AGENDA

Committee of the Whole

Wednesday, November 7, 2018
9am
Foran Greene Room
4th Floor, City Hall
AGENDA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
November 7, 2018 – 9 a.m. – Foran/Greene Room, 4th Floor, City Hall

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MINUTES
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
October 24, 2018 – 9:00 am – Council Chamber, 4th Floor, City Hall

Present
Mayor Danny Breen
Deputy Mayor Sheilagh O’Leary
Councillor Ian Froude
Councillor Jamie Korab
Councillor Wally Collins
Councillor Deanne Stapleton
Councillor Hope Jamieson
Councillor Maggie Burton
Councillor Dave Lane
Councillor Debbie Hanlon
Councillor Sandy Hickman

Staff
Kevin Breen, City Manager
Derek Coffey, Deputy City Manager of Finance & Administration
Tanya Haywood, Deputy City Manager, Community Services
Lynnann Winsor, Deputy City Manager – Public Works
Cheryl Mullett, City Solicitor
Elaine Henley, City Clerk
Ken O’Brien, Chief Municipal Planner
Brendan O’Connell - Director of Engineering (10:42)
Susan Bonnell, Manager of Communications and Office Services
Carla Squires, Manager – Facilities Division – Community Services
Bev Skinner, Manager – Program and Service Delivery
Karen Sherriffs, Manager – Community Development
Natalie Godden, Manager – Family & Leisure Services
Garrett Donaher, Manager – Transportation Engineering
Maureen Harvey, Legislative Assistant

Two members of the media and three members of the public were also present.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The agenda was adopted as presented with the addition of the Special Events Advisory Committee Report which was deferred from the Regular Meeting of October 22, 2018.

ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

Moved – Councillor Jamieson; Seconded – Councillor Froude
That the Committee of the Whole minutes dated October 10, 2018 be adopted as presented.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DELEGATION

Mr. Seamus O’Keefe re: Iceberg Alley Concert at Pleasantville

Mr. O’Keefe referenced a presentation, a copy of which is available at the Office of the City Clerk. He also welcomed Mr. John Steele and Mr. Sean Basha, both of whom could respond to any questions members of Council may have.

He began by presenting the vision of their organization and by reviewing the benefits of Iceberg Alley Festival identifying the direct and indirect economic impact for the City with particular reference to the number of jobs created, special events concert precedence, arts community support and the organization’s adherence to the noise bylaw. He also referenced compliance with regulatory agencies and collaboration with City staff to mitigate disruption to the neighborhood.

In anticipation of the questions that would likely have been asked, Mr. O’Keefe addressed the following:

Q1. **Why does the Festival have to be in Pleasantville?**
   - Only parcel of land within City Limits that is capable of handling event logistics
   - Desire to be a “Livable City” in which Arts is accessible to all residents
   - Precedence for hosting large events such as the Regatta

Q2. **Can the noise be mitigated?**
   - Unfortunately not. Omnidirectional speakers radiates sound in all directions - 360°. Strategic positioning of speakers will not impact the sound direction
   - Only the construction of a permanent berm will reduce the sound impacts

Q3. **Why does the Festival have to be 10 days in duration?**
   - Economics of the Festival business model dictates maximum utilization of resources with minimal downtime. PA equipment rental, security expenses and other supplier rentals would still occur even if the Festival did not occur on certain nights.

A question/answer period ensued with the following matters raised.

- Councillor Jamieson questioned the quantifiable economic impact to which Mr. O’Keefe agreed to provide Council with once finalized.
- Several Councillors reiterated the concern from residents regarding noise late into the evening and with the duration of the event (10 days). Mr. O’Keefe reiterated the benefits of the festival suggesting that as residents become more
accustomed to the event, complaints should subside. He indicated this is a typical growing pain that should diminish in time. He did, however, agree to work with Council and staff in an effort to identify the means by which the noise factor could be mitigated.

- Could consideration be given to a break in the event such that residents could have some evenings of reprise from the noise. Mr. O'Keefe stated that to break up the event over a longer period would result in a negative economic impact to his organization. Following some lengthy debate, he agreed to having more comprehensive dialogue with the City to see if something could be worked out.

Discussion concluded with the Mayor commending organizers for the investment made and the operation of a first-class event.

The delegation retired from the meeting but was assured that Committee would review the information presented and make a recommendation to Council as it relates to securing dates for next year's event.

**COMMUNITY SERVICES & EVENTS – COUNCILLOR JAMIE KORAB**

**Decision Note dated September 5, 2018 re: Recreation Proposed Revenue Fee Increases – Budget 2019-2021**

The Committee discussed a schedule of recommended fees for the 2019-2021 Budget. The proposed schedule was debated and the following was brought forward.

**Recommendation**

Moved – Councillor Korab; Seconded –Councillor Hanlon

- That the proposed schedule of recreation fees be adopted and included in the 2019-2021 operating budgets.

**Amendment**

Moved by Councillor Burton; Seconded by Councillor Jamieson

- That the proposed fee increase for the following programs be rejected for the 2019 budget.
  - After school programs – with and without transportation and for full days where there are professional development days for teachers.
  - Day camp programs
  - Swimming programs
  - Preschool programs
AMENDED MOTION FAILED WITH ONLY COUNCILLORS
BURTON, JAMIESON AND FROUDE IN FAVOR

MOTION CARRIED WITH COUNCILLORS
BURTON AND FROUDE DISSENTING

Special Events Advisory Committee Report – October 16, 2018
(Deferred from October 22, 2018 Regular Meeting)

Based on the discussion that took place with the delegation in attendance, the following was presented in relation to Iceberg Alley Performance Tent 2019.

Proposed Concert Dates - Wednesday, September 11, 2019 – Saturday, September 21, 2019

Recommendation
Moved by Councillor Korab; Seconded by Councillor Stapleton

That Council approve the proposed event dates, subject to adherence to conditions set out by the Special Events Advisory Committee in the months to come as we work through this application.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Councillor Jamieson agreed to further discussions with the Organization to mitigate noise.

Decision Note dated October 18, 2018 re: Appointments to Shea Heights Community Centre Board of Directors

The above noted was discussed with the following recommendation brought forward.

Recommendation
Moved – Councillor Hickman; Seconded – Councillor Collins

That:
1. Jim Reardon, Dave Warford, Vanessa Peddle and Jerome Quinlan be appointed to the Shea Heights Community Centre Board of Directors to fill vacancies within the “at large” category of the Board structure.
2. Another call of interest be conducted in the near future to seek interest in the remaining vacant positions on the Board of Directors, at which time they will be brought forward for City Approval

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT – COUNCILLOR MAGGIE BURTON

Decision Note dated October 12, 2018 re: Amendment to Rezone Land to the Commercial Downtown (CD) Zone for a Multi-Building Development, MPA1800003; 150 New Gower Street; Applicant: Lat 49 Architecture Inc for Manga Hotels (New Gower) Inc.

Consideration was given to the above-noted.

Recommendation
Moved – Councillor Burton; Seconded – Councillor Hanlon

That the application to rezone 150 New Gower Street from the Residential Downtown (RD) and Commercial Central Office (CCO) Zones to the Commercial Downtown (CD) Zone be considered and the attached draft Terms of Reference approved. Upon submission of a satisfactory Land Use Assessment Report, it is recommended that the application be referred to a Public Meeting chaired by an independent facilitator and the Discretionary Use of Swelling Units on the 1st storey be advertised. Following the public meeting, the application would be referred to a regular meeting of Council for consideration.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Decision Note dated October 15, 2018 re: Text Amendment to Enable Distillery as a Discretionary Use REZ1800015, 140 Harbour Drive

Recommendation
Moved – Councillor Burton; Seconded – Councillor Lane

That the application for a text amendment to the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations to enable a distillery as a discretionary use be considered and that the applicant submit a concept plan for the property. Upon submission of a satisfactory concept plan, it is recommended that the application be advertised for public review and comment. The application would then be referred to a regular meeting of Council for consideration of adoption.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
Information Note dated October 15, 2018 re: Continuous Improvement (CI) Project Results and Next Steps

The Committee reviewed the above noted document with commendation given to staff on implementation of the CI program, particularly as it affects customer service.

While all projects were deemed valuable in terms of improving efficiency internally, it was agreed by consensus that a communication plan is appropriate to announce the results of projects that have resulted in improved customer service for residents doing business with the City.

Decision Note dated October 15, 2018 re: Appointment to Youth Advisory Committee

Recommendation
Moved – Council Burton; Seconded – Councillor Jamieson

That the following be appointed to the Youth Advisory Committee in accordance with Section 3.1.1 of the Terms of Reference:

Applicants Name (Organization)
- John Scott Pearce Highschool (Holy Heart)
- Katherine Dibbon Highschool (Waterford Valley)
- Nicholas Matthew Hillier MUN
- Zaira Maria Freda Highschool (Holy Heart)
- Eilish Mae MacCharles MUN
- Meghan Hollett Association for New Canadians, Youth Engagement Officer
- Cindy Murray Eastern Health, Youth Outreach Worker
- Sofia Descalzi Canadian Federation of Students NL, Chairperson
- Jude Almutawa Junior High (Lakecrest)
- Nathan Christopher Young High School (Gonzaga)

Currently Recruiting Community Representative
Currently Recruiting Community Representative

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Decision Note dated October 15, 2018 re: Appointment to Inclusion Advisory Committee

Recommendation
Moved – Councillor Jamieson; Seconded – Councillor Froude

That the following be appointed to the Inclusion Advisory Committee in accordance with Section 3.1.1 of the Terms of Reference:

Applicants Name/Organization

• Sarah White/Autism Society of NL
• Kim Pratt-Baker/Hard of Hearing Association
• Megan McGie/Association for the Deaf
• Heidi Dixon/St. John’s Native Friendship Centre
• Debbie Ryan/CNIB

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR DEBBIE HANLON

Decision Note dated September 6, 2018 re: Public Parking on Convent Square

Discussion took place with the following recommendation:

Recommendation

Moved – Councillor Hanlon; Seconded – Councillor Jamieson

1) That the spaces on the west side of Convent Square remain as they are currently configured.
2) That the Area 3 sign at the entrance to Convent Square be moved to clarify that there is no parking between the driveway for civic 25 and Hamilton Avenue.
3) That the parking area adjacent the playground be designated as Area 3 with an exception from 7AM to 5PM, Monday to Friday that allows unrestricted parking. Once the development of the Seniors Complex takes place, this matter will be reassessed.
4) That the parking area adjacent the playground be painted, including hatching in front of the fire hydrant.

Amendment

Deputy Mayor Sheilagh O’Leary introduced an amendment requesting the removal of item 3 until such time as the proposed Seniors Complex is completed.

IN THE ABSENCE OF A SECONDER TO THE AMENDMENT,
THE AMENDMENT FAILED

The Committee did however, agree that item 3 be modified to add the following text: Once the development of the Seniors Complex takes place, this matter will be reassessed.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held Wednesday, November 5, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. in Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.

Mayor Danny Breen
Chairperson
Report to Committee of the Whole  
Inclusion Advisory Committee  
October 3, 2018 – 1:00 p.m. – Gleneyre Room 2, Paul Reynolds Community Centre

Present:  
Taylor Stocks, Chair  
Councillor Hope Jamieson  
Natalie Godden, Manager of Family & Leisure Services  
Sherry Mercer, Inclusive Services Coordinator  
Kimberly Yetman Dawson, Empower  
Margaret Tibbo, (Muggs), Citizen Representative  
Grant Genova, NLAA, UDN  
Debbie Ryan, CNIB  
Dave Saunders, Citizen Representative  
Nancy Reid, COD-NL  
Tilak Chawan, Association for New Canadians  
Kathy Driscoll, Legislative Assistant  

Others:  
Anna Bauditz, Transportation System Engineer  
Jim Scott, Trace Consulting (retired at 2:30 pm)  

REPORT

1. Proposal to Introduce Groups and Organizations  
The Chair explained at each meeting one group representative would present to the Committee allowing the ability to further develop the Committee. Sherry Mercer indicated the individual would have 5 minutes to present with 5 minutes allotted to Q&A.

Natalie Godden indicated this process tied into the Inclusion Outreach Collaborative. Members can present their positions under the City’s Advisory Committee webpage and then link to their organizations making it easier for the public to locate. Further to explore the possibility of working with the City’s Communication Division to provide a small video to make people aware of who sits around this Committee’s table as well as all the working groups that report into it.

Natalie Godden indicated videos could be applied in collaboration with the City’s Communication Department. She indicated the information could be stored in one location.

Moved – Grant Genova; Seconded – Kimberly Yetman Dawson

Put forward internal learning opportunities lead by Committee members paired with external engagement efforts inclusive of videos on City’s website.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
2. Decision Note – Inclusion Outreach Collaborative

Natalie Godden spoke to the above cited. She advised the purpose was to outline the workplan of the City of St. John’s Inclusion Outreach Collaborative and expectations for implementation.

Moved - Debbie Ryan; Seconded – Muggs Tibbo

It is recommended that the City continue to implement its current inclusion activities and develop an Inclusion Outreach Collaborative that highlights these resources and partnerships and ensures all City departments adhere to specific inclusion requirements as outlined in the Decision Note. It is recommended that the City delay the development of a comprehensive Inclusion Policy until the federal and provincial regulations have been updated and can be considered/incorporated into the policy development process.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Taylor Stocks,
Chairperson
DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: City of St. John’s Inclusion Outreach Collaborative

Date Prepared: August 31, 2018

Report To: Inclusion Advisory Committee

Councillor and Role: Hope Jamieson, Council Champion

Ward: N/A

Decision/Direction Required: To outline the workplan of the City of St. John's Inclusion Outreach Collaborative and expectations for implementation

Discussion – Background and Current Status:
As discussed in a decision note presented to the Inclusion Advisory Committee on June 12th, 2018, a draft Policy Note was submitted to the Corporate Policy Committee for the development of an Inclusion Policy. With federal legislation expected to be introduced into the House of Commons in 2018/2019 the City of St. John’s has committed to the development of an Inclusion Outreach Collaborative and to review the request for an Inclusion Policy once a federal and/or provincial legislation is implemented.

The City will also work with the Inclusion Advisory Committee and partners in the community to develop an Inclusion Outreach Collaborative that supports Inclusion and Accessibility. The proposed Collaborative will:

- outline the resources and collaboratives that the City already has in place to support Inclusion and Diversity
  - Inclusive Services (and related programs)
  - Inclusion Advisory Committee
    - Community and organization members take part in a collective impact approach to share individual points of view and consider the inclusion community as a whole. Members provide feedback to the City of St. John's and communicate back to their membership.
  - Inclusion Corporate Wide Orientation and Training
  - Department Specific Inclusion Training (as requested by Department Managers)
  - Accessible equipment such as Pocket Talkers, FM Transmitters, wheelchairs, water wheel chairs, adult change tables, pool lifts, automatic door openers, etc.
  - Alternate Format (this needs to be pushed out as a requirement for all departments, so they are prepared to offer larger print and braille when requested, follow Clear Print Guidelines on all City forms, website, email…)
  - Ensure all City meetings follow the accessible meeting checklist
  - Ensure all City events follow the accessible event checklist
Through input from the Universal Design Working Group, develop a process to ensure all City development (buildings, parks, roads) use a Universal Design lens

- Ensure all City facilities have at least one gender neutral washroom
- Ensure all City programs and services are inclusive through external and internal reviews (such as the current partnership with Inclusion NL) and continued engagement with the Inclusion Advisory Committee including when public engagement sessions are taking place
- Ensure a list of all financial aid opportunities are listed in one place on the City’s website for ease of the resident

- indicate how the City’s new Envision Strategic Plan and Healthy Communities Collaboratives interface with and support inclusive environments within the City
- outline the collaborations and partnerships that exist between the City and other sectors to further inclusive environments within the City

City of St. John’s Inclusion staff will draft the collaborative, engaging with working groups and partners in the community as required, and submit it to the Inclusion Advisory Committee for feedback and approval.

**Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. **Budget/Financial Implications:**
   - N/A – Activities will be completed within existing budgets.
2. **Partners or Other Stakeholders**
   - Inclusion and Accessibility Stakeholders
3. **Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans**
   - Aligns with the “Responsive and Progressive” Strategic Direction and the goal to “become a welcoming and inclusive city”,
4. **Legal or Policy Implications**
   - None at this time.
5. **Engagement and Communications Considerations**
   - Update the Inclusion section of City’s web page to outline details of the Inclusion Outreach Collaborative on an ongoing basis and ensure that it is placed within “one click” of the City’s home page.
6. **Human Resource Implications**
   - The Human Resources Division will work as part of the Inclusive Organization Working Group to ensure that internal inclusion activities align with those of the Inclusion Outreach Collaborative.
7. **Procurement Implications**
   - N/A
8. **Information Technology Implications**
   - N/A
9. **Other Implications**
   - N/A
Recommendation:
It is recommended that the City continue to implement its current inclusion activities and collaboratives and develop an Inclusion Outreach Collaborative that highlights these resources and partnerships and ensures all City departments adhere to specific inclusion requirements. It is recommended that the City delay the development of a comprehensive Inclusion Policy until the federal and provincial requirements have been updated and can be considered/ incorporated into the policy development process.

Prepared by/Signature:  Sherry Mercer, Inclusive Services Coordinator

Approved by/Date/Signature:  
Natalie Godden – Manager, Family & Leisure Services

Attachments:
REPORT
BUILT HERITAGE EXPERTS PANEL MEETING
October 25, 2018 – 12:00 p.m. – Conference Room A

Present: Glenn Barnes, NLAA, MRAIC, Chair
Ken O’Brien, Chief Municipal Planner
Ann-Marie Cashin, Planner III, Urban Design and Heritage
Rob Schamper, Technical Advisor
Rachel Fitkowski – Landscape Architect
Bruce Blackwood, Contractor
Mark Whelan, HW Architecture
Garnet Kindervater, Contractor
Maureen Harvey, Legislative Assistant

Regrets: Robert Sweeney – Historian (due to audioconference technical difficulties)
Dawn Boutilier - Planner

Decision Note dated October 18, 2018 re: 288 Water Street, Yellowbelly – Installation of Beer Tanks

The City has received an application for the installation of two exterior beer tanks on the patio of Yellowbelly Brewery & Public House, located at 288 Water Street (corner of George Street). The beer tanks have already been installed and are proposed to be removed after a period of approximately 18-24 months. The footprint of the building extends under George Street and therefore the beer tanks are located within the footprint of the building.

The subject property is located within Heritage Area 1, is in the Commercial Downtown District of the St. John’s Municipal Plan and is zoned Commercial Central Retail (CCR). The building is designated by Council as a Heritage Building and therefore any repairs must seek approval from Council. This area is also within the Water Street National Historic District.

Recommendation
Moved – Bruce Blackwood; Seconded – Mark Whelan

It is recommended to approve the two beer tanks located at 288 Water Street, as proposed. It is further recommended that an end date of 18 months be included on the building permit, that the building be inspected once the tanks are removed, and any damage to the exterior caused by the tanks be repaired.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Glenn Barnes, NLAA, MRAIC
Chairperson
DECISION/DIRECTION NOTE

Title: Application timeline for previous tenants

Date Prepared: October 26, 2018

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Lead: Hope Jamieson, Housing

Ward: Not ward specific

Decision/Direction Required:

Approval of Council to accept the policy that will state applicants, if previously housed with Non-Profit Housing (NPH), will have to wait 12 months from date of departure to reapply for housing with NPH.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

Currently, NPH will traditionally only permit transfers between units for medical reasons and/or if the family composition changes. Tenants who do not meet transfer criteria, will sometimes end their tenancy with NPH and then immediately re-apply to seek an alternate unit. NPH staff are noticing an increase in this situation. This undermines our transfer policy.

Transfers can be expensive to the City of St. John's as it means 2 units will have to be made rent ready to house one family/individual. As a result, our transfer policy is limited.

Tenants look to transfer or move for various reasons. The most common reasons are conflict with neighbors. If tenant conflict is identified to our Tenant Relations Officer’s, they will work to mediate the conflict and provide resolution. Sometimes, tenants will choose not to notify their Tenant Relations Officer and move out, then re-apply. For issues that do not involve life safety concerns, it is usually our experience that tenant conflict be worked through.

Newfoundland and Labrador Housing state their policy is they do not accept applicants from those that have moved out within a 12 month period.
Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications
   N/A

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders
   N/A

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans
   a. A Culture of Cooperation – Create effective City – community collaborations
   b. Responsive and Progressive – build social, environmental and demographic factors into policy-making

4. Legal or Policy Implications
   Language on the application will have to be changed if this policy is accepted. The language change will be veted through our Legal Department.

5. Engagement and Communications Considerations
   A memo explaining the changes will be sent to all tenants, if this policy is accepted by Council.

6. Human Resource Implications
   a. n/a

7. Procurement Implications
   a. n/a

8. Information Technology Implications
   a. n/a

9. Other Implications

Recommendation:

Effective January 1, 2019, Council accept the recommendation that tenants who move out of Non Profit Housing cannot apply within 12 Months of departure.

Prepared by: Judy Tobin
Manager of Housing

Approved by: Tanya Haywood, Deputy City Manager of Community Services
Title: 10-Year Affordable Housing Strategy

Date Prepared: Oct 31st, 2018

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor and Role: Hope Jamieson, Council Lead Housing

Ward: All Wards

Decision/Direction Required:

Approve and adopt the new 10-year Affordable Housing Strategy

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City’s first Affordable Housing Business Plan (AHBP), called Creating Opportunities, Housing Our Community, was approved by Council in 2014 and ran until September 2017. The Plan was based on the City’s core belief that housing is a human right and that everyone needs and deserves a home that is affordable to them.

To continue this commitment to affordable housing - a 10-year Affordable Housing Strategy has been developed for the City of St. John’s

Background

This strategy was built on a strong foundation of public engagement and research

Public Engagement

A public participation process occurred between May and June 2017. Methods included the online ‘Engage’ portal, public information and consultation sessions, focused conversations and written submissions. Several themes emerged throughout this process and are reflected within our implementation strategies, some of these themes include: The importance of universal design/accessibility, energy efficiency as a function of affordability, and that collaboration and partnerships are imperative for success.

Research

To ensure this strategy reflects the current local housing situation and emerging trends, thorough research was conducted using data from Statistics Canada Census and from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation housing market reports and publications.

City of St. John’s research included:
- Household characteristics
- Economic context
- Housing market
- Housing Need
- Housing affordability gaps

Best practices in affordable housing from other Canadian municipalities included:

- Policy approaches
- Municipal tools and resources
- Affordable Housing projects
- Initiatives to develop age friendly communities

Current Status

Public Feedback on Draft

The draft Affordable Housing Strategy was open for public comment from October 10-23rd. Public feedback was used to make refinements before moving the draft affordable housing strategy into a final report version.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications

Some budget implications are anticipated to carry out aspects of this strategy. This strategy contains a focus of partnership and leveraging external funding opportunities in tandem with City contributions wherever possible. On April 30th, 2018, Council agreed to sell 16 Empire Avenue and reinvest revenues into a Civic Housing Action Fund (Council Directive # R2018-04-30/7). This fund would support the development of affordable housing initiatives outlined in the new 10-year affordable housing strategy and provide a means to leverage provincial and federal funding.

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders

The City's Draft Affordable Housing Strategy is built upon public and strategic stakeholder engagement, and the implementation strategies will be guided and shaped by multi-stakeholder partnerships and processes.

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans

Neighborhoods Build our City – Increase to range/type of housing

Responsive and Progressive – Build social, environmental and demographic factors into policy-making.

4. Legal or Policy Implications

The implementation strategies underwent a thorough internal vetting process which included the review and approval of the City's legal department. Legal will continue to be engaged in carrying out this
strategy as part of the interdepartmental committee that will be established. They will also be consulted on policy recommendations and advocacy work to the Provincial Government.

5. Engagement and Communications Considerations

Document is currently being graphically designed.

Communications, marketing and promotional efforts will be needed in raising awareness of this new strategy. Communications will be engaged to share information, messages and ideas in support of this strategy while positioning the City as a leader and a community partner in addressing the affordable housing issue.

6. Human Resource Implications

N/A

7. Procurement Implications

N/A

8. Information Technology Implications

N/A

9. Other Implications

None

Recommendation: That Council approve and adopts the new 10-year Affordable Housing Strategy that has been developed for the City of St. John’s.

Prepared by/Signature: Simone Lilly, Affordable Housing and Development Facilitator

Judy Tobin, Manager, Housing

Approved by/Date/Signature: Tanya Haywood, Deputy City Manager, Community Services

Oct 25th, 2018

Attachments:

Final Draft Affordable Housing Strategy
CITY OF ST. JOHN’S 10-YEAR
AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY
2019-2028
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 2018 Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) is a ten-year plan that continues and expands from the original Affordable Housing Business Plan. To fully address our municipality’s housing needs, this strategy document has been developed with the vision of working in-step with partners, stakeholders and residents to create and maintain safe, suitable, and affordable housing throughout the city.

For the purposes of this Affordable Housing Strategy, ‘Affordable Housing’ utilizes the following definition: for housing to be considered affordable, it must cost less than 30 per cent of a household’s pre-tax income including housing and related costs—such as mortgage or rent, property taxes, home energy, water and repairs.

The Affordable Housing Strategy works to provide more housing choices that are affordable according to the 30 per cent criteria. A focus will be placed on households with an income too high to be eligible for social housing but too low to afford market rents or purchasing options, but it will not stop there. The City has a long history of pursuing housing solutions for people with incomes below $32,500 as well. This strategy will incorporate and encourage the continued collaborative efforts across the housing continuum.

This strategy also recognizes that households have different housing needs based on size, employment, ability, health, income, stage in life, and a host of other factors. Affordable housing stock is about creating a range of housing choices.

**The Strategy’s Mission and Vision**

**Mission:** The City of St. John’s will leverage its unique capacities and build strong partnerships to produce, protect and promote affordable housing for the people of St. John’s.

**Vision:** St. John’s will be a vibrant, inclusive and thriving city with a wide range of affordable housing options that contribute directly to community health, sustainable growth and economic security.

Building on our strengths in this area and past successes, the City will continue to provide leadership around affordable housing, with a commitment to the following actions:

Act as champions for issues across the affordable-housing continuum;  
Reach out to partners for consultation and collaboration and apply a range of best practices and approaches;  
Continue to support the work of End Homelessness St. John’s;  
Support the Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG) as they guide the affordable housing implementation strategies.
Continue to provide support to the Non-Profit Housing Division in their provision of affordable housing and their coordination of efforts in this strategy;

The City of St. John’s will commit to providing leadership and building on partnerships to generate inclusive, affordable housing solutions that work for people across the housing continuum.

**Strategic Directions**
Built from a strong foundation of public engagement and research on our current local housing situation and emerging trends, the six strategic components below related to affordable housing will be addressed in the new 10-year affordable housing strategy. Listed in no order of importance, they are titled as follows:

**UNLOCKING RESOURCES:** Identify and draw on the City’s resources and assets to advance housing initiatives and create new opportunities.

**BUILDING HOMES:** Increase the stock and sustainability of affordable rental and home ownership opportunities

**LEADING INNOVATION:** Inspire and facilitate creativity in affordable housing projects

**REVITALIZING POLICY:** Create Municipal policy and plans that strive to meet affordable housing needs of residents.

**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.

**INFORMING ACTION:** Raise awareness and educate what the impact housing needs has on our community’s health, sustainable growth and economic security.

Implementation strategies to support each component have been developed and are listed in the full strategy document. The Affordable Housing Strategy is intended to be flexible and responsive to changes in the housing market and cost of living. To ensure that changes in the external environment are reflected in the AHS, housing needs updates will be conducted throughout the life of this strategy. Shifts in housing, demographic and economic data points will provide the underpinning of any refinements or revisions needed in our strategy’s efforts. Our strategic directions will be maintained as the foundation of the City’s efforts; however, flexibility will exist to reflect new information identified from the needs assessment updates.

**COMMUNICATION AND EVALUATION**
Communications, marketing and promotional efforts in support of this strategy will leverage the City’s capacity to share information, messages and ideas while positioning the City as a leader and a community partner in addressing the affordable housing issue. Our social marketing strategy will tackle the fears associated with affordable
housing through increased information (awareness campaigns, success stories, etc.) and focusing on the benefits of affordable housing.

Annual reporting on implementation strategy updates will be incorporated into the City of St. John’s corporate target updates and a formal and substantive evaluation of the Affordable Housing Strategy will occur at the strategy’s completion.
City of St. John’s  
Housing Affordability Snapshot

This infographic was created to support the City of St. John’s new 10-Year Affordable Housing Strategy. Data has been compiled for the Census subdivision of St. John's, C. For more information, visit:  
http://www.stjohns.ca/living-st-johns/your-city/affordable-housing

**Household Characteristics (2016)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>108,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>47,625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.4% Own</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38.6% Rent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

62% of households in the City of St. John's have two or fewer people.

It is forecasted that in the City of St. John's, the number of households will increase at a greater rate than the population.

- 30.9%
- 36.3%
- 16.2%
- 12.0%
- 4.6%

It is anticipated that as we move towards 2036:
- The age group of **25 to 34** will show the strongest decline.
- The population **65 and over** will show large population increase.

**Economic Context (2016)**

- **8.9%** Unemployment Rate
- **16%** Households are considered low income based on the Statistics Canada’s Low-income measure, after-tax (LIM-AT)
- Average after-tax household income **$77,936** Median after-tax household income **$60,114**
- **Average Apartment:**
  - **Rental Rates (2017)**
    - Bachelor **$699**
    - One Bedroom **$793**
    - Two Bedroom **$956**
  - **Vacancy Rates (2017)**
    - Bachelor **5.1%**
    - One Bedroom **6.9%**
    - Two Bedroom **6.8%**
- **Average MLS Housing Price:** **$303,713 (2017)**
What is the Current Housing Gap? (2016)

A commonly accepted guideline for housing affordability is that housing costs should not exceed 30% of a household’s annual income. Costs include, as applicable, rent, mortgage payments (principal and interest), property taxes, condominium fees, and payments for electricity, water and other municipal services.

Approximately 12,100 households live in unaffordable housing, spending more than 30% of income on housing costs

- 64.9% are tenants households
- 35.1% are homeowners households

14,495 households live in housing that requires improvement to at least one of Adequacy, Suitability or Affordability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rental Market - How much does it cost to rent an apartment? (2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Annual Income Required to Afford the Average Rental Apartment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(paying no more than 30% on Rent Alone)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$31,720 One Bedroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$38,240 Two Bedroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who can't afford to rent based on a single income?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Bedroom Apartment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in a range of occupations including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Early Childhood Educators and Assistants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hairstylists and Barbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Home Support Workers, Housekeepers and Related Occupations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two Bedroom Apartment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in a range of occupations including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Restaurant and food service managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Graphic designers and illustrators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Airline Ticket and Service Agents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Ownership - How much does it cost to own a home? (2017)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum Income required to qualify for a mortgage for the Average MLS Housing Price (2017)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$88,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who can't afford to purchase the average house in St. John’s Metro region?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in a range of occupations including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Electricians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Elementary school and kindergarten teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Firefighters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2016 Census Data Tables used to compile household & economic data
** CMHC Housing Market Portal 2017 used to compile Rental Market Information
***Wages based on median wage/occupation collected from Gov of Canada Wage report- Avalon Peninsula Region NL
**** Qualifying income collected from RBC mortgage affordability calculator 2018
***** Projections from ‘CSJ Population Projections’
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Note to Readers:
The Affordable Housing Strategy Document uses terms specific to housing policy and city planning. Key term definitions can be found in the Appendix E Glossary

“Housing is a human right. All people need and deserve a home in which they can afford to live, and the City should work to ensure such housing opportunities exist.” Equipped with this mandate, the City of St. John’s Council approved its first Affordable Housing Business Plan (AHBP), titled Creating Opportunities, Housing Our Community, in 2014. In use until September of 2017, the AHBP was structured on seventeen objectives that aimed to tackle issues across the affordable-housing continuum. The City worked with partners to address housing crises for those who found themselves with too high of an income to qualify for housing subsidies but too low an income to afford market-rental or ownership options.

The 2018 Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS) is a ten-year plan that continues and expands from the original AHBP. To fully address our municipality’s housing needs, this strategy document has been developed with the vision of working in-step with partners, stakeholders and residents to create and maintain safe, suitable, and affordable housing throughout the city.

Realizing this strategy will include addressing key affordable housing issues and priorities. We all have a role to play in helping our communities thrive. Like the AHBP, this is a strategy which will be worked on together with our partners. The City will look internally and engage partners—including other levels of government, community and private sectors—to pursue strategic solutions that multiply our efforts in addressing the challenge of affordable housing in St. John’s.

HOUSING IS A MUNICIPAL RESPONSIBILITY

“SAFE, AFFORDABLE HOUSING MAKES OUR CITIES AND COMMUNITIES WELCOMING PLACES TO LIVE, WORK AND START A BUSINESS. IT’S ALSO INTEGRAL TO RETAINING WORKERS AND ATTRACTING NEWCOMERS TO ENRICH OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND DRIVE TOMORROW’S ECONOMIC GROWTH.” - FCM, https://fcm.ca/home/issues/affordable-housing.htm

The City’s history of involvement in affordable housing issues spans many decades. Its traditional role has included planning, zoning, controlling development, and enforcing minimum standards and by-laws. The City has also provided land, waived fees, and expedited inspections to facilitate affordable housing initiatives by non-profit and private developers. Our Non-Profit Housing Division operates 454 units of affordable housing with houses and apartments varying in size from one to four-bedroom units. The City of
St. John’s makes available hundreds of low-rent homes for low- to moderate-income earners.

In hiring a full-time affordable housing coordinator in 2010 and implementing the AHBP in 2014, the City became an example for other Atlantic provinces on taking the lead with affordable housing concerns. By providing leadership and enhancing partnerships, the City of St. John’s became one of the first municipalities in Atlantic Canada with a dedicated municipal affordable housing plan.

Since 2000, St. John’s has been the only Designated Community in NL under Canada’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) – one of 61 HPS communities nationwide. HPS will be renamed ‘Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy’ beginning in 2019, and the $2.1 billion, ten-year initiative will roll out in tandem with Canada’s new National Housing Strategy. Currently, the City of St. John’s serves as the HPS Community Entity and – guided by End Homelessness St. John’s – the City facilitated the development and implementation of the 2014-2019 St. John’s Community Plan to End Homelessness in partnership with the community and public systems.

**End Homelessness St. John’s**

End Homelessness St John's (EHSJ) Community Plan to End Homelessness runs from 2014-2019. Based on Housing First principles, the Plan centers on preventing homelessness and providing housing to persons experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible - without time limits - and providing services as needed aimed at sustaining housing stability. The City, under the 2014-2017 Affordable Housing Business Plan (AHBP), identified three Non-Profit Housing (NPH) units for use by Housing First clients in EHSJ’s 'Front Step' Intensive Case Management program. The units were furnished and have been occupied since March of 2016.

**DEFINITION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

“**WHEN WE TALK ABOUT AFFORDABILITY, WE CAN’T TALK ABOUT HOUSING COSTS ALONE: WE ALSO HAVE TO LOOK AT THE ASSOCIATED TRANSPORTATION COSTS. FOR YOUNG PEOPLE OR SENIORS ESPECIALLY, A HOUSE IN A WALKABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD WITH GOOD BUS SERVICE MIGHT BE MUCH MORE AFFORDABLE…”**

– COMMENT ON THE ENGAGE PAGE

For the purposes of this Affordable Housing Strategy, ‘*Affordable Housing*’ utilizes the following definition: for housing to be considered affordable, it must cost less than 30 per cent of a household’s pre-tax income including housing and related costs—such as mortgage or rent, property taxes, home energy, water and repairs.

In line with its previous AHBP, The City’s Affordable Housing Strategy works to provide more housing choices that are affordable according to the 30 per cent criteria. A focus
will be placed on households with an income too high to be eligible for social housing but too low to afford market rents or purchasing options, but it will not stop there. The City has a long history of pursuing housing solutions for people with incomes below $32 500 as well. As figure 1 demonstrates, housing exists on a continuum extending from homelessness through to affordable housing options, followed by market housing. Incorporating and encouraging the continued collaborative efforts across the housing continuum, this ten-year strategy aims to improve situations for people and families for whom affordable housing is a concern. As cost of living, the housing market and vacancy rates are sure to vary over the next ten years, the City’s strategy is designed to scale and address the problem of affordable housing with such fluctuations in mind.

Affordable Transportation
Housing must be complemented by affordable transportation options to be considered truly affordable. Common measures recommend an additional 15 per cent for transportation costs, for a total of 45 per cent of household income is considered affordable when both costs are considered. Transportation costs in this type of breakdown usually consider the direct costs of transportation such as fuel, fare and ownership costs. However, while much more difficult to measure, it is recognized that the burden of travel time on an individual can also greatly affect their personal productivity.
Households have different housing needs based on size, employment, ability, health, income, stage in life, and a host of other factors. Affordable housing stock is about creating a range of housing choices. As figure two illustrates, there is no one-size-fits-all housing solution. Affordable housing must encompass a range of housing choices, as diverse as the city itself.

Communities across Canada recognize the practical benefits of engaging partners from all sectors to create housing diversity available to their residents. Investing collaboratively in innovative solutions to the affordable-housing challenge can yield economic, social and environmental dividends for the entire community.
Canadian Home Builders Association- NL is the voice of the province’s residential construction industry. Membership includes new home builders, renovators, developers, trade contractors, manufacturers, suppliers, lenders, and other professionals – the companies and people who provide Newfoundlanders and Labradorians with quality housing. Through the voluntary efforts of its members, the CHBA-NL serves both consumers and producers of housing by promoting quality, affordability, and choice in housing for all. CHBA-NL members contribute real solutions and make positive changes that promote and protect the interests of the industry and consumers by working with municipal, provincial, and federal governments in the areas of significant importance - labour market needs, government-imposed costs, the underground economy, and housing affordability.

Economic Context

For several years prior to the 2014 Affordable Housing Business Plan release, St. John’s economy enjoyed robust growth: Natural resource projects brought employment opportunities, and the private sector made significant investments into office, hotel, and retail developments. By 2014, the St. John’s’ Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) unemployment rate hovered around six per cent—the lowest level in at least 40 years and among the lowest metro rates of any Canadian city. Population growth, housing starts, and economic activity surpassed forecasts; within this fertile environment, housing experienced a “boom.” Consequently, our 2014 Affordable Housing Business Plan focused on working within that environment to create awareness, partnerships and affordable housing development opportunities. Unfortunately, the boom did not last. Since 2014, housing starts have decreased significantly and the economy has contracted. The unemployment rate is now among the highest of CMAs in Canada. And in 2016, household income exhibited the lowest rate of growth in nearly twenty years.

Looking ahead, overall economic activity is expected to remain subdued; several economic indicators—labour, for example— are expected to remain weak. As major projects move to completion, capital investments are also expected to decline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Indicators St. John’s CMA¹</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Weekly Earnings</td>
<td>$860</td>
<td>$1,003</td>
<td>$991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Sales ($M)</td>
<td>3,458</td>
<td>4,028</td>
<td>4,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Starts</td>
<td>1923</td>
<td>1230</td>
<td>763</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ State of the Economy, St. John’s, 2018
Housing Market Realities in 2018

“IF MANY MILLENNIALS ARE UNABLE TO ENTER THE MARKET, OR ARE FORCED INTO HOUSING OPTIONS THAT DON’T MEET THEIR NEEDS, THE EFFECTS WILL BE FAR-REACHING, AFFECTING ALL OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING BUSINESSES AND EXISTING HOMEOWNERS....”
- Canadian Home Builders’ Association

Housing prices have decreased somewhat in recent years however costs remain high. The average MLS® housing price has sat above $300,000 since 2012 making the transition from renting to homeownership more difficult for households - the minimum income required to qualify for a $300,000 mortgage is approximately $87,000 per year.

Moreover, rental housing in the city —while abundant— faces a number of issues. While the overall rental vacancy rate for St. John’s since 2012 has increased from 2.8 per cent to around 7 per cent, these tenant spaces may require major repair, are not always suitable for household size and often come with rents too high for many households to afford. In the city of St. John’s, over 8900 tenant households require improvement to meet one or more of affordability, adequacy, or suitability standards. 7855 tenant households spend 30 per cent or more of their gross monthly income on shelter and 3750 tenant households spend 50 percent or more of their gross monthly income on shelter. In 2017, the overall average rent in the City increased by 8 per cent from 2013, with average rent for a bachelor apartment being $699 monthly, a one-bedroom apartment resting at $793 monthly, and a two-bedroom at $956 in 2017. When household income is broken down into quartiles, apartment affordability including rent plus utilities, does not occur until the third quartile when households make an annual income of $35,842 or more.

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2 http://www.chba.ca/Affordability/AffordabilityMain.aspx
3 State of the Economy, St. John’s, 2018
4 https://www.rbcroyalbank.com/mortgages/tools/mortgage-affordability-calculator/index.html, 5% down payment, 25 year, 3.740% interest rate
5 CMHC Housing Market Information Portal. Oct 2017
6 Census 2016 Data Table 98-400-X2016231
7 Census 2016 Data Table 98-400-X2016231
8 Canadian Rental Housing Index
9 CMHC Housing Market Information Portal. Oct 2017
10 CMHC Housing Market Information Portal. Oct 2017
11 CMHC Housing Market Information Portal. Oct 2017
12 Canadian Rental Housing Index
Also indicative of the difficulty to move from renting to home ownership is that housing affordability issues affect renters, on average, more than homeowners. As illustrated in the following chart\(^\text{13}\), tenant households typically pay a higher percentage of their income towards shelter costs than do owner households. In other words, renters are more likely to spend greater than 30 per cent of their household income on shelter than their home-owning counterparts.

![Percentage of Total Households Spending 30% or More of Gross Monthly Income on Shelter by Tenure](image)

**CURRENT HOUSING NEED**

“HOUSING IS BECOMING LESS AFFORDABLE AT EVERY INCOME LEVEL. INCREASINGLY, STRESS FRACTURES IN EACH SEGMENT OF THE HOUSING SECTOR — FROM EMERGENCY SHELTERS THROUGH SUBSIDIZED HOUSING THROUGH MARKET RENTALS — COMPROMISE THE WIDER SYSTEM.”

- FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES\(^\text{14}\)

There is a need for an adequate supply of housing affordable to households with lower incomes, where housing affordability issues are especially acute. In 2015, low-income prevalence in the city was 15.5 per cent\(^\text{15}\), with single individuals accounting for the largest per centage\(^\text{16}\) and almost 20 per cent of lone parent economic families having low income status\(^\text{17}\).

As the housing affordability tables show below, an individual working full time and earning minimum wage would not be able to afford a bachelor apartment in the City unless they spent more than 30 per cent of their income on housing costs. For single parents with dependents, the situation is even more dire. Whether earning minimum

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\(^{13}\) Census 2016 Data Table 98-400-X2016231

\(^{14}\) Canada’s Housing Opportunity, Urgent solutions for a national housing strategy

\(^{15}\) Census Profile, 2016 Census prevalence of low income based on the LIM-AT

\(^{16}\) Census 2016 Data Table 98-400-X2016133 LIM-AT

\(^{17}\) Census 2016 Data Table 98-400-X2016136 LIM-AT
wage or receiving income support benefits, these households use roughly 46 per cent to 84 per cent of their income for rent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Affordability Table: Single Person Household</th>
<th>Bachelor Apartment</th>
<th>1-Bedroom Apartment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost required annually for rent alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINIMUM WAGE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Income for Single Person Working Full Time Earning Minimum Wage ($11.25/hour)</td>
<td>$23,400.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Annual Income on Rent Alone</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME SUPPORT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Income for Single Person Receiving Income Support Benefits (Basic Monthly Income + Rent Amount + Fuel Supplement)</td>
<td>$11,724</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Annual Income on Rent Alone</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>81.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Affordability Table: Households with Dependents</th>
<th>2-Bedroom Apartment</th>
<th>3-Bedroom Apartment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost required annually for rent alone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINIMUM WAGE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Income for Single Person Working Full Time Earning Minimum Wage ($11.25/hour)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$23,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Annual Income on Rent Alone</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Income for Couple Working Full Time Earning Minimum Wage ($11.25/hour)</td>
<td></td>
<td>$46,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Annual Income on Rent Alone</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Income for Single Parent Receiving Income Support Benefits with Dependents</td>
<td></td>
<td>$13,644</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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16 Oct 2017 rates, CMHC, Housing Market Information Portal
19 Oct 2017 rates, CMHC, Housing Market Information Portal
21 Oct 2017 rates, CMHC, Housing Market Information Portal
22 Oct 2017 rates, CMHC, Housing Market Information Portal
### INCOME SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Monthly Income + Rent Amount + Fuel Supplement</th>
<th>Percentage of Annual Income on Rent Alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Basic Monthly Income + Rent Amount + Fuel Supplement)</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual income for Couple Receiving Income Support Benefits with Dependents</th>
<th>$14,220</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Basic Monthly Income + Rent Amount + Fuel Supplement)</th>
<th>Percentage of Annual Income on Rent Alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Basic Monthly Income + Rent Amount + Fuel Supplement)</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current trends indicate the need for a range of housing options suitable for seniors and those ageing in place. The city’s population, which has fluctuated around 100,000 over the past 25 years, has recently seen substantial growth. Buoyed by favourable economic conditions, the population climbed to 108,860 people in 2016. As we move towards 2036, it is anticipated that the 25–34 years-old age group will show the strongest decline while the age 65+ population will increase. As it stands, the 65+ population owns more than a quarter (27.5 per cent) of all housing stock in the city. Smaller dwellings are needed for those who are downsizing as well as options to facilitate ageing in place.

The growth in number of households is also outpacing the growth in population, and this trend is expected to continue. One-person households now make up 31 per cent of households, and the average household size is just over two people (2.2). The steady increase in 3-bedroom vacancy rate moving, from 3.6 per cent in 2013 to 10.5 per cent in 2017, reflects this change in household composition. An emphasis, then, should be placed on developing smaller housing options, including one and two-person apartments.

The City must continue to monitor housing supply, housing demand, and housing affordability to ensure initiatives stay focused on the most urgent issues and reflect economic and demographic trends.

### Point-in-Time Count

The Point-in-Time (PiT) Count of the community’s homeless population, titled ‘Everyone Counts’ is an initiative in partnership with Canada’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy and the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness. It provides a snapshot of the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness on a single day in St. John’s. The 2018 Count determined that at least 165 people were experiencing homelessness.

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25 State of the Economy, St. John’s, 2018
26 State of the Economy, St. John’s, 2018
27 Census 2016 Data Table 98-400-X2016227
28 Census Profile, 2016 Census
29 Census Profile, 2016 Census
30 CMHC Housing Market Information Portal
on the night of April 11, 2018. Low income (57.6 per cent), in combination with the high cost of rental units (43.5 per cent) in St. John’s were cited as the top two barriers to obtaining housing by those completing the survey.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONTEXT

“CANADA’S FIRST-EVER NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY IS BUILT, IN PART, ON THE IDEA THAT WHEN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WORKS COLLABORATIVELY WITH ITS PARTNERS, WE CAN GIVE MORE CANADIANS A PLACE TO CALL HOME. THE NATIONAL HOUSING CO-INVESTMENT FUND IS THIS IDEA IN ACTION. BY WORKING WITH OUR PARTNERS AT ALL LEVELS, MORE MIDDLE CLASS CANADIANS -- AND THOSE WORKING HARD TO JOIN IT -- WILL FIND SAFE, ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE HOMES, IN VIBRANT AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES WHERE FAMILIES THRIVE, CHILDREN LEARN AND GROW, AND THEIR PARENTS HAVE THE STABILITY AND OPPORTUNITIES THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.” — THE HONOURABLE JEAN-YVES DUCLOS, MINISTER OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION

The City’s new AHS will not exist in isolation. Commitments from other government bodies will be relied upon for securing resources and beneficial partnerships.

This municipal strategy is well timed to emerge in line with the federal government’s first-ever National Housing Strategy. Introduced in November 2017, this $40 billion, 10-year plan will see an end result including: cutting chronic homelessness by 50 per cent, removing 530,000 families from housing need, renovating and modernizing 300,000 homes, and building 100,000 new homes. Ultimately, the strategy will promote diverse communities and create a new generation of housing that is mixed-income, mixed-use, accessible and sustainable.

Significant work is also underway at the provincial level. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has endorsed a multilateral Housing Partnership Framework to guide the Federal-Provincial/Territorial partnership to deliver initiatives under the National Housing Strategy. The Governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador are currently working on a bi-lateral agreement to deliver Newfoundland and Labrador’s share of federal funding. The provincial government is also working on a comprehensive provincial housing and homelessness plan and is working towards achieving a truly Housing First philosophy across all relevant departments.

First Time Homebuyers Program
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation’s First-Time Homebuyers Program (FHP) opened on April 1, 2018 with a budget of $1.25 million, allowing the program to
assist more than 100 households with the down payment for their first home. All funding for the FHP was committed within a month of the program's opening.

**THE STRATEGY’S MISSION AND VISION**

**Mission:** The City of St. John’s will leverage its unique capacities and build strong partnerships to produce, protect and promote affordable housing for the people of St. John’s.

**Vision:** St. John’s will be a vibrant, inclusive and thriving city with a wide range of affordable housing options that contribute directly to community health, sustainable growth and economic security.

**CORE BELIEFS BEHIND AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY 2018-2028**

The City of St. John’s Affordable Housing Charter (2011) continues to inform our work. The vision and mission therein will be upheld by the City and our partners in this new 10-year Affordable Housing Strategy. Two additional underlying tenets helped inform our original mission:

- Housing is a Right
- Housing is Fundamental to Community Wellness

The United Nations recognizes that housing is a fundamental and universal human right in many documents:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Article 25(1)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the ICESCR)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Convention of the Rights of the Child

In this context, our Affordable Housing Strategy will apply a human rights lens to efforts around affordable housing over the next 10 years. We will continue to recognize the right to access adequate housing and be free from homelessness without discrimination. Everyone needs and deserves a safe, suitable home that is affordable to them.

Affordable Housing represents a foundation for safe, prosperous and healthy communities. A vital part of the infrastructure of our City, affordable housing is not just a human right but a key pathway out of poverty, which contributes to resident well-being and the economy.

**CITY LEADERSHIP**
Building on our strengths in this area and past successes, the City will continue to provide leadership around affordable housing, with a commitment to the following actions:

- Act as champions for issues across the affordable-housing continuum;
- Reach out to partners for consultation and collaboration and apply a range of best practices and approaches;
- Continue to support the work of End Homelessness St. John’s;
- Support the Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG) as they guide the affordable housing implementation strategies;
- Continue to provide support to the Non-Profit Housing Division in their provision of affordable housing and their coordination of efforts in this strategy;

The City of St. John’s will commit to providing leadership and building on partnerships to generate inclusive, affordable housing solutions that work for people across the housing continuum.

**City of St. John’s Demographic and Opinion Survey**

The City of St. John’s undertook a residential survey in 2016 designed to gather information and perspectives from residents. Residents responded that creating affordable housing was amongst the top four challenges facing the City of St. John’s that should be a priority. More information on the City of St. John’s Demographic and Opinion Survey can be found on the City of St. John’s website.

**Partnerships: Their Essential Role**

> “WE ALL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN IMPROVING HOUSING STABILITY FOR THE RESIDENTS IN OUR CITY. WE MUST WORK WITH ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND OUR COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS TO TACKLE THE ISSUE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING” – MAYOR DANNY BREEN

Partnerships are crucial to any affordable housing initiative. The support and leadership that strong partnerships provide can mean the difference between a successful strategy and one that never gets off the ground. Partnerships were one of the main drivers of the first AHBP’s accomplishments.

Building on these successes, collaborative investment in housing solutions remain imperative as the City moves towards implementing its 10-year Affordable Housing Strategy. It is only when key investments are in place that a housing program’s economic, social and environmental dividends can be fully realized.

Partners who are necessary to the success of the new 10-year strategy are illustrated in the following table.
Community Partners
There are a wide range of organizations involved in affordable housing solutions in the City of St. John’s. The community housing sector in St. John’s has gained a national reputation for its high level of organization, collaboration and creativity and the potential for future partnership is formidable. Community organizations and private industry partners include (but are not limited to)

AIDS committee of NL
Canadian Home Builders Association- Newfoundland and Labrador
Choices for Youth
CHANAL
End Homelessness St. John’s
Empower
Faith groups
Habitat for Humanity
Iris Kirby House
John Howard Society
St. John’s Native Friendship Centre
St. John’s Status of Women Council
Stella’s Circle
THRIVE
Newfoundland & Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network (NLHHN)
Many other housing providers and advocacy groups
INTEGRATION OF OTHER MUNICIPAL STRATEGIES AND PLANS

The AHS will not be a stand-alone document. To be successful, it must work in tandem with other municipal strategies and initiatives. By implementing the AHS, we will achieve our municipal vision and support the City’s strategic directions.

Figure 3 Integrated Municipal Initiatives

St. John's: A Vibrant city where we Want to Live.
STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Built from a strong foundation of public engagement and research on our current local housing situation and emerging trends, the City has identified six strategic components related to affordable housing that will be addressed in the new 10-year affordable housing strategy. Listed in no order of importance, they are titled as follows:

- Unlocking Resources
- Building Homes
- Leading Innovation
- Revitalizing Policy
- Cultivating Partnership
- Informing Action

Implementation strategies to support each component are listed in the following section:
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

UNLOCKING RESOURCES
IDENTIFY AND DRAW ON THE CITY’S RESOURCES AND ASSETS TO ADVANCE HOUSING INITIATIVES AND CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

1.1 Create a Civic Housing Action Fund
1.2 Create an Interdepartmental Committee to coordinate internal components of this strategy
1.3 Continue to create a list of city-owned vacant land and buildings and evaluate the inventory for potential redevelopment as affordable housing
1.4 Work with the Provincial and Federal Governments on identifying land and surplus buildings in St. John’s
1.5 Advocate to the Provincial Government for broadened powers of expropriation for the City of St. John’s, to allow acquisition of land that could be redeveloped as affordable housing.

BUILDING HOMES
INCREASE THE STOCK AND SUSTAINABILITY OF AFFORDABLE RENTAL AND HOME OWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 Make creating successful tenancies a priority
2.1.1 Share information about landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities
2.1.2 Share information about eviction prevention and community supports available
2.2 Focus on producing sustainable rental opportunities
2.2.1 Encourage private landlords to be involved in affordable housing
2.2.2 Seek funding opportunities for a Landlord Mitigation Fund which could provide better assurances for landlords for payment or damages.
2.2.3 Continue to work with partners in the community to create a Landlord Registry
2.2.4 Continue to engage multiple stakeholders in addressing the under-reporting of property standards violations in rental housing
2.2.5 Continue to work with NL Housing on their Rent Supplement Inspection Program and look for ways to increase the City’s involvement with other programs
2.3 Create a non-profit housing strategic asset management framework to guide decisions of housing unit renewal and redevelopment
2.3.1 Develop a non-profit housing real estate portfolio
2.3.2 Leverage the existing City-owned housing portfolio to increase the supply of accessible and affordable housing units

“THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AND A NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS IN THE CITY TO WORK WITH IF YOU’RE A LANDLORD. YOU NEED AN OPEN MIND BUT IF YOU ARE WILLING TO WORK WITH ONE OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS,
Adaptive Reuse
A valuable trend in affordable housing initiatives in St. John’s is adaptive reuse, which entails taking an older, underutilized or vacant building and repurposing it into affordable housing. When these buildings are thoughtfully redesigned into affordable apartments, this ensures the preservation of the city’s built heritage. This results in interesting streetscapes and scenic views that have a high social, cultural and economic value.

In 2016, The Sisters of Presentation donated St. Patrick’s Convent to the City of St. John’s for use as affordable supportive housing for seniors. The City successfully secured $2.5 million in funding through the joint federal/provincial Investment in Affordable Housing to convert the 160-year-old property into 22 affordable housing units. All units are visitable and three are fully accessible. Aesthetic and historical values of the property will be maintained during the transition to affordable housing, and two units will be reserved for elderly sisters to reside in. The renovation is expected to be complete by 2019.

LEADING INNOVATION
INSPIRE AND FACILITATE CREATIVITY IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECTS

3.1 Continue to offer the Housing Catalyst Fund grants yearly for affordable housing projects
3.2 Explore the best venue for a Housing Design Competition. Feature awards for designs that incorporate affordability as well as other important features to meet the needs of our changing population.
3.3 Facilitate an Energy Efficiency Pilot Project, bringing partners together on a collaborative project that is aimed at reducing power costs and increasing affordability.

REVITALIZING POLICY
CREATE MUNICIPAL POLICY AND PLANS THAT STRIVE TO MEET AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS OF RESIDENTS.
“ALMOST EVERY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DECISION COUNCIL MAKES AFFECTS THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING, FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE. AFFORDABILITY SHOULD ALWAYS BE ON THE AGENDA!” - COMMENT ON THE ENGAGE PAGE

4.1 Support building a diverse and inclusive housing stock.
4.1.1 In the *Envision St. John’s* Development Regulations, continue to allow subsidiary dwelling units in as many residential zones as possible.
4.1.2 In the *Envision St. John’s* Development Regulations, incorporate provisions for tiny homes

“TINY HOMES ARE VERY APPEALING TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION WHO WANT MORE THAN JUST AN AFFORDABLE HOME. THEY WANT TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY WITH A LIGHTER CARBON FOOTPRINT” COMMENT ON THE ENGAGE PAGE

4.1.3 Advocate to the Provincial Government to enable detached subsidiary dwelling units (ex. laneway houses) on a property in appropriate locations, as per the Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000.
4.2 Support intensification and mixed-use developments throughout the City of St. John’s
4.2.1 Allow small apartment buildings in some residential zones throughout the City of St. John’s
4.2.2 Make best use of the land base to provide affordable housing. Do not impose restrictive residential density limits in the Envision St. John’s Development Regulations.
4.3 Provide incentives for affordable housing developments.
4.3.1 Allow flexibility for some affordable housing parking requirements on a case-by-case basis
4.3.2 Provide an exemption of municipal fees to private developers of affordable housing who have confirmed investment from another level of government, and for all registered charities.
4.3.3 Prioritize planning and building permit approval processes for affordable housing projects who have confirmed investment from another level of government.
4.4 Advocate to the Provincial Government for the expressed legislative authority to require a percentage of affordable units in new development or redevelopment (inclusionary zoning).
4.4.1 Research best practices from other municipalities of like size
4.4.2 Advocate for changes to be made in the *Urban and Rural Planning Act 2000*
4.4.3 Explore the option of cash in lieu to support sustainability of the Civic Housing Action fund.
4.5 Explore the option of revisions to the Building By-law to set stricter regulations of new buildings to improve accessibility for older residents following best practice from
Vancouver BC which requires all new homes to be adaptable for seniors and people with disabilities

4.6 Re-invest in planning at the neighbourhood level to identify ways to improve the built environment for better mobility, access to goods, services, open space, employment and increased housing diversity.

4.6.1 Encourage higher density, mixed-use development in areas identified for intensification along transit corridors

4.6.2 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

4.6.3 Continue to require new developments to consult with the St. John’s Transportation Commission regarding public transit infrastructure requirements.

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.

5.1 Continue to support the work of End Homelessness St. John’s

5.1.1 The City and partners will continue working alongside and supporting their 2014-2019 Community Plan to End Homelessness

5.1.2 The City and partners will participate in the development of End Homelessness St. John’s new Plan (post 2019)

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

5.3 Support the involvement of the private sector in affordable housing.

5.3.1 Focus efforts on listening to, and helping to solve, the challenges private developers express regarding developing affordable housing

5.3.2 Have the Affordable Housing Working Group reach out to developers, encouraging them to incorporate affordable housing in their projects

5.4 Continue to act as an affordable housing facilitator.

5.4.1 Share housing related research, contacts and supports within the community

5.4.2 Continue leadership of the Affordable Housing Strategy by the Affordable Housing Working Group

Innovative Partnership

Home Again Furniture Bank helps increase housing stability by collecting gently-used furniture from individuals and businesses and distributing these items to people in need. By helping individuals furnish a home, they are more likely to develop an attachment to “home”, and therefore remain housed longer. Working through a referral process, Home Again has partnered with 34 community agencies and organizations
who refer their clients. They assist those who are transitioning from homelessness, prison or war-torn countries, the working poor, recent divorcees, seniors on a fixed income and those struggling with physical and mental health issues. In just over 2 and a half years, and with the help of 100 plus volunteers Home Again has brought comfort, dignity and stability of a well-furnished home to more than 745 households throughout the Northeast Avalon. In turn diverting over 250 Tonnes of furniture and household items destined for the landfill.

5.5 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).

5.6 Support our community partners in their efforts to improve market access for social enterprises involved in the development, renovations and maintenance of affordable housing taking into consideration the City is bound by the Procurement act.

Social Enterprise in our City
A disproportionate number of young people, seniors, members of minority communities, and people with physical and mental health challenges are either unemployed or otherwise detached from the labour market. Social enterprises that provide access to training and employment for these groups represent a major step towards reducing the breaking cycles of poverty, and building a viable path to employment and independence. Impact Construction is a CORTM certified social enterprise construction company, operated by Choices for Youth, that trains and employs at-risk and homeless youth. From asbestos abatement and kitchen renovations, to demolitions and energy retrofits, the enterprise offers a wide-range of services. Youth are involved in all aspects of the project and are able to progress through various levels of training and job responsibilities. Impact Construction has worked on a number of housing rennovations, new builds and modernizations. With every project, the enterprise delivers the social impact of generating supportive youth employment while delivering projects on code, on time and on budget.

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

5.7.1 Continue 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.

5.7.2 Support Metrobus in identifying where better connectivity is required so that affordable housing units can be accessed.
5.7.3 Work with the Province to ensure connections to public transit, cycling infrastructure and pedestrian infrastructure are incorporated where feasible for all new affordable housing developments and redevelopments.

5.7.4 Participate in the development of the City of St. John’s Transportation Master Plan to ensure affordable housing considerations are included.

5.7.5 Participate in the development of the Metrobus Strategic Plan to ensure affordable housing considerations are included.

The Transportation Master Plan currently under development by the City of St. John’s looks into the long-term transportation needs of residents and visitors to the City. The Plan will develop policies to prioritize and complete transportation facilities and programs over a time frame of 20 to 30 years. By considering housing and transportation affordability the Transportation Master Plan can look to policies and programs that improve the overall transportation costs for residents of affordable housing.

Cochrane Centre
Faced with rising costs associated with building maintenance at Cochrane Street United Church, Cochrane Community Outreach and Performance Centre was established to utilize the space. Over several years, Cochrane Centre renovated portions of the church to develop an outreach and performance centre which includes performance and rehearsal space, community space, a commercial kitchen and a supportive affordable housing development. Funded by programs from all three levels of government, the housing development includes 10 affordable housing units and 5 seniors affordable housing units. Housing units are accessed by those with a history of homelessness and barriers to accessing traditional housing. As of June 2018, the day to day operations of Cochrane Centre are managed by the St. John’s Native Friendship Centre, providing an excellent collaboration between community organizations.

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

6.1 Increase the understanding of affordable housing, housing need, and associated best practices
6.1.1 Continue to plan and deliver an Affordable Housing Forum every year on (or near) National Housing Day (November 22)

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

6.2 Increase understanding and advocacy of Universal Design Standards

“Beginning in 2011, NL Housing made it a requirement that all units constructed under the Affordable Housing Program must incorporate universal design principles, and at least one in every 10 units must be fully accessible. This will allow persons with disabilities who qualify to live in an Affordable Housing Program building to access any unit in the building. Newfoundland and Labrador is the first province to make this a requirement for the construction of affordable housing” - NLHC Investment in Affordable Housing Public Report or Outcomes.

6.2.1 Transfer knowledge throughout the construction industry and with landlords to enable a better understanding of Universal Design (UD) features versus full accessibility

“THE MAIN THING IS TO ENSURE THAT THE CITY’S AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS HAVE AN ACCESSIBILITY LENS PLACED ON THEM BUT ALSO TO BUILD CAPACITY THROUGHOUT THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND EVEN WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHO ARE LANDLORDS TO TAKE ACCESSIBILITY ON THEMSELVES...THE CITY CANNOT BE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE HOUSING....INCLUSION ONLY TRULY HAPPENS WHEN WE ALL DO OUR PART. : )” EXCERPT FROM AN EMAIL SUBMISSION DURING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSULTATION

6.2.2 Explore and share funding opportunities for Universal Design renovations for existing buildings, especially heritage buildings.

6.3 Continue to raise awareness of energy efficiency as a function of affordability and related rebate/grant/loan programs that increase affordability of these efficiencies

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

6.4.1 Act as leaders and champions in addressing NIMBY attitudes.

6.4.2 Develop and implement a social marketing strategy that addresses and alleviates concerns related to affordable housing developments.

6.4.3 Share and utilize the NIMBY toolkit when considering or supporting new affordable housing developments.

6.5 Conduct recurrent housing needs assessments updates every 3 years.

The BUILDING “YES”: A NOT-IN-MY-BACKYARD (NIMBY) TOOLKIT, published by the Canadian Home Builders’ Association- Newfoundland and Labrador (CHBA) and funded by the City of St. John’s through the Government of Canada’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy, was designed for use by housing proponents in NL. It provides best practices to support development proposals that offer different housing options through community engagement and education.
Located on Garrison Hill adjacent to Howard House, Garrison Place is a 10 unit affordable housing complex for individuals facing complex barriers to housing. Before commencing their development in 2016, the John Howard Society were proactive in their approach to combating community insecurities by using tools from the NIMBY toolkit. As an example, before construction began, the Society developed a pamphlet about the project describing what the program was and who would be living there. They then knocked on doors and spoke with residents in the area and answered any questions that may have been raised. For those they weren’t able to speak to, they left hand written notes on pamphlets encouraging people to call at any time if they had any questions or concerns. The John Howard Society were quick to respond to any inquiries and were attentive to the needs of the community throughout the construction of Garrison Place.

EVALUATION & COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION PLAN AND SOCIAL MARKETING STRATEGY

Communication Plan
To achieve success in its affordable housing initiatives, the City must invest in long-term, sustained communications. Short-term, “one-off” communications strategies, such as those developed for program launches or building openings, should reflect the long-term goals in the overall plan.

The 2018 Affordable Housing Strategy is rooted in the belief that housing is a basic human right and is built on the principle that the City can leverage its capacity and use partnerships to produce, protect and promote affordable housing for the people of St. John’s. Communications, marketing and promotional efforts in support of this strategy will also leverage the City’s capacity to share information, messages and ideas while positioning the City as a leader and a community partner in addressing the affordable housing issue.

It will be important to ensure that City departments with a piece of the affordable housing issue collaborate and communicate often. Similarly, it is important the members of Council, who have a vested interest in seeing this issue progress, are well-informed about Affordable Housing initiatives and actions.
Specific, overall goals for communications include:

- To ensure the new strategy is communicated broadly and easily accessible, such that the majority of residents are aware that a strategy exists while partner stakeholders understand fully the goals and outcomes identified and how to engage directly with the City on the affordable housing issue.
- To position the City as a champion for issues across the affordable housing continuum, raising the profile of the Affordable Housing Working Group stakeholders and advocates and identifying and supporting identified leaders on Council as key spokespeople and affordable housing advocates.
- To share the stories of what the City is doing to support affordable housing efforts across existing platforms for communications, where possible, and to devise new methods for communications and engagement that advance the City’s goals on affordable housing.
- To improve access to information about affordable housing providers, rental property standards and tenant rights and responsibilities.
- To improve access to information about the economical, social and environmental benefits of creating affordable rental housing and home ownership opportunities to landlords and developers, especially focusing on grants, guidelines and incentives.

Particular emphasis will be placed on a long-term strategy to increase public awareness about what affordable housing means, paying particular attention to the “NIMBY” syndrome – “not in my backyard.”

**Tactics**

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<th>Informing</th>
<th>Positioning</th>
<th>Curating</th>
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<th>Changing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Media launch</td>
<td>Key messages</td>
<td>Client stories</td>
<td>Engaging with stakeholders (clients, landlords, builders, advocacy groups, etc.)</td>
<td>Social Marketing Strategy</td>
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<td>Strategy awareness events</td>
<td>Media opportunities</td>
<td>Landlord stories</td>
<td>about communications matters</td>
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<td>Media updates/ public reporting</td>
<td>Speaking opportunities</td>
<td>Partner stories</td>
<td>Developing accessible tools and resources for targeted populations</td>
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<td>Promote progress/ updates/ reports over time</td>
<td>Public presentations</td>
<td>Social media profiles</td>
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<td>Marketing/ video</td>
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**Social Marketing Strategy**

In 2017, the Housing Division and Communications and Marketing contracted with We Us Them, a Halifax-based agency, on the development of a social marketing strategy for the City on the NIMBY issue. A research report and subsequent draft approach were presented and held by the team to be incorporated into this plan, and the consultant’s concepts and information have been integrated into the proposed campaign.
The NSMC, an international centre of behaviour change expertise, defines social marketing as “an approach used to develop activities aimed at changing or maintaining people’s behaviour for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.”

While overall St. John’s residents agree and support the need for affordable housing, the ‘Not In My Backyard’ mindset has been a consistent roadblock to housing developments and a detracting factor for property owners considering renting or developing with an affordable housing agenda.

According to the CMHC (Gaining Community Acceptance of Affordable Housing Projects and Homeless Shelters, 2006), there are a number of universal concerns when affordable housing projects are being considered:

- An initial lack of awareness about the project which leads to opposition when the community learns about it.
- A lack of information or knowledge, or both.
- Misconceptions about the proposed function of the structure.
- Concerns about new residents affecting community safety.
- Discrimination against new residents.
- Decreasing property values.
- High density housing and increasing crime.
- Concerns that affordable rentals will be sold off once approval of the project is granted.
- A demand for market driven rather than low income housing.
- Increased traffic.
- Aesthetic concerns - structures would not fit with existing residential buildings.

Despite the stated support and priority given to affordable housing in recent demographic studies, citizen satisfaction surveys and other engagement tools - in the survey conducted as part of this strategy, 75 per cent of respondents strongly supported affordable housing in the neighbourhood) - the City frequently experiences strong neighbourhood-based resistance to affordable housing options.

For St. John’s, our consultants identified the primary NIMBY demographics to be young professionals, between 24-34 and older residents, 45-54+. There is no data pointing to men or women being more likely to have NIMBY attitudes, however the following factors are typically associated with higher NIMBY attitudes:

- Living in the neighbourhood for 15-20+ years
- Having young children
- Higher income (75,000+)

These factors were found to be associated with lower NIMBY attitudes:

- College or University education
- Less than 5 years spent in neighbourhood

The public’s perspective on affordable housing development is tainted by misconceptions and stigmas which create a sense of fear for both residents and authority figures, delaying progress. This is evident in residents’ responses as identified
in “St. John’s: Overcoming NIMBYISM in St. John’s” (p. 32.). What residents fail to see are the positive benefits that affordable housing development brings to the community. Misconceptions and fears include:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fear</th>
<th>Reality</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lowered property value</td>
<td>“Many studies on Affordable Housing conclude that there is no impact on property values. One study done in Toronto found that, ‘there was no evidence that the existence of the supportive housing buildings studied has negatively affected either property values or crime rates in the neighbourhood.’ Property values have increased and crime decreased in the period considered by the study.” (Ontario Humans Rights Commission. <a href="http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/zone-housing-human-rights-and-municipal-planning/overcoming-opposition-affordable-housing">http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/zone-housing-human-rights-and-municipal-planning/overcoming-opposition-affordable-housing</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowered curb appeal/neighbourhood character loss</td>
<td>Visual appeal is key: Affordable housing developments are often consistent to modern, suburban residential builds</td>
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<td>Increased traffic</td>
<td>Vehicle ownership tends to be less in Affordable Housing Residencies</td>
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<td>High turnover rate &amp; fear of reducing neighbourhood safety by introducing unstable residents</td>
<td>Those who benefit from Affordable Housing already live in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased crime related to drugs and alcohol</td>
<td>“There are no studies that show affordable housing brings crime to neighborhoods. In fact, families who own their own homes add stability to a neighborhood and lower the crime rate. Families who live in affordable housing seek the same thing every family does – a safe place to raise children and the opportunity to enhance the value of what they own.” (John Hagerman. &quot;Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity. 7 Myth About Affordable Housing Busted.&quot; November, 2014.)</td>
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Challenge:
To achieve the City’s vision of “a vibrant, inclusive and thriving city with a wide range of affordable housing options that contribute directly to community health, sustainable growth and economic security”, we must decrease resistance to affordable housing.

In developing strategies for this campaign, the City must employ an understanding of behavioural economics, which NSMS describes as “a way of understanding how people make choices. It moves beyond traditional – or ‘neoclassical’ – economics, which assumes that people make decisions in a logical way. Behavioural economics recognises that we don’t always behave rationally. Instead, our behaviour is governed by instinct, emotion, past events and the people around us.”
Our social marketing strategy will tackle the fears associated with affordable housing through increased information (awareness campaigns, success stories, etc.) and focusing on the benefits of affordable housing. Working with the Housing team, we will target, research, implement and evaluate campaigns over the ten-year strategy to work towards addressing the challenge statement.

**EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

The Affordable Housing Strategy is intended to be flexible and responsive to changes in the housing market and cost of living. To ensure that changes in the external environment are reflected in the AHS, a housing need updates will be conducted twice during the life of this 10-year strategy (2021 and 2024). Shifts in housing, demographic and economic data points will provide the underpinning of any refinements or revisions needed in our strategy’s efforts. Our strategic directions will be maintained as the foundation of the City’s efforts; however, flexibility will exist to reflect new information identified from the needs assessment updates.

A formal and substantive evaluation of the Affordable Housing Strategy will be completed in 2027.

Accountable to the City of St. John’s Corporate Strategic Plan, annual reporting will also be incorporated into the corporate target updates.

**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX A: AFFORDABLE HOUSING WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP**

The main hub for the City’s leadership on this issue is the Affordable Housing Working Group (AHWG) formerly the Mayor’s Advisory Committee on Affordable Housing (MACAH). The Affordable Housing Working Group was primarily responsible for the implementation of the Affordable Housing Business Plan approved by the City in 2014. It was repurposed in May 2018 to guide the development and implementation of the new 10-year strategy. The AHWG considers relevant City policies and activities which impact implementation strategies and ensures communication with the appropriate parties. The AHWG Terms of reference can be found on the City’s [webpage](#).
APPENDIX B: ENGAGEMENT PROCESS TOWARDS A NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

The City’s engagement scope involved capturing both policy and lived experience of St. John’s residents. Reaching residents and stakeholders of various backgrounds and socio-economic status was a key component to ensuring the strategy could meet the whole community’s needs.

Engagement Process: Everyone is affected by affordable housing in some way, and so it was the City’s intent to meet with as many people as possible. By providing an online platform through the Engage Page (http://engagetestjohns.ca/affordable-housing), residents had a place to go for more information, whether they were very experienced in the subject matter or had little to no knowledge of it.

Engagement Tools and Techniques:

Engage page http://engagetestjohns.ca/affordable-housing:
Over 300 visitors to the online portal.
Two questions asked:
- What is important to you as the City of St. John’s builds its new Affordable Housing Strategy? (15 responses submitted)
Please share your story. As part of this engagement, we would like to collect local, affordable housing success stories. We would like to hear from you on the positive impact affordable housing has had on you/your family (0 stories submitted)

**Information Sessions**
- Landlord Information Session: June 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 35-40 people attended
- General Information Session: June 6\textsuperscript{th}, 35-40 people attended
- Affordable Housing Consultation Event:
  - June 20\textsuperscript{th}, 60-65 people attended
- Affordable Housing Information Session:
  - June 28\textsuperscript{th}, 15-20 people attended

**Focused conversations**

We held focused conversations with existing groups, including the Local Immigration Partnership, Citizen’s Voice, Accessibility & Inclusion Committee and the Seniors Advisory Committee.

The consultation process has been used to inform themes throughout the new 10 Year Affordable Housing Strategy for the City of St. John’s. Please see the **What We Heard** document for more information at the following link: [https://www.engagestjohns.ca/affordable-housing](https://www.engagestjohns.ca/affordable-housing).
APPENDIX C: AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHARTER 2011-13

CITY OF ST. JOHN’S
AFFORDABLE HOUSING CHARTER

Mission
The City of St. John’s will leverage its unique capacities and build strong partnerships to produce, protect and promote affordable housing for the people of St. John’s.

Vision
St. John’s will be a vibrant, inclusive and thriving city with a wide range of affordable housing options that contribute directly to community health, sustainable growth and economic security.

Housing is Fundamental
Affordable Housing is:
- a foundation for a safe, prosperous and healthy community;
- a vital part of the infrastructure of our City;
- a human right enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- a key pathway out of poverty;
- a sound public investment that contributes to resident well-being and the economy.

Values

Collaboration
We will engage many partners in our work, focusing on the particular strengths of each partner.

Sustainability
We will produce and promote affordable housing solutions that incorporate both economic and ecological sustainability out of respect for future generations who inherit these solutions.

Accountability
We will set challenging, achievable goals and report regularly and publicly on our progress.

Ingenuity
We will build innovative solutions based on successful leading edge approaches, that are carefully and creatively adapted to current and local realities.

Congruency
We will review relevant City decisions and policies using an affordable housing lens to ensure that they are congruent with our mission of production, protection and promotion.
APPENDIX D: HISTORY OF THE CITY’S HOUSING ACTION

The following is a summary of action that the City has taken in recent years to address housing and homelessness issues with its many partners.

1960s and 70s:
- Cost-shared operation of two significant housing developments with the Province.
- Became delivery agent for the Federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) – resulted in renovations to hundreds of homes in St. John’s.

1980s and 90s:
- Built 424 housing units for singles, seniors and families from 1982 to 1992. Primarily infill housing – designed to revitalize the core area and stabilize neighbourhoods. The city still owns and manages these units.
- Convened an Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Committee on Housing to encourage collaboration on affordable housing issues.

2000 – 2009:
- Participated as a founding member in the St. John’s Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness under the federal Homelessness Partnerships Strategy (formerly NHI). Through membership, the City helped support housing & homelessness capital projects through alleviating property taxes and development charge for related projects, as well as providing planning support and City land.
- Established a Sub-Committee on Housing (reporting to the standing committee on Planning & Housing Committee).
- Formed the Affordable Housing Action Committee (now the Affordable Housing Working Group), which includes members from all orders of government and the community and private sectors.
- The City has convened annual housing forums since 2008.

2010 – 2014:
- Hired an Affordable Housing Coordinator in 2010.
- Adopted an Affordable Housing Action Plan and Charter in February 2011 that outlined the City’s commitment to housing as a priority issue. This action plan laid out concrete strategies to address the shortage of affordable housing options from 2011 to 2013.
- In collaboration with NL Housing, built 30 new units of affordable housing in Pleasantville, using land acquired through the federal government’s Surplus Federal Real Property for Homelessness Initiative. Twenty-four of the units created became part of the City’s Non Profit Housing portfolio. This project includes office and social enterprise space for the NL Housing and Homelessness Network. The City contributed $500,000 toward the development of the social enterprise space.
- Donated land to Habitat for Humanity and Saint Vincent de Paul for their affordable housing developments.
- Introduced new energy-efficiency standards for all new home construction to improve long term affordability and reduce greenhouse gases.
Hosted a workshop on rental property standards with a large and diverse representation from community and government.

Convened a working group (Rental Team) to develop concrete solutions to promote safe and healthy rental housing.

Actively participates as member of the St. John’s Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness (SJCACH) since the committee’s inception in 2000. This diverse group has created several community plans to address homelessness through shelter creation, awareness, and community capacity building.

Took on the role as a “Community Entity” in 2013 as part of in the federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy, joining 60 other Cities in distributing funds and creating partnerships to end homelessness in St John's.

2014 – Present:

- Cleared roadblocks to affordable housing development, including waiving building- and development permit fees for affordable housing projects.
- Continued to develop a City-owned land inventory.
- Initiated a Housing Catalyst Fund in 2016 and delivered 7 grants for affordable housing projects between 2016 and 2017, with a total community contribution of $73,500
- Working with partners, hosted multiple Affordable Housing Information Sessions.
- Created an Affordable Housing Newsletter.
- Supported the development of Home Again Furniture Bank, a non-profit organization that provides gently used furniture and household items to individuals and families in need.
- With NL Housing, hired a consultant to conduct a Central Housing Waitlist Feasibility Study.
- Continued to address property standards through ensuring compliance in rental properties. The City’s Supervisor of Inspection Services delivers a presentation titled “City of St. John’s Inspection Services, Residential Property Standards Guidelines” to stakeholders.
- Coordinated a survey of landlords in partnership with the Rental Team. The survey addressed barriers, obstacles and opportunities of achieving a successful tenancy. The results of the Landlord Survey have been used by the Rental Team to frame Landlord Engagement plans moving forward.
- In partnership with the Rental Team, offered Landlord Information Sessions and have started New Lease, an online Landlord Newsletter.
- Partnered with the Province to complete a Seniors Housing Research Project in 2014.
- Successfully secured $2.5-million in funding through the joint federal/provincial Investment in Affordable Housing to build 20 new homes. The Sisters of Presentation have gifted St. Patrick’s Convent to the City for use as affordable supportive housing for seniors. A total of 22 additional units will be built at this location by 2018.
APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY

Adequate housing (in reference to National Household Survey statistics): Housing that is reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.

Affordable Housing: 30% or less of a household’s pre-tax income including housing and related costs—such as mortgage or rent, property taxes, home energy, water and repairs.

Cash-in-lieu: Payment of cash instead of stock

Civic Housing Action Fund: Fund that would support the development of affordable housing opportunities and provide a means to leverage provincial and federal funding

CCMH: The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) is Canada’s national housing agency that provides housing research, advice to consumers and the housing industry, and reports to parliament and the public on mortgage loan insurance and financial reports

Energy Efficiency: A measure of how efficiently a housing unit uses energy

Homelessness: Having no home or permanent place of residence

Housing Crunch: Households with an income too high to be eligible for social housing but too low to afford market rents or purchasing options

Household: All the persons who occupy or intend to occupy a housing unit

Housing First Philosophy: Centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed to maintain it.

Inclusionary Zoning: Requirement that affordable housing units be included in residential developments

Intensification: Developing an area at a higher density than currently exists through development, redevelopment, infill and expansion or conversion of existing buildings.

Mixed-Use Development: Blend of residential and commercial uses, where those functions are physically integrated.

Not in My Backyard Syndrome (NIMBY): In the broadest sense, the “Not-In-My-Backyard” syndrome or ‘NIMBY’ is the term used to describe the desire of residents in a neighbourhood to prevent certain land uses near their homes or communities. It has also been described as “opposition to housing projects that are based on stereotypes or
prejudice towards the people who will live in them. It can refer to discriminatory attitudes as well as actions, laws or policies that have the effect of creating barriers for people”\(^{31}\)

**Subsidiary Dwelling:** A Suite within a single detached dwelling whose floor area does not exceed 40 per cent of the Gross Floor Area of the Dwelling.

**Suitable housing (in reference to National Household Survey statistics):** Housing that has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.

**Strategic Asset Management Framework:** Provides a long term systematic approach to managing assets and associated resources in the most cost-effective way.

**Universal Design:** Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability.

**Urban and Rural Planning Act:** Provincial legislation for land use planning

Issue:
Council has requested information on how potential modifications to circulation routes in the area of Long’s Hill and Livingstone Street will impact vehicle traffic.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:
Residents in the area of the Long’s Hill and Livingstone Street have raised concerns regarding sex trade activity in the neighbourhood. With the intention of mitigating the effects of this activity on local residents, residents suggested traffic and parking restrictions be considered to prevent drivers being able to repeatedly circulate through the area. Figure 1 illustrates the existing directional traffic control and circulation patterns possible in the area. Under current conditions, both clockwise and counter clockwise routes are possible.

Figure 1: Existing Long’s Hill Traffic Circulation
Staff completed further review of the existing roadway circulation in the area to determine what changes, if any, could be made to completely prevent circulating driver behaviour. Options explored to address resident concerns are discussed below.

**Option 1 – Resident proposed restrictions**

Residents proposed the following traffic restrictions be considered to prevent circulating drivers:

i. No left turn from Balsam Street to Queen’s Road
ii. No left turn from Queen’s Road to Allan Square;
iii. No left turn from Livingstone Street to Long’s Hill

Figure 2 illustrates these potential changes and impacts to the existing area traffic circulation.

**Figure 2: Option 1 Resident Suggested Traffic Restrictions**

The suggested restrictions would impact area properties in the following ways:

i. No left turn from Balsam Street to Queen’s Road – Drivers parked on, or exiting from, Balsam Street wanting to turn left and head east on Queen’s Road would need to make a right turn and detour down Bates Hill and east along Duckworth Street or travel further west
and detour up Barter's Hill to travel east back along Livingstone Street or along an alternate route.

ii. No left turn from Queen’s Road to Allan Square – Drivers travelling east on Queen’s Road would need to loop around Church Hill and back to Allan Square in order to access properties on Allan Square or the on-street parking on the south side of Livingstone Street, east of Allan Square.

iii. No left turn from Livingstone Street to Long’s Hill – Drivers exiting the area heading west/north would need to head west on Livingstone Street or travel east and make a right turn on Long’s Hill and loop around Church Hill to head back up Long’s Hill.

While the left-turn restrictions suggested by residents would partially interrupt existing circulation, clockwise circulation would be unaffected, and drivers could continue to circulate counter clockwise around Long Street and Church Hill as shown in Figure 2.

**Option 2 – Reverse one-way travel on Allan Square**

To partially prevent the existing clockwise circulation through the area, the one-way control on Allan Square could be reversed as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Option 2 Traffic Restrictions**
While this change would prevent the shortest existing clockwise circulation patterns, other circulation routes through the area would be unaffected and a new, shorter counter clockwise route would be created.

Properties along Allan Square and Balsam Street would be primarily impacted by this change although it is recognized that many other drivers in the neighbourhood would be affected. Residents of Allan Square and Balsam Street would no longer be able to travel west directly from Livingstone Street and would need to head west by turning right on Queen’s Road or turning left and looping back around Church Hill to travel up Long’s Hill. Drivers wishing to park on the south side of Livingstone Street, east of Allan Square would also need to enter the neighbourhood via Carters Hill or loop around Long’s Hill and Long Street.

**Option 3 – Reverse one-way travel on Balsam Street and make Livingstone Street one-way westbound from Long’s Hill to Allan Square**

To prevent counter clockwise circulation through the area, one-way control on Balsam Street could be reversed and one-way westbound control could be implemented on Livingstone Street from Long’s Hill to Allan Square as shown in Figure 4

![Figure 4: Option 3 Traffic Restrictions](image-url)
These changes would prevent counter clockwise circulation through the area and would prevent the shortest existing clockwise route, longer clockwise circulation routes up Carter’s Hill would be unaffected.

While these changes would have the greatest impact on properties along Livingstone Street, Allan Square, Balsam Street, neighbourhood residents wishing to exit the area would be forced to travel up Carter’s Hill or west along Livingstone Street. These changes would significantly impact the available routes exiting the neighbourhood and would cause longer detours for drivers heading to destinations in the east end or downtown.

**Option 4 – Reverse one-way travel on Allan Square and on Long Street, make Livingstone Street one-way eastbound from Allan Square to Long’s Hill, and ban left turns from Livingstone and Long Street onto Long’s Hill**

As shown in Figure 5, by reversing one-way control on Allan Square and on Long’s Street, implementing one-way eastbound control on Livingstone Street, and banning left turns from Livingstone and Long’s Street onto Long’s hill both clockwise and counter clockwise circulation through the area could be prohibited.

**Figure 5: Option 4 Traffic Restrictions**
Although these changes would prevent driver circulation through the area, they impose significant restrictions on area resident travel and would have the greatest cumulative impact on how any driver would enter the neighbourhood as well as impacting those existing the area via Long’s Hill.

With Balsam Street, Allan Square, Long Street, and Livingstone Street (from Allan Square to Long’s Hill) all one-way “outbound” to Queen’s Road and Long’s Hill, the only way for residents to return to their homes would be via Carter’s Hill/Livingstone Street. This would require long detours for residents returning home via New Gower and Queen’s Road up Long’s Hill and around Murray Street/Carter’s Hill. In addition, residents of Allan Square, Balsam Street, and Livingstone Street east of Allan Square would be limited to travelling west/north by turning right on Queen’s Road or turning left and looping back around Church Hill to travel up Long’s Hill as in Option 2.

Given the significant impacts presented by this option it is unlikely that the left turn restrictions exiting Livingstone Street and Long Street would be respected by drivers in the areas.

**Option 5 – Resident proposed Area Parking Restrictions**

In addition to the suggested area traffic restrictions, residents requested that “no stopping anytime” restrictions be considered to prevent drivers from interacting with sex trade workers. While a no-stopping restriction could be considered along existing areas of no-parking such as the east side of Long’s Hill, this restriction could not be applied to on-street parking areas without prohibiting all types of parking and loading activity.

No stopping anytime restrictions are typically used when stopping a vehicle would create a significant blockage to traffic flow. Given the relatively light traffic volume on Long’s Hill this is not the case along the east side of Long’s Hill. As such a no stopping anytime restriction is not likely to be effective in curtailing stopping activity.

**Key Considerations/Implications:**

1. **Budget/Financial Implications**
   n/a

2. **Partners or Other Stakeholders**
   Residents, sex trade workers, and general public travelling through the area.

3. **Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans**
   n/a

4. **Legal or Policy Implications**
   n/a
5. Engagement and Communications Considerations
Members of Council have met with residents of the area several times. They have discussed the traffic and parking restrictions suggested by residents and additional options reviewed by staff.

6. Human Resource Implications
n/a

7. Procurement Implications
n/a

8. Information Technology Implications
n/a

9. Other Implications
n/a

Conclusion / Next Steps:
The impacts of the options proposed were carefully considered by staff. The resulting detours and access restrictions would have significant negative impact on residents. On balance it was felt that the restrictions explored would not have an appreciable impact on the sex trade activity in the area and would be outweighed by the negative impacts to travel.

No next steps are planned from a transportation perspective.

Prepared by:
Anna Bauditz - Transportation System Engineer

Signature: ________________________________

Approved by:
Garrett Donaher, Manager - Transportation Engineering

Signature: ________________________________
Title: 2018 Traffic Pilot Projects - Tree Top Drive
Date Prepared: October 23, 2018
Report To: Committee of the Whole
Councillor/Theme: Debbie Hanlon - Transportation
Ward: 5

Decision/Direction Required:
Direction is required to cancel the Tree Top Drive – Neighbourhood Street Art Painting pilot project and proceed with painting a centre line on Tree Top Drive.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:
In 2017 the City completed traffic pilot projects at three different locations to test potential infrastructure improvements with the goal of improving road safety, traffic flow, and other community concerns. These temporary installations were used to gather valuable feedback, lessons learned, and to provide proof of concepts for the consideration of permanent solutions.

In 2018 Council approved a plan to complete six new traffic pilot projects. One of these projects was in response to community concerns regarding speeding and road safety along Tree Top Drive. The project was for the City to engage with the surrounding neighbourhood to coordinate a community lead street art event this summer. The intention of the project is to provide a visual traffic calming effect. Members of the community would be invited to submit their artistic design to be painted along sections of the roadway shown below. It was planned for the community to supply the paint and materials needed for the project and the City would coordinate with the community and supply traffic control services on a Sunday to allow residents to safely paint their design.

When the City reached out to the community to initiate this street art project there was insufficient support to develop an event. As a community lead initiative this project relied on the efforts of community members to be completed. Subsequent correspondence with the neighbourhood indicated that one of the original ideas for the area, to paint a centre line on Tree Top Drive, would be a good alternative in lieu of the street art project.

The concept of painting a centre line on Tree Top Drive was supported by the great majority of the community when discussed last year. There was a small group of residents who were very vocal about their opposition to this treatment. Those residents appear to feel the same way now. Recently there has also been comment from a small number of residents in opposition to the street art concept as well. Any future effort to complete such a project will need to ensure the support of the community is present ahead of time.
It is expected that a painted centre line may have a minor traffic calming effect as it encourages better lane discipline among drivers. With the majority support of the community, painting this line is recommended.

**Tree Top Drive – Neighbourhood Street Art Painting**

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. **Budget/Financial Implications**
   
   A small amount of line painting resources would be used by this change.

2. **Partners or Other Stakeholders**
   
   n/a

3. **Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans**
   
   A Culture of Cooperation: Create effective City-community collaborations
   
   Responsive and Progressive: Create a culture of engagement
   
   Identify and deliver on projects, strategies, and programs

4. **Legal or Policy Implications**
   
   n/a

5. **Engagement and Communications Considerations**
   
   Residents have been consulted throughout the process of developing the concept for this pilot project and subsequently the decision to cancel it.
6. **Human Resource Implications**
   n/a

7. **Procurement Implications**
   n/a

8. **Information Technology Implications**
   n/a

9. **Other Implications**
   n/a

**Recommendations:**

It is recommended that the City cancel the Tree Top Drive – Neighbourhood Street Art Painting pilot project and proceed with painting a centre line on Tree Top Drive.

**Prepared by:**

Garrett Donaher, Manager - Transportation Engineering

Signature: ________________________________

**Approved by:**

Brendan O’Connell, Director of Engineering

Signature: ________________________________

**Attachments:**

n/a
Title: Newcomer Transportation Report  
Date: October 15, 2018  
Report To: Committee of the Whole  

Councillor and Role: Deputy Mayor, Sheilagh O’Leary, Lead, Economic Development, Tourism and Culture  

Ward: N/A  

Issue: Provide Council with information related to the “Newcomer Transportation n St. John’s” Report conducted by Mind the Gap Consulting, commissioned by the St. John’s Local Immigration Partnership (LIP).  

Discussion – Background and Current Status:  
In spring 2018 the St. John’s Local Immigration Partnership commissioned a report seeking to better understand the transportation barriers newcomers to Canada face in the city - and to explore possible solutions in which the City of St. John’s and other stakeholders could play a role.  

In discussions facilitated by the LIP over the past few years, transportation has been raised repeatedly as one of the top concerns for newcomers in the City, as barriers to transportation can contribute to increased social isolation, greater employment challenges, and an overall decrease in newcomer retention. It was determined that a greater understanding of the specific transportation issues faced by newcomers was needed, and a consultant was hired to conduct focus group research as a means to identify possible gaps and reference possible solutions.  

The LIP discussed the report with Transportation Division, Department of Planning, Engineering & Regulatory Services in the early stages of this project to help frame the focus research questions. The primary method for this study were focus groups with 23 newcomers from different countries of origin in various places along the immigration spectrum – refugees, immigrants, international students, temporary workers, etc. In addition, interviews were conducted with eight individuals at three key stakeholder organizations.  

Points raised in the focus groups and key informant interviews include cost-related issues (such as prohibitively high auto insurance premiums), Metrobus service, way-finding, and connectivity problems, bus shelters and sidewalk clearing, and the challenges that come with navigating the city in a new language. A series of recommendations for consideration by various stakeholders (CSJ, Metrobus, Service NL and others) are included in the report.  

Metrobus and Transportation Engineering have been engaged in discussion on the recommendations in the report.  

Key Considerations/Implications:  

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Budget for this work was incorporated in the LIP (externally funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada) and the EDCP budget.
2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: A variety of partners were engaged in the research project as key informants and/or are implicated in the recommendations in the report. The LIP will play a coordinating role to bring various stakeholders together to address recommendations as appropriate.

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: Local Immigration Partnership and emphasis on supporting newcomers is included in the Economic Roadmap.

4. Legal or Policy Implications: N/A

5. Engagement and Communications Considerations:
   In order to recruit potential participants for the study a recruitment email was sent to key organizations including the ANC, RIAC, Multicultural Women’s Organization of NL, le Réseau de Immigration Francophone, Memorial University’s Internationalization Office, the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, and various other cultural organizations.

6. Human Resource Implications: N/A

7. Procurement Implications: N/A

8. Information Technology Implications: N/A

9. Other Implications: N/A

**Conclusion/Next Steps:** The report has been presented to the LIP Partnership Council, and the LIP has met with Metrobus and CSJ Transportation and Planning Manager to discuss the recommendations. The LIP has met with Dillon Consulting and is providing input to the Metrobus and GoBus Accessible Transit strategic planning process. There are several recommendations that are coincident with items identified in this focus group report that Metrobus has identified and have been or are currently in the process of being addressed, and others, with the transportation review, may be considered in the future including the availability of Wifi on busses, increasing number of bus shelters on routes most often frequented by families and addressing issues related to wayfinding. The My New St. John’s online service map developed by the LIP includes transportation options and directions which may also assist with information needs — i.e., public transit routes available to access services and alternative forms for transportation (walking and cycling routes, etc).

**Prepared by/Signature:** Jessica Barry, Local Immigration Partnership Officer, Elizabeth Lawrence, Director, Economic Development, Culture and Partnerships

**Approved by/Date/Signature:** Tanya Haywood, Deputy City Manager, Community Services

Attachments:

Report is attached.
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Executive Summary

Through this study Mind the Gap Consulting™ sought to better understand the transportation barriers newcomers to Canada face in the city - and to explore possible solutions within which the City of St. John’s could play a role.

The primary method for this study were focus groups with 23 newcomers. Of these participants 52% have been in Canada for less than two years, 35% have been in Canada for two to five years, and 13% for more than five. More than half (56%) were permanent residents, 26% are international students, 9% are here on a working visa, and 9% are Canadian citizens. The focus groups with these individuals allowed the researchers to learn the first-hand experiences of newcomers in their own words.

In addition, interviews were conducted with eight individuals at three key stakeholder organizations (the Association for New Canadians, the Multicultural Women’s Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council) and email submissions were made by la fédération de francophone de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, an additional ANC employee, and a former MUN Internationalization Office employee. Key stakeholders offered a broader organizational perspective as it related to their specific clientele: refugee youth, immigrant women, francophone immigrants, etc. Together these methods yielded diverse and important data.

The participants in this study frequently use a variety of transportation modes. The majority of them (approximately 60%) use Metrobus on a regular basis and around a third of them use taxis, a third walking, and a third personal vehicles. Other participants used the GoBus, the city’s trails, bicycles, and friends’ cars.

The barriers newcomers face to transportation in St. John’s are great. They include cost-related issues (such as extremely high auto insurance premiums), Metrobus service, way-finding, and connectivity problems, a lack of bus shelters and cleared sidewalks in winter, and the apprehension that comes with navigating the city in a new language. The implications of these barriers - for newcomers themselves and for the city - are great. With limited transportation options can come increased social isolation, greater employment challenges, and a decrease in newcomer retention.
As a result this study’s researchers make a total of 42 recommendations which include the following:

- That Metrobus/the City of St. John’s (CSJ) seriously consider giving the approximately 60 LEARN students (those who live outside the catchment areas of their schools) free bus passes for every semester they are in school.
- That Metrobus seriously explore expanding its hours of operation to include early mornings and late nights (to aid in the commute of those going to work).
- That Metrobus stop signs all indicate which route stops there.
- That Metrobus create a “holistic visual” that shows how various routes overlap/interact - a simplified geographic overview of the whole public transit system.
- That Metrobus overhaul its route maps, website, and app so that they are more user friendly.
- That (in the longer term) Metrobus install digital signs that indicate upcoming stops and stops as they occur.
- That Metrobus increase the shelters available at its bus stops, particularly on routes that youth and/or families frequent.
- That Metrobus ensure good connectivity to essential government- and health-related centres such as the DMV and Vital Statistics (Mount Pearl), Service Canada (Churchill Ave.), and MCP and IFH providers (Major’s Path).
- That further research be done into the gender issues at play as it relates to transportation and newcomers.
- That the LIP explore what partners/private enterprises might offer affordable access to recreation/nature outside of St. John’s particularly in warmer months (for access to berry picking, hiking, bird watching, fishing, beaches, etc.)
- That Service NL consider lessening the required wait time between the receipt of a learner’s permit and the driving exam for those newcomers who are experienced drivers.
- That the City increase the number of sidewalks that are cleared in winter (particularly on routes to schools, post-secondary institutions, and around places of worship).

For a full list of all 42 recommendations please proceed to page 37.
Introduction

Project Title
Newcomer Transportation in St. John’s

Agreement Duration
The duration of this project was from March 8 to May 22, 2018.

Project Proponent Contact Information
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Project Proponent Description
Mind the Gap Consulting™ assists organizations and individuals navigate and optimize diversity so they may build their capacity to work more effectively both internally within their organizations and externally with their clients. It does so by providing professional and customizable training, coaching, and research with a specializing the area of cultural diversity.

Principal of Mind the Gap Consulting™, Dr. Willow Anderson has focussed much of her education and experience on diversity-related issues with a Masters in Conflict Resolution from the University of Bradford (England) and a PhD in Communication from the University of New Mexico with a concentration in intercultural communication. For this project, Mind the Gap enlisted the assistance of two additional professionals: Wonkyoung Choi and Jae Hong Jin.

Wonkyoung Choi is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at Memorial University. She is currently conducting thesis research entitled "The Construction of Transnational Language Identities among the Korean Community In St. John's." In South Korea she also participated in a research project which explored multicultural families in rural areas.

Jae Hong Jin is a photographer, musician, and researcher with a background in the anthropology. He is skilled in customer experience research and service design and has done ethnography-related work for companies such as Hyundai and Samsung.

Built on a strong foundational knowledge of immigration and cultural adaptation and solid research experience, Mind the Gap Consulting™ was well suited to conduct this study into the transportation barriers that newcomers face in St. John’s.
**Project Overview**
The St. John’s Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) contracted Mind the Gap Consulting™ so that it might better understand the transportation barriers newcomers to Canada face in the city - and to learn possible solutions in which the City of St. John’s could play a role. The researchers used focus groups with newcomers and interviews with key stakeholders to explore the topic. Several participants expressed their appreciation that this work was being done. As one of the project participants reminded the researchers “If you want to be friendly to newcomers, then transportation is a major thing.”

**Methods**
The primary method for this study were focus groups with newcomers. These focus groups were supplemented with interviews with - and emailed submissions from - key stakeholders. The focus groups allowed the researchers to learn first-hand experiences of newcomers in their own words. The key stakeholder interviews offered a broader organizational perspective as it related to their specific clientele (eg. refugee youth, immigrant women, francophone immigrants, etc.). Together these methods yielded diverse and important data.

**Key Stakeholder Interviews**
One-on-one interviews were conducted with eight individuals at three key stakeholder organizations in St. John’s. These organizations were:
- The Multicultural Women’s Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador (MWONL)
- The Association for New Canadians (two different offices) (ANC)
- The Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council (RIAC)

In addition email submissions were sent in from:
- Two members of La Fédération de francophone de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL)
- An additional ANC employee
- A former MUN Internationalization Office employee

The information gleaned from these interviews and emailed submissions offered invaluable insight into the newcomer experience through various lenses: health, education, gender, career development, the francophone community, etc. In addition, the information gained from these interviews helped inform the protocol and approach used for the focus groups with newcomers.

**Newcomer Focus Groups**

**Recruitment**
In order to recruit potential participants for the study a recruitment email was sent to key organizations such as the LIP, ANC, RIAC, MWONL, FFTNL, le Réseau de Immigration Francophone, Memorial University’s Internationalization Office, the Muslim Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, and various different cultural organizations. These organizations
were welcomed to forward the email on to their membership. The email stated that those interested in the topic of newcomer transportation could email Mind the Gap to register for a focus group or to fill out a confidential form online. Those that registered were offered assistance with transportation to and from the focus group (approximately 5 people availed of this) and translation (one person used a friend as a translator).

Of the four focus groups, three were made up of individuals recruited through the above methods and one was made up of ANC clients who expressed an interest in the topic.

**Participant Description**
In consultation with the St. John’s LIP, it was decided that for the purposes of this study “newcomer” would be defined quite broadly to include both permanent and temporary newcomers to Canada. It would include those who had arrived from other countries recently, as well as those who had been in Canada for some time. There is benefit to hearing these experiences: temporary residents (such as international students or temporary foreign workers) may have their sights set on becoming permanent; while immigrants who arrived some time ago can offer a longer-term perspective on the transportation options they have had since arriving.

At the end of the data collection period a total of 23 participants had volunteered their time for this study. The following outlines some demographic information about the group:

**Time in Canada**
Less than 2 years - 52% (12 people)
Between 2-5 years - 35% (8 people)
More than 5 years - 13% (3 people)

**Time in Newfoundland and Labrador**
Less than 2 years - 56% (13 people)
Between 2-5 years - 35% (8 people)
More than 5 years - 9% (2 people)

**Immigration Status**
Permanent resident - 56% (13 people)
Canadian citizen - 9% (2 people)
International student - 26% (6 people)
Working visa (temporary resident) - 9% (2 people)
In addition, it is worth mentioning that, although they were not factors for participant inclusion, the researchers did make attempts to ensure that amongst the focus group participants there be demographic diversity and diverse experiences. These factors included:

- Gender and age diversity
- Various modes of transportation used
- Those quite new to Canada
- Those who have been in Canada a longer period of time
- Single people as well as various sizes of families

The researchers were pleased that those who participated in this study did represent these various experiences.

**Data Collection**

This section will outline the procedures and processes used in data collection. First of all, when focus group participants arrived they were welcomed and invited to help themselves to coffee and muffins. The researchers then explained that in order to participate in the study they would need to sign a consent form which was a protective measure outlining how the researchers would keep their identity confidential, how the conversation was being recorded, and how the data would be used. After they signed the consent form they were welcomed to put their names in a hat for a prize draw at the end.

Once all the participants had arrived and signed the consent forms, the focus group conversation began. The protocol began with questions meant to put the participants at ease. The questions then moved on to broad non-directional questions (“grand tour” questions), then more directed questions. The focus groups ended with closing questions to help summarize the most important information shared. *Please see Appendix A for the focus group protocol.*

After the focus groups ended, two names were drawn from a hat for prizes such as free Metrobus passes and grocery gift cards.

**Data Analysis**

During the focus groups one researcher facilitated the discussion with participants while another researcher kept track of major themes that emerged on post-its. After all the focus groups were completed the researchers used these post-its to group the data into coherent themes. These served as tentative themes for the data analysis. Also, immediately after the focus groups, the transcriptions of those audio recordings were carefully reviewed: the data were placed into existing themes and new themes were created. These themes serve as the basis for the following Results section.
Results

This study explores the experience of newcomers to Canada as it relates to transportation in St. John’s. It delves into what transportation modes newcomers use, what factors influence their decisions, and what barriers they face when using/considering various modes of transportation. Frequent destinations, destinations that are hard to access, and the implications of difficult transportation also emerged from these data. Finally, participants explored what kinds of transportation have worked for them, and what alternative modes of transportation might work in St. John’s in the future.

Transportation Modes

It was striking to the researchers how varied the transportation modes of participants in this study are. The majority of them (approximately 60%) use Metrobus on a regular basis and around a third of them use taxis, a third walking, and a third personal vehicles on a regular basis. One participant uses GoBus, one the city’s trails, and one uses a bicycle when she can. Several of the participants reported depending on the generosity of friends for occasional rides in their car.¹

Conversations with key stakeholders yielded similar results:

- Former refugee students (Settlement Workers In Schools - SWIS - clients) use Metrobus and walk a lot. High school students who attend the Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN) program (yet live outside of the catchment area for school bussing) need to use Metrobus to attend school (at their own expense).
- Some former refugee youth enjoy riding their bikes when the weather allows.
- Graduate students and big families (receiving child tax benefits) sometimes have the opportunity to purchase and use their own vehicle.
- MWONL clients (women) tend to not use the busses a lot, but they walk a lot, some use GoBus, and the organization pays for their taxis to programming. When not possible, private sponsors, friends, or volunteers will drive them to their appointments.
- RIAC’s clients use the following modes of transportation (in this order):
  1. Busses
  2. Walking
  3. Taxi
  4. Vehicle of a friend
  5. Own vehicle

There are a number of factors which influence which transportation modes newcomers use in St. John’s.

¹ Please note: Participants were asked which modes of transport they use most frequently and they were welcome to answer with more than one mode. As a result these percentages will not add up to 100%.
Influencing Factors
Participants in this study brought up a number of factors that influence their decision-making around transportation. Cost, convenience, accommodation, and family size are factors that were raised often. Other influencing factors raised by participants are health benefits, the environment, and not wanting to inconvenience friends.

Cost
Participants frequently brought up the cost associated with various transportation options and it is obvious that it weighs heavily in newcomers’ decision-making around how they navigate the city. Participants were almost unanimous in their agreement that both taxis and owning and operating your own private vehicle are expensive. Not all participants agreed, however, on whether public transit is expensive. One GoBus user - an international student - said that he finds that service very affordable. Other participants with families, however, find bus fare pricey. One man who has a family of six admits that he cannot afford to pay for the whole family to take the bus at the same time. He and his wife share a monthly card and they take turns doing errands. Even the price of the monthly pass is significant for him: “it's a lot of money when you're starting in your life,” he explains. “And most of the newcomers they’re just facing the same problem,” he added. Participants and key stakeholders in this study shared numerous stories of newcomers walking huge distances in all seasons to avoid paying bus or taxi fare (eg. from the Avalon Mall to the Village or from Empire Avenue/Freshwater Road to Newfoundland Drive/Torbay Road).

More details on participants’ experiences with transportation costs can be found in the Barriers section of this report.

Convenience
Although cost is a significant factor in transportation for newcomers, participants in this study explained that they regularly balance cost with convenience. Several participants explained that they prefer to take the bus (primarily for cost savings reasons), but that various factors make it less convenient than a private vehicle or a taxi. A couple of participants with children explained that it is very challenging at times to take the bus as a family; often the walks to the bus stop are long and several stops lack shelter. One mother explained that her children complain about having to use the bus: “sometimes we come back home like wet, completely wet.” Two parents in this study admitted that, although they started their time in St. John’s using Metrobus, they later purchased vehicles because they found the public transit so difficult with children. Another participant parent reluctantly switched to driving although he strongly prefers public transit:

“I never used to need a car. I used to live in London, England where you would be crazy to drive a car. And then I used to live in Toronto where it would take hours to get anywhere [in a car]...But here if you have a car it’s very easy to get anywhere you want. As long as it’s in St. John’s, if you don't [have a car], then you're screwed. That's my view.”
Affordable Accommodation
The location of affordable accommodation also emerged as a major factor influencing what transportation modes newcomers use. A couple of participants pointed out that apartments and houses near the Memorial campus can be very expensive. One participant reported visiting a house in fairly poor shape and the landlord wanted $1,600/month (utilities not included). Instead his family chose to move to the Airport Heights area in order to pay a lower rental rate. That has necessitated their purchase of a car, however, because Metrobus’ hours of operation and routes do not allow him to commute to and from work on public transit. The ANC shared that it has clients who moved to Paradise or Mount Pearl to save on rent, but that once they were there they found commuting into St. John’s on Metrobus very difficult. One of these clients has more than a one hour commute to reach his workplace.

Family Size
The size of a newcomer’s family - and the ages of those in the family - also factors into what modes of transportation newcomers use. As was mentioned earlier, larger families can find bus fare expensive enough that the whole family rarely goes out together. However, as someone who works at the ANC explained, there are newcomer families with multiple children that budget carefully and use their child tax benefit towards a purchasing/maintaining a cheap car. This may be an option, particularly if they already have driving experience and do not need to pay for driving lessons. Purchasing a car is not an option available to all newcomer families, however.

MWONL has also found that amongst its clients young children and big families can be big barriers to transportation. They have found that families of even three or more will not take the bus together because they find it too expensive.

Other factors that influence which transportation modes newcomers choose (but were not as prevalent as those described above) are:
- Benefits of walking to health
- Environmental benefits of public transit
- Not wanting to inconvenience friends with repeated requests for rides

Barriers to Transportation
One of the major areas of focus for this study is what barriers newcomers to Canada face when using various modes of transportation in St. John’s. It is not surprising then that this was the theme that the researchers received the most feedback on. Participants commented on challenges that cross several modes of transit (such as bad weather and uncleared sidewalks), but they also gave feedback on specific modes such as walking, biking, taxis, private vehicles, and public transit.
Weather

Weather is something that can be hard for newcomers to adjust to. The participants in this study are no exception. Those that use public transit and/or, in particular, walk talked about the weather. Both participants and key stakeholders told weather-related stories about how challenging it can be to get around the city. One organization pointed out that some newcomers may unable to afford proper winter boots, making it all the more difficult for them to get safely from point A to point B. One focus group participant shared that he often pauses before he leaves the house. He explains:

“I want to think of my health, especially in the cold St. John's has, not that we just say, ‘oh, let's go out’ - No. You think about the weather, you think about different things before you actually leave the house.”

This mental preparation for going outside in winter weather is something commonplace for many Canadians, but it is a learned skill if you come from a climate with less variation. In addition, participants who walk or take the bus are open to the elements to an uncommon degree.

Sidewalks

The state of the city’s sidewalks in winter emerged as a major issue in this study. For several participants (and two key stakeholder organizations) it was one of the top issues they hope the City of St. John’s would be able to address. Not enough sidewalks, they argue, are cleared in the winter, and sometimes even when they are, packed ice dangerous to walk on is left behind. The implications of unsafe sidewalks are varied: Walkers need to lengthen their route in order to stay on cleared sidewalks, walkers may feel the need to walk on the roads (however unsafe that may be), and there is the obvious risk of falling (which has happened to clients of MWONL, RIAC, and the ANC). As one participant put it:

“I think [piles of snow on sidewalks] is the biggest issue. Like, it doesn't matter whether you're a walker, biker, you know, someone who's going to use the Metrobus, if the side roads are piled with snow you know, it makes so much difficult to [use] any of these means.”

Another participant agreed that sidewalks are the number one issue. On the average day she may be taking the bus, but she still needs to walk 100 metres from the bus stop and with no cleared sidewalks, even that short distance can feel very dangerous with people driving 80 km/hour beside you, she explains.

Secondly, a couple of individuals raised the fact that some roads do not have sidewalks at all or are not fully sidewalked (such as areas near the mosque on Logy Bay Road), and those travelling with children or those travelling in the winter can find a lack of sidewalks particularly difficult.
Walking
As mentioned earlier many of the participants in this study walk a significant amount, as do the clients of the key stakeholders who were interviewed. Winter weather and a lack of sidewalk clearing impact them, but one participant raised an additional issue: unleashed dogs. She recounted an incident in a park that really upset her:

“I remember I stopped using a park, a particular park, because one pet owner, he unleashed two of his dogs. You know, they were huge dogs and they were running and trying to jump on me. And I was scared, and because I was scared he got offended and started saying slurs on me. I stopped using that park, although it’s very close.”

She explains:

“because newcomers are usually coming from a different culture. They are not used to living in an environment where pets, pet ownership is so popular or widespread. So like they can get so scared that they can stop using the trails...It can be a deterrent for newcomers who are not familiar to use such spaces.”

After the incident she looked into the City’s regulations and learned that she was in the right in telling the dog owner his dogs were supposed to be leashed, but she hopes that more signage and enforcement might help prevent conflicts such as this one.

Biking
Only one participant in this study rides a bike on a semi-regular basis, but a couple of ANC employees pointed out that many of their clients use bikes (some even continue through the winter). Bikes are often a symbol of freedom for their clients when they first come to Canada, they explained, and the Read to Ride program (while it lasted) gave many free bikes to former refugees. One challenge they face in riding a bike, however, is understanding the importance of safety-related elements such as wearing reflectors.

A couple of additional participants in the study admitted to be interested in cycling, but that the barriers in St. John’s had been too great. They included:

- Very hilly terrain
- Snow
- A lack of bike paths and bike lanes
- A lack of bike racks

In addition, a couple of participants expressed an interest in having the trails open to them. As one person explained:
“I think it would really be nice if cyclists could use the walking trails. I'm sure most of them would behave themselves. And I don't think the walking trails are so heavily used that there is a real problem with people bumping into each other. I think it would just be nice to be able to [spend] time on the trail.”

Taxis
Participants in this study also talked about the barriers they face when using taxis.

Cost
The number one issue that participants raised regarding this mode of transport is the cost. They feel taxis are very expensive and so many of participants only take taxis when they absolutely must.

Driver Integrity
The second barrier to taxi use that came up is a lack of integrity on the part of some drivers. A couple of participants shared that they have come across taxi drivers who try to take them on circuitous routes in order to raise the fare. For example, one family (who arrived in Canada from a refugee camp less than a year ago) had a very unfortunate experience with a taxi driver recently. One day one of the participant’s wives needed to go to the mall and because her knowledge of English is limited she asked her husband (who was elsewhere) to call her a cab from his cell. She had been to the mall twice before and knew the route so she noticed when the cab driver began driving in a very indirect way. When they eventually arrived at the mall he charged her $40 (which was far above what they had ever paid on that route before). She knew she was being cheated, but without a command of English she felt obliged to pay. On hearing this her husband was angry, but they were unable to identify the taxi driver and so they felt unable to do anything more about this cab driver’s unethical behaviour.

Another participant responded to this man’s story by adding:

“But when you know the language and your whereabouts you can stop them from doing it, and they get a little bit frustrated because you are almost more knowledgeable than the driver. But there's this inclination unfortunately to do that.” [to cheat]

Newcomers in this study admitted that they appreciate the convenience of taxi use, but that on their often limited budgets they feel them too expensive. In addition, the possibility that they may be taken advantage of may be a further barrier to some newcomers using taxis more.

Private Vehicles
Many participants in this study, given the opportunity, would prefer to have and use their own vehicle. There is the convenience factor, but in addition many jobs that are “obtainable for newcomers with limited English [require] you to work late nights or early mornings when the buses don't run” (ANC employee). As a result, sometimes in this city driving can mean the difference between having employment or not.
That said, there are significant barriers to newcomers being able to drive. Parking in and around the university was something that was raised a couple of times\(^2\), but the majority of participants who talked about barriers to driving spoke of the cost of auto insurance, the required delay to their obtaining a driver’s license, and the fact that it is hard for newcomers to get driving experience.

**Cost of Auto Insurance**

Owning a vehicle can be a costly endeavour. There is the price of the vehicle itself as well as its maintenance, gas, and the cost of winter tires. All of these items can be pricey for newcomers. The price of auto insurance, however, came up more than any other budgetary driving-related concern. In fact, this issue came up in each of the focus groups and interviews that were conducted.

Participants reported that when newcomers go to get auto insurance in Canada for the first time, none of their previous driving experience counts.\(^3\) This leads to very high premiums. Participants reported paying as much as $300 or $400 a month for auto insurance alone - despite often having decades of driving experience in their home countries. Some newcomers go to great lengths to pay for their car and its insurance. One participant said his international student friend arrived in Canada with enough money saved for all his tuition and living expenses, but because he needed a vehicle to get to and from his accommodation he has had to take on a job just to pay solely for his transportation. Several other participants said the same. They have taken on jobs at coffee and sandwich shops for the sole purpose of paying for their car and its insurance. For some participants this job is a second or third job, but they feel they have little choice: “It’s hard. Low income and it’s hard, but we need it.”

**Motor Vehicle Regulations**

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador allows for the easy transition from an American driver’s licence to a NL one. In addition, it has reciprocity agreements with approximately eleven other - primarily European - countries making it easier for people originally from those countries to transfer to an NL licence.\(^4\) Newcomers from all other countries, however, must enter the graduated driver licensing process. This means that after their arrival in Canada newcomers can only write the learner’s test and then must wait a year before taking their practical driver’s exam.\(^5\) Many of the participants felt this was an unfair and unnecessary wait given their extensive driving experience:

\(^2\) One key stakeholder said that they know of university students who drive their private vehicles to the Avalon Mall, park them, and then take Metrobus to MUN’s main campus where they stay for the day.

\(^3\) There appears to be two exceptions to this. Driving experience in the United States is recognized and, the researchers were told, if one is able to find an insurance company in Canada with an office in their home country, that company may recognize their years of pre-Canada driving experience.

\(^4\) A list of these countries can be found here: [http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/drivers/DrivertypesandVehicles/driverlicensing/application.html#12](http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/drivers/DrivertypesandVehicles/driverlicensing/application.html#12)

\(^5\) There are some circumstances under which new residents can take the driving test after 8 months. See this website for details: [http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/drivers/DrivertypesandVehicles/driverlicensing/graduateddriver.html](http://www.servicenl.gov.nl.ca/drivers/DrivertypesandVehicles/driverlicensing/graduateddriver.html)
“So I need to start again the wait until one year, and so it's very hard for me. Sometimes you have kids, so you have to use buses or taxis...You know how to drive, you’re driving and you have, for example, 10 years of experience, but they don’t recognize that. It's hard.”

Those that need their driver’s licence for potential employment find this particularly frustrating.

In addition, in one of the stakeholder interviews the interviewees brought up an interesting challenge. When a newcomer to Canada arrives on a visitor visa they can legally stay in Canada on that visa for 6 months, but the maximum amount of time they are supposed to drive in NL on a foreign licence is 3 months. This 3 month discrepancy has meant that some people are driving on their international licences longer than they should, or that after their first three months in Canada are up these individuals leave their cars languishing in a parking lot until they have an opportunity to get an NL licence.

In addition, Service NL regulations require that:

“Any person who is taking up residency in Newfoundland & Labrador, who originates from outside of Canada, and who is applying for a learner’s permit or a driver’s licence must provide proof of their legal presence in Canada”

One of the key stakeholders claimed that this proof of legal presence in Canada can be hard: given the list of the required primary and secondary documentation listed by Service NL this is not surprising, and may be an additional regulation-related barrier.

**Driving Practice Hard to Get**

Finally, those newcomers who have no driving experience often have a hard time getting the experience needed before they take their road test. After they get their learner’s permit (but before they take their road test) they must always be accompanied by a licensed driver. Those that are new to the country often do not have their own car nor do they necessarily have a licensed driver friend with a car. As one ANC employee put it: “Learning to drive and obtaining a driver’s license is a privilege, it’s a costly endeavour. Many times newcomers have nobody to practice with.” One of the participants was so desperate to learn how to drive that, despite being on a tight budget, he paid someone $3500 for twice a week practice over 3 months.

In sum, the cost of auto insurance and motor vehicle regulations remain barriers to many newcomers being able to own and operate their own vehicles particularly in their early years in Canada.

**Metrobus**

For a variety of reasons the great majority of the participants either take the bus or would prefer to take the bus as their major mode of transport. That said, the barriers to using Metrobus were by far the most talked about topic in the focus groups and interviews. The

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6 See aforementioned mentioned Service NL website for details.
barriers were: Cost, service levels (such as routing and frequency), way-finding challenges, a lack of shelters, and an apprehension around using busses.

Cost
Participants explained that when you are on a very limited income and/or if you have a large family, the $2.50 Metrobus fare per person can sound like a huge amount. In fact, one ANC employee suggested that “Cost is the biggest barrier to using the bus for most newcomers.” International students in the focus groups agreed. One recounted how in 2014 you could pay $2 for unlimited use for two hours. He found this very convenient and would get a bus for his groceries and could make it back to the bus in time to return home on the same fare. This savings was something he really appreciated. He went on to say:

“Last year they increased the cost of the bus tickets and many international students complained; they found it makes their life harder. So I think we need to remember that most of people who use buses, they come from the lower income families or their budgets are limited. So I don't think we need to put another burden on the shoulder of people who don't have much money.”

Several ANC employees mentioned that many newcomers in our city use Metrobus to get to their educational institutions, but they do not receive a cheaper student rate or a semesterized rate for their bus fare. Among others these include students attending the ANC’s Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) school (English as a Second Language classes), the Adult Basic Education schools, and the Literacy Enrichment and Academic Readiness for Newcomers (LEARN) program at various junior highs and at Holy Heart High School. Although these are not post-secondary institutions, these individuals are students on a limited budget and in the case of the LEARN students they are minors who are required to go to school. As mentioned earlier, if a refugee student lives outside the catchment area of the school that offers the LEARN program (such as Holy Heart for high school students), then they need to get to school at their own expense. A monthly Metrobus pass is costly for many newcomer families.

One key stakeholder suggested that the City of St. John’s follow Halifax’s lead and offer free transit passes to asylum seekers for their first year. She suggests that it would make a huge difference to families who need to get their children to school, go shopping, learn English, find employment, etc.

Service Levels
Service related issues with Metrobus were raised with great frequency by participants and the key stakeholders. The comments focussed primarily on six themes: frequency, timeliness, connectivity, hours of operation, routes, and bus driver interactions.

Frequency & Hours of Operation
The frequency of bussing and the hours of operation of Metrobus arose often in this study. As one participant explained: “A big, big barriers we have for the transportation is spending more hours to wait the transport, Metrobus.” Other participants remarked on just how narrow the hours of operation are.
There were a couple of windows of time/locations that participants thought needed more frequency and/or extended hours. These primarily focussed on:

- Between 7-9:30am - Between these hours many kids are heading to their schools, sometimes from quite a distance. One key stakeholder talked about children that live near the Village Mall that need to catch their first Metrobus at 7am in order to arrive at school for a 9am start. She pointed out that there is a need to increase service in areas that have lower rent/subsided housing (such as NL Housing areas, Airport Heights, etc.). See the Destination section for more detail on areas where newcomers are living.

- Between 2-3:30pm: During this period many single parents are rushing home to meet their children’s busses and LEARN students who live outside of the catchment area of their schools are heading home (both participants and key stakeholders raised this).

- Later at night & earlier in the morning: Many newcomers are given early morning shifts (sometimes starting as early as 5:30am), late shifts (often ending after 10pm), and overnight shifts, in customer service, janitorial or security-related roles (at establishments like Starbucks, Tim Horton’s, MacDonald’s, or call centres).

This lack of frequency and smaller windows of operation have implications for how often newcomers can take the bus, for their ability to be efficient, and for their budgets. A couple of participants talked about the fact that if they had an appointment they had the choice of either arriving 45 minutes early or taking a cab and arriving on time. Other participants reported having no choice, but to take taxis to and from work. One explained that he works at MUN until 10pm two days a week and by that hour there is no bus from MUN, so he pays for a cab (costing him $160/month). Given that this was the only job he could find in the last two years he feels he has little choice - he has other friends in a similar predicament: “they always use taxi because they don’t want to lose their job. So they pay for taxi and they get their paycheque and pay for taxi.” Finally, one of the key stakeholders added that she has clients who take the bus who only dare book only one appointment per day because their commute on Metrobus takes so long that they do not trust they can fit in another appointment. This restricts their ability to be efficient and get several tasks done in a day.

Many of the participants and key stakeholders shared the belief that if Metrobus increased its frequency and hours of operation that ridership would increase.

Timeliness
Participants in this study also recounted how they cannot rely on their bus to arrive on time. Several of them have had the experience of waiting as long as a half hour for a bus. One international student (who had never been in weather below zero before) experienced this on his second day in St. John’s. It was minus 13, he was at a bus stop with no shelter, and he was extremely cold: after this experience he vowed to never use Metrobus again.
Participants also expressed their frustration with busses being early. One woman has learned she has to show up five to ten minutes before the appointed hour because sometimes busses arrive - and leave - their stops early. Another person recounted how when he was on a bus the driver stopped to take a break in order to keep the bus on time. This rider was frustrated; In his mind, if this bus is always ahead of schedule maybe the route’s timing should be rethought to be more realistic. Another participant suggested that waiting 15 or 30 minutes for a bus (particularly without shelter) is unacceptable and that there should be penalties for busses not being punctual.

One newcomer GoBus user - who generally loves the service - had a similar complaint. If he has booked the bus for 2pm he knows that he needs to be home and ready from 1:45 to 2:15pm in order to get the bus. He was also somewhat disappointed that he has to book the GoBus so far in advance because if a last minute appointment comes up, he has to take on the extra expense of taking a taxi.

**Connectivity**

Related to the themes of frequency and timeliness is the idea of connectivity. Many participants in this study wished there were better connectivity between the various Metrobus routes. The section of this report called “Destinations” talks in more detail about specific areas that participants say need better connectivity, but in general terms participants expressed frustration at how long it takes them to get somewhere by bus as opposed to by car. They shared many examples (eg. six minutes by car versus two hours by bus, ten minutes by car versus one hour by bus, etc.). As one participant explained:

“Especially if you need to take two buses. It's just, like, - I just forget about it. Okay, I don't go to that direction because it's like too much time and energy, especially if the weather is not good.”

One key stakeholder explained that he lives in Mount Pearl and works in St. John’s. When he was first making this commute he would get his Mount Pearl bus which leaves every half hour and then he would switch at the Village Mall. Because his next bus is not well linked to his first, however, it used to take him 1.5 hours one way to get to work. After doing that for a couple of months he was fed up and bought his own car; It now takes him less than 30 minutes to get to work.

**Bus Driver Interactions**

Participants in this study had mixed feedback on their interactions with bus drivers. Some drivers, they felt, were kind and helpful; Others were impatient and rude. These unpleasant interactions left a bad taste in the mouths of the riders in question. One participant told a story of her getting on a bus, but not having enough time to get to her seat. The driver started the bus quickly and her face was smacked up against a metal column. As she explains it, she asked him politely if in future he could wait for passengers to sit before starting the bus, and he told her “you should be faster.” She was very upset by this interaction and she complained to
Metrobus via email mentioning all relevant details including the number of the bus etc., but despite sending this email three times she received no reply.

Another newcomer recounted waiting for a bus, but being somewhat confused where the stop actually was. Walkers by gave him advice, but it was inaccurate. By the time he had finally spotted the bus stop he was 3 or 4 feet away from it when the bus was approaching. Rather than waiting for him to arrive at the stop, the driver drove by. The newcomer wished the driver had had a little more compassion and had thought instead “Oh, you are the newcomer. Come, come, come.”

In another incident a participant (who has excellent English skills, incidentally) asked the driver for some help with directions and the driver responded with “English, please.” This participant added:

“I don't know why - there are like many good and kind bus drivers, I don't want to generalize at all, but I think they are not trained or educated to respect other cultures and people with different accents and just care to help people who are new here...I heard a lot of same stories from international students who experienced this at one bus centre...So I think that they need to get some training to help students who are new in the city...So it depends on their personality. If [the bus drivers] care, they help you. If not they don't feel like it's their responsible.”

**Airport Route**

Many participants in this study did not realize that a bus route to the airport existed (they often brought up the fact that they felt the city needed an airport shuttle). Those that did know the route existed were very happy it did, but had some suggestions for its improvement:

- They hoped the route times could better align with flight times
- They hoped the route from the airport could take riders downtown
- They hoped the route could run on Sundays (particularly important for those that work at the airport, but also those that are flying)
- They hoped that the airport bus stop could be closer to the departures and/or arrivals area (so it is not so hard to navigate outdoors with luggage)
- They hoped the bus stop would have a shelter
- They hoped the airport would clearly mark where one can catch the bus, and its departure times (in several languages if possible)

As one participant explained:

“the way they've got it set up, you really would need to know that there was a bus that was going from the airport. You need to know times. When I went last looking for it, it had only recently been set up. I went outside and I couldn't find the bus stop. I ended up wandering off onto a roundabout and then seeing a bus go past.”
Finally, participants were very pleased to learn that a bus to the airport existed, but felt that more public education should be done so that people know it exists.

**Way-Finding**

Another major theme that emerged from this study was how potential or current Metrobus users are able (or not) to navigate their way through the transit system. These way-finding challenges include feedback on signage, route maps, the website and app, and in-bus navigation issues.

**Signage at Bus Stops**

- The major issue that came up regarding signage at bus stops is the fact that the signs do not indicate which bus stops there nor where the bus is going. Key stakeholders and participants both raised this issue as being very problematic.
- One participant added that the signs themselves are pretty small and subtle and they are sometimes not easy to find.
- Bus stop signs do include numbers that users can call to get bus information, but sometimes that number is unclear. In addition, it is worth mentioning that some newcomers (particularly youth) have a cell phone that only works on WiFi and so they will be unable to call said number for route information.
- Finally, one participant raised the fact that some bus stop signs have fallen down or have been removed (leaving only the pole). One parent recalled going to the DMV to get her driver’s licence. She got a ride there, but was planning to take the bus back. Outside in freezing rain with her four year old, she was desperate to find the bus stop, but it took her a long time to realize that a bare pole on the side of the road was meant to indicate the bus stop.

**Route Maps, Website, and App**

Without exception, participants in this study were very unsatisfied with Metrobus route maps and website. The majority of key stakeholders brought up issues with them as well. One ANC employee pointed out that the print schedules are in small print and only in English. Newcomers themselves reported finding them very confusing (regardless of their language ability) and that the route maps are disjointed from each other.

This lack of clear connection between various routes came up several times. One participant called the individual route maps “useless” and another “such a waste of paper.” One individual described his interest in using Metrobus on moving to St. John’s, and how he went online to learn about the system:

> “Strangely enough, you know, I thought I would try and find a map of the whole area and there wasn’t a map. You could find individual routes, but you had no way to find out how they would connect to one another to get you anywhere.”

This longing for a “holistic visual” of the Metrobus system came up several times. One participant, however, worried that the City has given in to the fact that this is a driving culture and that they have given up trying to get people on public transit. He explains:
“Today I learned from here the City or the Metrobus really don’t care...Sorry, they can have no chance to think in a commuter’s perspective...the user’s perspective. There’s no picture or map - there’s only names or, you know, places. And that only works for those who already know the place and name. So...no one else can read the map. So it sounds like somehow they’re kind of giving up that kind of effort.”

Not all participants were so resigned, however, and in this study there was great interest in a Metrobus schedule/map redesign. In fact, for many participants and key stakeholders it was a priority area.

Participants wondered if a redesign could include the following changes:

- “A schematic map which doesn't show you the actual geography, it shows you a kind of simplified geography” (eg. a bus route image that shows bus routes in straight lines).
- Maps that include visual codes indicating what institutions exist at major stops (eg. hospital symbol, shopping symbol): “language shouldn't be a barrier then because they will use symbols, you know. Internationally recognized symbols.”

Participants also talked about the fact that bus stops themselves (particularly the major ones) should have route maps and/or Metrobus informational posters. These maps/posters could also be posted in public places such as City community centres. As one participant said: “It doesn’t really have to be like a fancy, fancy, but basic map with some important stuff.”

Another way-finding tool that participants sometimes raised was the Metrobus app. Most participants did not know it existed, but those that did said it was not user friendly and that it took a lot of time to figure out. One participant suggested that if there was an app redesign that it would be very useful if it (or the bus schedule online) could tell people “If you are working ‘x’ shift on this date at this location then this is the bus you should take is ___”

In-Bus Navigation
Participants reported having significant difficulties in navigating the bus system while they were on the bus as well. One issue that would be very easy to address is the fact that some newcomers do not know that transfers exist. A couple of people raised this issue explaining that when they first began taking the bus that they would repay every time they changed busses. An ANC employee also pointed this out as being an issue with her clients.

A second issue - one somewhat more difficult to address is - the lack of in-bus visual or auditory signals telling riders where they are and what the next stop is. As one participant put it “if you are sitting on the bus, you don’t know where the bus is going. You don’t know about the route.” Those newcomers with strong enough English language skills could ask the driver for assistance in pointing out their destination when it approaches, but those with poorer English skills (or less helpful drivers) are at a loss. Participants reported having developed strategies to try to overcome these challenges. A couple of them said that before they leave home they Google
Map how many stops it will take them to get to their destination and then once on the bus they try to count the bus stops that they pass on their route. But this is not a failsafe method:

“Why it's so hard to see from inside the outside? Like it's so blurred, it's so obscured you don't know where you are. So you can't make the right move at the right time. It's so much like that you will miss your stops. Because you can't see...This is something that I found very interesting and very disabling.”

Participants found that advertisements and dirt on the windows - as well as the small bus stop signs - meant that they sometimes miscounted the bus stops and overshot their destination.

Recommendations on how this might be ameliorated, however, also emerged from the study:

- Bus drivers could call out upcoming bus stops and then the stops as they happen
- Digital signs on the busses could indicate which stop is which and which is upcoming

Participants pointed out that with a visual signalling of where you are at any given time, travelling on the bus would be much easier for newcomers. Being able to compare one’s destination on a printed map (on one’s person) and the locations on a digital sign on the bus would mean that people could navigate the bus system with little to no English. As one participant pointed out, she was able to make her way around Quebec City with no knowledge of French because their bus system used symbols for major activities at bus stops as well as digital signs on the busses.

**Lack of Shelter**
The lack of shelter at bus stops was flagged as one of the largest transportation barriers newcomers had. Participants and key stakeholders alike raised this issue as a priority area. When asked “what were some of your first experiences of transportation in St. John’s,” many participants answered with frustrated stories of their discomfort waiting for a bus with no shelter during the winter months. For some of them those first experiences were enough that they vowed to never use the bus again and/or move to an area of town where most things were walk-able. As one participant explained:

“I just waited at the bus stop. Like, there was a seat but there was no shelter as well. It was windy too. So waiting there for an hour and ten minutes, I learned my lesson. I was like, ‘no, I’m not doing this again.’”

Other individuals pointed out how much harder it can be for families with children. One father in the study pointed out that in summer he is happy to take the bus with his family, “But when snow starts it was terrible...there is no place that you can stay with your family.” As a result, in the winter he is more nervous to travel on the bus with his children. Another participant talked about her worries about the school commute of the LEARN students: “Even for transit to another bus, they have to wait 10 or 15 minutes in the snow or in the winter without any shelter. So it’s really hard.”
Several participants drew a clear connection between the lack of shelter and the lack of frequency. If the times between busses were shorter the lack of shelter would matter less, or if there was shelter longer wait times might be more bearable; however, even short wait times in nasty weather are difficult without shelter. One individual went as far to say that he worries about his health when he is waiting in winter without shelter: “it’s very dangerous for me.”

Participants hoped that in future more shelters could be built and/or more arrangements made for shelter inside at places like COSTCO or the YMCA (such as what exists at the University Centre at MUN and at the Avalon Mall).

Apprehension
Some newcomers living in our city feel apprehensive about using Metrobus as a mode of transportation. For some it is because they are new to bus systems in general; for others they may feel a lack of confidence in their English language skills. There exists also a worry about the safety of using public transit, particularly among some newcomer women.

New to Public Transit
Some newcomers are new to public transit as well as being new to the country. As a result, they may be nervous about taking the bus or may not even know if Metrobus is available to them. One former refugee recounted arriving in St. John’s in winter and walking around the city to get to her appointments. She recalls seeing busses passing her, but she did not know if she was allowed to take them. She explains:

“I’m afraid to sit in the bus because it’s new for me. I don’t use in my own country and I don’t know also the places here. It takes long time until I adapt to these things. And I walk in the snow, it’s hard for me all the time. I try.”

After five months in the city the ANC gave her an orientation to the bus system, but until then she was too nervous to see if the busses were available to her.

It is worth mentioning that the ANC provides transportation for its ESL students to and from the LINC school, but it was reported that some of these same clients have a fear around taking Metrobus for their other kinds of appointments. A couple of key stakeholder organizations expressed their concern that the ANC transportation to English classes creates a dependency and that there should be more effort put into helping these clients transition into public transit earlier.

English Language Proficiency
The second source of apprehension that some newcomers feel around bus use is the worry that their English language skills are not strong enough. This lack of language skills, participants explained, can lead to scenarios such as:

- Not knowing where to get off, but not being able to ask the bus driver or fellow riders
- Being able to ask where to get off, but not being able to understand the answer (because the bus driver may speak quickly or have a strong accent)
- Getting off at the wrong stop, but not being able to ask passersby which way to go to get to one’s destination

One key stakeholder told a story of a refugee family who normally depend on their son to help them navigate the bus system. One particular afternoon he was unable to join them, however, so he described exactly where they should catch the bus and he drew them a map telling them where to get off for their appointment. Something went wrong however, and some time later he got a phone call from them saying that they had not seen their stop and that they were still taking the route, going around and around in circles in hopes of reaching him by phone so he could help them out of their predicament.

Safety

Another factor creating apprehension about taking the bus are worries around safety. One participant expressed her concern about sending her daughter to school on the bus and if it would be safe. Another had an unfortunate situation happen on a bus that made him wonder “what kind of person's going to get on the bus with you.” A fight broke out on his bus and it was so bad that the bus driver had to pull over and wait for the RNC to arrive. As he sees it, all it takes is one or two incidents like that for riders to be turned off bus use permanently.

A fear of the safety of travelling by bus appears to be particularly pronounced in some communities amongst women. MWONL pointed out, for example, that many of their Syrian clients are afraid to take the bus. In some cases, they worry about the time on the bus itself, but others have said they feel nervous waiting for a bus alone at night. One woman recounted to MWONL how she felt a stranger was giving her bad looks and it made her feel unsafe. As a result of these kinds of concerns, when MWONL does programming at night they often reimburse their clients for taxi use - a hefty expense for a non-profit with limited funds. One encouraging fact brought up by an ANC employee, however, is that there is an increase in female Metrobus drivers which should help ease the apprehension of some potential riders.

In sum, there are a number of barriers that newcomers face to using Metrobus as their main means of transportation: cost, service levels, way-finding, a lack of shelter, and an apprehension around using the busses. With the thoughtful attention in the right areas, however, the newcomer population is a huge potential source for increasing Metrobus’ ridership.

Given this, the next section outlines what destinations are involved in newcomer transportation in St. John’s. What parts of the city do newcomers live in? What are their most frequent destinations? What places are hard or impossible for newcomers to get to at all?
Destinations

Frequent Point to Point Transportation
Participants brought up “point to point” routes that they make on a regular basis. The following are those that were mentioned in the focus groups and/or in key stakeholder interviews. Please note that these routes are not generalizable to all newcomers (as the sample size for this study was small), but they give some insight into newcomers’ routes. Also noted in the table below are those routes that participants said need servicing by Metrobus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point A</th>
<th>Point B</th>
<th>Mode of Transport (if specified)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenmount Terrace</td>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>Metrobus 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenmount Terrace</td>
<td>Kelsey Drive</td>
<td>Walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenmount Terrace</td>
<td>Avalon Mall</td>
<td>Metrobus 10 &amp; 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>Avalon Mall</td>
<td>Metrobus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>Costco</td>
<td>Shared car</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>Merrymeeting Road Sobey’s</td>
<td>Walking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>No Frills, Mount Pearl</td>
<td>Personal vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td>Metrobus or cab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>Stavanger Drive</td>
<td>Personal/shared vehicle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire Ave (west)</td>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>Metrobus 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freshwater Road</td>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td>Metrobus 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empire Ave</td>
<td>Kenmount Road</td>
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<td>Empire Ave</td>
<td>Kelsey Drive</td>
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<td>Empire Ave</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td><em>Bus service needed</em></td>
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<td>Empire Ave</td>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empire Ave</td>
<td>Avalon Mall</td>
<td>Metrobus 12</td>
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<td>Empire Ave</td>
<td>Ropewalk Lane Sobey’s</td>
<td>Metrobus 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empire Ave</td>
<td>Torbay Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empire Ave &amp; Newtown Road</td>
<td>Memorial’s main campus</td>
<td><em>Bus service needed</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbittown</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
<td><em>Bus service needed</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rabbittown</td>
<td>MUN</td>
<td><em>Bus service needed</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Buckmaster Circle</td>
<td>Avalon Mall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buckmaster Circle</td>
<td>Rabbittown</td>
<td><em>Bus service needed</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre City</td>
<td>Major’s Path</td>
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7 Please see the Recommendations section for the need for further research on where newcomers live.
8 Given that Costco is soon moving to Galway it may be that the new point to point transport will be from MUN to Costco at its new location.
9 An ANC employee listed this as a frequent route for her clients, but there are no busses nor sidewalks in this area.
10 On Major’s Path there are clinics that cover dental and eye health under the IFH - the federal government health program that supports refugee health. In addition, blood services are also found at Major’s Path.
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<tr>
<th>Point A</th>
<th>Point B</th>
<th>Mode of Transport (if specified)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre City</td>
<td>Health Sciences Centre</td>
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<td>Centre City</td>
<td>St. Clare’s Hospital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centre City</td>
<td>Mosque (Logy Bay Road)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Churchill Square</td>
<td>Stavanger Drive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Churchill Square</td>
<td>Mosque (Logy Bay Road)</td>
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<tr>
<td>East End</td>
<td>Kenmount Road</td>
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<tr>
<td>East End</td>
<td>YMCA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newfoundland Drive</td>
<td>Downtown</td>
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Worthy of note: The accessibility of schools - particularly of Holy Heart - by public transit came up frequently because so many LEARN students use public transit to get to school. As one woman described it “they have to make so many connections. So it makes their life really miserable.”

**Frequent Destinations**
The following is a list of destinations that key stakeholders pointed out are frequent destinations for their clients. Those with a star are destinations that the researchers were told are difficult for newcomers to get to on public transit:

- The West End*
- Costco/Stavanger Drive*
- Mount Pearl*
- Motor Vehicle Registration*
- Goulds/Kilbride*
- Southlands (some parts)*
- Conception Bay South*
- Torbay*
- Airport*
- Shea Heights*
- The Battery*
- Mosque (Logy Bay Road)*
- Bishop Abraham School on Pennywell Road (for summer school)*
- Community Centres (for summer camp)*
- Holy Heart High School
- Avalon Mall
- Cash & Carry
- Public schools
- Various colleges
- Downtown
- YMCA (Ridge Road)
The current Costco location and the Stavanger Drive area in general came up very frequently as both an area where newcomers like to shop, but also where they have been able to find work. Participants felt that public transportation to that area is not adequate. One newcomer (who lives near Quidi Vidi) reported he would need to take two or three busses to reach that area (despite it being near him as the crow flies). In addition, a key stakeholder who gives newcomers job/career assistance admitted that the Costco/Stavanger Drive area is very hard for her clients to get to. The limited hours of those busses means that she has had to advocate on behalf of her clients, asking that employers give them different shifts in order for them to be able to take public transit to work. Other newcomers without such an advocate, however, may not be so lucky.

**Frequent Starting Points**

Although it is difficult to summarize where most newcomers are living, the following is a list of locations where many ANC clients live:

- Buckmaster's Circle
- Livingstone Street
- Empire Avenue
- Brophy Place
- Eric Street
- Chalker Place
- Terra Nova Road Apartments
- Thorburn Rd area around the Avalon Mall (Seabourne/Falkner/Cumberland)
- MUN area (eg. Whiteway St., Freshwater Rd., Anderson Ave.)
- Rabbittown/Merrymeeting Road down to Empire (eg. Malta St., Cavlier Ave., etc.)
- Hillview Terrace area
- Newfoundland Drive (esp closer to where Torbay Rd. meets Newfoundland Dr.)
- Bell's Turn
- Penney Crescent
- Major's Path
- Airport Heights

One participant expressed his frustration at the fact that there are areas of the city where newcomers live that are not well connected by public transit:

“there is other place here in St. John that Metrobus can't reach. And there are also newcomers there are just living there. So can you imagine someone who wants just to go maybe to do shopping and have to carry everything...on the hand. So it's a little difficult.”
Another participant added:

“And I think there should be a coordination between the development of affordable housing and the introduction of new routes, new bus stops, so that the two are consistent with each other. You can't build affordable housing in locations where there is no transportation facility, Metrobus stops.”

Infrequent Trips, Essential Locations
Participants also mentioned locations that they did not need to access often, but that are essential to their life in St. John’s. As one participant pointed out that during the first couple of weeks in Canada a newcomer has a lot of paperwork to complete:

“the first couple of weeks are hectic for every student because they've got to open a bank account, they've got to go to MCP and Service Canada, whatever. You need to do. Those are important stuff.”

In these first few weeks some locations are particularly important to access. Although government- or privately-sponsored refugees would probably receive assistance in getting to these locations that will not necessarily be the case for other newcomers. In fact, it is in those first few weeks that many immigrants and international students may be least likely to have friends to rely on for transportation. As a result, public transit to these locations is particularly important. Locations that were mentioned for arrival-related paperwork include:

- Mount Pearl (particularly for Motor Vehicle Registration and for Vital Statistics)
- Churchill Avenue (Service Canada for a SIN card)
- Major’s Path (for MCP card)

The difficulty of getting to the Motor Vehicle Registration office in particular came up many times. Participants talked about taking two or three busses in either direction, and that with lengthy waits between busses, the DMV visit took their full day.

*Please see the “Barriers” section of this report for more details on the challenges of public transit routing.*

Leisure Locations
One of the largest themes to emerge from this research is that, because of transportation challenges, many of the things that make this area of the world special are inaccessible to newcomers. Participants spoke of a yearning to be able to access farmland, nature, trails, historic sites, beaches, and recreation areas. As one woman puts it: “so if you don't own a car you don’t get a chance to go for berry picking or hiking. Newfoundland has a very beautiful and unique nature, but...there is no bus stops close to the most of the trails.” Another participant relayed that an international student friend of hers had been at MUN for over a year before
getting an opportunity to go to Signal Hill because of a lack of transportation options. Another participant responded, “It's Signal Hill. It should be easy to access.”

Participants talked about how much they would like access to places like Topsail Beach or Middle Cove Beach (if only just on weekends in the summer). Key stakeholders also pointed out that even recreation spaces like Rotary Sunshine Park cannot be accessed by bus, and even Pippy Park is not easily accessed by bus (especially on weekends when activities are normally happening).

As one participant put it: when you are a newcomer “you have to learn about the city. And to discover other places. So you can't just be in the city... So [the City of St. John’s] can just give other newcomers opportunity to know exactly the city... it could be good.” Many participants agreed that there would be interest in affordable tours or even just shuttle runs in and outside the city to popular historic sites or areas of natural beauty. Extending the reach of newcomers to places slightly further afield/out of reach, they feel, would increase their appreciation of the city itself.

**Implications of Transportation Challenges**

Given all the barriers that newcomers face to transportation in St. John’s, what are the implications of these challenges? Participants and key stakeholders alike talked about what they felt were the far reaching potential consequences of transportation difficulties. Transportation barriers, they felt, can influence if someone is able to get (or needs to find) employment. They can dictate what kinds of education they are able to get. They can guide where newcomers are able to live. Barriers to transportation also influence newcomers’ well being and whether they have strong social connections in the greater community. Finally, participants reported that troubles with transportation can mean that newcomers do not have opportunity to see the province outside of the capital, and this can influence whether they decide to stay in Newfoundland and Labrador permanently or not.

**Employment**

As referenced earlier, many newcomers are offered employment with early morning or late night shifts (working in call centres, cleaning, customer service in fast food establishments, or putting flyers in the Telegram). These shifts require them to arrive at and/or leave from their place of employment outside of the hours that Metrobus is operating. This can mean that these individuals take on the added expense of taking a taxi, but that added expense is not an option for all. Individuals at RIAC know of four newcomers who had to turn down potential employment because the bus schedule would not allow them to arrive to work on time. The researchers heard a similar story from an ANC client.

In addition, participants in this study felt forced to purchase a vehicle due to the limitations of the bus service. As a result of these additional expenses they have had to take on additional work. As one participant explained:
“I have seen many students who are just working in McDonald’s or Subway to earn this extra $400 so that they can afford a car, otherwise they don’t need to go do a job.”

**Education**

Some newcomers feel that their educational options are limited because of the limited transportation options in and around St. John’s. One key stakeholder organization said they know of some newcomer students who cannot take night classes because they do not have a vehicle and the infrequency of the busses at night mean they cannot get home after night classes end.

A participant in one of the focus groups also recalled an educational opportunity that he lost, he felt, because of limited transportation options. He had been offered a spot at a school that would teach him how to drive a transport truck and he had federal funding to support him. The training was in Conception Bay South, however, and although he had a vehicle he was nervous to drive it such a distance daily because a friend had told him that that stretch of road has many accidents. He decided to look into public transportation options between CBS and St. John’s and was disappointed to learn that there were not any. Sadly, he turned down the training as a result:

“We don’t have any chance just when you go to the school. The government will help you for test for education, but if you don’t have any transportation, any chance about that, you will not have any chance for you”

**Accommodation & Population Density**

Several participants in this study shared that they live in a central area of the city primarily because they feel their public transportation options are so few. International students in particular brought this up. One shared: “Most of us really have to rely on our feet when it comes to moving to places because of the lack of transportation.” A former immigrant to Canada, one who is a huge supporter of public transit, felt he had no choice upon his arrival to the city, but to choose to live in a central location:

“I was looking for the bus shelters and I couldn't find many. Especially as winter came on I wouldn’t really want to be waiting without a bus shelter. So I figured out very quickly that either I was going to move into the centre, really into the centre where I could walk everywhere, or I was going to use my car for everything, which I object to.”

This necessity to live near campus or downtown has led to a high population density in those areas; a couple of participants suggested that this has led to problems. It means that house rental rates around the Elizabeth Avenue, Newtown Road and Burton’s Pond areas, for example, are really high (and some of the accommodations’ quality is questionable) while nice places with lower rent (in areas such as near Logy Bay Road, Airport Heights, or Paradise) are virtually inaccessible for most newcomers. A more robust public transit system, suggests one
newcomer, “will change the population distribution across the city,” and for the better, he feels.

**Social Isolation & Well-Being**

Another striking implication of the various barriers to transportation that newcomers face is the potential social isolation that it can foster. As mentioned earlier, large families in particular can often not pay for a monthly bus pass for each member of the family. As one participant explained:

“For bigger families there's only one - the husband usually - holds the main bus pass, and that [he] shares with other members. Like wife or children if needed. So it means that part of the family is always in isolation. They can't travel together as a family.”

She goes on to explain that:

“Especially [in] certain cultures, you know, it reinforces the idea that women should stay at home, children should stay at home, and the husband can go and enjoy. But if it's made affordable, then you know, there will be incentive for the whole family to navigate the city.”

The inaccessibility of transit, then, has implications for newcomers’ ability to connect with the world outside the home, and these implications, it seems, are often greater for women.

Participants in this study, however, recognized just how good it can be for one’s well-being to get outside of the house or even outside of the city. When asked about the benefits of going to a beach for the day, one participant answered:

“Just being able to go you feel like you live in a better city...Knowing that you can. Personally, I will make an effort to go more than once...it’s so close but at the same time, it’s hard to get there. And I think it makes...wellness. Going outside, spending time outside, making exercise.”

Another participant, who is admittedly on a very tight budget, sees the benefit of getting the family out of the house on occasion regardless of the extra expense:

“But for me sometimes you know, I can't spend all the weekend home. So I need to take my family out. So I don't have choice. So have to call a taxi now. We have to go somewhere. So it's a little bit difficult.”

In sum, many barriers to transportation can lead to social isolation, and the modes of transit that can reduce that social isolation can be a burden on newcomers’ pocketbooks.
Limited Exploration Outside YYT
A number of participants in this study - both those very new to St. John’s as well as those that have been here longer - expressed a desire to see more of the province. Without a car, however, they felt this was impossible. One individual mentioned that he had been searching online to see how he might get to Corner Brook, but he found no reference to a bus service. Another participant explained that a bus does leave the MUN campus several times a week for the West coast, but that it is expensive. A number of participants were surprised to hear of this bus service, and they knew of no other busses that could take you to other regions of the province. Several participants lamented their experience of NL being restricted to St. John’s only. As one young man explained:

“I love travelling and like going into adventures, but sadly I don't have a travel buddy in Newfoundland or I couldn't find any transportation which take me to other places inside the province.”

Newcomer Retention
Finally, many participants in this study said that having a hard time getting around the city (and getting outside of the city) would negatively affect their decision to stay in the city. Many times it was labelled “a big factor” in that decision. One newcomer in this study has been so frustrated with public transit in the city that she did a project on it for one of her courses. She feels the system is very poor. She adds:

“And that is why nobody really wants to stay in St. John’s. Once I'm done with my comprehensive exams at the end of the year, I would find a way to bail out of the city...I'm bailing out. There's nothing to pin me to St. John's.”

Another individual in the same focus group says he really likes it here, but if another city offers him better transportation, then that would be a factor in his decision to stay or not. Still another participant agreed “It's a very nice city to live in,” but he adds that if the government wants to retain international graduates there need to be improvements to transportation, but also to affordable accommodation and leisure activities: “there's nothing really that they are offering us here. St. John's transportation system is really, really bad. Like, it's not favourable to immigrants. Why should they stay?”

What has Worked
Although participants talked significantly about the barriers they faced to transportation they also made a point to mention transportation options that had worked for them.

MUN's Airport Greeting Service
First and foremost, MUN’s international students really appreciated the Airport Greeting Service. According to a former employee of the Internationalization Office (IO), each year that service paid for the taxis of more than 400 students travelling to their accommodation for the first time. Former users of this service told the researchers that in addition to being a very affordable option, it was also a friendly way to be welcomed. One participant told the
researchers that during his drive from the airport the staff person that met him pointed out major sites on the way, told him about the local population and its culture, and then when he arrived home he was met by his MUN mentor. He felt it was a very positive way to be welcomed to the city. The Airport Greeting Service still exists; however, the Internationalization Office no longer pays for the taxi fare. In the two weeks preceding and one week after a semester’s start, if arranged in advance, an IO staff person can greet incoming international students at the airport and then accompany them in their taxi ride to their accommodation. The greeting service is still very much appreciated by international students, the researchers were told, however some participants in this study were disappointed that they now had to pay the taxi fare given the cost of international student tuition.

Shuttle to Grocery Store
MUNSU organizes a shuttle from Burton’s Pond Apartments to the Kesley Drive Sobey’s every 30 minutes on Tuesdays from 6-9pm. International students reported that those who live on campus in particular found it very convenient - particularly as on Tuesdays students get 10% off most items at Sobey’s.

Walking Trails
A couple of participants mentioned how much they appreciate the walking trail system in the city. One woman said that the trail system was her first impression of transportation in St. John’s. She arrived in the summer “and my first impression was pretty good because you can walk everywhere on the path. I really like that there are trails to go anywhere in central St. John’s.”

GoBus
One of the participants in this study was a GoBus user. He does not think it is a perfect service, but he has appreciated how far he can get for the fare: “it’s good for me. I look at it in a way positive way.”

Shared Car
As mentioned earlier, MWONL has traditionally offered to reimburse their clients for cabs if they are unable to take a bus to get to their programming. Recently, however, they have found they can save money by asking someone with a car or van if they can pick up women on their way to the MWONL office. They do reimburse the volunteers for the gas, but they are still able to save significantly when using this method. They have found that their clients seem to appreciate the company of other women and enjoy travelling together.

Alternative Transportation Modes
When asked which alternative transportation options might be possibilities in St. John’s participants brought up Uber, shuttles, shared vans, car share, and community bikes.

Uber
There was some disagreement about whether Uber would be a good option for St. John’s or not. Some participants thought it might be a convenient way to get around the city and/or a good way for newcomers to gain employment. Other participants, however, felt it would be too
expensive for newcomers. Others still said that Uber would never come to St. John’s because our distances are so short - and customers so few - that there is no way for drivers to make enough money to make it viable.

**Shuttles**
Several participants talked about how smaller busses - or community shuttles that run regularly between two locations - might be a good addition to our city. One ANC employee said this kind of service might be a good option for areas used for recreation purposes (like Lester’s Farm, but year around). A participant brought up shuttles as a potential solution to the parking problem at Memorial University and yet another wondered if Eastern Health has ever considered a shuttle system.

**Shared Vans**
Several participants in this study are originally from countries that have transportation options that are like shared vans, but they are privately run. These vans run on a schedule and they have designated routes. Some pick people up at their doorstep, but other have regular pickup locations. The vans hold a maximum of 15 or 20 people and they pick up and drop off people along their route charging them according to the relative distance that they travelled in the van. One participant added “if the city is looking for some creative ways, they could really try that.” Another explained that in her country of origin, families would come together to hire a car and driver to pick up various kids from one single neighbourhood to take them to school. This service was door to door, she explained, and would be a very convenient option here particularly in winter.

**Car Share / Ride Share**
Several participants liked the idea of a car or ride sharing service if it was convenient and affordable. Participants pointed out that there are examples in other parts of Canada (such as Communauto and Amigo Express in Quebec, and a female-only car sharing group in Toronto). In addition, until 2016 there was a very cheap car rental service offered by “Student car share.” One key stakeholder said “it was very useful for individuals who wanted to travel outside of St. John’s, do groceries at Costco, and attend events early in the morning or late at night” (when busses were no longer running). Currently, there is a group called CarShareNL that is working to start a car share service here.

One key stakeholder pointed out that newcomers might benefit from a car share programme, but their taking advantage of it would not be without its challenges because drivers would:

- Need to have a Canadian license
- Need to be a certain age for insurance purposes
- Need to be able to navigate systems online
- Be willing to learn new technology
That said, participants did express an interest in this kind of a system. As one person explained:

“I'd be interested in looking at a car-sharing scheme if there was one that was not too far away. I could walk to it. I'm not needing to drive every day. I work from home. So yeah. If it was electric, even better. I would feel good about using that.”

**Bike Share**

A handful of participants mused whether a City- or community-run bike share program might be a good option for St. John’s. Some cities have central locations where bikes are locked up. Individuals put a dollar or two into the locking device and - like some airport’s baggage trolley systems - it releases the bike. You can use the bike and then return it to one of multiple bike stations and get your toonie back. “It would be a good new service,” one participant added “but it would require some maintenance cost as well. But it would be very sustainable and not a very big expense for the city.” One international student pointed out that bikes are expensive and since we only have a short season during which she would feel safe biking, she did not want to invest in buying a bike, but “people would like to just rent for a day or for a week and enjoy biking when the weather allows.” Students at MUN can avail of a bike rental service and it is very popular in the summertime.
Conclusion & Recommendations
Through this study Mind the Gap Consulting™ sought to better understand the transportation barriers newcomers to Canada face in the city - and to explore possible solutions within which the City of St. John’s could play a role. Interviews were conducted with eight individuals at three key stakeholder organizations (the Association for New Canadians, the Multicultural Women’s Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council) and emailed submissions were made by La Fédération de francophone de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL), an additional ANC employee, and a former MUN Internationalization Office employee. In addition, a total of 23 newcomers participated in four focus groups. The data collected from these methods led to significant findings.

The barriers newcomers face to transportation in St. John’s are great. They include cost-related issues, Metrobus service and connectivity problems, and the apprehension that comes with navigating a city in a new language. The implications of these barriers - for newcomers themselves and for the city - are great. With limited transportation options can come increased social isolation, greater employment challenges, and a decrease in newcomer retention. Responding to these challenges, however, can result in benefits for newcomers as well as for the broader population. As one participant put it: “It's not just us, it's locals as well...the best for the city. Overall, taking care of everyone.”

With these things in mind we recommend the following:

Recommendation #1: That Metrobus/the City of St. John’s (CSJ) seriously consider giving the approximately 60 LEARN students (those who live outside the catchment areas of their schools) free bus passes for every semester they are in school

Recommendation #2: That Metrobus explore the viability of creating a family bus pass or of increasing the age before which a child rides free

Recommendation #3: That the City explore offering free transit passes to asylum seekers for their first year in St. John’s (as Halifax has)

Recommendation #4: That Metrobus increase public education on the existence of its route to the airport, how to register bus driver complaints, and basic “new user” information (such as bus pass options and how transfers work)

Recommendation #5: That Metrobus seriously explore expanding its hours of operation to include early mornings and late nights (to aid in the commute of those going to work)

Recommendation #6: That Metrobus increase the frequency of its routes particularly during 7-9:30am and 2-3:30pm Mon-Fri (when children are using the busses to get to school and single parents are rushing home to meet school busses)
Recommendation #7: That Metrobus review how its routes service low income neighbourhoods - and neighbourhoods such as Rabbittown - with specific attention given to connectivity to schools and essential services (such as hospitals, grocery stores, and places of worship).

Recommendation #8: That Metrobus conduct further research to understand which routes require better connectivity (eg. from Mount Pearl to St. John's).

Recommendation #9: That Metrobus review how it deals with customer service complaints and ensures that complaints are addressed in a timely basis.

Recommendation #10: That Metrobus drivers get cross-cultural sensitivity training.

Recommendation #11: That there are repercussions for Metrobus drivers who are discriminatory towards newcomers and/or those who are culturally different from them.

Recommendation #12: That the Metrobus airport route have a stop very close to the departures or arrivals areas, that it be clearly marked, and that there is significant signage indicating where and when the busses depart (this signage should be near the arrivals area).

Recommendation #13: That Metrobus explore expanding the airport route to include a downtown location or one where riders could park their cars for an extended period.

Recommendation #14: That the Metrobus airport route run on Sundays.

Recommendation #15: That Metrobus stop signs all indicate which route stops there.

Recommendation #16: That Metrobus create a “holistic visual” that shows how various routes overlap/interact - a simplified geographic overview of the whole public transit system.

Recommendation #17: That Metrobus overhaul its route maps, website, and app so that they are more user-friendly.

Recommendation #18: That more Metrobus stops have route maps and schedule information.

Recommendation #19: That Metrobus route maps and schedule information are posted in community settings like community centres, shopping areas, and schools.

Recommendation #20: That (in the short term) Metrobus have drivers make in-bus announcements about upcoming stops and stops as they occur.

Recommendation #21: That (in the longer term) Metrobus install digital signs that indicate upcoming stops and stops as they occur.
Recommendation #22: That Metrobus increase the shelters available at its bus stops, particularly on routes that youth and/or families frequent.

Recommendation #23: That Metrobus ensure good connectivity to essential government- and health-related centres such as the DMV and Vital Statistics (Mount Pearl), Service Canada (Churchill Ave.), and MCP and IFH providers (Major’s Path).

Recommendation #24: That Metrobus explores the possibility of using smaller feeder busses that would run more frequently and connect well to the larger busses on larger routes.

Recommendation #25: That the ANC ensures that their new clients get an orientation to Metrobus within the first couple of weeks that they are in St. John’s.

Recommendation #26: That other organizations (such as RIAC and MWONL) also develop orientations to Metrobus to increase newcomer understanding of the bus system more broadly.

Recommendation #27: That further research be done into the gender issues at play as it relates to transportation and newcomers.

Recommendation #28: That further research be done into the neighbourhoods where newcomers live.

Recommendation #29: That all future developments of affordable housing (both at a provincial and municipal level) include bus stops and sidewalks.

Recommendation #30: That the LIP explore what partners/private enterprises might offer affordable access to recreation/nature outside of St. John’s particularly in warmer months (for access to berry picking, hiking, bird watching, fishing, beaches, etc.)

Recommendation #31: That the LIP (and partners such as MUN) share with newcomers the transportation options that can help them explore the province outside of St. John’s.

Recommendation #32: That the LIP foster a discussion amongst its partners about the viability of shuttle busses, Care Share, and Bike Share as alternative transportation options.

Recommendation #33: That the LIP explore what can be done to ameliorate the burden newcomers face re: auto insurance (perhaps hosting an information session by an insurance broker).

Recommendation #34: That Service NL consider lessening the required wait time between the receipt of a learner’s permit and the driving exam for those newcomers who are experienced drivers.
Recommendation #35: That the LIP work with Service NL to explore what documentation is necessary for “proof of legal presence in Canada” (and other identification documents) and work with them to increase public awareness regarding said necessary documents and the steps necessary for obtaining an NL driver’s license

Recommendation #36: That the LIP explore what volunteer organization or ngos might be available and interested to give newcomers opportunities to practice their driving in a car with a licensed driver

Recommendation #37: That future research done by and for the City of St. John’s regarding transportation include questions about immigration status and accommodation location and that data collection methods are accessible and friendly to non-native English speakers

Recommendation #38: That the City increase the number of sidewalks that are cleared in winter (particularly on routes to schools, post-secondary institutions, and around places of worship)

Recommendation #39: That the City increase public education on dog leashing regulations and bike safety and that these “campaigns” have components that are directed specifically to newcomers

Recommendation #40: That MUN explore the cost of a Metrobus pass being included in international student fees (at a semesterized rate)

Recommendation #41: That the City and Metrobus work to make public transit “normal” and a mode of transport that many people in the city would want to use

Recommendation #42: That the City and Metrobus embed Google translate in its website to aid the comprehension of non-native English speakers (as the NL English School District has done)
Appendix A: Focus Group Protocol

1. To start we would like you to share your name and something you enjoy doing in St. John’s (e.g. a hobby or a place you visit and enjoy)

2. What is the first thing you think of when I say “transportation in St. John’s”? (what are your first thoughts or words that you think of)

3. Think back to when you first arrived in St. John’s. What was your experience of getting around the city?

4. Now that you have been in St. John’s longer what have you learned about transportation in St. John’s?

5. What modes of transportation do you use most frequently? (show of hands): walking pathways/trails, sidewalks/roads, public transit, taxis, bicycles, personal vehicle, shared car

6. Why do you choose this kind of transportation?

7. Why do you not use other kinds of transportation? (what are the specific reasons or barriers?)

8. Is there a route that you often make? (are there two locations that you travel between frequently?)

9. Are there certain parts of the city that are hard or impossible for you to get to?

10. Are there certain times during the day or night that are harder for transport?

11. How important is transportation to your decision to stay in NL or not?

12. Are there kinds of transportation that are not currently available that you feel might work well for newcomers? (e.g. Uber/Lyft, Carshare, shuttles?)

   Oral summary by facilitator

13. Do you feel this summarizes well what we talked about today?

14. If you had a chance to give advice to the City of St. John’s on transportation what is the most important thing you want them to know?
Title: Reception – World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

Date Prepared: November 2, 2018

Report To: Committee of the Whole

Councillor & Role: Mayor Danny Breen – Governance & Strategic Directions

Ward: Not ward specific

Decision/Direction Required: Seeking approval to sponsor a vigil/reception in the Wyatt Hall on November 21, 2018 to commemorate the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims.

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

• The World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims takes place on the third Sunday in November every year as the appropriate acknowledgement of victims of road traffic crashes and their families.

• In Canada, more than 1,800 people are killed in road crashes and more than 160,000 are injured.

• The reception would be for about 50 people from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. on November 21, 2018.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications
   • A small reception for approximately 50 people – approximate cost of $500 – money available under “civic events” budget

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders
   • Families of those affected by road traffic crashes

3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans
   • Neighbourhoods Build our City

4. Legal or Policy Implications – n/a

5. Engagement and Communications Considerations – n/a
6. Human Resource Implications – n/a

7. Procurement Implications – n/a

8. Information Technology Implications - n/a

9. Other Implications – n/a

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that Council approve hosting a vigil/reception to commemorate the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims in the Wyatt Hall on November 21, 2018.

**Prepared and Approved By:** Elaine Henley, City Clerk

**Attachments:** N/A