

Affordable Housing
ST. JOHN'S

CITY OF ST. JOHN'S
10-YEAR

Affordable Housing Strategy

2019-2028

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 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 10-Year Affordable Housing Strategy. Data has been compiled for the Census subdivision of St. John's.
For more: stjohns.ca >Living in St. John's >Your City >Affordable Housing

Household Characteristics (2016)

108,860
Total Population

47,625
Total Households

61.4%
Own

38.6%
Rent

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

30.9%
36.3%
16.2%
12.0%
4.6%

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

Households ↑ **11.8%**

Households ↑ **8.0%**

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)

$699
Bachelor

$793
One Bedroom

$956
Two Bedroom

Vacancy Rates (2017)

5.1%
Bachelor

6.9%
One Bedroom

6.8%
Two Bedroom

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**

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Rental Market-How much does it cost to rent an apartment?

(2017)

Annual Income Required to Afford the Average Rental Apartment
(paying no more than 30% on Rent Alone)

$31,720 One Bedroom
$38,240 Two Bedroom

Who can't afford to rent based on a single income?

One Bedroom Apartment
People in a range of occupations including:

- Early Childhood Educators and Assistants
- Hairstylists and Barbers
- Home Support Workers, Housekeepers and Related Occupations

Two Bedroom Apartment
People in a range of occupations including:

- Restaurant and food service managers
- Graphic designers and illustrators
- Airline Ticket and Service Agents

Home Ownership
How much does it cost to own a home? (2016)

Minimum Income required to qualify for a mortgage for the Average MLS Housing Price

(2017)

$88 450

Who can't afford to purchase the average house in St. John's Metro region?

People in a range of occupations including:

- Electricians
- Elementary school and kindergarten teachers
- Firefighters

*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'