



Fall 2024

# Housing IS a Municipal Election Issue

South Shore Housing Action Coalition  
<http://sshac.ca>

## HOW DOES HOUSING IMPACT MY COMMUNITY?

Housing is a real concern for members of your community. Many people are concerned about the cost of renting, buying, and maintaining a home. Some are thinking about where they will live when they can no longer live at home. Others need to live closer to services and employment, but are unable to find housing options suitable for their needs.

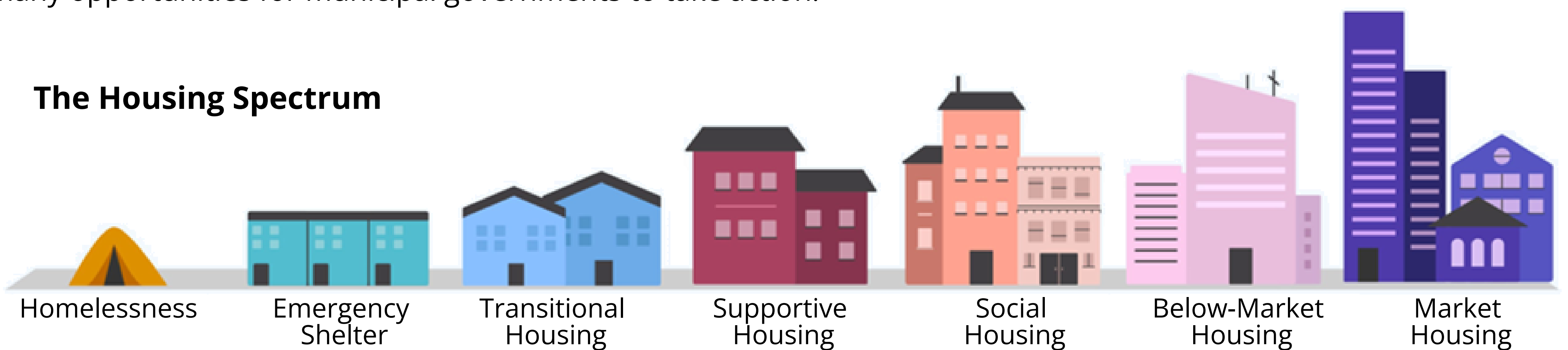
Healthy, sustainable communities provide a range of housing options (see the Housing spectrum below) to meet the changing housing needs of all throughout life. Taking action to ensure everyone has access to a healthy, safe and affordable place to call home benefits us all, and there are many opportunities for municipal governments to take action.



### Benefits of Housing Options

- Supports the economy, providing a more stable tax base
- Contributes to community sustainability
- Improves health & reduces health care costs
- Lowers crime rates & improved community safety
- Enhances social inclusion & sense of community

### The Housing Spectrum



## WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

Affordable housing is housing that is affordable; affordability depends on a household's needs and financial resources. Spending 30% or more of household income on shelter-related costs (including rent/mortgage, utilities, insurance, etc.) is an indicator of financial strain and increases the risk of not having enough money for necessities as food, clothing, and transportation. Renters are much more likely to be spending more than 30% and to be in core housing need. Spending more than 50% of income on housing puts a household at risk for homelessness.

When a household's home is not adequate (needs major repairs), or is not suitable (has enough bedrooms), or is not affordable, and there is no affordable local alternative, they are considered to be in core housing need.



**\$730/month**

Affordable housing costs for a single person household working 40hrs/week at minimum wage.



### Housing Insecurity

Housing Insecurity occurs when there is uncertainty or instability in a housing situation. It may occur because of:

- high housing costs
- low income
- domestic violence
- lack of affordable housing in a community
- job insecurity
- discrimination

Housing insecurity can result in health problems, poverty, social isolation and educational challenges.



### Homelessness

Homelessness occurs when an individual, family, or community does not have stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability of acquiring it. It includes:

- unsheltered homelessness
- emergency sheltered homelessness,
- provincially accommodated homelessness (temporary/transitional)
- being at risk of homelessness (imminent housing loss).

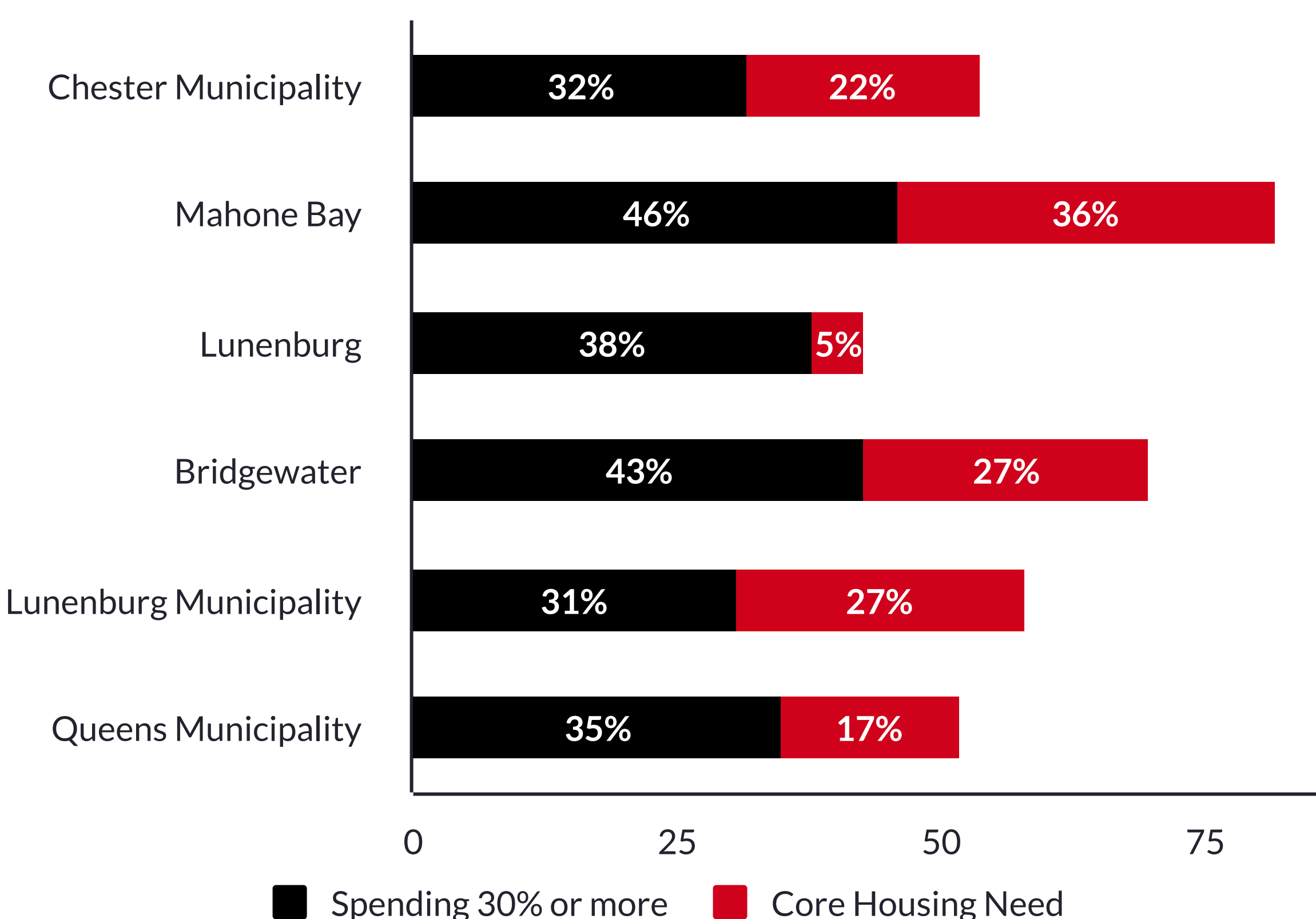


## Housing Need: Lunenburg & Queens Counties

Households that do not have adequate income to meet their basic needs are more likely to be at risk for housing insecurity and homelessness. The need for affordable housing options is growing in our communities. **Nova Scotia has the highest rates of poverty (13%) and food insecurity (29%) among the provinces in Canada** (Source: Canada Income Survey, 2022). Furthermore, **rates of child poverty in Lunenburg (21.2%) and Queens Counties (28.5%)** have risen by nearly 10% since 2020 (Source: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Child and Family Poverty Report for Nova Scotia, 2023)

Data from the most recent Census (2021) shows that in Lunenburg and Queens Counties, core housing need among renter households ranges from 5% to 36%, and that 31% to 46% of renter households are spending more than 30% of their income on shelter related costs (see chart below).

**Renter Households: Spending 30% or more of income on shelter costs and Core Housing Need, by Municipality**



### South Shore Open Doors Association (SSODA)

SSODA supports people in Lunenburg and Queens Counties that are experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness.

576

Since opening in May 2022, SSODA has completed **576 intakes** from households seeking support for housing

As of June 2024:

- SSODA has **128 active clients**, which include: 37 seniors, 77 children, and 43 people who are experiencing chronic homelessness.

### Roof 25

SSODA also operates Roof 25, a 15 bed emergency shelter, for persons 19 years and older, in Bridgewater. Since opening in November 2023:

- 97 people have used the shelter
- On average, 9 beds are used each night

## What can Municipalities do?

Prioritizing affordable housing means investing in a future for all. Municipalities have the power to:

- Bring awareness to the role that housing plays in creating healthy, prosperous and safe communities.
- Learn about and bring attention to the housing needs of your community
- Explore what options exist within bylaws to promote affordable housing development.
- Work in partnership with groups who are advocating on behalf of housing
- Support non-profit groups that seek to develop affordable housing options. This could include donating land or prioritizing non-profit housing development.

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Municipalities must take action to help solve the coinciding crises faced by too many individuals and families within our local communities.

- Building Inclusive Communities,  
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

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## ASK CANDIDATES

If elected, what actions will you take to address housing your community?

