



# Municipality of the District of St. Mary's

Committee of The Whole (COTW) Meeting

Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023

*We acknowledge that we are gathering in Mi'kma'ki the traditional unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people.*

## 1. Meeting, Date & Time:

Warden Wier called the COTW Meeting of the St. Mary's Municipal Council to order on Tuesday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 4:00 pm in the Council Chambers, Sherbrooke, N.S.

## 2. Attending:

Warden Wier	Councillor Malloy
Deputy Warden Fuller	Councillor Zinck
Councillor Baker	
Councillor Mailman	

## Absent with Regrets:

Councillor Harpell

## Also Attending:

Marissa Jordan, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
Marian Fraser, Director of Finance (DOF)  
Mallory Fraser, Municipal Clerk

## 3. Additions to the Agenda:

- There were no additions to the agenda.

## 4. Approval of the Agenda:

*On motion of Deputy Warden Fuller, and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approved the agenda as presented.*

***Motion approved.***

## 5. Approval of Minutes:

*On motion of Councillor Baker, and seconded by Councillor Malloy, Council approved the minutes of the COTW Meeting held Wednesday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.*

***Motion approved.***

## 6. Business Arising from the Minutes:

- Staff will be ordering no parking signs for Main Street this week.

## 7. Presentation

### a. Guysborough County Housing Network – Nancy O'Regan

- See the attached presentation.

## 8. Correspondence

### a. Nova Scotia Museum System – Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage, Pat Dunn

- Correspondence was received from the Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage, Patt Dunn in response to the letter sent regarding funding for provincial museums. The correspondence informed Council of a permanent increase to locally managed Nova Scotia museum sites' annual operating grants in the 2023-24 budget.

## 9. Other Matters of Business:

### a. Active Living Strategy

- See the attached staff report.
- Changes to the document include more prescriptive recommendations.

*On the recommendation of Councillor Baker, and seconded by Councillor Zinck, Council approved the Active Living Strategy.*

***Recommendation adopted.***

### b. Internal Recreation Outlook

- The Director of Community Development & Recreation provided an update on upcoming projects and events.
- Staff are working on drafting a Strategic Plan. This is a result of a recommendation within the REC Master Plan. The Strategic Plan will be an internal document based on the Rec Master Plan and the Active Living Plan to guide staff on projects for this fiscal year.
- Staff hosted a stakeholder meeting in April for a community update on the plans. In the future, this meeting will be held in the late fall. The information gathered from this meeting will be used for strategic planning which will be used for the annual department budget.
- Summer Day Camps are coming up. Registration is open and closes on June 1<sup>st</sup>. Due to limited staff funding a cap has been set for the number of allowed participants. This cap has already been exceeded. There has been some registration of youth that reside outside of the Municipality. The Department has never had to set parameters for who can attend based on where they live. Staff is trying to accommodate full-time use due to the lack of available childcare throughout the Municipality. Staff are trying to be creative with staffing capacity and are seeking more resources for funding for staffing. Camps will start on July 4<sup>th</sup> and will be based out of the Recplex. Camps will include indoor and outdoor activities. The Active Living Coordinator has been working on programming to hit physical activity guidelines for youth and is including nature-based programming.
- The Before and After Program is ending at the end of June. This Program is offered through the Municipality based on funding from the Province. This year has been the most successful year to date, with 42 children are registered. There is a daily cap of 24 kids per day. This cap has not been met. There are usually anywhere from 10-20 kids per day. The Province is willing to fund the Program for the next academic year. There is no cap on how many children can be registered, and the program is run based on daily numbers. There has been a lot of positive feedback from the school administration, parents, and participants. There is great staff running the program.
- Canada Day is coming up and is the biggest event of the year. Planning for the event is well underway. The event will include traditional activities such as the street parade, family fun and games in Sherbrooke Village, bouncy houses, a kid's play corner, food vendors, and live entertainment. New this year is a reptile show, a St. Mary's wide scavenger hunt, and staff are hoping to have more vendors onsite this year. Staff is hoping to partner with the Sherbrooke Saturday Market to sponsor activities occurring during the market. Staff will also be reaching out to organizations outside Sherbrooke to see if they need any support for their events.

- Council thanked Kerri for inviting them to participate in the book donation to Saint Mary's Academy / Education Centre. Seven boxes of books were donated and there are six full boxes left for community library boxes.
- Council asked about the expected timeline for the Community Library Boxes. The successful proponent is ill. Staff may be looking at re-issuing the request for proposals. Included in the call for proposals is a recommended blueprint and the materials required. It is the staff's goal to have a library box in 8 different communities and would like to have them installed this summer.

c. Source Water Protection Plan Advisory Committee Policy

- Council discussed the draft Source Water Protection Plan Advisory Committee Policy.

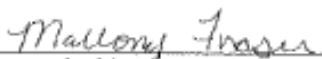
*On the recommendation of Deputy Warden Fuller, and seconded by Councillor Baker, Council approved the Source Water Protection Plan Advisory Committee Policy.*

***Recommendation adopted.***

**Adjournment**

*On motion of Councillor Mailman, and seconded by Councillor Malloy, there being no further matters of business, Council adjourned at 5:25 pm.*

***Motion approved.***



Recorded By  
Mallory Fraser, Municipal Clerk



Approved By  
Warden Wier



# Project Update

## May 2023

*Supported by*

*The Community Health Board Wellness Fund Project Update*

# Land Acknowledgement



We acknowledge that we are gathered today in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. We are grateful for the Peace and Friendship treaties and strive for reconciliation in our work together.

We would also like to recognize that Nova Scotia is home to over 50 African Nova Scotian communities, who's culture, heritage and histories have been and remain a key part of this province for more than 400 years. For generations, African Nova Scotians have experienced inequities due to systemic racism in Nova Scotia and still do today. We strive to listen to and learn from the first-voice perspectives of Black Nova Scotians, amplify Black voices, support Black communities, and address inequities and injustices in our work together.

# GCHN Research Project Overview

- Partnered with StFX Coady Institute and University College of Cape Breton- funding from CLARI
- Community Consultation Process – identified factors impacting housing and priority housing needs
- Interviews with Realtors
- Statcan Data Analysis – 2016-2021 comparison, aging population, older housing stock
- Input from service providers on housing needs – learned about intersection of multiple issues that impact or are impacted by poverty, racism, bias, food insecurity, violence, addictions and mental health
- Service based count – small sample
- Landlord and Tenant Surveys – lack of data

# New StatCan Data Released

- New housing related data released in September 2022
- Catherine Leviten Reid and Jean McQueen, Public Health have created an infographic (emailed separately)

## Highlights

- Higher level of residents in core housing need
- Older housing stock, in need of repair, owned by older residents
- Guysborough County has a lower % of dwellings occupied by usual residents compared to province
- Higher percentage of owner-homes than rentals 88% (67%NS)

# Community Consultation Process

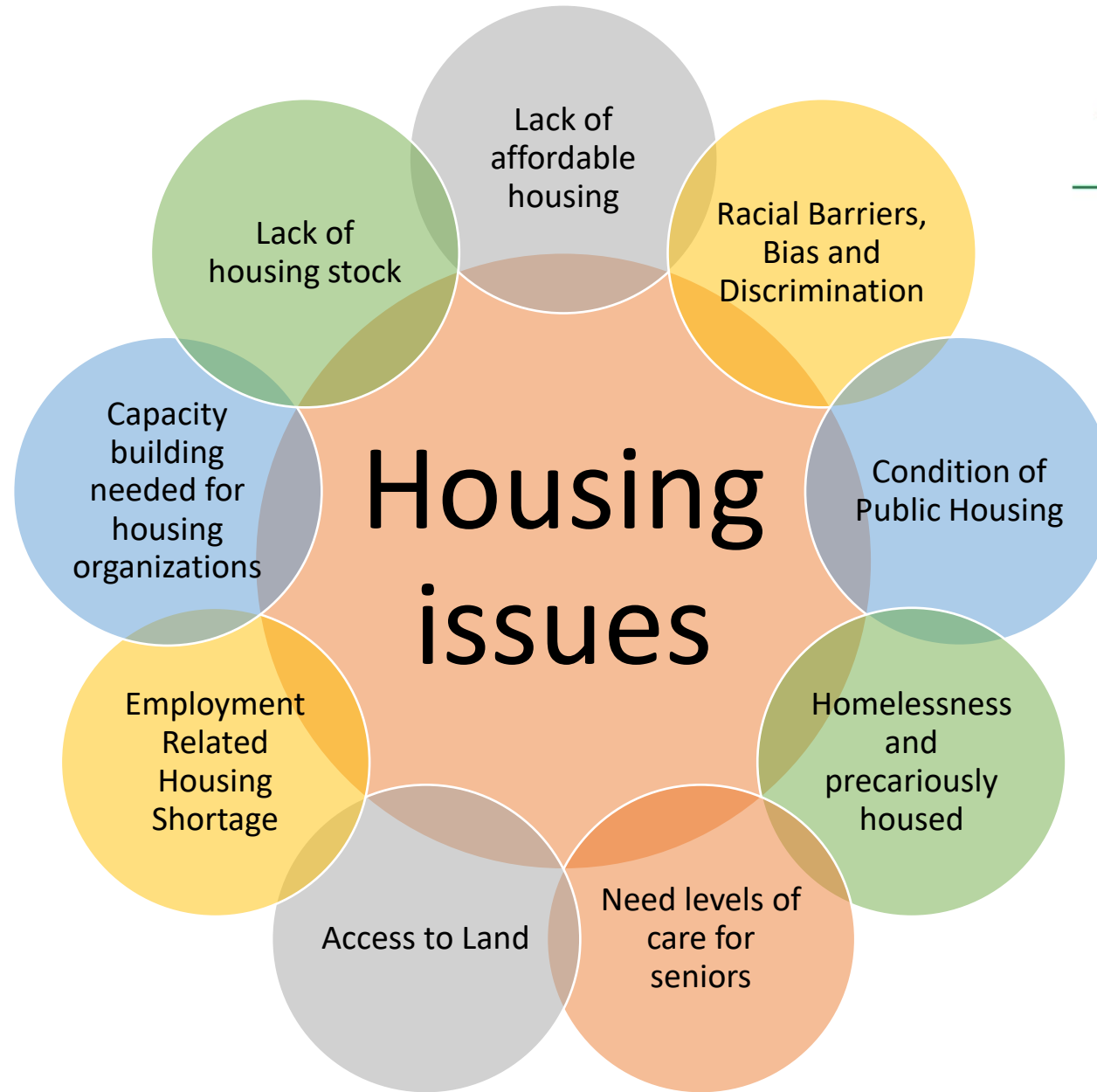
- Six community consultations between April and June 2022 – approx. 70 participants
- Asked community to identify housing issues, impacts
- Looked for solutions
  - Individually
  - Community level
  - Municipal
  - Provincial
  - Federal





# What are the Housing Issues Facing Our Communities?





# Lack of Affordable Housing



## ANS Communities

- Houses are not affordable to build (or rent)
- Low employment rates
- Cost of living continues to go up
- Single people without children experience additional barriers to getting housing – preference often given to families

# More.....Lack of Affordable Housing



## District of St Mary's

- lack of affordable housing for seniors and families
- Lack of housing for seniors and families and persons with disabilities, no small options homes, shelters

## Guysborough

- Low-income family rentals not available
- Affordability for new homeowners
- Affordable, accessible housing for seniors to support aging in place

## Canso

- Affordability, No money to afford housing purchases
- With seasonal work, incomes are lower

# Employment Related Housing Needs



## **St. Mary's**

- Housing needed for health care staff and economic development

## **Guysborough**

- Healthcare staff, coming here to work and no housing
- No housing leads to more travelling healthcare staff, not permanent residents
- Young professionals migrate out because no place to stay and no social/recreational options
- No homes for professionals

## **Canso**

- Housing needed to recruit and maintain health care professionals

# Access to Land



- Land titles are unsettled (ANS communities)
- Land use and access
- Amount of Crown land that's not available to public for development
- No land available – protected land use, planning limits

# Homelessness and Precariously Housed



- There are people living rough in many areas of the county
- Some living in tents, or campers
- Not typical or visible homelessness, many live with parents or couch surf between friends

# Other issues identified



## Bias and discrimination in tenant selection

### Guysborough

- Discrimination against DCS clients looking for rental housing

## Care For Aging Seniors

- No facility for people to go for those that need different levels of care



# Mental Health/Social Impact



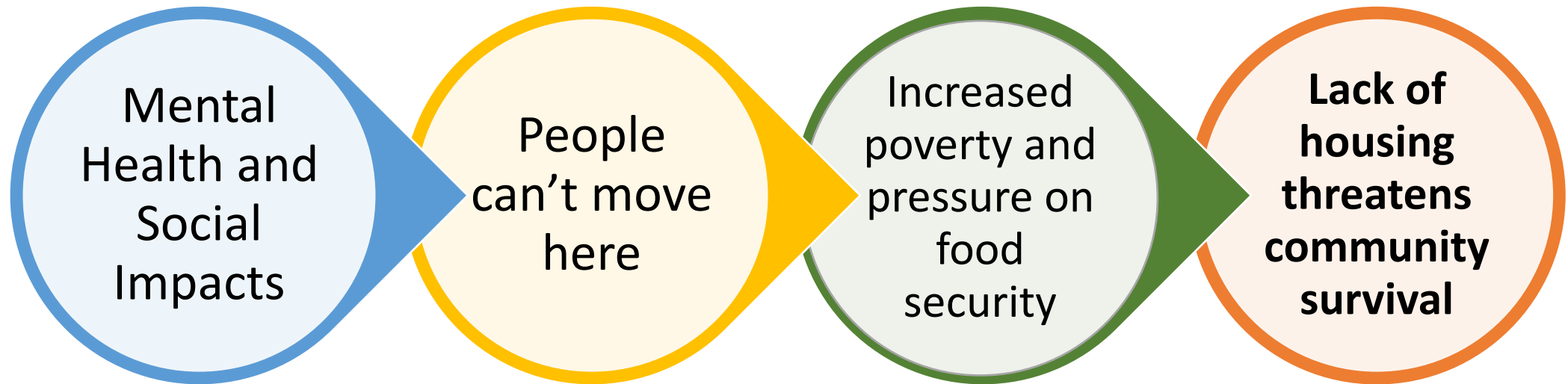
- Stress/mental health affected by searching for housing, or being precariously housed
- Anxiety, displeasure, lack of information, lack of process
- Lack of housing impacts by causing constant stress
- People must choose between basic needs (food, heat)
- Supports the cycle of poverty

# Lack of housing threatens the future of communities



- A home is a starting place to live well
- People leave the community because they can't find homes
- Pressure on intergenerational living
- Housing stress impacts wellness – depression, etc.
- Outmigration weakens our communities
- People cannot return to their communities in retirement
- Need help to maintain our communities
- Lack of funding for African NS communities
- Aging, declining population
- Try to attract people through services, beautification, but no homes for them to lay roots down
- Can't bring people here
- People are leaving
- Aging population, not willing to give up their home, rent out rooms, or rent their home

# Impacts of Housing Issues



# September 2022 Planning Workshop

- 22 participants – service providers, municipal and provincial government representatives
- Reviewed data and discussed key points
- Created a vision, values for moving forward on housing work together
- Identified 3 most important pathways forward
- Confirmed role of Guysborough County Housing Network as ***communication, coordination and collaboration***

# Visioning:

- Safe
- Affordable
- Intergenerational
- Prosperous (Economic and Social)
- Coordinated/Collaborative/Connected
- Sustainable
- Multi-functional
- Diverse and Inclusive
- Peaceful
- Healthy
- Accessible
- Being able to be close to your roots

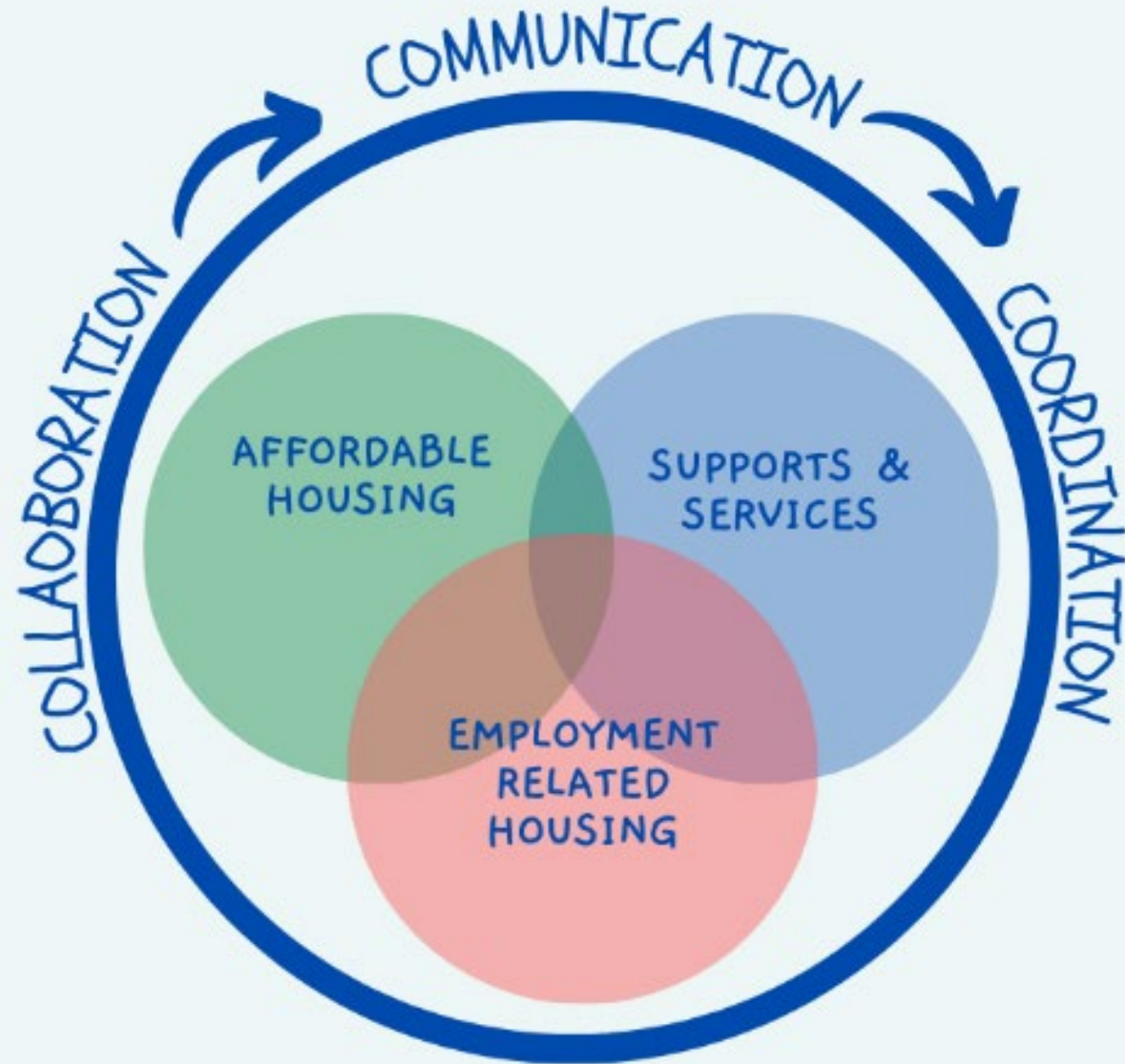


# What Values need to Guide the Work:

- Respect
- Non-judgmental
- Open-minded
- Passionate/Committed
- Honesty/Transparency/Clear communication
- Action-Focused
- Big Picture View
- Value for everyone's contributions
- Open to change
- Flexibility/Ability to compromise
- Listen and learn

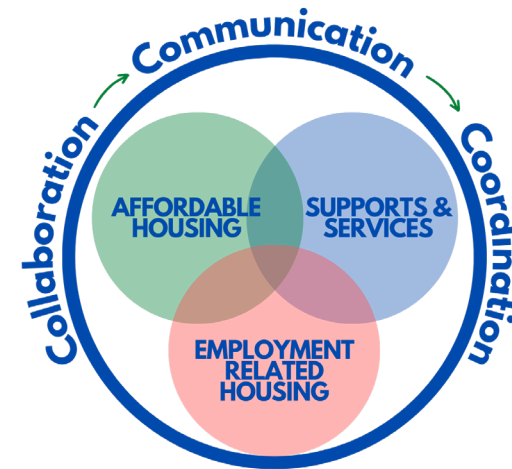


# GUYSBOROUGH COUNTY HOUSING WORKSHOP



# Pathways/Priorities

- Affordable Housing:
  - Pocket Neighbourhoods
  - Rent to Own Programs
  - Emergency/shelter Housing
  - Research into Land Trusts
- Employment Related Housing:
  - Co-Op Housing
  - Old Schools or Motels. Look into options to purchase and renovate
  - Temporary Housing
  - Tiny Homes

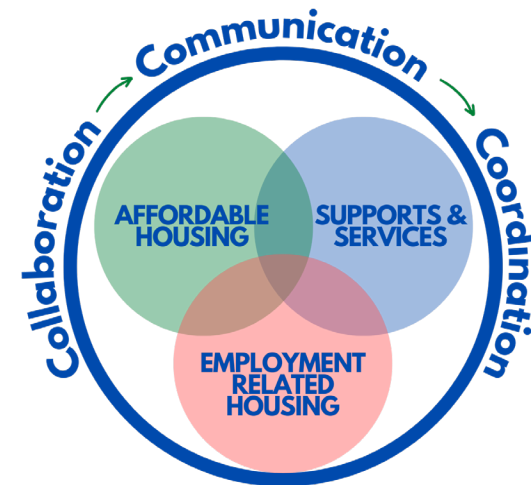




# Pathways/Priorities

## Supports & Services:

- Transportation
- Supports & Services Directory & Information Coordination
- Health Services including Mental Health Services
- Access to affordable healthy food
- Close to schools and recreation
- Accessible & Educational Housing Maintenance funding
- 211 Maintenance and usage
- Close to childcare
- Access to warming centers/cooling centers
- Cultural and Spiritual support



# Next Steps for Guysborough County Housing Network

## Complete the research project

- Prepare report and recommendations
- Share with Municipalities, Communities and government

## Communication

- Collaborative website with social service and housing service providers. Funding from Guysborough Community Health Board

## Collaboration and Coordination

- Community Health Board Funding to bring partners together to create actions plans for moving forward on three priority areas.
- Hire housing consultant to facilitate and guide development of a community housing organization.



# What is Happening locally?

- Guysborough County Black Development Association formed
- Caper Development has been approved for funding for half of the units in the new development to be affordable housing
- St. Mary's Municipal Planning Strategy Community Vision addresses the need for "welcoming and supporting neighbours that take care of one another". Met with committee in January
- Sherbrooke Inn for sale
- Guysborough Business Partnership will "Work with housing and immigration groups to attract more housing developments as well as build a relationship with government officials in these fields to help increase population"
- MODG is working on an inventory of municipal land suitable for affordable housing including zoning for phase 2 of Cutlers Estates to allow for multi-units
- GCHN Invited to speak at Early Years Network
- Tiny Home model project

# What is Happening Provincially?

- Formation of the Nova Scotia Non-Profit Housing Association. GHN are members, Mary Desmond, Nancy O'Regan participating in founding organization committees
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Affordable Housing in Nova Scotia webinars, People's Schools, [People's School on the Role of Municipalities and Affordable Housing](#)
- Changes in Public Housing to NS Provincial Housing Agency – visit from Regional Director
- Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia – RAB Reaching Home



# How Can the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's help?

- Continued representation on Guysborough County Housing Network
- Partner with GCHN to hold another consultation in St. Mary's and identify St. Mary's specific Community Housing Strategies
- Identify parcels of municipal land that could be made available for affordable housing projects.
- Identify renovation or repair programs to encourage community members to make space for apartments, grandparent suites, or room rentals.

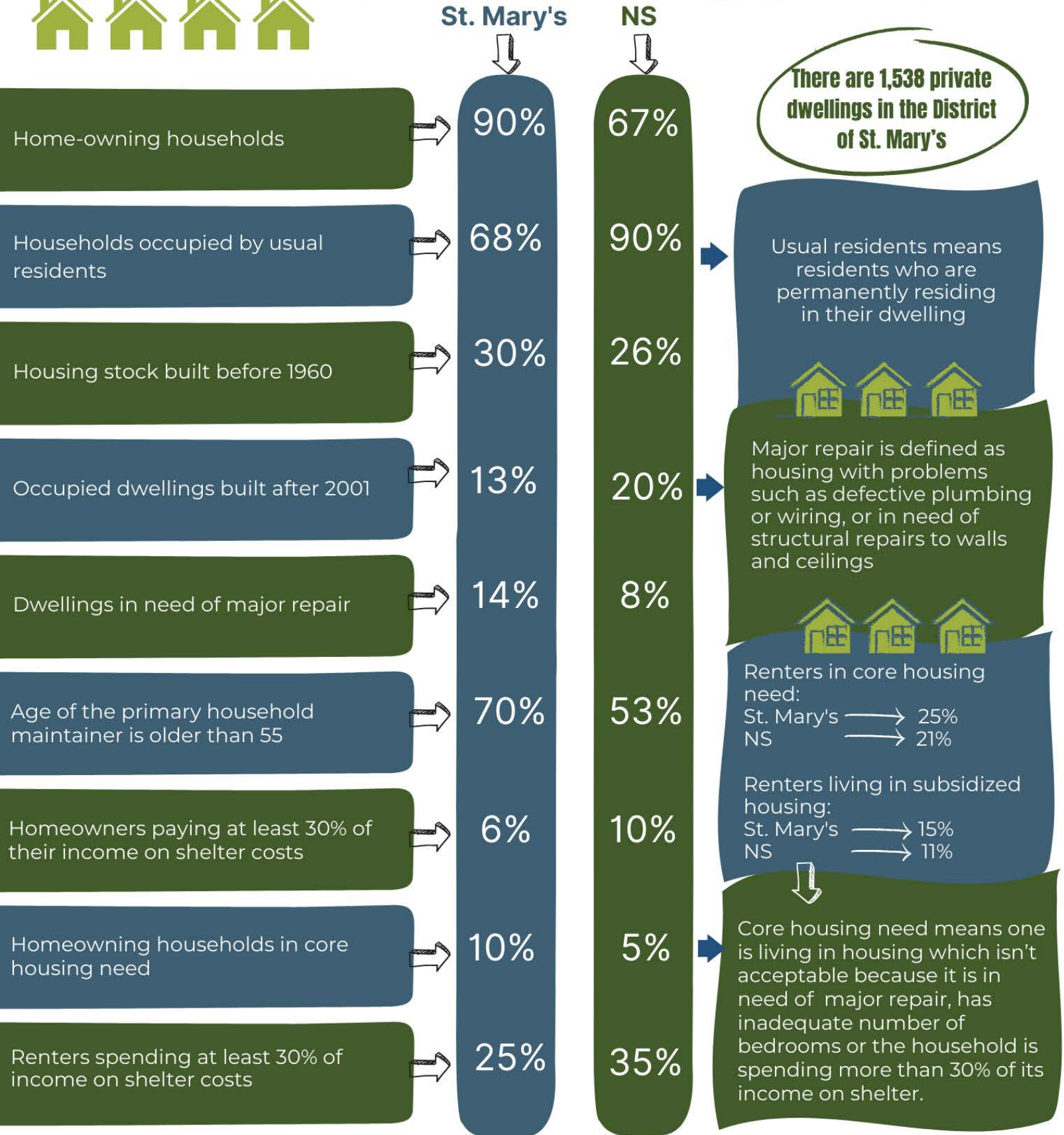


Thank You

Questions, comments?



# Housing in St. Mary's 2021 Census



## Active Living Strategy

Community Development and Recreation Department

### SUMMARY

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's (MODSM) Community Development and Recreation Department has reviewed and updated the current Active Living Strategy that is to be implemented over the next five years. Staff present the final draft for Council's review and approval.

### BACKGROUND

The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Province of Nova Scotia to remain a part of the Municipal Physical Activity Leadership Program in 2019. The MOU states: The Municipality is responsible for hiring an MPAL staff person and development, implementation, and monitoring of a comprehensive Municipality" wide plan to increase physical activity in the Municipality. The Municipality created its first Active Living Strategy in 2009, and as per the MOU must update the plan every 5 years.

### CONSIDERATIONS

The Active Living Strategy provides a series of strategic and practical goals with actions aimed at creating a healthy and active community with the Municipality. Increasing physical activity rates within the community will be supported through this comprehensive plan which focuses on five goal areas accompanied by a series of actions to meet the goals. These goals are as follows:

1. Active Opportunities for All Residents
2. Foster an Active Love for the Outdoors
3. Support and Promote Active Transportation
4. Actively Promote Community Awareness and Partnerships
5. Monitoring and Updating Strategy

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above considerations, staff are recommending that:

*Council approves the Active Living Strategy as presented.*