

## Part 4 The "Idea Bank"



## Promote More Awareness of Existing Housing Programs

More awareness of housing programs can help with issues associated with deferred maintenance, home adaptability and other housing needs. Links to the provincial housing programs can be incorporated on municipal web sites. A list of appropriate programs might be incorporated into tax notices being mailed to residents and businesses. More information about the programs offered by the province through Housing Nova Scotia can be found at <http://housing.novascotia.ca/programs-and-services>.

## Flexibility in Zoning Rules

Zoning rules should be flexible enough to permit live-work units, or mixed use residential over retail, on main streets throughout the South Shore. This will provide opportunities for modest 'invisible' densification, support for downtowns, encourage smaller lot sizes, and encourage multiple-unit dwellings (e.g. two or three unit buildings, townhouses, garden suite, apartments, etc.)

## Municipal Role in Providing Enriched or Assisted Living Facilities

Municipalities might consider using any lands they own, along with financing from the Municipal Finance Corporation, to provide much-needed enriched or assisted living facilities. Some efforts are underway in Halifax Regional Municipality in May 2016 involving partnerships between private developers and non-profit long term care organizations. A partnership agreement with a long term care group would likely be required to provide seniors care services under this scheme. If a local care provider is unable to assume such a responsibility, Northwood and Ocean View Continuing Care Centre have new services available that might be explored. Northwood has recently assumed management of Shoreham Village long term care in Chester (see the project proposed for the Municipality of the District of Chester). See Ocean View's new service below.

<http://www.nsmfc.ca/documents.html>

<http://nwood.ns.ca>

<https://oceanv.ca>

## Housing Supports Made Available through Social Enterprise

At one or more public meetings, the social enterprise service model developed by Ocean View Continuing Care Centre was mentioned as an example of how long term care organizations are reaching out to assist with seniors' housing and care needs in communities.

<http://ovnp.clubexpress.com/content.aspx?sl=489205429>

## Raising Awareness of Human Rights and Residential Tenancy Act

Based on the levels of discrimination reported in the SSHAC Public Survey, awareness of human rights as related to housing may be needed.

## Home Value Program

An expression of interest in this program would likely lead to its expansion outside Halifax Regional Municipality. Learn more at <https://www.cua.com/Home/ProductsAndServices/MortgagesandLoans/HomeValueProgram>.

## Municipal Staff Training and Familiarity of Housing Programs and How to Apply

Have at least one staff member trained on the available grants from the Province and host a link to these grants and how to apply on the Municipal website; promote: <http://housing.novascotia.ca/programs/affordable-housing-projects>. Yarmouth provides an example of this here: <https://www.townofyarmouth.ca/community-economic-development-grants.html>

## Dayspring Facility

Both the Town of Bridgewater and Municipality of the District of Lunenburg have expressed concerns about the future of the Housing Authority's Dayspring facility. There is a desire to ensure the future of this facility includes affordable housing as a policy commitment and direction. This should be monitored by SSHAC and both municipal units.

## Collaborative Programs with Landlords

Some of the tax incentive suggestions made (Queens, Bridgewater) might be combined with awareness-building programming with the private sector. Community members have verified issues associated with stigma, prompting a suggestion for dialogue with landlords about rental practices vis a vis families with young children, single mothers, students and pets.

## Walkability

Map and plan new developments for walkability using the walkability measure, available at <https://www.walkscore.com/>. This measure calculates walkability based on the number of amenities located within a certain distance to housing. In general, the closer and more dense amenities are located to housing, the higher the walkscore. The measure could be used along side other methods for siting senior housing and general affordable housing close to the needed services and amenities. A walkability score is a useful marketing tool for new housing projects.

## Vacant Buildings Study

Sometimes small, disassociated things can't be 'seen' by a 'market' until they are consolidated, packaged and promoted. SSHAC, the Dal Planning Department and municipal economic development partners might consider developing a regional database of vacant buildings and tax sales - and help close any knowledge gap with local real estate agents, developers, builders, non project housing groups or partners. Provincial groups (Building Owners and Managers Association, Nova Scotia Real Estate Agents Association), might help expand knowledge of available assets.

## Web portal for Affordable Housing

The reach of SSHAC's role as a conduit for community collaboration can be expanded by continued development of a web portal approach to resolving housing needs. Links with groups like the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia can help extend the partnership approach, knowledge base, and knowledge transfer. Example: City of Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency.

<http://vancouver.ca/your-government/vancouver-affordable-housing-agency.aspx>

## Seniors Housing Projections (ASHRA)

SSHAC can promote seniors population projections for each Municipality, by using a projection tool available through the Atlantic Seniors Housing Research Alliance (ASHRA). Projections can be made for 2016, 2021 and 2026 and can include wealth and health dependency parameters. The projections are organized on the basis of postal codes, which sometimes do not line up with municipal boundaries; however, a factor of the total municipal population as a % of the ASHRA population can be used to provide approximations for each municipal context. <http://ashra.msvu.ca/community.htm>

## Supportive Housing

There are a wide range of needs along the South Shore for "supportive housing" that being, housing that includes supports to people. SSHAC and its municipal partners can and should look for innovative models and best practices for providing, in particular, second stage housing or supportive housing solutions. CMHC and the Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia provide examples, along with good local contacts, for supportive housing needs and ideas.

## Federal Financing

SSHAC and its municipal partners will want to closely monitor all new federal funding programs for affordable housing.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/budget-offers-23-billion-boost-for-affordable-housing-measures/article29346419/> and <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/prfinas/>

## Site Planning for Mini Home Communities

Municipalities may need to embrace innovations in housing and servicing technology along with appropriate protocols to meet community need. Linked housing, using slab-on-grade construction, can meet special needs (seniors, those with disabilities) and provide tenure options (bare land condominiums) along with proven alternative treatment technologies. Much can be accomplished with good design to mitigate the stigma associated with mobile home parks or container housing. Regulatory control might be established through site plan approval processes to complement standard land use by-law definitions (R-1, R-2, R-3) and subdivision controls. In such planning approaches, affordability, sustainability and social inclusion are considerations.

## Rentals Online Database and Municipal Inspection or Licensing

Municipalities could create a searchable online database that requires that the rentals on the database are inspected by the Municipality prior to be accepted on the site. Perhaps a grant-based maintenance incentive could be given to those landlords participating in the website database.

A more regulatory approach is low rise apartment licensing. This requires landlords to obtain a permit to lease low rise apartments (e.g. flat in a house) and to obtain an inspection every year and/or when the property changes ownership. Learn more about this as it is being used in Waterloo, Ontario here: <http://www.waterloo.ca/en/government/residentialrentallicences.asp>.

## Create a South Shore Social Inclusion Plan and Municipal Housing Corporation

The City of Moncton (population 70,000) commits to Housing Choice and Affordability through its Social Inclusion Plan along with the following:

- Urban Agriculture and Food Security
- Mental Health
- Education and Training
- Inclusion and Diversity

A Municipal Housing Corporation may be used to execute the goals of this plan. The City believes this Plan and Corporation are important for the future growth and prosperity of the Greater Moncton Area. More information about this is available at: [https://www.moncton.ca/Government/Media\\_Room/News\\_Releases/Social\\_Inclusion\\_Plan\\_Adopted.htm](https://www.moncton.ca/Government/Media_Room/News_Releases/Social_Inclusion_Plan_Adopted.htm).

## Municipal Policy Tools for Encouraging Affordable Housing

Municipalities are charged with regulating land use through the Municipal Government Act. The chart below (Ross Grant, 2015) outlines tools that municipalities can employ to encourage, or create affordable housing. The third column notes whether the policy is currently employed by municipalities in the SSHAC area. The fourth column identifies whether or not each policy may be employed by municipalities depending on if it is enabled by the Municipal Government Act. Municipalities can select the policies which are best suited for them based on the local context.

Policy Toolkit			
Land Use Tools			
Policy	Description	Enabled in Lunenburg or Queens?	Enabled by MGA?
Inclusionary Zoning	Sets a minimum percentage of units within a zone which must be developed as affordable housing. This policy is used in cooperation with policies that incentivise developers to produce affordable housing, like density bonusing or waiving development fees. Alternatively, fees can be charged to developers who build market housing within the zone. The municipality then uses the funds raised for developing affordable housing. (1)	None.	Yes
Density Bonusing	Developments would be allowed certain height or size bonuses beyond the standard for a particular zone in exchange for building affordable units. (1)	Some. Only Bridgewater has a density bonusing policy.	Yes
Secondary Suite	Also known as garden home, laneway housing or granny flat. Allowing and promoting secondary suites in existing structures and considering the allowance of accessory structures as habitable units. (1)	All.	Yes.
Demolition Policy	When rental or affordable units are lost due to demolition the developer must offset the losses by building new rental units or paying a fee. (1)	None.	Yes.
Growth Management Strategy	By allowing density in certain areas municipalities can create affordable housing opportunities. This can include, but is not limited to infill housing, brownfield redevelopment and intensification. A growth management strategy directs growth and density to certain parts of a municipality and justifies these concentrations. (1)	All. Each municipality has certain policies that encourage density; however, none have a comprehensive growth management strategy.	Yes.
Relaxed Parking Requirements	Relaxed parking requirements for higher density housing, especially when near transit and major services. The minimum number of required parking spaces is reduced to lower the cost of development with the intention of passing savings onto renters- or to increase density. (1)	Some. Bridgewater has relaxed parking requirements in higher density areas.	Yes.

## Other Strategies

Policy	Description	Enabled in Lunenburg or Queens?	Enabled by MGA?
Resale Price Restrictions	A restrictive covenant is placed on a home or unit which limits the escalation in resale price according to an "index or formula" instead of the market. (1)	None.	No.
Housing Fund	Municipalities or Provinces can create a fund dedicated to affordable housing projects. Money can be raised from development fees on market housing. (1)	None.	Yes.
Rent Restrictions	Subsidized housing by the municipality or a not-for-profit and rent control. (1)	None.	Municipalities and non-profits can subsidize rent but only the province can impose rent control.
Public Private Partnerships	Municipalities can donate land or create preferential zoning districts to affordable housing projects to be developed and/or managed by the private sector. (1)	Queens policy 3.3.21 says Council will work with developers to create affordable housing..	Yes.
Housing Needs Assessment	The assessment is used to determine the housing needs of a particular community. (1)	Initiated by SSHAC,	Yes.
Waitlist system	Persons in need of affordable housing can be placed on a list until new affordable housing becomes available.	None.	No.
Land Banking	Municipalities can purchase land when the price is low and hold it until affordable housing can be built. (1)	None.	Yes.
Shared Ownership Model	Municipalities purchase land and partner with community groups to build homes. The municipality retains ownership of the land and defers payment for it while the homeowner pays off the costs of the house. After the house has been paid off the homeowner begins to pay off the costs of land. Both payments are made without interest. (2)	None.	Yes.
Expedited Approval Process	Municipalities can fast track affordable housing projects through the development approval process. (3)	None.	Yes.
Tax Free Affordable Housing	Municipalities can waive or reduce property taxes on affordable housing. (3)	None. Province of NS offers a tax rebate to seniors receiving the income supplement.	Yes.
Reduced Development Fees	Waiving or reducing development fees and conversion fees on affordable housing projects. This can incentivize developers to build affordable housing (3).	None.	Yes.
Secondary Suite Grant	Homeowners who build a rental suite and maintain affordability for 20 years can receive a grant. (1)	None.	Yes.
Below Market Land Leases	The municipality can lease land to affordable housing projects at below market value. (2)	None.	
Affordable Housing Strategy	A municipal policy document which acknowledges a shortage of affordable housing and which lays out a strategy to address this issue. (1)	None.	