign the need to increase access to capital for new social and nonprofit housing developments, provide ongoing funding for repairs and increase federal investments to social supports and supportive housing solutions.



Cultivating Partnership

Work with all levels of government, private and community partners to address housing issues, support partner efforts and work collectively to create solutions.

- Continue efforts to align and combine the City of St. John's Non-Profit Housing and NL Housing applications and wait lists.

The City of St. John's had several conversations with CRA re. granting direct access to Option Cs for applicants and tenants. CRA requires legislation that states that we can collect this information. The City of St. John's Act that governs the municipal affairs of St. John's does not reference setting rents, collecting rent or verifying income. We are advocating for this to be addressed in the review of the St. John's Act that is currently underway.

- Continue to act as an affordable housing facilitator.

The affordable housing facilitator continues to share housing related research, contacts and supports within the community. The Affordable Housing Newsletter continues and is released approximately every two months.

The Affordable Housing Working Group continues to meet every 2-3 months to inform priorities and actions under the Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028.

- Continue to support the work of End Homelessness St. John's (EHSJ)

The Community Entity (CE) status has been held by the City of St. John's since 2012 and the City has actively been supporting EHSJ in 2019 as they transition to their own non-profit entity, to take place in 2020. The City of St. John's provides EHSJ with considerable in-kind support including free office space, human resources support, legal support, support with purchasing and procurement, and financial/administrative support. Annually since 2016, the City provided a cash contribution of \$100,000.

The City of St. John's is a member of the Board of Directors and the Community Advisory Board that governs EHSJ work. The City provided input in the 2014-2019 Community Plan Assessment and participated in consultations to guide the development of the new EHSJ Community Plan through Reaching Home.

- Support our community partners as they work towards building affordable home ownership opportunities in the community (ex. Habitat for Humanity and NL Housing's First Time Home Buyer's program).

A letter of Intent with Habitat for Humanity has been formalized which outlines the intended gifting of a property subject to successful rezoning, development approval and collaboration with the Community Garden located on site.

- Work with partners to improve transportation systems as they relate to housing affordability

The City continues to engage the Provincial Government and neighboring municipalities in discussions to develop and improve the regional transportation system so that affordable housing units can be accessed, particularly via public transit.



Informing Action

Raise awareness and educate the impact housing needs has on our community's health, sustainable growth and economic security.

- Increase the understanding of affordable housing, housing need, and associated best practices

Innovative Partnership and Development Forum – February 2019

An Affordable Housing Forum was held on innovative partnership and development. The Keynote speaker was Natalie Voland, President of Gestion Immobilière Quo Vadis Inc. based in Quebec. The affordable housing context, challenges being faced to move projects forward or for partnerships to emerge, and creative solutions were discussed. Approximately 65 attended representing a mix of government, community sector, service providers and private industry.

Housing Need in St. John's – October 2019

A presentation was held on October 2019 on Housing Need in St. John's and new research and practices to respond to housing trends. Data, findings and analysis associated with the City of St. John's Housing Needs Assessment Report were presented. Mechanisms to encourage aging in place and recent CMHC research and resources were also presented. Approximately 75 attended representing a mix of government, community sector, service providers and private industry.

Film Screening & Panel Discussion – November 2019

On November 19th The City of St. John's & End Homelessness St. John's are hosting a screening of "Push" a film by Fredrik Gertten, that follows Leilani Farha, the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, as she's traveling the globe, trying to understand who's being pushed out of the city and why. The film will be followed by a panel discussion about the local housing sector.

Affordable Housing Forum – November 2019

On November 20th The City of St. John's in partnership with CMHC will host its annual Housing Forum. This year, the forum is titled 'Finding the Right Mix: Projects, Partnerships and Funding' and will include Keynote speaker Greg Dewling, CEO of Capital Region Housing, to speak on their new project and approach integrating affordable housing into market housing in Alberta. Additional topics include: Mixed income housing models, revitalizing spaces and partnerships and 'Affordable Housing Building Blocks'.

- Discourage Not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) attitudes

Work has begun to develop a social marketing strategy that addresses and alleviates concerns related to affordable housing developments. A social marketing campaign has been created to tackle the fears associated with affordable housing through increased information (awareness campaigns, success stories, etc.) and focusing on the benefits of affordable housing. A communications sub-committee has been struck to guide this work. Year 1 of this campaign will use short videos with inanimate objects that are common to every home. The script is aimed at producing self-reflection for the viewer to chip away at the perceptions of affordable housing.

The Affordable Housing Working Group has begun to update the 'Building "Yes": A Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) Toolkit' with current case studies and an updated resource list. This work is anticipated to be completed before the end of 2019. A link to the updated NIMBY Toolkit will be placed under publications on the City of St. John's website.

- Conduct recurrent housing needs assessments updates every 3 years

Housing Needs Assessment Report: In conjunction with the development of the Affordable Housing Strategy, a Housing Needs Assessment was completed for the City of St. John's. The scope of the study included researching and analyzing information from a wide variety of sources, conducting stakeholder interviews, and conducting a community survey. Developed with the help and input from many stakeholders, the Housing Needs Assessment also includes a "Non-Market Housing Inventory." The inventory includes important information on shelters, transitional housing, supported and affordable housing, as well as planned future projects.

Internal Non-Market Housing Mapping Tool: Using the data from the non-market housing inventory for St. John's, an internal urban planning tool was created. Housing was mapped across St. John's and overlaid with transportation routes and proposed intensification areas. This tool (currently in draft form) will help identify how public transportation routes interact with non-market housing inventory, so that the City of St. John's can make recommendations for improved service. It can also be used to help identify and address gaps in inventory of non-market housing.

- Offer Innovative housing workshops where local experts can share practical and innovative housing designs that meet emerging market needs.

A workshop series outline has been drafted and partnership opportunities are being explored to deliver sessions in 2020.