

### 3.5 District of Lunenburg



### 3.5.1 Description

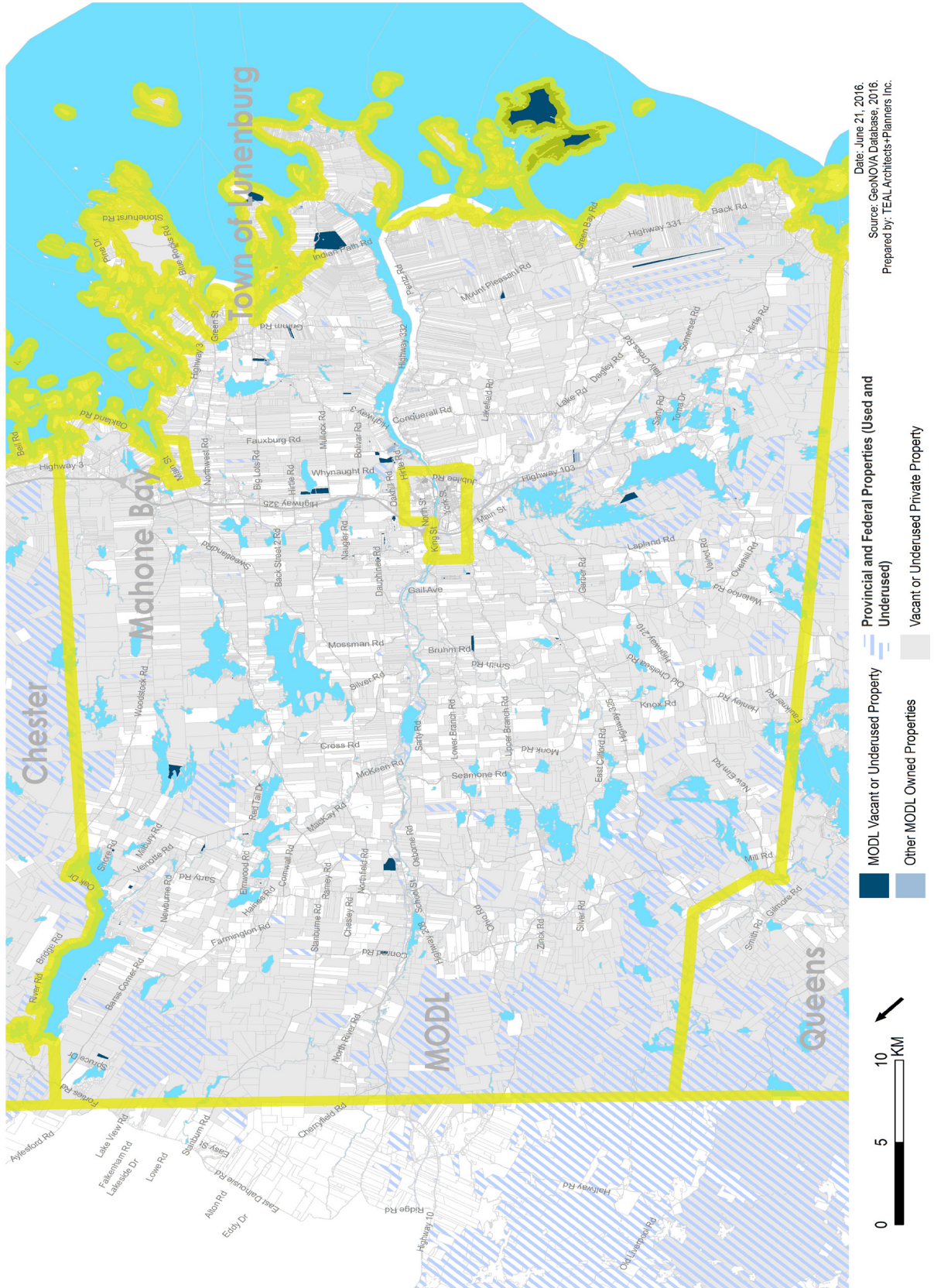
The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL) was incorporated in 1879. Covering 1,759 square kilometres of land. It is Nova Scotia's third largest municipality by land area. The District is mostly rural in nature, but enjoys being geographically close to Halifax. Early European settlers to the region came from many of the same origins as settlers to the Towns of Lunenburg and Mahone Bay. Many had German and French origins and had been labouring in Halifax before being resettled to the area by the British. Many of the first settlers worked in agriculture, fishing and ship building.

The Municipality consists of over 130 communities, many of which were established by European settlers long before the Municipality was incorporated. The largest of these communities are Blockhouse, New Germany, Dayspring and LaHave. The Municipality has 12 Councillors making its capita per councillor about 2,093.

The District's largest employment sector is sales and services, followed by trades and transportation. Over 14% of workers in the municipality are employed in manufacturing, which is approximately double the Provincial average.

MODL has its own planning department and conducts its planning internally. Most of the municipality is not planned and as such, many developments are as-of-right. The Municipality will only apply a secondary plan to an area of the District if local citizens request one. There are seven secondary plans in MODL, which are Hebbville, Riverport and Area, Princess Inlet and Area, Oakland, Blockhouse, Osprey Village and the Lunenburg Industrial Park. The municipality offers a property tax rebate to low income residents.

### 3.5.2 Map: MODL Municipal Boundary and Government-owned Vacant Land





3.5.3 Data: Census and National Household Survey Summary

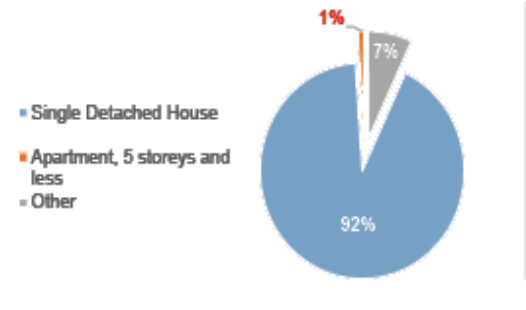
# District of Lunenburg

## Housing Affordability Profile

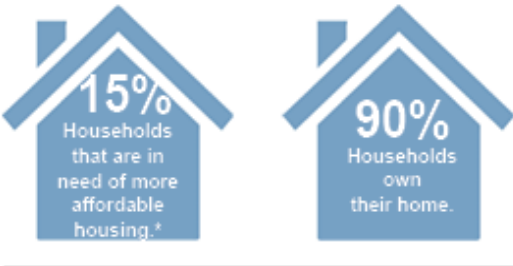
Population and Dwelling Characteristics	
Total Population	25,118
Total Households	10,725
Average Household Size	2.3
Unemployment Rate	8.6%
Occupied Dwellings	10,725
Vacancy Rate	Not Available
Cannot afford median rental shelter costs	20% (2144 households)
Cannot afford median ownership shelter costs	10% (1072 households)
Populations most at risk of Housing Inaffordability	lone parent mothers, senior females, roommates



Image: <https://www.google.ca/maps/place>



Renter Households	
Households that rent	10% (1,020 households)
Monthly Shelter Costs (median)	\$651
Households in Subsidized Housing	4% (40)
Spending 30%+ of income on shelter costs (%)	31.2% (318 households)
Vacancy Rate	8.6%
Earning <\$20,000 before tax	27% (275 households)
Prevalence of low income (%)	16.8%

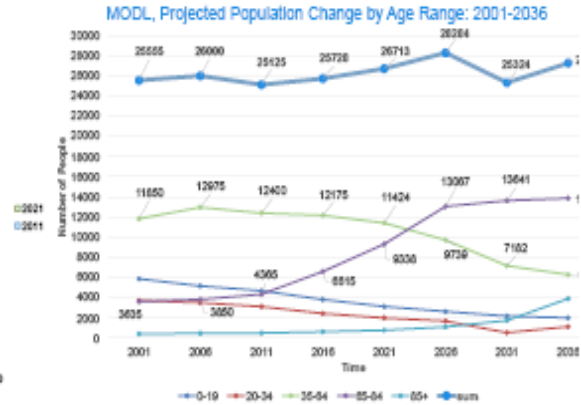
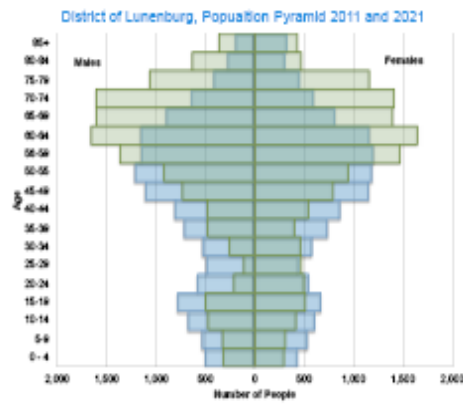


Owner Households	
Households that own	90% (9,705)
Median Assessed Value	\$174,831
Spending 30%+ of income on shelter costs (%)	13.5% (1310 households)

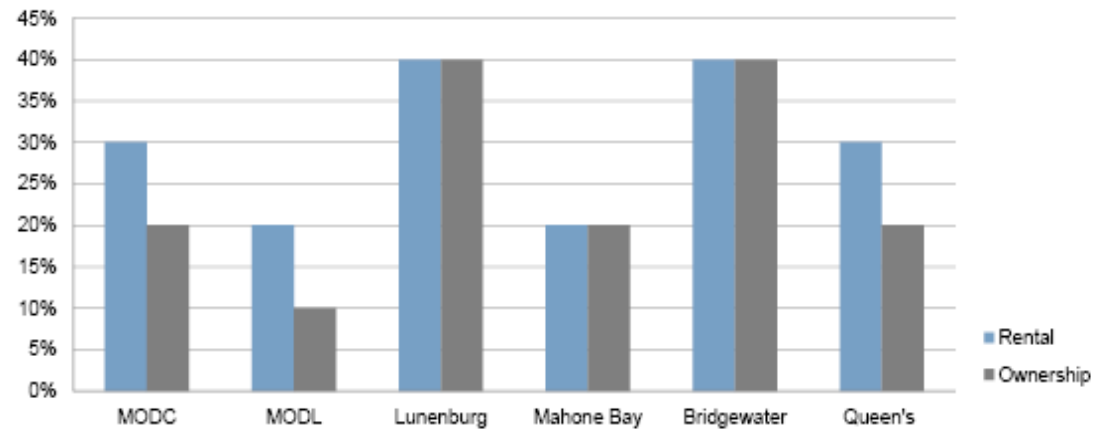


\*Households spend 30%+ of income on shelter costs.  
 \*\* Shelter costs are median monthly costs that include monthly rent (for tenants) or the mortgage payment, property taxes and condominium fees (for owners) and the costs of electricity, heat, municipal services, etc.

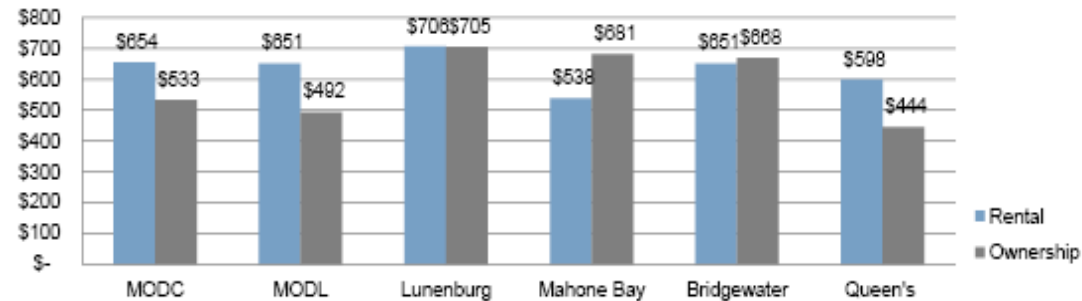
### Population of the District of Lunenburg 2016 - 2036



### Proportion of All Households Unable to Afford Median Shelter Costs\*



### Median Shelter Costs\*: Rental and Ownership



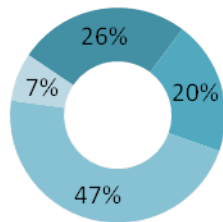
\* Based on Low End of Income Range. Shelter costs include monthly rent (for tenants) or the mortgage payment, property taxes and condominium fees (for owners) and the costs of electricity, heat, municipal services, etc. Note: Affordable Ownership only includes the price of the house (no expenses), assumes no debt, a downpayment of approximately 5%, interest rate of 4.75% and a 25 year amortization period using calculator at [www.zillow.com/mortgage-calculator/house-affordability/](http://www.zillow.com/mortgage-calculator/house-affordability/)

### 3.5.4 Data: District of Lunenburg Public Survey

Surveys were used together with Federal data to create a profile of each community. Responses from District of Lunenburg citizens to the Public Survey are in this section. Responses account the experiences of closely-affected members of society. The survey did not result in statistical significance. Responses collected from public members regarding questions related to housing needs, conditions and experiences are as presented. An analysis of these responses follows in the next Section.

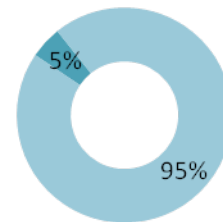
How many people live with you?  
N=124

■ Three + ■ Two ■ One ■ Zero

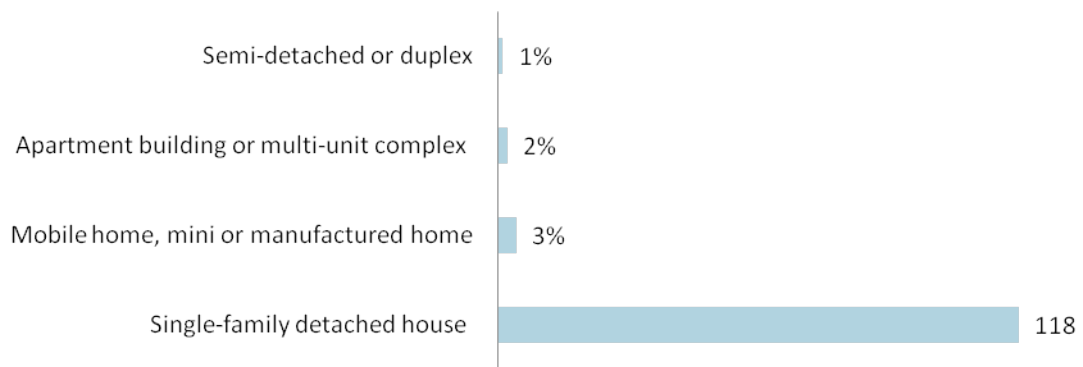


Are you a single parent with children at home? N=123

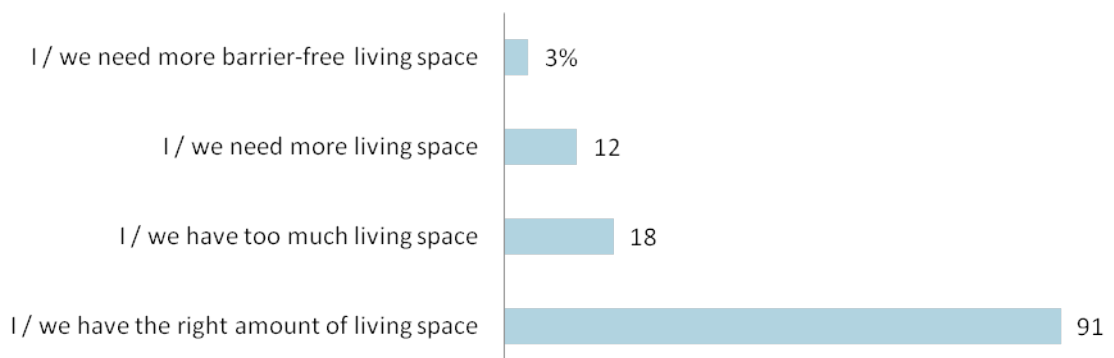
■ Yes ■ No



What type of housing do you live in? N=125

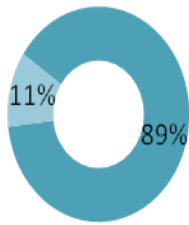


How is your housing matched to your needs? N=125



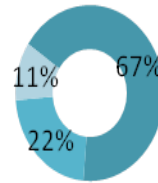
Does anyone in your household have any accessibility or mobility issues? N=124

■ No ■ Yes



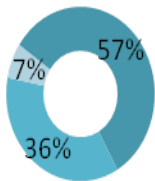
Please rate the level of difficulty you have experienced or are experiencing in finding housing that matches your needs. N=121

■ Not difficult ■ Somewhat difficult ■ Difficult



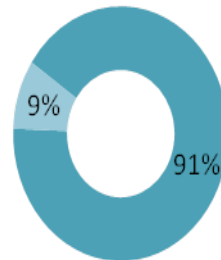
Are you spending more than 30% of your or your family's income before tax on shelter costs? N=124

■ No ■ Yes ■ Don't Know



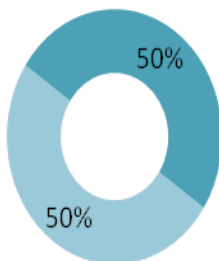
Do you rent or own your housing? N=125

■ Own ■ Rent



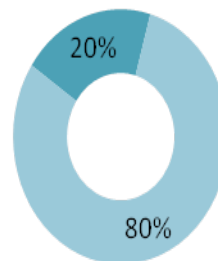
Do you depend on someone to help pay rent? N=10

■ Yes ■ No



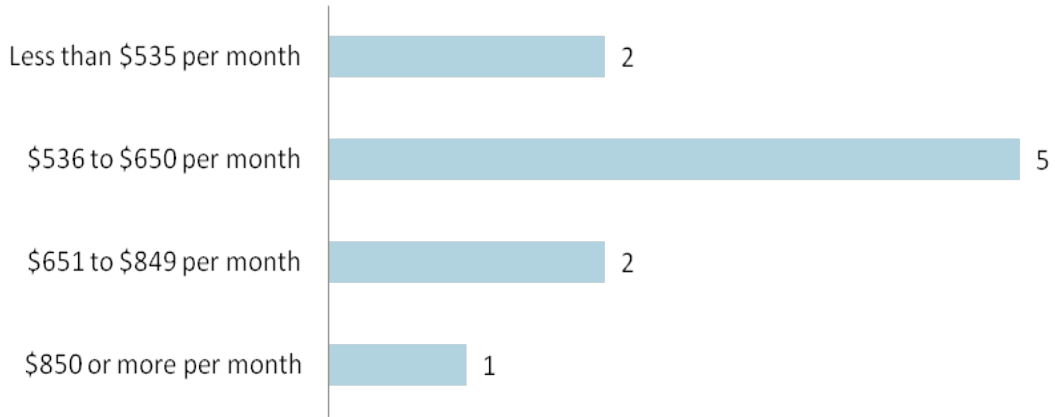
Does your rent include heat and lights? N=10

■ Yes ■ No

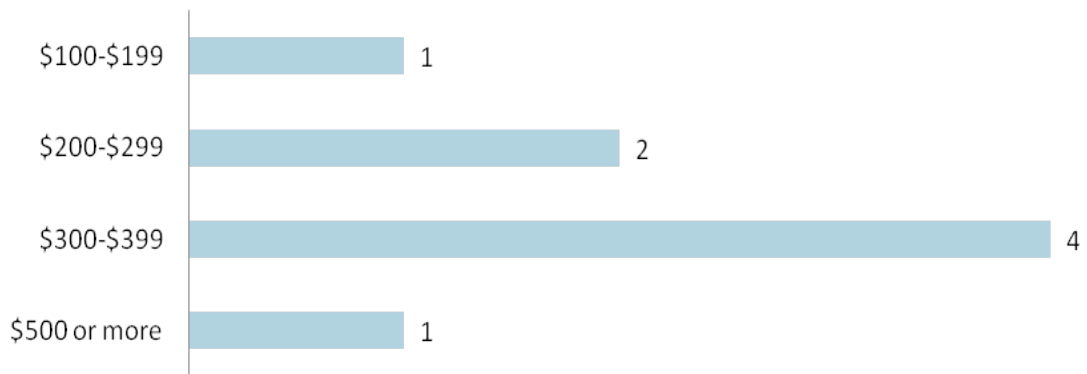




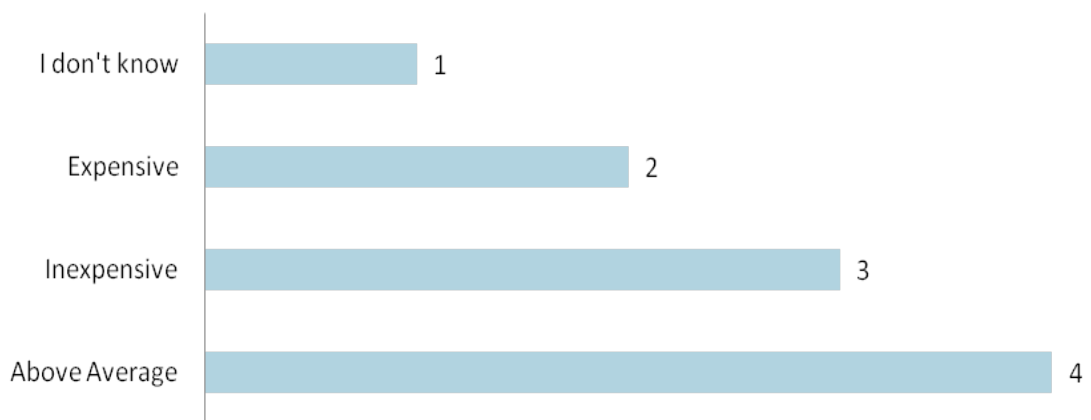
How much does your housing cost to rent? N=10



If no, how much are you spending, approximately, on utility costs per month? N=8

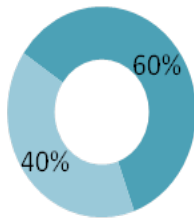


How would you rate the affordability of your rental unit? N=10



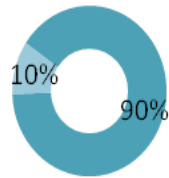
How would you rate the maintenance of your rental unit / building? N=10

■ Poor ■ Good



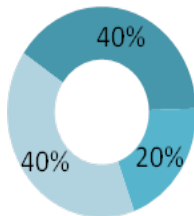
How would you rate the availability of affordable rental housing in your community? N=10

■ Poor availability ■ Good availability



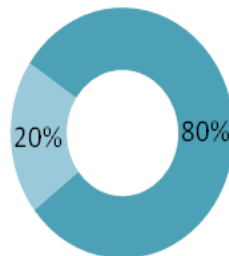
Have you experienced any type of discrimination in relation to your housing? N=10

■ Yes ■ Possibly ■ No

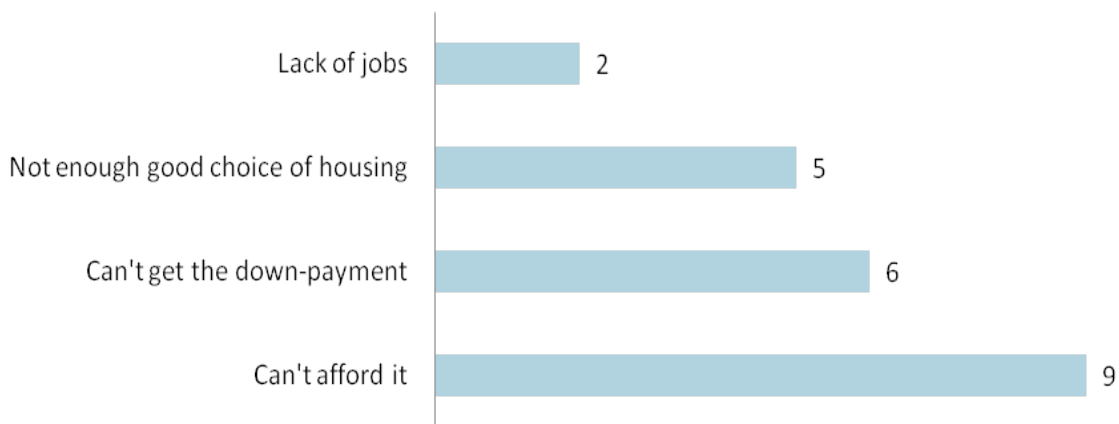


Is home ownership important to you? N=10

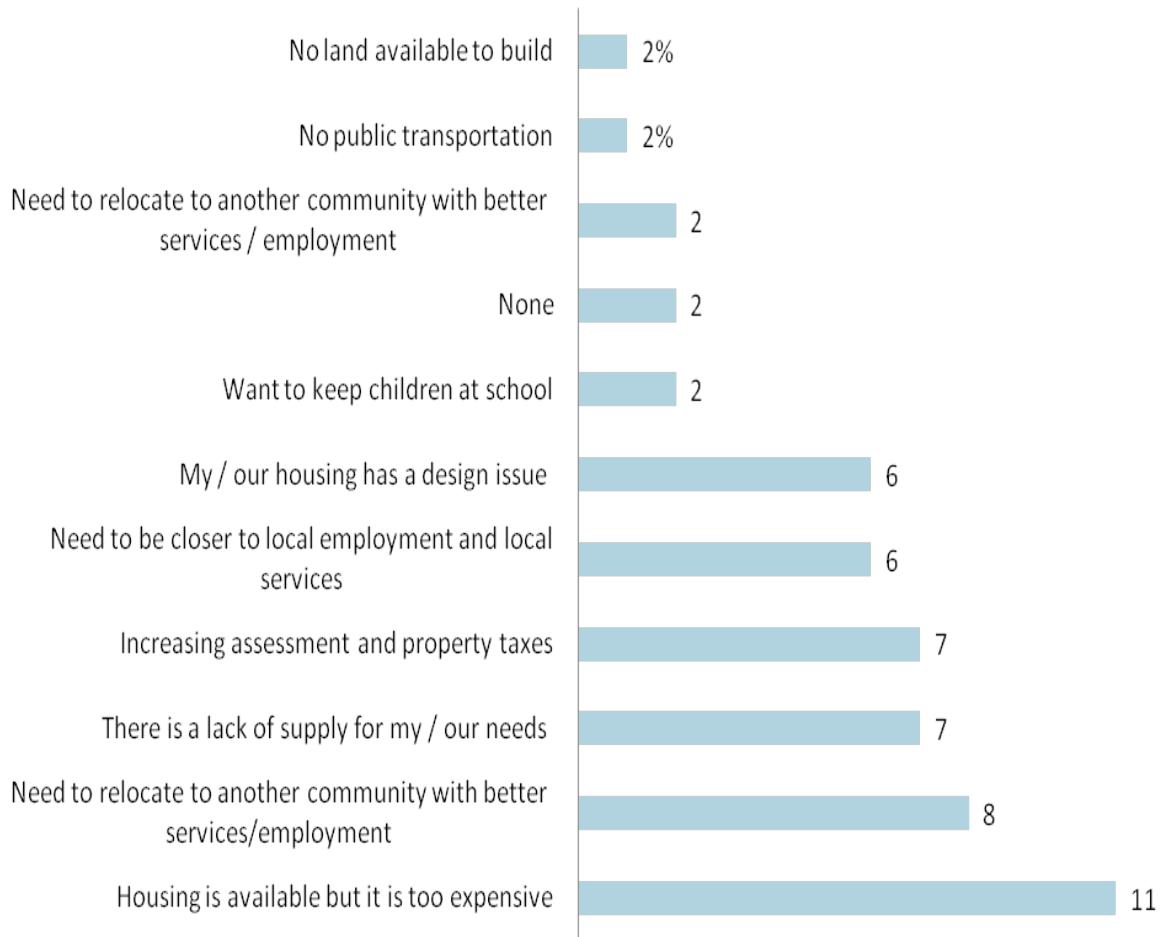
■ Yes ■ No



If yes, what barriers do you experience? N=22

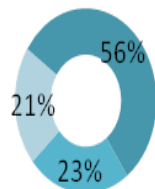


If yes, what challenges are you experiencing? N=53



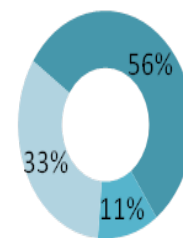
Does your community have a problem with homelessness or temporary situations like 'couch surfing'? N=115

■ Don't know ■ Yes ■ No



Do you feel there is a housing affordability problem in your community? N=115

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know



### 3.5.5 Data Analysis

2011 Federal data for the District of Lunenburg should be used with caution, given changes to the Long Form Census plus the fact that the data is dated.

Small sample sizes for questions at the local level should be considered with caution in the SSHAC Public survey. Aggregate numbers lend more confidence, but are regional. The following excerpts from the survey responses provide some context to housing issues in MODL:

- 80% of renters are spending \$350 on utilities, on average;
- \$650 is the average rent;
- Despite 45% of respondents stating a need for more affordable rental and owned housing, 95% of houses are single family style and a better variety of housing was considered 'least needed' by 25% of respondents;
- A high proportion of respondents (91%) own their homes and 44% own them outright;
- 22% of respondents note having major maintenance issues that they plan to deal with, and a further 50% have minor maintenance issues they are planning to deal with;
- 40% of renters encountered discrimination regarding housing;
- Poor maintenance of buildings affects 60% of renters, and;
- 56% of respondents do not know if there are people facing homelessness in MODL.

Renters are spending a high average amount on utilities and a high proportion (40%) are reporting discrimination regarding housing. Maintenance of owned housing stock will prove to be increasingly difficult with an aging population, dispersed across a large rural area.

### 3.5.6 Council and Community Input

Council sees its role as an advocate and facilitator of housing options, but not as a provider of housing.

During consultations with members of Council and community, several concerns relating to accessibility were raised:

- Access to secondary suites, providing access to extra income for owners, and hopefully lower cost options for tenants;
- Multiple unit dwellings over 4 units need water and sewer services, which is unavailable in the District;
- Wheelchair accessibility in houses, particularly for those who are leaving hospital;
- Lack of access to transportation, in particular, to health appointments;
- Access to supportive housing by special needs populations including seniors, and;
- Access to supports for those who need a hand up in maintaining their independent living status.

During consultations with the community, concerns were raised about the future of the Dayspring Treatment Centre for Youth. SSHAC, and the Municipality, should remain in contact with the Western Housing Authority to help facilitate transitional plans for this facility.

### 3.5.7 Pilot Project

#### Municipal-Health Partnership to Coordinate Health Appointments and Transportation

Linking transportation to health and other services in support of rural living is an issue in most of the SSHAC communities.

Collective forms of rural transportation are challenged by wide distances and dispersed populations, however, some communities have made progress in creating a 'critical mass of destination' to assist in providing some economies and efficiencies.

The proposed pilot project is to coordinate health appointments on a geographical zone, time and schedule basis, and build community capacity in terms of rural transportation services. This means engaging the healthcare providers, hospital, and clinics to coordinate appointment times so transportation services can be aligned. This pilot project is conceived as a partnership between the Nova Scotia Health Authority, Helping Hands, Municipality of the District of Lunenburg and Town of Bridgewater.

Providers may be Bridgewater's Senior Wheels service, or the Town's proposed transit service.

A health / inter-municipal task force is proposed to examine some best practices in rural transportation services, and explore opportunities associated with coordinated health care appointments.

Models in other communities are explained on the following websites:

*Accelerating Rural Transportation Solutions*

<http://www.niagaraknowledgeexchange.com/resources-publications/accelerating-rural-transportation-solutions-ten-community-case-studies-from-ontario/>

*Improving Travel Options in Rural and Small Town Communities*

[https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/GMF/Transport\\_Canada/ImprovingTravelSmallRural\\_EN.pdf](https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/GMF/Transport_Canada/ImprovingTravelSmallRural_EN.pdf)

*Yarmouth Transit Service*

<http://www.thevanguard.ca/News/Local/2016-01-19/article-4408564/Take-the-bus-through-Yarmouth-beginning-next-month/1>

