



Seniors Housing Research Project: Update Summary

February 29, 2016



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This report was funded by the City of St. John's and the Province of Newfoundland Labrador. The study was prompted by the City's 2012 Age Friendly Survey in which local seniors identified housing as their top issue of concern, as well as the Seniors Housing Forum (also 2012) which identified that builders wanted more information on opportunities in the changing seniors housing market. In June 2014, Council adopted the Affordable Housing Business Plan, which includes a goal of creating 500 homes with our partners by 2017, including 100 age friendly homes. This report presents detailed market information and innovative ideas on how home builders can meet local needs and expand into this growing niche.

The team that completed the study included CBCL consultant Mary Bishop, who has intimate knowledge of the City through her work on the Municipal Plan draft. She partnered with SHS Consulting who have done extensive work on other seniors and housing projects, including the CMHC's comprehensive national guide to seniors housing.

Key points of the Study

Demographics: Currently 20% of the City's population is over 60, by 2035, it will be 28%. Current average income of those over 60 is only \$24 540, however there is a high percentage of home ownership, and a significant group with assets to invest in more suitable housing forms (e.g. downsizing). Seniors represent a broad range of incomes and diverse needs, and the study identified these housing preferences via direct local consultation and national research:

- Want to age at home
- Prefer seniors only housing
- Want to downsize to homes which will allow them to live independently
- Want to live close to services and amenities
- Home maintenance is an issue
- Home modifications are not always possible
- Ideally want two bedrooms, accessible features and privacy

Housing Supply: Current supply is largely focused on single family homes that do not meet seniors' diverse and changing needs; and **75 % of available residential land is still zoned for single family homes.** This will present a challenge to meeting the goals of the City's Municipal Plan of increasing densities, providing a range of housing options and creating complete communities. More affordable, innovative options are needed - **this represents a major market opportunity.**

Recommendations

The report suggests that the City has an important and proactive role to play in several areas. Many of these areas are already identified in the strategies outlined in the City's Affordable Housing Business Plan (HBP). The following section provided an analysis of each recommendation, including the City's current and planned work on each issue. This has been updated in January 2016 and now also includes an **'Update/Next Steps'** as well as an **'Alignment with City Plans/Timeline'** section:



Policy and Regulations

| Recommendation | City Response/Action | Update/Next Steps | Alignment with City Plans/Timeline |
|--|--|--|---|
| 1. Consider including a definition of affordable housing in the Municipal Plan and identifying affordable housing targets such as those identified in the City's Affordable Housing Business Plan | City will consider this – a definition already exists in the Affordable Housing Business Plan that could serve as a good basis for this. | The new draft Municipal Plan (Section 4.1 Housing) includes policy around affordable housing; diversity, choice, etc. Policy speaks to promoting and enabling a wide range of affordable housing options. A specific definition is not used, but overall objectives speak to the key principles of affordable housing and what it means. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - Responsive and Progressive Timeline: Pending Municipal Plan approval |
| 2. Consider updating the definition of seniors housing and broadening zoning provisions to allow innovative, age-friendly housing options throughout the City | City will consider this in the process of re-writing the Development Regulations. | The City is considering this option under the new draft Development Regulations; proposing to remove seniors' apartment buildings and replace with a new definition for assisted living residential complex. Age-friendly housing is permissible everywhere throughout the City. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City Timeline: Pending Development Regulations approval |
| 3. Consider pre-zoning lands that have been identified as suitable for residential development, particularly surplus lands suitable for multiple-dwelling developments, to reduce the time and cost involved with rezoning | City will consider this in the process of re-writing the Development Regulations. | The new draft Municipal Plan is proposing only one residential district. This change makes the process easier and eliminates the need for a Municipal Plan amendment. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - Responsive and Progressive - A Culture of Cooperation Timeline: Pending Municipal Plan approval |
| 4. Consider alternative development standards for affordable housing developments, including seniors housing projects | City will consider this in the process of re-writing the Development Regulations. | Several new ideas are being proposed in the development regulations, including: affordable housing in institutional zones downtown requiring less parking as well as multi-use zones that allow for a mix of housing types. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - Responsive and Progressive - A Culture of Cooperation Timeline: Pending Development Regulations approval |
| 5. Explore the feasibility of streamlining planning and building permit approval processes for affordable housing projects, including seniors housing projects | City will research options for this, based on best practices across Canada. | This is ongoing and the entire process for planning and building permit approvals is being streamlined. This change is not specific to seniors' housing projects, but they will also benefit. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - Responsive and Progressive - A Culture of Cooperation - Effective Organization Timeline: Ongoing |

Programs, Initiatives and Funding

| Recommendation | City Response/Action | Update/Next Steps | Alignment with City Plans/Timeline |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>6. As part of the inventory of land for potential redevelopment for housing that was identified as an action in the Affordable Housing Business Plan, identify suitable land or existing, underutilized buildings, such as old school sites, that may be appropriate for seniors or mixed-age housing and share this information with the development community</p> | <p>An inventory of city land available for potential redevelopment is complete in Ward 2 and other wards will follow soon.</p> | <p>Inventory for Ward 2 is completed and our holdings identified. LIS Staff have been actioned to complete the land inventory in the other wards. The City's Real Estate Division is approaching the Province and the School Board to discuss provincially owned land.</p> | <p>City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Effective Organization</p> <p>Timeline: Ongoing, to be completed by 2017</p> |
| <p>7. Consider providing incentives, such as waiving all or a portion of development and building permit fees for developments that increase the supply of affordable rental housing for seniors</p> | <p>Will be considered under the strategies identified in the Affordable Housing Business Plan to create a Housing Catalyst Fund.</p> | <p>Development and building permit fees are waived for non-profit groups that develop affordable housing projects. Other affordable housing projects are evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The Housing Catalyst Fund has been submitted as a budget-ask to Council.</p> | <p>City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Fiscally Responsible - Effective Organization</p> <p>Timeline: Housing Catalyst Fund has been approved for 2016/late 2016 for timeline.</p> |
| <p>8. Consider identifying funding, resources and incentives to support a seniors housing pilot project</p> | <p>Will be considered under the strategies identified in the Affordable Housing Business Plan to create a Housing Catalyst Fund.</p> | <p>Seniors housing projects have been completed throughout the City. The City is identifying funding, resources and incentives for further affordable seniors' housing developments. Conversations are in progress in this area. Partners are being identified and plans are being explored.</p> | <p>City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Fiscally Responsible</p> <p>Timeline: end of 2016</p> |
| <p>9. Consider providing incentives, such as waiving all or a portion of development and building permit fees, for residential developments that go beyond the requirements of the National Building Code with regard to incorporating Universal Design elements</p> | <p>Will be considered under the strategies identified in the Affordable Housing Business Plan to support the creation of age-friendly and energy efficient housing.</p> | <p>This will be considered as part of the Housing Catalyst fund.</p> | <p>City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Fiscally Responsible</p> <p>Timeline: Housing Catalyst Fund has been approved for 2016/2017 for timeline.</p> |

Communication, Education and Advocacy

| Recommendation | City Response/Action | Update/Next Steps | Alignment with City Plans/Timeline |
|--|--|---|---|
| 10. As part of the workshop on innovative housing identified as an action in the Affordable Housing Business Plan, include education on innovative housing forms for seniors, including shared ownership and life lease housing options | Will be incorporated in Innovative Housing Workshop described in the strategy section of the Affordable Housing Business Plan. | The City will start these Innovative Housing Workshops, on diverse housing forms (including innovative housing forms for seniors), in 2016. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive Timeline: June-December 2016 |
| 11. Advocate to the provincial government to identify provincially-owned land that can be used for residential development and to provide this land at minimum cost to private and not-for-profit developers developing affordable housing, including affordable seniors housing | Council has already written several letters to the Province on this matter and will continue to advocate and follow up. | Council will continue to advocate and follow up. This is in progress and ongoing. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Fiscally Responsible Timeline: Pending |
| 12. As part of an education campaign, increase awareness in the private development sector of the range of housing needs in the City of St. John's and the options that should be considered to help meet these needs by sharing the results of this Seniors Research Project | A forum will be planned with the Canadian Home Builders Association NL to share the results of this project. | A Builder's breakfast happened in June 2015. Approximately 40 attendees. The results of this research were shared with participants at the Seniors Housing Forum in December of 2015. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive Timeline: Completed and ongoing |
| 13. As part of an education campaign, share information on social impact bonds with community agencies and the private sector, including seniors | City will research social impact bonds and how they might be applied to housing. | This is in progress and ongoing. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive - Fiscally Responsible Timeline: early 2017 |
| 14. As part of an education campaign, work with the Seniors Resource Centre on initiatives to increase awareness of grants and funding available for home modifications and the application process | City will communicate with Seniors Resource Centre to explore this. | The City explored this recommendation with stakeholders at the Seniors Housing Forum (December 8, 2015). Further follow up with related partners is in progress and ongoing. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive Timeline: June-December 2016 |
| 15. As part of an education campaign, work with the Seniors Resource Centre and other community agencies to increase awareness and develop material on the different home care options available to facilitate aging in place | City will communicate with Seniors Resource Centre to explore this. | The City explored this recommendation with stakeholders at the Seniors Housing Forum (December 8, 2015). Further follow up with related partners is in progress and ongoing. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive Timeline: June-December 2016 |

Collaboration and Partnerships

| Recommendation | City Response/Action | Update/Next Steps | Alignment with City Plans/Timeline |
|---|---|--|--|
| 16. Work with Newfoundland Labrador Housing (NLHC) and other affordable housing providers to establish a centralized waiting list for affordable housing in the City, including a centralized application process for these units | A centralized registry is a strategy in both the Affordable Housing Business Plan and the End Homelessness Community Plan. Work is already under way to determine how this registry can be created. | This work is in progress. A Call for Proposals to secure a Consultant for a feasibility study will be on the City's website in February 2016. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive Timeline: February – July 2016 |
| 17. Consider partnering with Habitat for Humanity to build affordable ownership housing options for seniors through financial or in-kind contributions | City will investigate seniors housing projects already completed by Habitat for Humanity globally and also connect with local affiliate about this possibility. | Discussions are in progress and ongoing in this area. City staff have met with the Executive Director of the local Habitat for Humanity affiliate. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive - Fiscally Responsible Timeline: end of 2017 |
| 18. Encourage and support community organizations in the development of social enterprises that provide services and supports for seniors by facilitating partnerships and providing information as part of an education campaign | City will research social enterprises that assist seniors and determine if this model can be effectively applied locally. | This is in progress and ongoing. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive - Fiscally Responsible Timeline: early 2017 |
| 19. Encourage and facilitate partnerships between community organizations and post-secondary institutions to identify opportunities where students and recent graduates can provide support services to seniors as part of their training or requirements for certification | City already supports Home Share NL, a local organization that connects seniors and students for mutual housing benefits. | This is in progress and ongoing. In 2016, the City will connect with Home Share NL and Memorial University's Harris Centre to explore this option. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Responsive and Progressive - Fiscally Responsible Timeline: early 2017 |
| 20. Explore the feasibility of working with community agencies and private investors to fund an affordable seniors housing pilot project through the use of social impact bonds | City will investigate social impact bonds and how they can be applied to housing projects. | This is in progress and ongoing. | City's Strategic Plan: - Neighbourhoods Build our City - A Culture of Cooperation - Fiscally Responsible Timeline: early 2017 |

The report also recommends that the City take a lead in facilitating one or more **Seniors Housing Pilot Projects** to test proven best practices locally:

Four Proposed Seniors Housing Pilot Projects for the City to initiate: *(details on pages 60-62)*

1. A mid-sized **Market Rental Building** with accessibility features to facilitate aging in place
2. An **Affordable Seniors Condominium** in partnership with Habitat for Humanity
3. A **Non-profit Cooperative Rental Project** as a social enterprise on re-purposed land
4. An **Affordable Supportive Housing** initiative in partnership with government and community partners

These pilot project suggestions also connect with the strategies described in the Affordable Housing Business Plan, which include:

- Facilitating a housing design competition (page 14)
- Promoting a mixed use development pilot project (page 14)
- Promoting an affordable condominium pilot project (page 14)