

# HOUSING DEMAND AND SUPPLY IN CENTRAL LABRADOR: HOUSING IN THE HAPPY VALLEY- GOOSE BAY CLUSTER

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# **Housing Demand and Supply in Central Labrador**

**HOUSING IN THE HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY CLUSTER**

**REPORT PREPARED FOR THE LESLIE HARRIS CENTRE OF REGIONAL POLICY AND  
DEVELOPMENT, MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY  
*POPULATION PROJECT: NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR IN TRANSITION***

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<sup>1</sup> I extend my sincere thanks to all individuals who were interviewed as part of this study and attended the community consultations. I also thank Keith Storey for his valuable comments and editorial contributions.

## The Population Project: Newfoundland and Labrador in Transition

In 2015, Newfoundland and Labrador had the most rapidly aging population in the country – which when combined with high rates of youth out-migration, declining birth rates, and an increasing number of people moving from rural parts of the province to more urban centres, means that the province is facing an unprecedented population challenge. Without intervention, this trend will have a drastic impact on the economy, governance, and the overall quality of life for the people of the province. Planning for this change and developing strategies to adjust and adapt to it is paramount.

The Harris Centre's Population Project has developed potential demographic scenarios for the province and its regions for the next 20 years and will explore a number of the issues arising. These include, but are not limited to, those concerning:

- **Labour markets** – how will future demands for labour be met given a shrinking labour supply?
- **Service demands** – what are the implications of an aging and a geographically shifting population on the demand for public, private and non-government sector services?
- **Service provision** – what are the implications of a declining rural population for the costs and delivery of services to an increasingly smaller and older, but still geographically dispersed population?
- **Governance** – how will local and senior levels of government respond to changing governance issues in the light of these demographic changes and challenges?

Utilizing expertise from both inside and outside the university, the project employs a combined research and debate approach to inform and contribute to government policy, as well as to develop strategies for the private and non-profit sectors to respond to the broad range of issues resulting from the anticipated population shifts. This report, prepared by Stephen Jewczyk, former Director of Planning and Development for the City of Mount Pearl, examines the housing environment in the communities of Happy Valley-Gosse Bay, North West River, and Sheshatshiu, in Central Labrador, to determine if these communities are or will be prepared for the changing housing needs and demands anticipated to 2036. The study analyses the current housing environment in the study area; evaluates future housing needs in light of projected demographic changes; identifies current and/or anticipated gaps or shortfalls in meeting these future needs; and recommends policies and programs that will address future housing needs.

This study demonstrates that the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area is currently facing a wide range of housing issues across the housing continuum and that government and the communities are not prepared for the housing demands that will occur over the course of the next twenty years. More specifically, the report finds that data on housing in the area are poor, planning resources related to housing are very limited, there is little collaboration among the communities and an absence of in-place housing policies and strategies by governments at all levels to deal with housing related issues. To address these issues a set of recommendations are offered directed to government authorities at all levels.

Funded by the International Grenfell Association (IGA), the report is the seventh published through the Population Project. This and all other reports generated through the Population Project are available online at [www.mun.ca/harriscentre](http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre). More information about the project can be obtained by contacting the Project Director. Comments on the Project and reports generated are welcomed.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

CMHC:	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
DHA:	Dominion Housing Act
FER:	Functional Economic Region
HS:	Historical (Cyclic) Survival Model
HVGB:	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
MLS:	Multiple Listing Service
NHA:	National Housing Act
NLHHN:	Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network
NHS:	National Housing Strategy
NLHC:	Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation
NS:	Natural Survival Model
RAnLab:	Harris Centre Regional Analytics Laboratory of Memorial University
RS:	Replacement Survival Model

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Definitions of the following terms were obtained from a number of sources and are in accordance with their purpose within this document only, and may have alternative definitions.

**Affordable Housing** - Refers to any part of the housing continuum from temporary emergency shelters through transition housing, supportive housing, subsidized housing, market rental housing or market homeownership.

**Appropriate Housing** - Housing that is deemed affordable based on the household's income.

**Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)** - CMHC is Canada's national housing agency, which provides mortgage loan insurance, mortgage-backed securities, housing policy and programs, and housing research.

**Core Housing Need** - According to Statistics Canada, a household is defined to be in core housing need if its housing does not meet one or more of the adequacy, suitability, or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30 per cent or more of its before-tax income to pay to median rent.

**Development Regulations** - A municipal government tool used to implement a municipal plan by dividing the community into land use areas that define the use of property, intensity of development, and conditions for the use of land and placement of buildings or structures.

**Emergency Shelter** - Shelter for person(s) to stay when no other options exist.

**Housing First** - Housing First is an approach to address homelessness by providing permanent (as opposed to temporary accommodation such as emergency shelters) affordable housing and support services to chronically homeless individuals who have been homeless for extended periods of time and are considered "hard to house" by more conventional housing providers.

**Housing Density** - The number of dwelling units for the residential population of a given geographic area.

**Housing Sector** - Segment of the housing market concerned with meeting the housing needs of the population

**Infill Development** - The development or redevelopment of vacant or underutilized sites within an existing neighbourhood or community that is enclosed by other types of development.

**Market Housing** - Private housing, rented and/or sale, where prices are set in the open market.

**Prefabricated Housing** - A home constructed of pre-made parts and components that are transported to the building site and assembled and lifted onto the foundation.

**Multi-Unit Housing** - A building divided into three or more dwelling units that will accommodate three or more separate residences that may be leased or sold to another party, excluding basement suites or small rooms for rent within a single unit residential property.

**Multiple Listing Service (MLS)** - A suite of services that real estate brokers use to establish contractual offers of compensation and accumulate and disseminate information to enable appraisals.

**Municipal Plan** – A municipal plan is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management, within the area covered by the plan (usually an entire municipality or parts of regional districts).

**Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC)** - NLHC is a Crown Corporation and provincial Housing Agency of Newfoundland and Labrador which provides housing and housing services for families, seniors, persons with disabilities and others who could not otherwise afford safe, secure, shelter.

**Private Sector** - A part of the economy, which is run by private individuals or groups, usually as a means of enterprise for profit, and is not controlled by the state.

**Professional Planner** - A professional planner is a national member of the Canadian Institute of Planners and provincially, a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Planners.

**Public Sector** - A part of the state that deals with the production, delivery and allocation of goods and services by and for the government or its citizens, whether national, regional or local/municipal.

**Rental Housing** - The person(s) living in a home does not own the unit, but pays rent to a third-party owner.

**Social Housing** - Subsidized housing targeted to low-income households who would otherwise not be able to afford safe, secure shelter.

**Stakeholder** - As it specifically relates to housing: a person, group, or organization that is affected by, or can affect, the housing market.

**Transitional Housing** - Housing that is designed to be occupied on a short-term basis that has built-in supports for people transitioning out of homelessness.

**Vulnerable Populations** - Individuals or groups who have a greater probability than the population as a whole of being harmed and experiencing an impaired quality of life because of social, environmental, health, or economic conditions or policies.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The goal of this project is to examine the housing environment in Central Labrador in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster, which includes the communities of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and Sheshatshiu, and to determine if these communities are or will be prepared for the changing housing needs and demands anticipated up to the year 2036. Adequate housing is critical to the life, health and well-being of communities. According to the federal government's National Housing Strategy "Housing Rights are Human Rights," signifying the importance of housing in the lives of all Canadians (Government of Canada, 2018a:8).

This study illustrates that the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster is facing a wide range of housing issues across the housing continuum; from emergency housing, to social housing, to rental housing, to market housing. Affordability, availability and choice are currently critical issues in the cluster. Given this background, it is surprising how little documented housing information is available for the area, which perhaps explains the lack of housing demand and supply projections for the next number of years. Based on the research from this study, government and the communities are not prepared for the housing demands that will occur over the course of the next twenty years.

The following recommendations are provided to provide direction and better address housing in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster.

## Recommendations

### GENERAL

**Recommendation:** All levels of government need to be proactive in planning and collaborating in a local response to the emerging housing needs of the aging population within the cluster in a comprehensive, integrated and supportive manner.

### FEDERAL

**Recommendation:** In accordance with the National Housing Strategy initiative "Addressing Gaps in Housing Market Information and Data", the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation should broaden its population criterion to allow collection of housing data for regions such as Labrador, and for areas with populations of less than 10,000 people, which are under population and housing pressures, such as the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster.

**Recommendation:** The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay should approach the federal government and request that Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay prepare a long term plan for the Base's operations, and if surplus land is identified that is not required for the long term operational requirements of the Base, that the land be transferred to the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay for community-based, affordable, housing programs.

**Recommendation:** The Innu Nation and the Community of Sheshatshiu should take advantage of the National Housing Strategy's Distinction-Based Housing program to help address its housing needs.

## PROVINCIAL

**Recommendation:** The provincial government should collaborate with the federal government and dovetail the provincial plan process with the National Housing Strategy in its preparation of a comprehensive provincial housing plan.

**Recommendation:** The provincial housing plan should be comprehensive in nature and put in place policies that address the multiplicity of housing issues in both the private and public sector.

**Recommendation:** The provincial housing plan should have policies that are sensitive to regional needs rather than being a one policy-for-all approach.

**Recommendation:** The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) should collaborate with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment to coordinate and integrate the provincial housing plan with provincial, regional and municipal land use policies.

**Recommendation:** The provincial housing strategy should examine the benefits of rental regulation as a tool to limit rent increases in communities experiencing rapid growth in housing shortages.

**Recommendation:** The Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment should proceed with employing professional planner(s) whose area of responsibility is the communities of Labrador.

## MUNICIPAL

**Recommendation:** The three communities in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster should collaborate in the preparation of a regional housing study and approach federal, provincial and first nation governments to fund the study.

**Recommendation:** The regional housing study should develop projections on housing needs and demands and examine the full range of housing demands in the housing continuum to provide the basis for an evidence-based needs plan for the various forms of housing and services required from emergency shelters to market housing.

**Recommendation:** The Towns of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and the community of Sheshatshiu should establish a regular forum to collaborate and address mutual issues and needs in the areas of land use and infrastructure planning, housing and community services.

**Recommendation:** Housing interest groups within the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster should combine efforts and support the Community Advisory Board of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network to be able to present a single organizational front to government and government organizations in respect to housing issues in the area.

**Recommendation:** The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay should initiate the filling of the currently vacant position of municipal planner as a high priority and prior to proceeding with the forthcoming 10-year municipal plan review.

**Recommendation:** The municipal planner should be responsible for the tracking and projection of housing demand and be responsible for preparing a municipal housing study for the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

**Recommendation:** Municipal housing policies, which guide and direct public and private investment in response to the housing needs of the community, should be part of the upcoming municipal plan reviews for the Towns of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River.

**Recommendation:** The communities should consider higher residential densities, more housing choice and inclusionary zoning, as part of their Municipal Plan and Development Regulation Review.

**Recommendation:** Development regulations should be revised to eliminate minimum floor areas for dwelling units so that smaller units can be built by the private sector to respond to the need for affordable housing.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

The Population Project is an initiative of the Harris Centre at Memorial University to explore policy options designed to address issues arising from current and anticipated demographic changes in Newfoundland and Labrador over the next twenty years. The initial focus is on Labrador which is a complex area characterized by relatively small, highly dispersed, population clusters distributed over a large area. These clusters vary considerably from the young and growing indigenous communities on the northeast coast, the ageing and shrinking population in the Labrador Straits area, volatile population changes in the mineral resource region of western Labrador and a mix of many of these elements in the Central Labrador area of Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

The Population Project has identified a number of projects to be undertaken as part of this initiative. This particular study focuses on meeting Labrador housing needs.

Housing supply and demand in Labrador presents a particular set of problems. In Indigenous communities in particular, demand for appropriate, affordable housing exceeds supply, and housing quality leaves much to be desired. Unless a more comprehensive approach is adopted these conditions are likely to be exacerbated given the anticipated demographic changes that will affect Labrador over the period 2016-2036.

As was noted, demographic changes within Labrador are projected to be highly variable by region. The Regional Population Projections for Newfoundland and Labrador 2016-2036 study (Simms and Ward 2017) noted that: "The pattern of low birth rates, high migration, an aging population and overall population decrease is common to all regions in the province with the exception of the North East Avalon and Central Labrador." Further, "In both the North East Avalon and Central Labrador the average age of the population will increase over the population period, but not by as much as most other regions." The study further noted that the only growth area identified in the Population Project study in Labrador is Central Labrador and more particularly the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area.

While housing needs in other regions of Labrador also justify study, budgetary limitations restrict this study to the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area, which already is and will continue to be under pressure to provide additional housing to meet the future needs of the area's growing population. While the Town of Rigolet, with a population of 305 in 2016, forms part of the Central Labrador Region, it is situated at the entrance of Hamilton Inlet, near the Labrador coast and is approximately 160 km east of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Because of its isolated location it does not experience the same challenges and growth dynamics as the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area and so for the purposes of this study it is excluded from the research study area.



## 1.2 Research Objectives

The goal of this project is to examine the housing environment in the communities of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and Sheshatshiu, the Study Area, to determine if these communities are or will be prepared for the changing housing needs and demands anticipated to 2036.

The objectives of the study are to:

- understand the current housing environment within the Study Area;
- evaluate the future housing needs within the Study Area in light of projected demographic changes;
- identify current and/or anticipated gaps or shortfalls in meeting these future needs; and,
- recommend policies and programs that will address the future housing needs of the Study Area.

## 1.3 Research Methods

The research began with a statistical forecast of housing needs in the area based on its population dynamics over the next twenty years. A literature review of relevant national, provincial and regional housing documentation was then undertaken to obtain background information on the current housing situation, policies and issues. A series of interviews with stakeholders in housing-related agencies and organizations, both over the phone and in face-to-face meetings then followed. This was then supported by a round table community consultation with selected community members to gain further insight about housing in the community over the next twenty years. This information was then reviewed to determine the state of housing readiness in the Study Area from which conclusions and recommendations have been derived.

More specifically, the approach to the research consisted of the following stages:

### 1.3.1 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Based on the Regional Population Study Projections prepared by the Harris Centre Regional Analytics Laboratory (RAnLab) of Memorial University, a housing forecast model was prepared for the Study Area. A series of variables relating to a supply and demand for housing was reviewed to determine the current state of housing in the area. On the basis of the available information, population and housing projections were generated for the 2016-2036 period taking into consideration the following key indicators:

- population, age, and gender;
- household size, growth, and type;

- historical housing growth rates;
- ownership tenure;
- housing types and housing choice;
- mix of owner occupied and rental units and associated vacancy rates;
- availability of land (serviced and unserviced to accommodate anticipated growth); and,
- availability and affordability of housing based on income and rents.

An online literature review of national, provincial and local documents, research and media reports provided a background context for housing in Labrador, and specifically for the Study Area. The review was used to identify legislation and northern housing policies that may provide guidance and direction for proposed housing policies for Labrador and in particular for the Study Area. Housing-related agencies such as the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) were contacted to obtain material that related to housing statistics, growth and need. The municipal and community plans and municipal-related housing documents for the Towns of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and the community of Sheshatshiu were also examined to gain an understanding of the municipal housing approaches and forecasts for the period 2016 to 2036. Community-based reports were also reviewed. This research assisted in identifying information gaps and provided a context for the community consultation.

### **1.3.2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS**

A community consultation session was held in the Study Area on March 2, 2018. Twelve persons representing agencies and organizations, including the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Innu Round Table Secretariat, Nunatsiavut Government, provincial Departments of Justice, Child, Seniors and Social Development, Office of Labrador Affairs and the Housing Hub (a community organization), participated in a three-hour discussion. A number of those present also serve on community-based housing organizations. A set of pre-determined questions was used to assist in the discussion. Questions focused on the current and future housing needs in the Study Area and community attitudes towards the possibility of changing housing types to accommodate future housing needs for the period up to 2036.

### **1.3.3 KEY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

Twenty-four telephone and in-person interviews were held with key stakeholders representing national, provincial and local agencies and organizations regarding the housing situation in the Study Area. These were voluntary interviews and names and titles have been withheld to maintain the anonymity of the participants.

#### **1.3.4 POLICY ANALYSIS AND DRAFT REPORT**

The information received from the statistical research, literature review, community consultation and key stakeholders interviews was analysed for policy direction and a draft report prepared identifying key findings, themes, opportunities, gaps and recommendations.

The draft report was then distributed to those individuals, groups and organizations that were part of the research and consultation process with a request for feedback. Upon receipt of the feedback, the draft report was revised and submitted to Harris Centre for further review and commentary.

#### **1.3.5 FINAL REPORT**

A final report was prepared which included the research, consultations, and analysis and policy recommendations.

#### **1.3.6 COMMUNITY PRESENTATION**

The background and findings of the final report were presented to Study Area residents at a Harris Centre Synergy Session held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on April 26 2018 and further changes made to the report based on input received.

## 2.0 THE STUDY AREA

### 2.1 Location

The Regional Population Projections for Labrador and the Northern Peninsula 2016-2036 study (Simms and Ward 2017) divided Labrador into five Functional Economic Regions (FER) (See Figure 1).

This study focuses on the economic region of Central Labrador and more specifically on the Happy Valley–Goose Bay cluster, which includes the Towns of Happy Valley–Goose Bay and North West River, the Community of Sheshatshiu and Mud Lake.

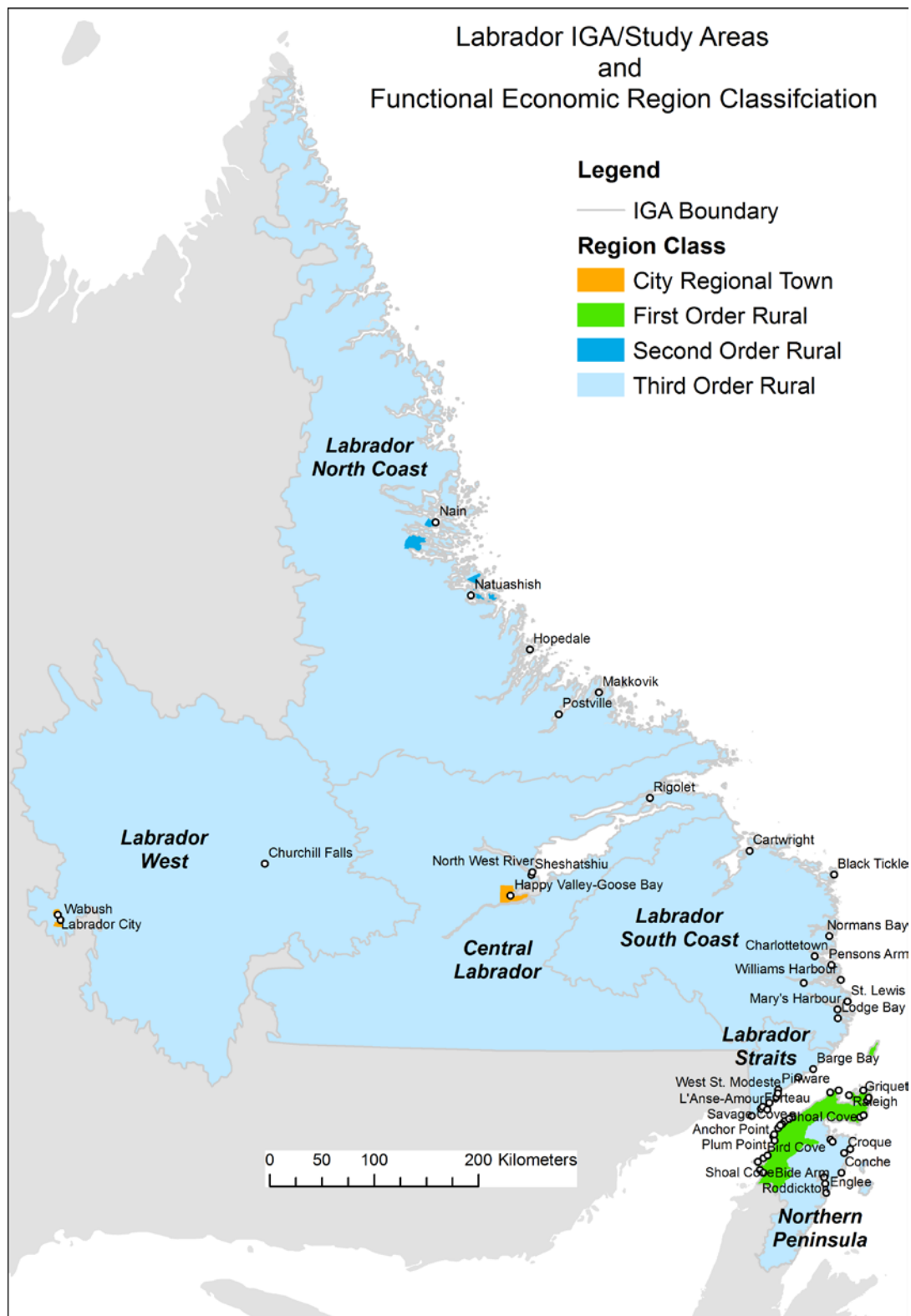
The Simms and Ward study identified five classifications of regional types or centres throughout the province: Urban Centres, Small Cities and Regional Towns, First Order Rural, Second Order Rural and Third Order Rural. The Study classified Central Labrador as a Small Cities and Regional Town region. This classification reflects a population that ranges from 39,805 to 9,225, with one reasonably sized town that is a focal point for public services for its region and for smaller adjacent regions. In this case the Town of Happy Valley–Goose Bay is classified as a City Regional Town and is the focal point of the Happy Valley–Goose Bay cluster (See Figure 1). The community of Mud Lake, which is 8 km from Happy Valley–Goose Bay, has a population of about 50 and is not considered separately as it is not municipally organized as a local improvement district or town, and falls within the economic shadow of Happy Valley–Goose Bay. The three main communities that form this cluster have a local or community governance structure and are in close proximity to Happy Valley–Goose Bay – North West River and Sheshatshiu each being a little more than 25km from Happy Valley–Goose Bay (Figure 2).

This classification recognizes that the Happy Valley–Goose Bay cluster provides more services and opportunities for growth than smaller rural areas. Of the three communities, the Town of Happy Valley–Goose Bay is the major hub for government, health care, social services, administrative and commercial services. The Town is also the location of the Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay, better known as 5 Wing Goose Bay. The surrounding communities of North West River and Sheshatshiu are more residential in nature with limited administrative, health, social and commercial services. As a result there is considerable interaction between the residents of these communities and Happy Valley–Goose Bay. While there may be variability between these communities with respect to infrastructure and growth, it is anticipated that these communities will continue to form part of the growth dynamics within the Study Area.

## 2.2 Local Governance

Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River are towns incorporated under the Municipalities Act of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Each town has a council, which governs the municipality, comprising an elected mayor and 6 councillors. The town boundary of Happy Valley-Goose Bay encompasses an area of 305.9 km<sup>2</sup> while the town boundary of North West River encompasses an area of 5 km<sup>2</sup>.

The community of Sheshatshiu is one of two communities of the Innu Nation and a First Nations Reserve as recognized by the Government of Canada through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. The Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation Band Council, which consists of elected band chief and 6 councillors, governs the community that has a reserve land area of 8.04 km<sup>2</sup>.



**Figure 1: Labrador Study Regions and Functional Economic Region (FER) Classification**



**Figure 2: Central Labrador Area.**

## 2.2 Population

### 2.2.1 CURRENT POPULATION

As illustrated in Table 1, the population in each of the three communities has fluctuated over the twenty-year period from 1996 to 2016. In the past five years, the census period 2011 to 2016, Happy Valley-Goose Bay increased in population while North West River and Sheshatshiu declined. However, in aggregate, the cluster of the three communities has experienced a steady increase in population since 2006.

**Table 1: Communities of Happy Valley – Goose Bay, North West River, and Sheshatshiu Labrador: Population 1996 to 2016**

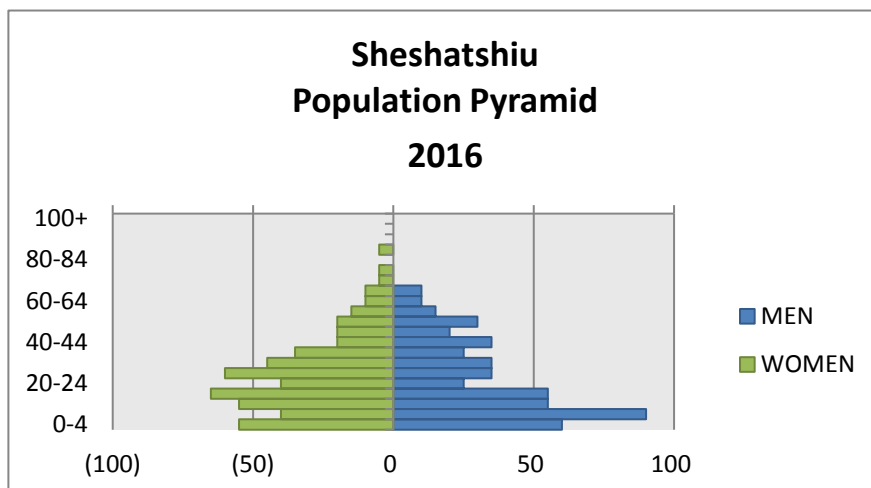
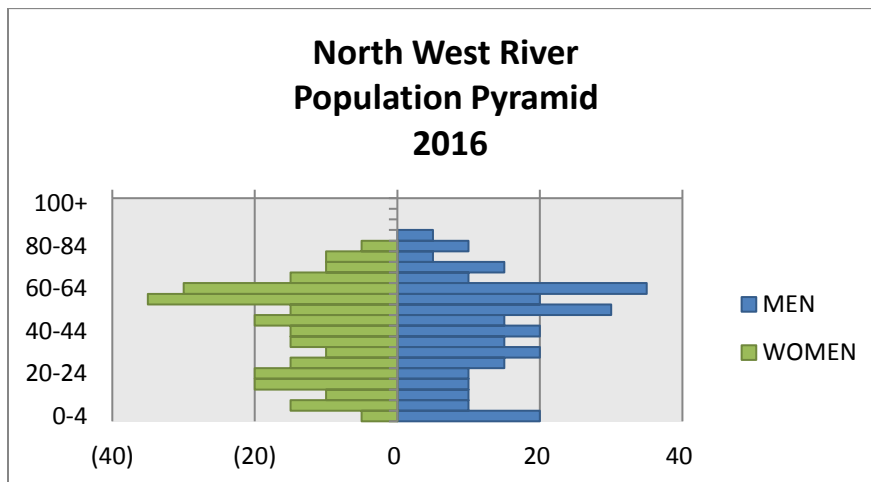
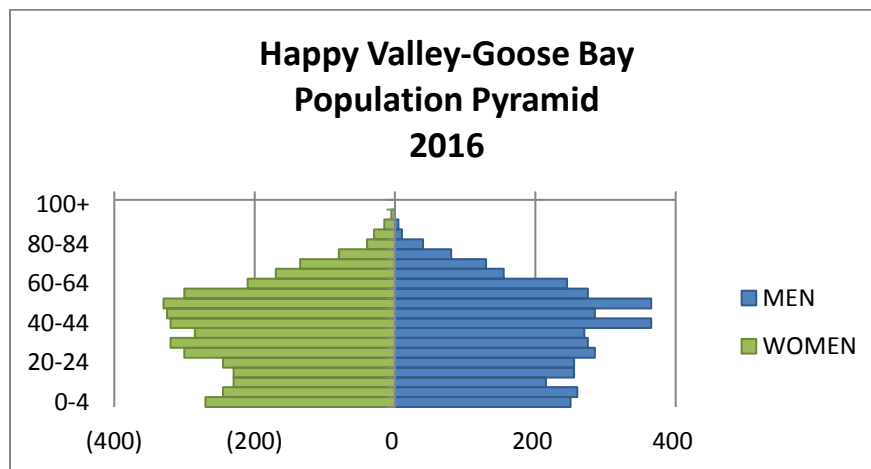
Town/Community	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Happy Valley– Goose Bay	8,665	7,969	7,572	7,552	8,109
North West River	567	551	492	553	547
Sheshatshiu*	–	–	1,054	1,314	1,023
<b>Regional Total</b>			<b>9,118</b>	<b>9,419</b>	<b>9,619</b>

Source: Statistics Canada (2016a, b, c)

\*It should be noted that the 2016 Census Profile for Sheshatshiu is presented in two parts. One part is the population for the identified First Nation's Reserve which is the population that is used for this report. The 2016 Census Profile also reports on the designated place of Sheshatshiu which is an area immediately adjacent to but outside the boundaries of the Reserve. There is a population of 671 in this designated place. If combined the 2016 population of Sheshatshiu is 1,694. Recent information received from Sheshatshiu indicates that the 2017 population of Sheshatshiu is 1,895. This represents the total population in the general area of the community of Sheshatshiu.

The following population pyramids based on the 2016 Census illustrate very different age structures in each of the three communities. Happy Valley–Goose Bay has more people in the working age groups, North West River in the retirement age groups and Sheshatshiu more people in the younger age cohorts. In Happy Valley–Goose Bay, 40.9 % of the population is over the age of 45 and 11 % over the age 65. In North West River, 54.1 % is over the age of 45 and 17.4 % over the age 65, while Sheshatshiu has only 18.1 % of the population over the age of 45 and 2.9 % over the age of 65. It is interesting to note that over half of the total population is under the age of 30. On the basis of these 2016 population age distributions, these communities can each expect to face different housing challenges to the year 2036.





Source Statistics Canada (2016a, b, c)

**Figure 3: Population Pyramids: Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River, and Sheshatshiu**

### 2.2.2 PROJECTED POPULATION

According to the Simms and Ward (2017) study, population models need to be developed within a regional planning context and “should be capable of being integrated with other analytics to assess the impact on infrastructure and services and the region’s ability to provide a labour supply to meet anticipated future requirements.” A series of population projections for Labrador and its five regions were developed for the period 2016-2036.

Three projection models were developed to forecast population growth:

1. The Natural Survival Model (NS) where the in and out-migration rates are set to zero and population change is dependent on age specific births and deaths only.
2. The Historical (Cyclic) Survival Model (HS) assumes existing age specific birth and death rates as in the NS model, but migration rates are set to cycle through periods of high and low growth, continuing the cyclic pattern of population changes as experienced during the last 10-15 years.
3. The Replacement Survival Model (RS) where net migration levels are calculated based on forecast replacement demands due to workforce aging.

A detailed discussion of each of these models can be found in the study, which is available at [www.mun.ca/harriscentre/populationproject](http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre/populationproject).

For the purposes of this study, the Historical (Cyclic) Survival Median (HS) model was used as it assumed that recently observed age specific birth and death rates would continue, as would those migration rates experienced during the last 10-15 years. This is considered to be the most likely scenario for the Study Area.

The study indicated that the baseline 2011 population for Central Labrador was 9,997. The Median HS Model indicates that the population in Central Labrador would increase to 10,222 by 2016 and to 10,614 by 2026, but would experience a slight decrease to 10,425 by 2036.

The study also noted that the average age in 2011 was 35 years. The Medium HS results indicate that this will increase to 40 by 2026 and to 44 years by 2036.

These projections provide the framework for this study from which housing forecasts were developed for the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster.

## 2.3 Housing

### 2.3.1 CURRENT HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

As illustrated in Table 2, there are a total of 3,797 private dwellings in the three communities of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster. Most of the private dwellings within this cluster – 3,271, or 86.1% -- are located in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. This is followed by North West River with 277 private dwellings (7.3%) and Sheshatshiu with 249 (6.6%). It should be noted that there are an additional 177 private dwellings situated in the designated area adjacent to Sheshatshiu.

While the population in the three communities grew between 2011 and 2016, the total number of private dwellings declined from 4,438 to 3,797. The greatest decline in private dwellings in the period was in Sheshatshiu with a decline of 77 dwellings or -24.1%, followed by Happy Valley-Goose Bay with a decline of 595 or -3.4%. North West River was the only community to see a growth in private dwellings with an increase of 31 dwellings (12.6 %).

**Table 2: Communities of Happy Valley–Goose Bay, North West River and Sheshatshiu Labrador: Housing 2011 to 2016**

Town/ Community	Total Private Dwellings, 2016	Total Private Dwellings, 2011	% Change in Total Private Dwellings
Happy Valley -Goose Bay	3,271	3,866	-3.4
North West River	277	246	12.6
Sheshatshiu	249	326	-24.1
<b>Regional Total</b>	<b>3,797</b>	<b>4,438</b>	

Town/ Community	Private Dwellings Occupied by Usual Residents, 2016	Private Dwellings Occupied by Usual Residents, 2011	% Change in Private Dwellings Occupied by Usual Residents
Happy Valley -Goose Bay	3,031	2,843	6.6
North West River	246	225	9.3
Sheshatshiu	226	291	-22.3
<b>Regional Total</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>3,359</b>	

Source: Statistics Canada (2016a, b, c);

Newfoundland & Labrador Statistics Agency, Department of Finance

The predominant housing form in all three communities is the single-detached dwelling (Table 3). In Happy Valley-Goose Bay, single-detached dwellings account for 69.8 % of the total. In North West River it is 87.8% and in Sheshatshiu 93.3%. Of the three communities there is a greater range of housing types in Happy Valley-Goose Bay than in North West River and Sheshatshiu. In Happy Valley-Goose Bay, semi-detached houses account for 15.84% of the total housing types while row dwellings account for 9.9% and apartments for 2.8%. In North West River there are 15 semi-detached houses and 10 apartments, which make up 6.1% and 4% respectively, of the housing types in the community.

**Table 3: Communities of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and Sheshatshiu  
Labrador: Housing Characteristics 2016**

Characteristic	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	North West River	Sheshatshiu	Total
Total - Occupied private dwellings by structural type of dwelling - 100% data	3,030	245	225	3,500
Single-detached house	2,115	215	210	2,540
Apartment in a building that has five or more storeys	0	0	0	0
Other attached dwelling	915	25	15	955
Semi-detached house	480	15	0	495
Row house	300	0	5	305
Apartment or flat in a duplex	40	10	5	55
Apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys	85	0	5	90
Other single-attached house	10	0	0	10
Movable dwelling	0	5	5	10

Source: Statistics Canada (2016a, b, c)

According to Statistics Canada, in 2016 Newfoundland and Labrador had an average household size of 2.3 persons per household. As outlined in Table 4, North West River has an average household size of 2.2 persons per household, followed by Happy Valley-Goose Bay at 2.6 and Sheshatshiu at 4.5.

**Table 4: Communities of Happy Valley – Goose Bay, North West River and Sheshatshiu Labrador: Private Households by Household Size 2016**

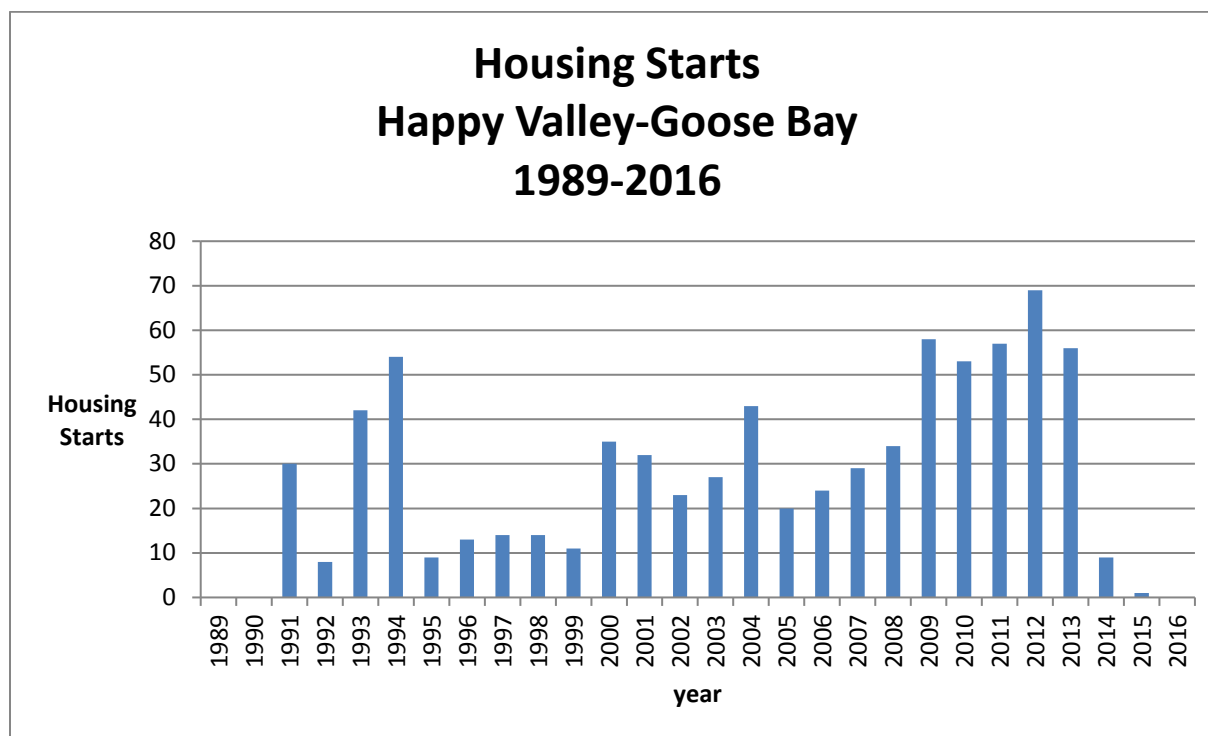
Characteristic	Happy Valley-Goose Bay	North West River	Sheshatshiu	Total
Total - Private households by household size - 100% data	3,030	245	225	3,500
1 person	565	65	15	645
2 persons	1,115	105	30	1,250
3 persons	605	45	35	685
4 persons	535	25	35	595
5 or more persons	210	10	105	1,240
Number of persons in private households	7,880	545	1,020	9,445
Average household size	2.6	2.2	4.5	

Source: Statistics Canada, (2016a, b, c)

Information on annual housing growth and sales in the cluster is difficult to obtain as there is little monitoring of housing market activity in the area by any of the levels of government or their agencies. CMHC have not surveyed Labrador since the 2011 census because of its small population and distribution over such a large land area. According to CMHC, the data that it uses is Statistics Canada census-based and any area for which it publishes data must qualify as a census agglomeration with a population of 10,000+. There are no such census agglomerations in Labrador.

However, CMHC did provide housing information for the Happy Valley-Goose Bay, which they have collected for specific periods. This includes information on building starts and housing sales from data made available through the real estate Multiple Listing Service (MLS). In the absence of similar information for North West River and Sheshatshiu, the information provided here is limited to the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay rather than the full cluster.

As illustrated in Figure 4, the number of housing starts for Happy Valley-Goose Bay for the years 1989-2016 has fluctuated mainly in response to the economic opportunities presented by resource development in the region, such as the Muskrat Falls project. The impacts of this project are reflected in the number of housing starts between 2009 and 2013. Since 2013, there has been a decline in the number of starts to a low of 0 in 2016.



Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation -Unpublished Data 2017

**Figure 4: Housing Starts Happy Valley-Goose Bay**

The MLS information compiled by CMHC regarding housing sales and prices is for the period 2012 to 2017. Table 5 indicates that average housing prices for homes that were sold during this period ranged from \$169,228 to \$304,385, with average housing prices for the period 2014 to 2017 being in the range of the high \$200,000's to the low \$300,000.'s. This information confirms local stakeholders and community organizations comments that housing prices and demand has been extremely high in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in recent years.

**Table 5: Multiple Listings Services, Happy Valley-Goose Bay 2012-2017**

Year	Number of Sales	Average Sale Price
2012	25	\$247,036
2013	24	\$169,228
2014	36	\$304,385
2015	30	\$283,287
2016	43	\$291,829
2017	22	\$291,318

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2017

A review of the Royal LePage 2018 listings in Table 6 indicates that house prices continue to remain high, with the average sale price (with the exception of the ½ acre vacant lot) at \$291,230. This notwithstanding the fact that peak employment at the Muskrat Falls project has now passed.

**Table 6: Royal LePage Listings for Single Family Dwellings; Happy Valley-Goose Bay, March 6, 2018**

Location	Lot Size	Units	Storeys	Bedrooms	Bathrooms	Price
4 Bay	70x100	1	1	2	1	374,500
77 Palliser	114x15	2	1	4	2	259,000
64b Markland	60x150	1	1	3	2	309,000
32 Roberts	42x100	1	1	4	1	159,900
30 Roberts	42x157	1	1	4	1	159,900
4 Abbott	125x208	1	1	4	2	299,000
2 Park	82x117	1	1	4	2	349,000
15 Cooper Cres.	40x100	1	1	4	1	164,000
55 Valleyview	100x200	1	2	3	3	499,000
47 Tenth	60x120	1	1	4	3	339,000
10 Padden	½ acre vacant lot	-	-	-	-	110,000

Source: Royal LePage Website Listing – March 6, 2018

Rental rates for housing are also difficult to obtain, as there is little published information and no registry that provides information. Current rental rate information is anecdotal in nature, although there seems to be local agreement about the general rental rates being charged in the Town. The lack of rental rate information is likely related to the fact that there is very little rental accommodation available in the local market.

The Town Council of Happy Valley-Goose website provides information comparing what the Town considers are “normal” rental rates relative to what the rental rates are as a result of the Muskrat Falls project. According to the Town’s website, “*In recent years, the Town has experienced an increase in rental rates as a result of the nearby Muskrat Falls project*” (Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay 2018a).

**Table 7 – Comparable Housing Rental Rates - Happy Valley-Goose Bay**

No. of bedrooms	Normal Rate per month	Muskrat Falls Rate per month
1 Bedroom	\$750-\$800	\$800-\$950
2 Bedroom	\$1000-\$1100	\$1200-\$1400
3 Bedroom	\$1200-\$1500	\$1500-\$1800
Full House	\$1800-\$2000	\$2000-\$2500

Source: Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay 2018a

The Town's website concludes with the following statement regarding house rentals: "The Muskrat Falls project has created a need for house rentals that are fully furnished, includes all utilities and housewares. These rentals will go for upwards of \$3,500/month" – rates which are considerably higher than those given on the website.

With high house prices and rental rates in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the lack of affordable housing is a major issue in the community. This has resulted in overcrowded living conditions, couch surfing and homelessness among those who are unemployed, and problems for those who have low-income employment and for young professionals attempting to enter the housing market. As a result a number of social housing organizations have established in the town to respond to the local housing crisis and assist in increasing affordable housing opportunities (Table 8).

**Table 8 - Community Housing Organizations, Happy Valley-Goose Bay**

Happy Valley-Goose Bay Long-Term Care Home	An accredited 70-bed facility that provides levels three and four nursing care to its residents.
Labrador Friendship Centre	The Centre includes hostel services available to indigenous and non-indigenous persons.
Labrador Group Home	A provincially operated group home for youth ages 12 to 18 years.
Libra House Woman's Shelter	An emergency shelter for women and children experiencing relationship violence.
Mokami Status of Women Council Centre	Supportive-living housing units for women.
Melville Native Housing Association	Provides subsidized housing for indigenous low-income tenants.
Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation	Provides subsidized housing for low-income tenants and vulnerable populations.
Paddon Home	A long-term care facility for level 2 and 3 seniors.
Torngat Regional Housing Association	Provides housing in response to Inuit homelessness

Source: The Lichen Group. (2007) updated



The Town currently has a representative on the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Community Advisory Board, which is a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network (NLHHN), a province-wide group of community-based service providers, municipal, provincial and federal departments and agencies, and representatives of persons at risk of homelessness, who are committed to working collaboratively on issues related to homelessness and housing (Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network, 2018) .

### 2.3.2 HOUSING FORECAST

Based on its earlier population forecasts for the Central Labrador Region, RAnLab generated a housing demand forecast for 5, 10 and 20 year periods for the region including the Towns of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River and the community of Sheshatshiu.

The same three models to forecast housing were used as in the population model: The Natural Survival Model (NS), the Historical (Cyclic) Survival Model (HS) and The Replacement Survival Model (RS). The report presented information on population outcomes by housing type and forecast years, followed by outcomes by housing demand by type. In this report the results from the HS model are used to illustrate projected housing demand by housing type as the model reflects the changes anticipated associated with the key elements of demographic change in the region - births, deaths and migration.

The forecasts are for housing demands in 2021, 2026 and 2036. The forecast model is based on the observed demand by housing type in 2016. The model does not take into account changes in the choice of housing type that may be made by future home purchasers and developers during the projection period.

Table 10 outlines the population by housing type and forecast year. The total population of the region is forecast to increase by 5.4% to 2021 and then decline by 0.63% to 2026, and by a further 3.2% by 2036. These forecasts are based on current birth and death data and past migration patterns. The forecasts do not consider the impacts of any future major projects in the region, which could significantly affect migration patterns and consequently impacts on housing demand. The forecasts would need to be revised in the event that any such projects go ahead.

The population occupying Single-Detached housing increases to 8,379 by 2012 and then declines to 8,144 by 2036. The population numbers occupying other housing types follow a similar pattern for semi-detached and row housing, the other main housing types in the area.

**Table 9: HS Model - Population by Housing Type and Forecast Year**

Housing Type/ Historic Cycle Model	Observed 2016	2021	2026	2036
Single-Detached house	7,945	8,379	8,377	8,144
Apartment in a building with 5 or more storeys	0	6	7	7
Semi-detached	1,310	1,350	1,300	1,197
Row house	690	721	701	668
Apartment or flat in a house	100	117	115	114
Apartment in a building with less than 5 storeys	205	219	217	216
Other single-attached house	25	39	46	60
Moveable dwelling	10	10	9	9
<b>Total population</b>	<b>10,285</b>	<b>10,840</b>	<b>10,771</b>	<b>10,414</b>
<b>Year Shift Percent (current forecast-previous forecast)</b>		<b>5.40%</b>	<b>-0.63%</b>	<b>-3.32%</b>
<b>Percent Change (Base year 2016 versus forecast Year)</b>		<b>5.40%</b>	<b>4.73%</b>	<b>1.25%</b>

Source: RANLab unpublished report 2017

Table 10 provides a forecast of housing type demands for the same periods based on estimates of persons per unit by type. The number of single-detached houses increases from 2,780 to 2,932 by 2021, remains constant through 2026 and declines to 2,850 by 2036. The numbers of both semi-detached and row house units also increase by 2021, but then decline slightly through 2026 to 2036.

**Table 10: HS Model - Forecasted Housing Type Demand versus Base Year 2016**

Housing Type/ Historic Cycle Model	Observed 2016	2021	2026	2036
Single-Detached house	2,780	2,932	2,931	2,850
Apartment in a building with 5 or more storeys	0	5	6	5
Semi-detached	495	514	491	452
Row house	305	319	310	295
Apartment or flat in a house	55	64	63	63
Apartment in a building with less than 5 storeys	90	96	95	95
Other single-attached house	10	15	18	24
Moveable dwelling	5	5	4	4
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,740</b>	<b>3,946</b>	<b>3,919</b>	<b>3,788</b>

Source: RANLab unpublished report 2017

Table 11 provides an estimate of the change in the number of units required by type to meet demand for each time period after 2016. For example, there were 2,780 single-detached units available in 2016. An additional 152 would be required by 2021. Requirements are virtually the same for 2026, but are expected to decline by 81 units by 2036. Similar patterns of increased and decreased demand are expected for the other main housing types.

**Table 11: HS Model - Housing Type by Year Shift Demands (Current versus Previous Forecast)**

Housing Type/ Historic Cycle Model	Observed 2016	2021	2026	2036
Single-Detached house	2,780	152	-1	-81
Apartment in a building with 5 or more storeys	0	5	1	-1
Semi-detached	495	15	-19	-39
Row house	305	14	-9	-14
Apartment or flat in a house	55	9	-1	-1
Apartment in a building with less than 5 storeys	90	6	-1	-1
Other single-attached house	10	5	3	5
Moveable dwelling	5	0	-1	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,740</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>-27</b>	<b>-131</b>

Source: RANLab unpublished report 2017

## 3.0 HOUSING POLICIES

A literature review of national, provincial, municipal and community documents was undertaken to identify legislation and northern housing policies that may provide guidance and direction to proposed housing policies for Labrador and in particular for the Study Area.

In recent years, there has been more of a collaborative effort by all levels of government to engage the community in the determination of and in the response to a more comprehensive range of housing needs known as the housing continuum. The housing continuum consists of the range of housing options available to households of all income levels, extending from emergency shelter and housing for the homeless through to affordable rental housing and homeownership.

Emergency Shelters	Transitional Housing	Supportive Housing	<b>Subsidized Housing</b>	Market Rental Housing	Market Homeownership Housing
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Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2018

### **Figure 5: Housing Continuum**

Recent housing policies at all government levels use this continuum as the framework for developing a comprehensive range of policies that address housing needs for all Canadian communities.

## 3.1 Federal Housing Policies

The role of the federal government in housing has fluctuated since 1935 when the Parliament passed the *Dominion Housing Act* (DHA). The Act was a financial vehicle, which enabled the federal government to make joint mortgage loans with private lending institutions to finance the building of new homes. This fluctuation is a result of several factors. One is the separation of powers as outlined in the Canadian Constitution, which grants the authority for housing policies to the provinces. A second factor is the view of the government as to its role in housing. Third are the economic times and the financial position in which the federal government finds itself with respect to its ability to fund and /or expand programs (Dupuis, 2003). While its involvement in the housing market has fluctuated over the years from strong involvement to nominal spending, the federal government has established programs through its various departments and instruments and in partnership with provincial and municipal governments to address housing issues.

The DHA was replaced in 1945 by the National Housing Act (NHA) which created the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (today the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation or CMHC) whose role has changed over the years, but which has been a significant federal instrument in the housing market. The Corporation was initially created to administer the NHA, to increase employment in the construction trades and assist in rebuilding the national housing stock. In its early years, CMHC was the major government motivator in the housing market by implementing a series of housing programs based on housing finance, mortgage insurance and housing need.

Since the enactment of the DHA there have been numerous changes in philosophy and in views regarding the responsibility of the federal government in federal housing policy. In the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government focused on the delivery of social housing. During the 1980s and 1990s, the federal government returned to its initial mandate of supporting the private housing market, leaving the delivery of social housing to the provincial governments.

In 1999, the federal government announced a new National Homelessness Initiative to fund emergency shelters and transitional housing. Shortly thereafter in 2001 a framework for bilateral agreements was agreed to by the federal, provincial and territorial governments, which recognized that the primary jurisdiction for the delivery of housing programs lay with the provincial and territorial governments. Under this framework the federal government partnered with the provincial and territorial governments to provide funding for specific aspects of the housing market, with a focus on affordable housing and homelessness.

During the early to mid-2000's, federal housing policy was characterized by the maintenance or modification of earlier programs and during a time of expenditure restraint focused more on modifications to private market mechanisms rather than increasing social housing spending (Favlo, 2013). During this time a number of bilateral agreements were coming to an end and in the absence of a clear housing strategy, it was unclear as to the role and direction of the federal government in the housing sector.

In 2016, with the election of a Liberal government, the policy vacuum was addressed with the Government of Canada unveiling the first ever National Housing Strategy (NHS). According to the Strategy, "the federal government is re-engaging in affordable housing and bringing together the public, private and non-profit sectors to ensure more Canadians have a place to call home" (Government of Canada, 2017a). The NHS is an attempt to address several components of the housing market within a more comprehensive policy framework which focuses on a systematic approach to housing through shared provincial and municipal funding programs. Unlike the 2001 bilateral funding programs, this funding is more focused and linked directly to a national housing strategy. The Strategy provides direction in responding to housing needs of Canadians and has several components, including addressing the needs of vulnerable populations, putting in place long-term funding, and improving data collection and research.

More specifically, the strategy proposes to invest over \$40 billion over the next 10 years with the intention of removing 530,000 households from housing need, creating over 100,000 new housing units and repairing 300,000 housing units. As part of the Strategy, a National Housing Co-investment Fund has committed to build and renew at least 7,000 shelter spaces for survivors of family violence” (Government of Canada, 2017a). Increased investments are proposed in the development of affordable housing, retrofitting of existing housing, dealing with homelessness, rental housing and addressing gaps in housing market information. The Strategy proposes investments at the federal level and in partnerships with provincial and territorial governments.

The NHS also “identified the importance of engaging with Indigenous people in co-developing distinctions-based housing strategies and approaches to addressing the Indigenous housing crisis in Canada” (Government of Canada, 2017a). Through the next two successive budgets, the federal government proposed dedicated funding of \$600 million over 3 years to support First Nation housing on reserves through the newly created Indigenous Services Canada (Government of Canada 2018b), by addressing immediate on-reserve housing needs, providing support for the renovation and retrofits of existing on reserve homes and in building local capacity. Of local relevance is the investment by the federal government in Inuit housing provided directly to the Nunatsiavut Government in Newfoundland and Labrador. This investment is assisting the Nunatsiavut Government in providing housing and supports in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster. The NHS also provides funding for First Nations, which includes the Innu Nation and could be of benefit to the community of Sheshatshiu.

The NHS was presented by the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, but its delivery will be through a number of different departments and agencies. Three of the primary delivery agents of the strategy are CMHC, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and the newly created Indigenous Services Canada. Each has responsibility for a number of housing programs to respond to a variety of housing needs multiple housing programs to respond to a number of housing needs.

## **3.2 Provincial Housing Policies**

### **3.2.1 GENERAL**

All provincial and territorial governments across Canada have provincial housing policies or strategies in one form or another. These policies and strategies are common in theme and content, addressing issues such as housing affordability, homelessness, affordable rental housing, supporting homeownership, addressing vulnerable citizen’s needs, and off-reserve housing. Provinces like British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec have different forms of rent regulation to support provincial housing policy and the rental housing market. All provinces have some form of landlord and tenant legislation. Some provinces integrate housing policy between departments, such as municipal affairs and housing, and in conjunction with their housing corporation, while others channel housing policies directly through their

housing corporations. As a result, some provinces have more comprehensive and integrated housing and land use policies than others. Many of these provincial housing policies and strategies are reviewed and reported on annually, with respect to whether the programs are meeting their objectives and targets.

The development of these provincial strategies occurred after the signing of the 2001 bilateral agreements. With the exception of British Columbia, which approved their housing strategy in 2006, the preparation of most provincial housing policies and strategies was slow to develop and most were approved only after 2009. The majority of these policies and strategies do, however, predate the federal government's 2017 National Housing Strategy. Several provinces are currently in the process of preparing housing strategies or plans. PEI is currently undertaking a consultation process seeking input into the Housing Supply Task Force, which is expected to produce a provincial housing policy sometime later this year. Manitoba Housing conducted province-wide consultations last year as part of its process to prepare strategy. That strategy is anticipated to be released sometime in the near future. Newfoundland and Labrador recently announced that a provincial housing plan will be prepared.

### **3.2.2 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

Historically, provincial housing policy in Newfoundland and Labrador has not been comprehensive in nature. In an earlier research paper titled *The Necessity for Reform to Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Policies*, Scott (2010) notes that:

Newfoundland and Labrador's legislative code is particularly thin in providing protection to low and fixed-income households. Unlike many other provinces that have implemented legislative protection to assist households who are struggling with a volatile rental market, Newfoundland and Labrador's legislation is ineffective at protecting tenants from predatory increases in rent or unjust evictions. Furthermore, there are few incentives for the private sector to provide affordable housing options which would remove some strains on government.

For example, most policies that have been developed have been based on federal housing funding programs and reflect more of the national response to housing needs rather than provincial or regional needs. There is no provincial government department whose main responsibility is housing. Currently, the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development is the Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC). Housing policy in Newfoundland and Labrador, as it currently exists is coordinated through NLHC. The Corporation was created in 1967 to pursue housing and land development initiatives that would serve the needs of the province. Its head office is in St. John's, and it has seven regional offices one of which is located in Goose Bay.

In its earlier years, the NLHC administered housing-related programs to assist in private home repair such as the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, the Emergency Repair Program and the Home Adaptations for Seniors' Independence. In addition, NLHC provided social housing units in communities across the province and was a significant contributor in the

planning and infrastructure development of residential and commercial/industrial subdivisions in selected municipalities across the province.

In 1998, NLHC revised its focus by abandoning its role as land developer and concentrating on the provision of affordable, quality housing for those in need throughout this province.

In more recent times, most provincial programs offered by NLHC have been developed and financially supported to coexist with federal programs and the Corporation has focused on social housing, housing affordability and homelessness.

In 2009, the Provincial Government released the report *A Social Housing Plan — Secure Foundations* which outlined key strategic priorities of the government in addressing the housing needs of the province. The plan identified a number of provincial housing issues and challenges, which included:

- Demographic change, particularly in rural areas;
- Increasing demand for housing with integrated support services;
- The capacity of the private rental market to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households;
- Financial challenges of operating social housing; and
- An aging social housing portfolio.

The Plan concluded by identifying a number of goals and objectives and included the following strategic priorities:

- Preserving privately owned homes by assisting with the cost of essential repairs.
- Providing quality, affordable rental accommodation through direct delivery programs and partnerships with the non-profit and private sectors.
- Promoting the development of more new affordable housing.
- Supporting home modifications to address the accessibility needs of seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Promoting renovations for lower-income homeowners to improve energy efficiency and conservation.
- Preserving NLHC homes to ensure they meet current and future housing needs and improving overall energy efficiency during renovations.
- Working with government and community partners in the development of a range of housing options, which prevent homelessness by integrating housing and other services to promote housing stability.

A bi-annual *What We Heard* report, based on community consultations, provides updates to the public on results achieved through the plan.



In November 2016, the then new government in power released *The Way Forward - A Vision for Sustainability and Growth in Newfoundland and Labrador*. Of the over 50 initiatives in the document, was included a commitment to conduct a review of the programs and services of the NLHC, the aims of which were to:

- Ensure the mandate of the organization reflects current priorities;
- Optimize the use of federal and provincial funding in the delivery of programs and services;
- Identify the means to reduce complexity and duplication within the system; and
- Realize efficiencies, improve services and streamline the organization with no negative impact on clients.

In November 2017, the Premier's mandate letter to Minister Lisa Dempster, Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development outlined the following housing initiatives:

- Concluding a review of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation;
- Developing a comprehensive provincial housing plan that addresses the diverse needs of our residents and is consistent with our Housing First approach, paying particular attention to housing needs and support for the most vulnerable and those with distinct needs;
- Exploring new opportunities to partner with municipalities to retrofit subsidized housing in partnership with the Minister for Municipal Affairs and Environment;
- Expanding housing and transportation services for seniors.

The review of NLHC has now concluded. One of the ongoing mandates is the development of a comprehensive housing plan. A plan that takes into account the National Housing Strategy and examines the full housing continuum that is prepared in collaboration with other departments and responds to the needs of all residents of the Province, would be a significant improvement in a provincial housing policy.

Under NLHC's Supportive Living Program, funding is provided to employ housing support workers in various rural parts of the province. A housing support worker has been employed for Happy Valley-Goose Bay to work with individuals who are at risk of homelessness. The Supportive Living Program also supports regional community advisory boards, which work towards homeless solutions in partnership with NLHC. Such a board exists in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the Board is a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network.

### 3.2.3 DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT

The Provincial Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment can also influence housing policy through the Urban and Rural Planning Act. Section 3 of the Act relates to provincial land use policy and states:

3. (1) The minister may recommend to the Lieutenant Governor in Council the development and establishment of a land use policy for

- (a) the province;
- (b) a particular area of the province; and
- (c) a particular type of land use.

(2) Before making a recommendation under subsection (1), the minister shall, with respect to a land use policy that is to be recommended, hold consultations with the public in a manner that the minister may determine to be appropriate.

Since coming into effect in 2000, the provincial government has limited the use of this section of the Act to policies related to flood risk areas throughout the province. However, the Act provides a great opportunity for the Department to collaborate with NLHC in developing a comprehensive provincial housing policy. Such a policy could provide direction with respect to future housing demands and responses for the province as a whole and for specific areas of the province, like the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster, which is experiencing population and housing challenges. As an example, the provincial land use housing policy could define what is meant by affordable housing and require all new residential development or redevelopment areas to include affordable housing dwelling units as part of the mix of housing in these areas.

Whether this opportunity will be taken up remains to be seen. The Premier's November 2017 mandate letter to Minister Eddie Joyce, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Environment, makes only minor reference to housing;

- Exploring new opportunities to partner with municipalities to retrofit subsidized housing in partnership with the Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

The mandate letter makes no reference to the development of a comprehensive housing plan for the province, which seems unfortunate given the importance of municipal plans in regulating housing through municipal development regulations and land use zoning.

As a part of this research, contact was made with the Urban and Rural Planning Division to discuss the involvement of the Department in planning for and responding to housing issues in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area. Unfortunately the planner's position with responsibility for Labrador has been vacant for some time and there was little available information or insight from the Department to share with the researcher. The researcher was advised to contact the local municipal authorities to discuss such matters.

### **3.3 Municipal Housing Policies**

#### **3.3.1 GENERAL**

The development and implementation of housing policies by municipalities across Newfoundland and Labrador is limited to approving plan policies and development regulations that regulate the use of land and housing types that are associated with the various land use zones. More comprehensive housing policy and the delivery of social or affordable housing for most municipalities is viewed as a responsibility of the provincial government through the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

While a number of the larger municipalities may monitor the local housing market to ensure that there is a sufficient land supply, most municipalities in the province depend on the private sector to meet local demand. The exception to this approach has been those municipalities who had taken advantage of the federal government's Housing and Homelessness Strategy which has resulted in a number of municipalities engaging with local community groups or advisory boards to provide affordable or supportive housing projects that assist vulnerable groups within the community. These are site-specific projects, which are responding to a funding program, rather than projects that are developed within the context of a municipal housing policy.

The one major exception to this approach in the province has been in St. John's. Since 1982 the City of St. John's has been actively engaged in the construction and management of 454 low-income housing units. Furthermore, the City has engaged and collaborated with the community in preparing municipal housing strategies. In 2011, the City adopted the Affordable Housing Charter, which was followed by an Affordable Housing Business Plan in 2014. This plan investigated solutions along the housing continuum that focused on housing affordability (City of St. John's, 2014). The City is now working on developing a new 10-year Affordable Housing Plan.

#### **3.3.2 TOWN OF HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY**

The extent of the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay's housing policy can be found in their Municipal Plan, which is in effect for the period 2008-2018. Background information on population projections is included in the Plan, based on work undertaken by Terrain Consulting for the Town in 2005. According to these projections the population was anticipated to bottom out at 6,790 in 2011 and then gradually rise to 7,235 in 2021. According to the study, "Low, Medium and High population projections supplied by the Newfoundland Statistics Agency for Economic Zone 3 for the year 2012 range from 9,023 to 9,267 and for the year 2017, range from 8,782 to 9,357 persons. These projections indicate that the region's population, is not likely to vary a great deal over the next five and ten years" (Town of Happy Valley - Goose Bay, n.d.b).

The Terrain Consulting Study population forecast for 2011 of 6,790 was 762 fewer than the 2011 census of 7,552. The boundary of the Newfoundland Statistical Agency's Economic Zone 3 is comparable to that of the Simms and Ward's Central Labrador Zone. While these forecasts were prepared prior to 2008, it is interesting to note that the high level population projections for Economic Zone 3 was 9,267 for 2012 and 9,357 in 2017 as compared to the Simms and Ward study baseline 2011 population for Central Labrador at 9,997 and projected to increase to 10,222 by 2016. The census data for Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River, Sheshatshiu, Mud Lake and Rigolet (i.e. Zone 3) shows a total population of 9,682, which is less than Simms and Ward's population projection of 10,222. It would seem that Terrain underestimated population growth while Simms and Ward Overestimated.

The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay Municipal Plan does not have specific housing policy, but does designate land for residential purposes. According to the municipal plan:

The Residential designation is applied to existing and future residential areas of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and its Planning Area. The Residential designation enables the Town to zone for a wide array of residential uses and other uses that are compatible with residential uses. Under this designation the Town can zone for different mixes of housing types and different mixes of compatible non-residential uses (Town Of Happy Valley-Goose Bay n.d.b).

In the accompanying development regulations, there are five residential use zones and one mixed development zone, which permit residential development. Three of the residential use zones are exclusive zones, two that exclusively permit single-family dwellings and one exclusively for mobile homes. A large portion of the Town and the major residential expansion area is zoned as Residential Low Density, which is exclusive to single-family dwellings with a minimum floor area of 110 m<sup>2</sup>.

According to Town officials, while the Town has not undertaken any housing projections, land has been set aside for anticipated growth for the next twenty years especially in the area of the town centre and west of Heffler Street. The Town has advised that they are in the process of employing a town planner and they are in the process of preparing the terms of reference for a Municipal Plan Review pursuant to the Urban and Rural Planning Act.

Although no housing policy exists for the Town, the Town has been involved in community housing initiatives. Community representatives formed the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Homelessness/Transitional Housing Working Group and produced the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Community Plan for Addressing Homelessness and Transitional Housing in 2007. This was the first such plan for the community. The Working Group was made up of federal, provincial, municipal and community representatives. More recently, they have a representative on the on the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Community Advisory Board which is a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network.

There is currently increasing public concern over the transient population within the Town. Since 2017, the Town has spearheaded a working group to hold solution-focused discussions with local stakeholders regarding the transient population within the community. The Transient

and Homeless Population Working Group (THPWG) was formed with representatives from: the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay; RCMP; Office of MHA Perry Trimper; Labrador Affairs Secretariat; Nunatsiavut Government; Innu Nation; Labrador Grenfell Health and; the local business community. This working group continues to meet on a regular basis with the aim of addressing issues related to this population group, which includes housing-related matters.

### **3.3.3 TOWN OF NORTH WEST RIVER**

The Town of North West River has not developed any specific municipal housing policies and also relies on its municipal plan and development regulations to guide residential development. However, the Town does not have the same social services or housing infrastructure as the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and functions primarily as a bedroom community to Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

The Town of North West River has an approved Municipal Plan in effect for the period 2010-2020. The municipal plan states that the Town's housing goal is: "To provide for the long-term housing needs of the community" (Town of North West River, 2011a). This goal is further outlined by the following two objectives:

- a) Housing shall be designed, sited and constructed to meet the particular local conditions and needs of residents of the Town and to facilitate the greatest development of available land resources through a wide variety of housing forms.
- b) An area of undeveloped lands will be designated for future residential development and older housing areas will continue to be upgraded. The layout of lots in new subdivisions will be designed so as to present a pleasant appearance and an efficient arrangement of street, water and sewer services.

In its overall policies the plan states:

It is the intention in this Plan to permit as of right, single dwellings and home businesses up to a certain size, and to consider, on a discretionary basis, a broad range of small scale non-residential uses in the Mixed Development area, including free standing developments (where the non-residential use is the only use on the property) and operation of home-based businesses in residential uses.

The municipal plan then designates land within the Town for Residential purposes. The Town has advised that the current municipal plan will expire in 2020 and at that time will be revised as part of the Municipal Plan Review pursuant to the Urban and Rural Planning Act.

In the accompanying development regulations, the Town has one use zone, Mixed Development, which allows a range of residential housing types. Single-family dwellings are the permitted form of housing and all other forms are discretionary. The zone has minimum floor areas for all housing types.

### **3.3.4 COMMUNITY OF SHESHATSHIU**

The researcher was unable to uncover any documentation on housing policies for the community of Sheshatshiu. It is understood that a community plan is in the process of being prepared and some form of housing plan has been completed which outlines housing needs for a twenty-year period.

It would seem that the provision of housing in the community has been based on the level of funding for housing that Sheshatshiu receives from Indigenous Services Canada (formerly Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada) and housing is built on the basis of the amount of funding received in any given year.

The 2018 federal budget provided NHS funding for indigenous housing based on a strategy of Distinctions-Based Housing, an approach adopted by the federal government respecting the distinct housing needs and involvement of each Indigenous group. The 2018 federal budget will support a First Nations-led housing strategy, an Inuit-led housing plan and the Métis Nation's housing strategy. This is an opportunity for the Community of Sheshatshiu to directly participate in determining and providing for their future housing needs.

### **3.3.5 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

In recognition of the housing challenges in the Study Area, a number of housing-related organizations and groups have established in the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay to investigate, collaborate and, where possible, provide housing supports in response to the housing and homelessness issues in the Town. In 2007 a coalition of these groups collaborated and employed the Lichen Group to prepare the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Community Plan for Addressing Homelessness and Transitional Housing. Twenty community and government organizations participated as a working group in the development of this plan. In more recent times, a coalition of these groups have formed the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Community Advisory Board, which is one of twelve Community Advisory Boards representing communities across the Province which form the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network. More recently, the Transient and Homeless Population Working Group has been established to respond to the challenges of the transient population. These groups are in addition to the provincial and Indigenous governments and community groups that provide shelter and housing supports.

## 4.0 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

### 4.1 The Consultation Process

The consultation process consisted of targeted telephone interviews, face-to-face meetings, and email exchanges with stakeholders, followed by a community consultation with a different group of selected individuals representing housing organizations and community groups in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster. Comments provided by stakeholders and from the community consultation are organized under the following general discussion areas or themes.

### 4.2 Stakeholder Interviews

A set of questions was developed for use in telephone and face-to-face stakeholder interviews (see Appendix 1). The following summarizes comments made by individuals in the interviews. Some comments are anecdotal and are not necessarily supported by formal data. The researcher may not necessarily agree with the points being made.

#### 4.2.1 THE HAPPY VALLEY- GOOSE BAY CLUSTER

This area is unique in the context of Labrador. The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is a service centre for Labrador and is currently being directly impacted by the Muskrat Falls hydro project and more generally by the natural increase in the Indigenous population in the area, which has led to an increasing number of indigenous organizations establishing their operations within the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. It needs to be recognized that the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay comprises a number of groups including Indigenous nations members, non-indigenous Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, and non-Canadian migrants and workers. This multicultural mosaic creates challenges in meeting the different housing needs of these groups.

#### 4.2.2 THE IMPACT OF MUSKRAT FALLS AND VOISEY'S BAY

Voisey's Bay and Muskrat Falls have had a very significant and visible impact in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Population growth has been boosted by these projects and local services and infrastructure have come under pressure. For example, at times during the Muskrat Falls project, there have been food shortages and there has been a very significant increase in truck traffic in the Town. Construction firms involved with the project have rented much of the hotel space for their workers due to the lack of onsite camp space. Many visitors that come to the Town for services have to stay in shelters while they are receiving services due to a lack of accommodation.



While there is a lot of communication between Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Nalcor Energy, the provincial crown corporation responsible for the Muskrat Falls Project, there is also a lot of tension because of differing public views of the project. There has been no partnering between Nalcor and the municipality to seek solutions to the housing demand problems generated by the project. While there is a camp to accommodate workers, there have been insufficient rooms to accommodate all those that need them. As a result, homes in the community have been converted to “bunk houses” and rented to contractors and temporary workers, and as noted, hotel space has been fully utilised for much of the time.

#### **4.2.3 COST OF LIVING**

According to all respondents, everything has become more expensive over the past five years in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. For the individual, costs of living have increased, but local salaries have not. In addition to an increase in the number of clients seeking assistance for housing and other daily needs from social service and community agencies, there has been a large increase in the number of “working poor” who need to avail of food banks and clothing centres. As a consequence there has been an increase in food and clothing drives in the community.

#### **4.2.4 HOUSING**

Respondents all agreed that the area was not prepared for the impacts of the Muskrat Falls project on the housing sector. The project has resulted in a housing shortage and prices of houses and units for sale and rent have increased dramatically. As a consequence the Town has become a more a difficult place to live due to a lack of available and affordable housing to meet the needs of the community.

Rental vacancy rates during construction have been close to 0%. Participants reported that homeowners have rented their homes to transient and temporary workers at a rate of \$6,000 per month. A number of these homeowners then move into rental apartment units and use the rents that they are charging the companies to pay off their home mortgages. Landlords are increasing rents and existing tenants have had to move because they are unable to afford the higher rents, only to find that here is no affordable rental accommodation available. The view among respondents was that rental rates are beginning to ease as the Muskrat Falls project winds down.

#### **4.2.5 THE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY**

According to stakeholders, there are very few developers who are in the business of developing residential subdivisions in the Town. Land is offered to developers and contractors to develop and construct homes, but not to individuals for individual home construction. Respondents generally felt that there is sufficient vacant land available for future housing needs, but many individuals can’t afford the cost of developer-constructed homes and they are unable to get access to smaller individual parcels of land.



There is no municipal housing strategy that identifies the future needs of the community. The process for the development of new lands is developer driven. Private sector developers apply to provincial Crown Lands for a tract of land to develop. Crown Lands then sends a referral to the Town requesting comments on the application. If all is in order, Crown Lands provides the land to the developer at market value. The developers are then subject to a development agreement with the Town with respect to roads, water and sewer infrastructure and public purpose lands for municipal parks and public facilities. When lands are developed and housing is constructed and sold, the Town receives 10% of the value of the development of each lot.

#### **4.2.6 THE MUNICIPAL ROLE IN HOUSING**

The municipality does not take an active role in the provision of housing. There have been no formal housing studies prepared by the Town. There has been no funding made available for such studies. The Council is aware that there are major housing problems in the town through observation and anecdotal information, but there has not been any quantitative study to determine the full extent of the problem.

Happy Valley-Goose Bay did attempt to research and obtain more quantifiable information on the impacts on the community of “fly in-fly out workers,” but the federal government did not support funding for such a study. As a result there is no information available on the impact of these workers on the town.

The municipality is represented on community-based committees that are concerned with housing-related issues, but does not take a lead role in those committees. There is no discussion by the Town on the provision of affordable housing.

#### **4.2.7 HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

Stakeholders noted that there is a northern culture of multigenerational households where grandparents, parents, and children all live in the same home. In some cases this can lead to overcrowding and related health and relationship issues. There is also a culture of couch surfing for family members and friends that travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay for medical and community services. This places additional stress on the health and well-being of the family and family members. According to stakeholders there have been local media reports of up to 10 people living in a 2-bedroom apartment.

#### **4.2.8 COMMUNITY HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS**

While most respondents acknowledged the value of the community housing organizations in the support and provision of housing, at least one respondent noted that there are too many housing organizations and entities in Happy Valley-Goose Bay often with very specific interests. As a result the focus on overall housing priorities is diluted and the competition for government funding means that individual organizations are, at times, underfunded. This in

turn has led to reduced capacity on the part of the group as a whole or of individual organizations to deal with housing issues. Respondents indicated a need for a consolidation of housing interest groups and their resources and a more coordinated approach to addressing housing problems.

Respondents also felt the need to have more “place-specific” solutions and approaches to housing rather than having to rely on the application of provincial-wide programs to the area.

#### **4.2.9 COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN**

This housing problem has been recognized for a number of years. In 2007 the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Community Plan for Addressing Homelessness and Transitional Housing was coordinated by the Happy Valley Goose Bay Homelessness/Transitional Housing Working Group, which consisted of government and community representatives.

#### **4.2.10 TRANSIENT POPULATION**

Stakeholders noted the growing number of seasonal transients who camp out in parks and along highways in the community during warm weather months. Many of this group are considered to be technically homeless for the summer period, after which they then return to their home communities for the remainder of the year. Many of these individuals travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay for medical or social service appointments or because they require extended care. As there is no accommodation available to them, they set up camp for the time that they are in the area. Many of these individuals have drug dependency or mental illness issues. This situation is not healthy or beneficial to the support and recovery of these individuals.

#### **4.2.11 LONG TERM CARE HOUSING**

There already exists a demand for long-term care in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. In many case, as a result of the inadequate supply of long-term care facilities, elderly persons are being accommodated in the hospital, which is putting pressure on hospital services. The demand for long-term care is not only fuelled by elderly residents of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but by the elderly from other parts of the coast who need the medical and social services which are only available in the Town. Planning for long-term care needs to be on a regional basis and not just confined to the Town.

#### **4.2.12 CANADA MORTGAGE AND HOUSING CORPORATION**

It was noted that CMHC no longer undertakes housing needs studies for areas with populations under 10,000. CMHC needs to be more flexible in the collection of housing data so that housing needs for the Town and similar areas can be better assessed.

#### **4.2.13 NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR HOUSING CORPORATION**

There is no specific NLHC housing policy for Labrador. A respondent advised that Newfoundland and Labrador Housing rent in the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is currently \$750.00 per month plus utilities. This is far lower than private sector rents, which are in the range of \$1200-1500 per month plus utilities. NLHC is in the process of developing a comprehensive housing plan, which is being prepared in parallel with the federal government's National Housing Strategy. Such a plan could benefit Labrador if flexibility is built into the plan's policies to be able to respond to place-specific needs.

#### **4.2.14 THE HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY CAPACITY AGREEMENT**

In 2015 the provincial government announced the approval of a capacity agreement with the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The purpose of the agreement was to assist the town in addressing the impacts of the Muskrat Falls hydro project on the community by increasing community capacity. The process was problematic in that the baseline information was still being collected when the project was already underway. As a result, it was hard to determine the normal baseline for the community. The study should have commenced before the project started to develop increased capacity if this approach was to be effective.

#### **4.2.15 THE COMMUNITY OF SHESHATSHIU**

Sheshatshiu has experienced significant population growth in recent years. Comparatively, the community has a very young population. Overcrowding is a much more immediate and significant issue in Sheshatshiu than Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River. Several generations or extended families will live in a home designed for single families, which is a contributing factor to overcrowding issues. There is no housing available for long-term care in the community and as a result, elderly are cared for in the single-family dwellings or, if space is available, go to Happy Valley-Goose Bay for care. There is lack of suitable housing to accommodate the varying needs of the community as houses being built are standard single-family homes. The community is also coping with inadequate community facilities and infrastructure as development is based on annual approvals by the federal government rather than a longer-term plan developed by the community. A respondent also indicated that housing and infrastructure projects take longer to develop as new areas of development in the community are subject to archaeological review prior to site work commencing. As a result there is a housing crisis in the community and there are huge demands for housing. According to one respondent, plans are being prepared to address a number of community issues, including housing, but these plans are not publically available at the present.

As noted funding for housing in Sheshatshiu is a federal responsibility. The federal government, through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), provides funding to the Band Council to develop residential land and construct homes. The Band Council owns the land and houses are approved and built by the Band Council for community members, but ownership remains with the Band Council. The Band Council on a priority basis allocates

houses to community members. It was noted that there is a need to build multi-unit residential developments to respond to current and future housing needs of the community.

Respondents noted that the involvement of Indigenous government in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster has grown and will continue to grow as the role and responsibilities of Indigenous government continues to evolve. This is evident by the increasing presence of Indigenous organizations in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

#### **4.2.16 THE TOWN OF NORTH WEST RIVER**

According to one respondent, North West River residents view the Town as a bedroom community to Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Housing in the town is primarily single-family in nature and there are few commercial and community facilities in the Town. It is thought that this will continue to be the predominant housing type in future, but there is recognition that some form of long-term care housing will also be required. It is not anticipated that the Town's growth will be significantly different from what its recent growth pattern has been (less than 5 dwellings per year). The Town has a municipal plan and development regulations, which ends in 2020. This will be reviewed and revised at that time to provide direction for land use and housing for the next 10 years. It was noted that there is some confusion over where the municipal and planning boundaries are located. The Town has not undertaken any housing studies to determine its needs.

#### **4.2.17 THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENCE**

Currently, the Department of National Defence (DND) lands are not available for housing or other types of development, even though much of it no longer seems to have strategic value. DND does not make lands available for non-military uses due to security concerns. The operation at the air base was much more significant in the past, but in recent years operations have been scaled back and many of the buildings that were used to house military, which many were multi-unit in nature, have been demolished. Respondents noted that DND needs to identify the long-term strategic plans for the land under its jurisdiction. If DND lands were opened up for civilian use, and specifically for housing, this could have significant benefits for the community.

#### **4.2.18 HOUSING DEMAND FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS**

Since 2016 house construction the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay has begun to slow down. There are a number of areas of the Town that have been cleared by developers for the past year, but houses have not been constructed. This is an indication that the recent construction boom has peaked. Respondents expressed concern that after the completion of the Muskrat Falls project there will be a market correction, reflected in falling prices for single-family housing and an easing of rental rates.

Over the next twenty years, respondents were generally optimistic that the Gull Island hydro project and the Voisey's Bay underground development will come on stream and thereby help to continue the economic growth that the area is currently experiencing. Likewise if the fixed-link project between Newfoundland and Labrador were to be constructed, this would ensure continued growth for Happy Valley-Goose Bay as the major service centre for Labrador and would have implications for ongoing housing needs in the community. Respondents did acknowledge that if these projects don't proceed, then the area would likely see a decline in economic activity. If this scenario occurs, housing demand is expected to level off, but there will still be a need to address the questions of more affordable forms of housing and different types of housing needs. From an infrastructure perspective there appears to be sufficient water supply and sewer capacity to accommodate new growth demands over the next 20 years.

The municipal plan and development regulations are ten years old and need to be reviewed and revised. There is a recognition that the plan, policies and regulations need to be amended to encourage more residential medium-density development. It was the view of respondents that smaller lot sizes, smaller homes, more prefabricated and modular homes, for example, might better serve the future housing needs of the community.

### **4.3 The Community Consultation**

The community consultation was held to confirm information and understanding from the literature research and interviews, to explore responses to the housing projections and to identify any further information gaps that needed to be explored. The consultation was held in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. An invitation was prepared and forwarded to 22 individuals and organizations involved in housing in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster (see Appendix 2) and eleven individuals attended the consultation. Each participant and respondent was advised that his or her individual responses would remain confidential.

This session was in the form of round table discussion. During the meeting, the same set of questions on housing used in the stakeholder interviews was used here to provide a framework from which other questions evolved through probing of their responses (see Appendix 1). For those who represented particular organizations and agencies, additional questions were based on the roles and responsibilities of their respective organizations.

The consultation session was in two parts. The first part discussed the current housing situation. The second discussed future housing needs over the course of the next twenty years. At the beginning of the session a brief presentation on the housing projections for the Central Labrador region was provided. This then led into a discussion of the current housing situation followed by future needs and potential responses. The following is a summary of the main themes raised at the session. As with the stakeholder views, the summary reports local perceptions of the housing situation without commentary on the accuracy of statements made or the feasibility of proposed solutions.

### 4.3.1 THE CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION

#### Housing Prices and Rental Accommodations

Respondents noted that the Muskrat Falls project continues to have an impact on housing prices and rental rates. Those employed by Muskrat Falls-related construction and service companies and living in Happy Valley-Goose Bay may have the financial ability and be prepared to pay the high house prices and rents that the market demands, however, others may not be able to do so. The housing market situation has not only impacted the working poor, but also young professionals, social workers, government workers and others who have been offered employment and wish to move to the Town, but are unable to do so in the absence of sufficient affordable housing or other appropriate accommodation.

As a response to the lack of housing provided for project workers, respondents noted that a number of single-family homes have been converted into "bunk houses" by their owners to accommodate construction employees.

While property values and rental rates in Happy Valley-Goose Bay remain high they appear to have stabilized over the past year. It was also noted that a large number of homes constructed or purchased at the height of the housing market are for sale, but as yet property owners do not want to be the first sell at lower prices. More housing units are vacant and available for rent than was previously the case, but rents continue to be high and they remain unoccupied, as people cannot afford them. Rents are currently \$1500.00/ month for 2 bedroom units plus utilities. Many believe that the local economy is on the precipice of change. As the Muskrat Falls project winds down over the next 2-3 years, there will be a downward shift in house prices and rental rates. Concern was also expressed about those local workers who, having purchased new homes may have difficulty in keeping up their mortgage payments when their employment on the project ends.

#### Homelessness

Due to the high house prices and rental rates, and a lack of appropriate and affordable housing, accommodation continues to be a problem for the working poor, seniors and others on low or fixed incomes. There are also a large number of individuals with challenging needs who require a variety of types of support and wraparound services. Individuals who are released from the correctional system in Happy Valley-Goose Bay also experience finding housing a challenge. While there are supportive and assisted living units available in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, they are insufficient to meet current needs as demand comes not only from the Town, but also from other communities as the Town acts as a regional centre for services, users of which need accommodation. Homelessness continues to be a major issue in the Town despite efforts to address it. Many of the homeless are reduced to search for boarding house accommodation, which is inadequate for the needs and demands, or have to rely on couch surfing with family and friends.

### **Social Housing**

Respondents acknowledged that there are still long waiting lists for social housing in the Town. As above, many of those who can't be accommodated are couch surfing or live with other family members, often resulting in overcrowding in those homes. In the warmer weather months, many set up tents in the Town's open spaces and on the outskirts of the Town.

### **The Transient Population**

The transient population has become a major problem in the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Usually these individuals come from surrounding coastal communities to receive government and community services that are only available in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Many of this transient population have mental and/or drug dependency issues. They will live in tents along the highway or in the open spaces and parks within the Town. Those living within the Town create safety concerns and anxiety for local permanent residents. Most of this transient population leave in the fall to return to their communities. Many have relatives that work and live in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and may provide some funding and other support to their transient relatives.

### **Men and Housing**

There is a major gap in providing housing and supports for men. Many of the tenants living in boarding houses are men. Many have dealings with the criminal justice system and have addictions and/or mental health problems. Those leaving the corrections facility or treatment programs with nowhere else to go will generally be placed in boarding houses. There is lack of support for men who are released from the corrections services. Many are released into the community without access to housing or other supports to assist them to reintegrate into the community.

Many men are also medical transportation clients who arrive in Happy Valley-Goose Bay for medical treatment and need a place to stay for a period of time while they are receiving treatment. There is currently no specific accommodation for them. This has resulted in a number of homeless men in Happy Valley-Goose Bay living without a supportive environment, which results in conflict and challenges with the community and which quite often results in the need for intervention by the policing or corrections systems.

Respondents were of the view that a group such as the John Howard Society should be approached to establish in Happy Valley-Goose Bay to provide assistance and services to homeless men.



### **Youth Housing**

Respondents agreed that there needs to be more housing support for Youth Transitioning Out of Care. A number of youth with challenging needs are required to leave their communities to take advantage of care services and programs located in the major centres of the province. Many from Labrador require ongoing support as they transition out of this care, but no such care is available when they return to their communities. As a result, many youth take advantage of care services and programs in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, but there is no housing support available to this group. As a result many of these youth are also reduced to couch surfing while they are transitioning out of care.

It was also noted that there are a number of youth from surrounding Indigenous communities that attend and stay at the residences at the College of the North Atlantic. However, when the College closes they are required to leave the residence and there is no alternative accommodation available for them. Given the youthful character of the Indigenous population of the region and Labrador in general, it is anticipated that the need for housing support for this age cohort will continue to grow.

### **Housing for Seniors**

Housing for seniors is also an issue in the Town. There are some affordable units that cater to seniors, but rates are going up. There is a need for more assisted living housing in the Town. There are also no personal care homes in the area. The private sector model for providing personal care homes may not work in this area as the population required to support such a home may not there. However, one respondent noted that a private sector company has recently expressed an interest in developing a personal care facility for Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

### **The Community of Sheshatshiu**

Participants agreed that housing demand in Sheshatshiu is extremely high. Over the past 10 years, there has been a significant growth in the population of the community, but there is not enough housing being constructed on an annual basis to support that growing population. In a number of circumstances there may be three or four families in a small home. Unlike the population demographics for Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River, Sheshatshiu has a very youthful population, which will put further demands on the housing needs of the community in the future.

Respondents also noted that the overcrowding housing situation in Sheshatshiu is creating major health and well-being issues for families. Some families live with family members that are drug dependent. In these circumstances elder abuse and child well-being is a concern. At times, overcrowding creates conflicts within the household and quite often children are



required to be removed from their homes and community, which in turn creates problems with child placements.

It was noted that there is an eight-bed shelter for women in Sheshatshiu. However, the shelter accommodation is insufficient for the need. There is no similar facility available for men. Men are required to travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to seek shelter and service. Long-term care in the community is also a problem.

Many elderly are required to stay in hospital in Happy Valley-Goose Bay as there are insufficient long-term care facilities to respond to this need. Many elderly who travel to Happy Valley-Goose Bay from Sheshatshiu feel alienated as they are out of their cultural norm and many don't speak English.

### **Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation**

It was pointed out that there are a number of housing units from NLHC that are vacant as they need repair and upgrading to current standards. Due to the economic boom in the area quotes to repair the units are high and so few are getting repaired in a timely manner. A further problem is the lack of skilled trades and maintenance people as much of this labour force is currently working at Muskrat Falls. According to respondents NLHC does not have sufficient resources for the work and labour union agreements limit the use of outside workers for repair and maintenance work.

Respondents noted that the 10-year reduced rental rates arrangements for affordable housing units under the Affordable Housing Program of NLHC is coming to an end, and there is no indication that the program will continue. There is considerable concern as to how the current occupants will be able to afford rents as when the program ends, as the owners of the buildings will have the ability to increase rents to market rates.

### **Income Support**

Income support rates are too low given costs in the local economy. Rates need to increase to help individuals find affordable housing. The respondents questioned why rates in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area did not increase during times of high housing costs as had been the case following a similar situation in the Labrador City-Wabush area associated with a boom in mining activity there.

Another major issue is that an individual cannot apply for income support if that person does not have a fixed address. This is a growing problem for those who are being released from correctional services in the Town. Respondents questioned why government agencies are not assisting individuals before they leave the correctional system to assist them with getting appropriate identification and setting up a bank account, without which the individuals in question cannot receive income support. As a result those who leave the corrections system

are often ill-prepared to re-enter the community and find accommodation. They become homeless and after a period of time frequently find themselves returned to the correctional system due to the challenges they face. It was suggested that there should be trained Advanced Education, Skills and Labour staff available to assist these individuals reintegrate back into the community.

### **Lack of Regional Sensitivities**

The provincial government's approach to housing was described as a "one size fits all" model. There should be greater regional sensitivity with respect to the delivery of housing and housing services. Respondents believe that more attention should be given to local solutions it is believed that these could be appropriate, simple, save money and be more efficient. Currently any changes to the system need the approval of the Deputy Minister responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

## **3.3.2 FUTURE HOUSING NEEDS AND RESPONSES**

### **Housing Projections**

There was a discussion about the outcome of the housing projections by the Harris Centre. The group were optimistic that the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area will grow more than forecasted and anticipated that there will be a continuing need for new housing units rather than there being a surplus as projected after 2026. The group referenced the growing importance of Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster as a hub for Labrador, the growth in indigenous related businesses and organizations locating within the area, the development of the Gull Island hydro project, underground mining at Voisey's Bay and Search Mineral's Foxtrot rare earth project, as examples of how the regional resource economy will continue to spur future housing growth.

### **Department of National Defence and Five Wing Goose Bay**

Respondents indicated that there is a need to re-examine DND policy with respect to surplus lands and housing at Five Wing Goose Bay. In earlier years, provincial civil servants were accommodated on the base, now there are some non-government civilians living on the base. DND's current policy is to make surplus housing available on a block, rather than a unit basis. Many of the housing units are a long way from the central area of town, which is problematic as there is no public transit system available. There appears to be an ongoing relationship issue between DND and the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay with respect to surplus lands, housing possibilities and land use integration.

### **The Investment in Affordable Housing Program to be Revisited**

The Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) Program by NLHC provided developers and contractors with a forgivable loan in the amount of \$55,000 per rental housing unit in return for the developer/contractor agreeing to provide affordable rental rents for a 10-year period. A number of housing units were brought into the market based on this program. However, this program is almost 10 years old and, as noted earlier, is nearing its end date, however, there is currently no information from the Province on what will happen once the program concludes regarding support to those renters who benefitted from the program. The concern is at the end of the program rents will increase, thereby forcing out those who least can afford the increase. This program needs to be revisited with a view to continuing the program to provide for those who are currently renting units as part of the IAH program.

### **Habitat for Humanity**

It was noted that a three-bedroom Habitat for Humanity home was built in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in 2017. Respondents acknowledged that there is a need for more initiatives of this type in the community.

### **Community Housing Groups**

The community groups that are involved in housing in the community need to be structured more formally. This includes establishing themselves as not-for-profit corporations in order to apply for and leverage funding to construct housing that is responsive to individual needs on the basis of "Housing First" approach. (A Housing First approach stresses the need to provide stable permanent housing for those who have challenging needs and are in chronic need of housing. Once permanent and safe shelter is provided, medical, health and social supports can then respond to an individual's needs). To avoid fragmentation of efforts and potential competition among groups, the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network was seen as the organization best able to take responsibility for taking concrete action on housing matters. The Board and the Network would need resources and support staff, funding for which would come from one or more levels of government to assist the Board in moving this forward.

### **Municipal Zoning**

Respondents agreed that future housing needs to focus on suitability accessibility and affordability. The zoning regulations need to encourage more one-bedroom dwelling units, which would respond to the needs of young professionals and seniors, and which would be more affordable than that housing units currently available. Consideration should also be given to the construction of "tiny homes" as a way to respond to the issue of homelessness and

revise the development regulations to allow for smaller homes on smaller lots. The zoning regulations should also be encouraging more row dwelling and apartment development

### **Landlord Tenancies Act**

There is also a concern about the balance between the public and private sector in the provision of housing. There are more vacant apartments in town in recent times, but rates are still unaffordable for many. The respondents felt that there was a need to place some form of controls on the increase in rents so that rent increases were reasonable and did not unexpectedly and suddenly increase significantly at times of high housing demand, forcing those in rental accommodations to search elsewhere for affordable accommodation that may not exist.

The respondents were of the view that the Landlord Tenancies Act favours tenants, and is restrictive to landlords when tenant problems occur. Landlords are unable to respond in a quick and effective manner because of the current legislative requirements for redress and evictions when they are aggrieved because of a challenging tenant. A better landlord-tenant mechanism needs to be put in place in which such situations can be addressed quickly so that both the landlord and tenant feels that the matters are resolved in a timely and reasonable manner. According to the respondents, a number of landlords who have experienced challenging tenants will leave units vacant after the tenants have left for a period longer than necessary as they do not wish to have the cost and aggravation associated with such challenging tenants. This contributes to reducing the number of rental units available in the community.

### **The Community of Sheshatshiu**

It was acknowledged that the housing issues in Sheshatshiu are different from those in the other two communities. With a very young population and a strong residential attachment to the community, more housing units need to be constructed to respond to the demand. In addition, more community facilities and services are required for seniors and child day care. This is a community that will see steady growth and changing housing demands over the next twenty years.

### **The Town of North West River**

North West River has the potential for further development, but growth will depend on the willingness of new residents to live in the community and commute back and forth to Happy Valley-Goose Bay. According to respondents, the average size of homes in North West River has been traditionally larger than in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Sheshatshiu, which given the aging population in the community may not be appropriate to meet future needs.

### **Long Term Care Facilities**

There is a demonstrated need for more long-term care units to respond to the growing demand from seniors. Happy Valley-Goose Bay serves as a regional centre for long-term care needs but does not have the capacity to accommodate the demand. There is also a need for better design in long-term care facilities and recognition of traditional ways in facility programming and foods offered to provide a more familiar environment for northern residents living there. Such an approach will also assist with those seniors who may also have mental health/ addiction challenges.

### **Supportive Housing**

Respondents noted that there is a growing need in the community for housing with support programs. A number of community organizations are currently providing such supports, but much more is needed. Parents whose children experience drug addiction or mental health issues are at risk of losing those children. They need to have individual and community supports to help them keep their children in the family environment. Many indigenous parents come to Happy Valley-Goose Bay seeking the help they require only to find that there is insufficient support to assist them. The province needs to listen to the specific needs of communities. If not, these types of problems will continue into the future.

## 5.0 RESPONDING TO THE HOUSING DEMANDS FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS

### 5.1 Overview

From the research and consultations, it appears that house prices in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster have begun to stabilize and there is preliminary evidence that rental rates are beginning to come down even though there is still a significant housing shortage in the area. Affordability is a major issue and is expected to be an ongoing issue over the next twenty years unless measures at all three levels of government are taken to address this issue. It also appears that the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay will continue to experience in-migration from the surrounding coastal communities as its function as a regional centre continues to grow.

In addition to the current high housing and rental costs in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, government, local community groups and advocates are struggling with the provision of housing and support services to the many homeless and vulnerable individuals and families that come to Happy Valley-Goose Bay for care and support. The private sector has not responded to these needs and in the absence of a coordinated plan to address housing needs and to encourage appropriate forms of housing to address the need, by government and/or other housing organizations, the problem is only likely to get worse.

In Sheshatshiu, a combination of overcrowding, a youthful population and a limited number of housing units being constructed annually, are contributing to its housing crisis. The majority of housing units that are continuing to be built are traditional single-family dwellings types. If more affordable, design-appropriate and cost-effective forms of housing could be built, this would increase the choice and number of units made available on annual basis to its residents and respond to the community's growing demands.

Considering the challenging times that the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster has experienced in recent years with respect to the housing sector, it is surprising how little documented housing information is available. From this research it appears that government and the communities are not prepared to be able to plan strategically for the housing demands over the course of the next twenty years. Housing projections for the area are unavailable or non-existent. When presented with population and housing projections developed by the Harris Centre, there was little support for the forecasts from the local community, even though there are no alternative projections or recognition that the continued growth expected as a result of new resource projects is by no means guaranteed.

There is a need to begin the collection of data for the full continuum of housing in these communities, to establish a process for forecasting future housing needs and to put in place policies and programs that will respond to these housing demands. The housing requirements will indeed change over time, but with monitoring and forecasting on a regular basis, the

Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster will be able to respond proactively in a more meaningful way to address the future needs of the community.

It is encouraging to note that there appear to be opportunities on the horizon associated with the federal and provincial governments' proposals through the National Housing Strategy and the Provincial Housing Plan to put in place appropriate measures to address housing issues in the area. However, any such strategies or plans have to be locally sensitive to respond to the particular housing needs of communities such as those in Labrador. A number of themes emerged from the research that provides direction on how to respond to the housing needs of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster.

## **5.2 Housing Data**

One of the difficulties in undertaking housing research in the Central Labrador region and in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster is the lack of housing information and consistent monitoring of activity in the housing sector. The population of the cluster does not meet the minimum population threshold required by Statistics Canada and CMHC to provide ongoing housing statistics for the area, and neither NLHC nor the local communities track housing information, or produce their own housing studies to anticipate and respond to future needs. Rather than hard data, information about the housing sector is experiential and anecdotal. Without such information, it is difficult to accurately assess the needs of the area and each of the communities in the cluster.

## **5.3 Long-Term Housing Policies and Strategies**

Housing policies that apply specifically to this area are almost non-existent and those that do exist are very general in nature and do not provide the direction needed to address the specific housing issues in the area. Throughout the research it became evident that none of the government agencies had prepared long-term housing strategies to respond to the changes and evolving needs in the housing sector, even though all supported the view that there was a housing crisis in the area. Community representatives prepared a housing and homelessness plan in 2007 based on opinions heard from community members and organizations. However, there was no significant follow-up by any level of government or consideration of whether there was a need to augment or update such a document in anticipation of the effects of the Muskrat Falls project.

## **5.4 The National Housing Strategy**

The federal government's National Housing Strategy is providing investment in a number of areas that could be of benefit to the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster. It is worth noting that in addition to the increased investment in affordable housing, rental housing and housing for the

homeless, several specific initiatives hold promise. The federal government is investing in more evidence-based housing data and research. If changes to the way housing data are currently being collected and could apply to areas with smaller populations that are experiencing significant pressures on housing, this would assist in better understanding the shifts in the housing needs over the next twenty years.

The National Housing Strategy is making federal land available for affordable housing over the next ten years. This presents an opportunity for the Province and municipalities to enter into discussions with the federal government regarding any surplus land that may exist at Five Wing Goose Bay that could be used for affordable housing. This would require the preparation of a long-term plan by DND to determine their future needs, and if surplus land is made available to the community, then a long-term housing plan needs to be developed by the Province in conjunction with the community to ensure that locational, housing mix, affordability and other issues are properly addressed.

The National Housing Strategy also responds to the housing needs of indigenous people by providing funding for Distinctions-Based Housing, which has in recent years supported Inuit-led housing initiatives. The National Housing Strategy has extended this program to include first nations such as the Innu Nation. Such a plan could also assist Sheshatshiu with determining its future housing needs and put in place the programs and responses needed to address the range of housing and associated services requirements of this community.

## **5.5 The Provincial Housing Plan**

The comprehensive provincial housing plan, which is underway, provides an opportunity to examine the full housing continuum to ensure that housing needs throughout the province are met. Current housing policy focuses on affordability, social housing and house repairs. There is an opportunity here to create a comprehensive plan by collaborating with the federal government and dovetailing the provincial plan with the National Housing Strategy.

The comprehensive housing plan should put in place housing policies that recognize the need for baseline studies and anticipated housing needs and impacts in advance of the development of major industrial projects. This would assist communities, such as the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster, in anticipating the impacts of future major industrial and resource development projects that would affect the community,

As part of this plan, NLHC should collaborate with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment to provide an integrated housing and land use policy. The policy needs to be flexible and be locally responsive to communities that are experiencing changing growth dynamics.

The policy should also examine the benefits of rent regulation in communities that anticipate extreme fluctuations in rents that affect housing affordability. A review of the Residential



Tenancies Act as a part of this policy review should also be undertaken to address landlord and tenants issues.

The policy should be proactive and investigate further incentives for the private sector to provide affordable housing options rather than mainly relying on the public sector to do so.

## **5.6 The Silo Effect**

Despite the existence of a housing coalition in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, which has representatives from government and community organizations, the three levels of government and the Innu First Nation continue to work in silos when it comes to addressing housing issues in the area. While each community may see their housing issues as specific to their community, the issues are inter-related and need to be addressed in a collaborative fashion. More formal collaboration between all groups would be beneficial in reducing duplication of effort in addressing area-wide housing needs and in identifying priorities and effective housing approaches over the next twenty years.

## **5.7 Municipal Planning**

Currently, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River can influence housing in their communities through their municipal plans and development regulations. In discussions with both towns, the municipal plans and development regulations are due for their mandatory 10-year review and Happy Valley-Goose Bay has just released a RFP to prepare the 10-year review. Changes to the plan and regulations within this past 10-year period have been in response to developers' proposals rather than in response to community housing needs. The housing type and form is currently being determined by the private sector rather than the public and community sectors. There are currently insufficient housing choices that respond to the demand for smaller and more affordable housing. Both towns reference the 10-year Review as an opportunity to respond to changes in the housing sector and to revise their zoning to permit a range of responses from smaller lot development to more medium-density residential choices. Consideration should also be given to housing opportunities in commercial and mixed development, such as apartment units above ground level commercial uses, or as mixed commercial/residential use buildings as infill projects. More emphasis should be placed on increasing densities in the areas that are currently developed to optimize the current municipal services and established road network, rather than expanding further into the surrounding lands. But in order to put into place an effective planning policy and zoning regime, good population and housing demand data are required to determine the type, scale and housing growth options required over the next twenty years.

## 6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 General

All three communities in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster will experience an increasing aging population over the next 20 years, which will have different needs and demands than the present population. It is also clear that the community of Sheshatshiu differs from the Towns of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River as Sheshatshiu also has a significant youthful population, which will also require different housing needs.

While there are community discussions around the need for seniors housing, smaller dwelling units, long-term care facilities, accessible housing, aging in place, universal design and home share programs, there is little evidence that these are being actively pursued by government as part of a proactive housing policy. It appears that housing supply decisions are, for the most part, being left to the private housing sector; decisions, which may not address the full range of community housing needs. All levels of government need to plan and collaborate to respond to the needs of this aging population in a comprehensive, integrated and supportive manner. While the challenges may be great, collaborative opportunities do exist to address the housing needs in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster and to put in place policies, programs and measures that can respond to the local needs of all three communities.

**Recommendation:** All levels of government need to be proactive in planning and collaborating in a local response to the emerging housing needs of the aging population within the cluster in a comprehensive, integrated and supportive manner.

### 6.2 Federal

#### 6.2.1 HOUSING DATA GAPS IN LABRADOR

The National Housing Strategy outlines one of its initiatives as “Addressing Gaps in Housing Market Information and Data”. There are few current housing data for the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster and there is no ongoing system to collect and publicly release housing data. According to CMHC, data were collected until 2011, after which that process ended. Areas for which CMHC publish data must qualify as a census agglomerations with populations of 10,000 or more. There are no census agglomerations in Labrador that meet this criterion.

This data gap makes it difficult to monitor and plan for housing needs in the cluster and throughout Labrador generally. The data are particularly important for areas experiencing significant population and housing shifts. Availability of high quality data, provided on a regular basis, creates a good base for planning purposes.

The NHS provides a good opportunity to direct CMHC to adjust their Housing Market Assessment criteria to have the flexibility to respond to change housing dynamics in smaller regions and local markets which are facing significant demographic and economic change.

**Recommendation:** In accordance with the National Housing Strategy initiative “Addressing Gaps in Housing Market Information and Data”, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation should broaden its population criterion to allow collection of housing data for regions such as Labrador, and for areas with populations of less than 10,000 people, which are under population and housing pressures, such as the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster.

### 6.2.2 CANADIAN FORCES BASE GOOSE BAY

The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay is situated immediately adjacent to the Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay. The Base has been progressively demolishing buildings including multiple-unit housing and apartment buildings in response to the decrease in number of service personnel on the base. As a result, there are large open space areas, which appear to be surplus to the needs of the Base. Some of this vacant land is in close proximity to built-up area of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and would be attractive for mixed-use affordable housing. There have been requests in the past from the community to the Department of National Defence to prepare a long-term strategic plan for Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay and, if there is surplus land, to make it available to the Town for development purposes. One of initiatives in the National Housing Strategy is to make surplus federal lands available for affordable housing. The Town should take advantage of this initiative and approach the federal government to request that a long-term plan for Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay be developed and for any surplus lands to be transferred to the Town for affordable housing opportunities.

**Recommendation:** The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay should approach the federal government and request that Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay prepare a long-term plan for the Base’s operations, and if surplus land is identified that is not required for the long-term operational requirements of the Base, that the land be transferred to the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay for community-based, affordable, housing programs.

### 6.2.3 DISTINCTION-BASED HOUSING

The National Housing Strategy provides funding for “Distinctions-Based Housing”. This funding program could assist the Innu First Nation and community of Sheshatshiu in determining its future housing needs and help put in place the programs and responses needed to address the range of housing and associated services specific to this community.

**Recommendation:** The Innu Nation and the Community of Sheshatshiu should take advantage of the National Housing Strategy’s Distinction-Based Housing program to help address its housing needs.

## 6.3 Provincial

### 6.3.1 THE PROVINCIAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Currently there is no comprehensive housing policy in the province that can be used to assist in understanding and responding to future housing needs throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. What does exist is a social housing plan that responds to provincial social and affordable housing needs.

In 2017 the Premier mandated the Minister Responsible for the NLHC to develop a comprehensive housing plan. In NLHC's 2016-2017 annual report one of the Corporation's initiatives is to prepare such a plan in 2017-2018. While the scope of the plan is unclear at this time, it should put into place a housing framework that addresses the multiplicity of housing needs along the housing continuum in both the public and private sector. With the federal government's 2017 launch of its National Housing Strategy a great opportunity exists for the integration and coordination of the provincial plan with the national strategy. The housing strategy needs to reflect the requirements and capacities of different regions and urban, rural and remote communities given the variety of housing challenges faced by communities throughout the province. In this case such a plan would provide the opportunity for the provincial government to examine and propose policies that are regionally sensitive to the specific issues faced in Labrador and its communities.

**Recommendation:** The provincial government should collaborate with the federal government and dovetail the provincial plan process with the National Housing Strategy in its preparation of a comprehensive provincial housing plan.

**Recommendation:** The provincial housing plan should be comprehensive in nature and put in place policies that address the multiplicity of housing issues in both the private and public sector.

**Recommendation:** The provincial housing plan should have policies that are sensitive to regional needs rather than being a one policy-for-all approach.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, which is the agency responsible for housing, should collaborate with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment, which is responsible for provincial land use policy, to coordinate and integrate the housing plan with provincial and community land use policy.

**Recommendation:** The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) should collaborate with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment to coordinate and integrate the provincial housing plan with provincial, regional and municipal land use policies.

The unregulated rental market creates considerable economic and housing hardship during a booming economy and associated housing shortages as has been experienced recently in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster.

**Recommendation:** The provincial housing strategy should examine the benefits of rental regulation as a tool to limit rent increases in communities experiencing rapid growth in housing demands.

### 6.3.2 PROFESSIONAL PLANNING RESOURCES

There are currently no professional land use planners currently employed within the Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment who are directly responsible for assisting communities in Labrador, and there is little professional planning expertise at the municipal and community levels. Such expertise is essential if housing and related land use issues are to be properly addressed. It is understood that at the time of writing this study that the Department has advertised a professional planning position to fill this gap.

**Recommendation:** The Department of Municipal Affairs and Environment should proceed with employing professional planner(s) whose area of responsibility is the communities of Labrador.

### 6.3.3 REGIONAL HOUSING PLAN

In the discussions with representatives from each of the communities in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster, it was determined that none of the communities has prepared a housing plan or monitors housing on an ongoing basis. Currently the three communities are dealing with housing issues independently. However, while housing issues may differ from community to community in some respects, in others they are interrelated. Happy Valley-Goose Bay, as the hub and service centre of Labrador, attracts people from the surrounding communities and acts as a host for many of the transitional and social forms of housing that the regional population requires. Collaboration between the three communities with respect to future housing demands could provide a more informed and measured response to the changes the housing needs in the cluster. The communities in the cluster do not have the necessary capacity to plan for changes over the next twenty years. The communities should collaborate in a proposal for the preparation of a regional housing study and approach federal, provincial and first nation governments to fund the study.

**Recommendation:** The three communities of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster should collaborate in a proposal to prepare a regional housing study and approach federal, provincial and first nation governments to fund the study.

**Recommendation:** The regional housing study should develop projections on housing needs and demands and examine the full range of housing demands in the housing continuum to provide the basis for an evidence-based needs plan for the various forms of housing and services required from emergency shelters to market housing.

## 6.4 Municipal

### 6.4.1 COLLABORATION AMONG COMMUNITIES

From discussions with community representatives from the three communities in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster, it appears that there is currently little collaboration between the three communities to monitor, plan and coordinate future community needs, including housing. Given the close proximity of the communities and the relationships among them, ongoing collaboration among the communities could be a benefit to all.

**Recommendation:** The Towns of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and the community of Sheshatshiu should establish a regular forum to collaborate and address mutual issues and needs in the areas of land use and infrastructure planning, housing and community services.

There are currently a number of local groups in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster with an interest in housing issues. While each may have a different focus, there appears to be much common ground in their interests. Many of these groups are members of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network. Collectively they may be able to be more effective than working as single entities. A single, larger group may be better able to leverage funds and avoid inter-group competition for those funds.

**Recommendation:** Housing interest groups within the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster should combine efforts and support the Community Advisory Board of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network to be able to present a single organizational front to government and government organizations in respect to housing issues in the area.

### 6.4.2 MUNICIPAL PLANNER

During discussions on the future housing needs with officials from the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, it was indicated that the Town has not developed any housing projections or prepared a housing study. Response to housing demands is left primarily with the private housing sector, which acquires Crown Land for residential development purposes based on their market interests. The Town Council's role in the process is to consider the applications for residential development and, if satisfied, conditionally approve applications ensuring that municipal services are available or are constructed to the Town's standards. The type of housing developed is left to the discretion of the private developer. Town officials indicated that consideration of future housing needs would be the role of a municipal planner, a town position that is currently vacant. As the town moves towards the review of the town plan and regulations for the next twenty years, it becomes even more important to fill this position with a professional planner who can assist in putting in place appropriate housing policies as part of the new municipal plan, which in turn can guide and direct both public and private investment in housing consistent with the needs of the community. Responsibilities of the municipal planner should include the tracking of housing needs, the projection of housing demands and

the preparation of a housing study for the Town. The municipal planner would facilitate ongoing community discussions on housing matters between the Town, government agencies, and local businesses and community groups to identify housing priorities and approaches to address them. The municipal planner would also play a key role in collaborative activities among the communities in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster.

**Recommendation:** The Town of Happy Valley– Goose Bay should initiate the filling of the currently vacant position of municipal planner as a high priority and prior to proceeding with the forthcoming 10-year municipal plan review.

**Recommendation:** The municipal planner should be responsible for the tracking and projection of housing demand and be responsible for preparing a municipal housing study for the Town.

**Recommendation:** Municipal housing policies, which guide and direct public and private investment in response to the housing needs of the community, should be part of the upcoming municipal plan reviews for the Towns of Happy Valley–Goose Bay and North West River.

#### 6.4.3 INCLUSIONARY ZONING INITIATIVES

All three communities in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay cluster currently encourage single-family dwellings within their community plans, regulations and construction programs. The minimum development standards, lot frontage, lot area and floor area based on a single-family dwelling housing strategy, restrict the range of affordable housing opportunities. While single-family development will continue to be the major form of housing for the communities over the next twenty years, the matter of housing affordability and choice will continue to be major issues. There are many opportunities in all three communities for other housing forms and the introduction of reduced lot sizes would respond to housing affordability. In their upcoming plan review process, the communities should pursue ways of increasing housing densities, encouraging mixed use multi-unit development and identifying infill housing opportunities. Development regulations should be framed to be more inclusionary to permit a range of housing options, types and lot sizes. More consideration needs to be given to housing developments that provide one- and two-bedroom dwelling units to respond to the needs of singles, young professionals and seniors.

**Recommendation:** The communities should consider higher residential densities, more housing choice and inclusionary zoning as part of their Municipal Plan and Development Regulation Review.

**Recommendation:** Development regulations should be revised to eliminate minimum floor areas for dwelling units so that smaller units can be built by the private sector to respond to the need for affordable housing.



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## APPENDICIES

### APPENDIX I: Questionnaire

The following questions were used in telephone and face to face stakeholder's interviews.  
Questions were asked and guided further exploration of responses

1. What is your name and what organization to you represent?
2. How do you see population growth occurring in the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Area over the next 20 years?
3. What are the current housing issues affecting the communities of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and Sheshatshiu? Can you please elaborate:
4. Are there any impacts on housing as a result of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay area being identified as a Regional Town Region?
5. What do you foresee as the future housing issues in the communities of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River and Sheshatshiu?
6. What will be the future demand on housing over the course of the next twenty years?
7. Are there any housing gaps that need to be addressed over the next twenty years?
8. What are the general conditions of housing in the area?
9. What are the government agencies and the local municipal and community council's involvement in the supply of housing?
10. Is there a sufficient supply of land for the anticipated growth of the community for the next 20 years?
11. Are you aware of any constraints to the provision of housing?
12. Are you aware of any housing reports on housing demand and/or supply related to the area that is available to the public?
13. Would you recommend any other individuals who have the knowledge and interest in housing and housing issues in the area who should be contacted regarding this study?
14. Any additional comments?

## APPENDIX 2: Community Consultation Invitation



# Housing Demand and Supply Study The Population Project

## Invitation to a Community Consultation

**Friday, March 2, 2018**

**9:00 am – 12:00 pm**

**Hotel Two North**

The Population Project is an initiative of the Harris Centre at Memorial University, the purpose of which is to explore policy options designed to address issues arising from current and anticipated demographic changes in Newfoundland and Labrador over the next twenty years. The Harris Centre has developed population scenarios for the province and its regions for the next 20 years as a basis for exploring a number of issues arising. One of the sectors being examined is housing and the area of focus is the Happy Valley - Goose Bay area which includes the Towns of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and North West River and the Community of Sheshatshiu.

As part of this study is a community consultation that involves representatives from the community to discuss:

- What is the current housing situation?
- What will influence housing over the next 20 years?
- What are the future housing needs in 20 years?

I am contacting you to participate in this consultation. Please respond by February 27, 2018 by contacting me at [sjewczyk@gmail.com](mailto:sjewczyk@gmail.com). If you could provide the following information, it would assist in preparing the contact list.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I look forward to your response and to your assistance in this study.

Stephen B. Jewczyk, FCIP  
Jewczyk Consulting

## APPENDIX 3: Community Consultation Itinerary

### Happy Valley-Goose Bay Housing Supply and Demand Study

#### Community Consultation Meeting

9:00 am – 12:00 noon

#### Agenda

Item	Time
1.Introductions Person, Organization, and Population Served	15 minutes
2. Background information on the Population Project and the Housing Supply and Demand Study	10 minutes
3. Round Table Discussion –Current Housing Situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Current Situation</li><li>• Influences on Housing Supply and Demand<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ National</li><li>○ Provincial</li><li>○ Local</li></ul></li><li>• Gaps and Needs</li></ul>	30 minutes
4. Break	15 minutes
5.Round Table Discussion – Future Housing Situation ( 20 year time line) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do you see the housing situation changing over the next 20 years</li><li>• What will be the demands on housing during this period?</li><li>• What will be the major housing issues over the next 20 years?</li><li>• What is the capacity to respond to the demand?</li></ul>	45 minutes
6. Prioritize issues	30 minutes
7. Concluding comments	15 minutes