



“What We Heard” 2011 Stakeholder Input Session

“What We Heard” 2011 Stakeholder Input Session

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Overview

In August 2009, the province released *Secure Foundations* - a 10-year Social Housing Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador. In the development of this plan, extensive input was provided by a broad range of stakeholders including community-based housing providers, government departments, municipalities, tenant associations, community centres, housing developers, private-sector landlords, community-based service delivery organizations and social advocacy groups.

On November 18, 2011, NL Housing hosted its annual Stakeholder Input Session at the Comfort Inn Airport in St. John's. Stakeholders representing a cross-section of community and government organizations provided input on initiatives to be pursued in year 4 of *Secure Foundations* and engaged in discussions on housing in the province. This was the latest a number of different opportunities for stakeholders to engage with NLHC and build upon regular and ongoing dialogue with government. Appendix A lists the organizations that participated on November 18th or provided comments on housing issues and priorities by submitting written comments.

Len Simms, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Newfoundland Labrador Housing opened the session by providing an overview of NL Housing's progress in implementing the Social Housing Plan along with other investments in housing made by Government to address the input provided by stakeholders in previous input sessions. Mr. Simms' presentation also provided stakeholders with context on the fiscal situation facing the Provincial government in the near future, highlighting the need to find innovative and cost-effective approaches to meet any immediate housing needs. (See Appendix C).

The objective in bringing stakeholders together was to stimulate discussion and generate ideas and to obtain feedback on the current direction of the Social Housing Plan. Bruce Gilbert, Assistant Deputy Minister, Rural Secretariat facilitated discussions. Housing staff provided facilitation and recording support for stakeholder discussion groups. Rural Secretariat staff identified themes and using Turning Point Voting Technology, recorded participant views on new ideas and current priorities.

The Approach

Stakeholders attending the meeting were faced with two expected outcomes:

- Primary outcome: identify new challenges/ideas/solutions/initiatives to support social housing
- Secondary outcome: probe specific initiatives and ideas that are already on the NL Housing agenda

In order to achieve these outcomes and build on the input from past sessions, attendees provided facilitators with their perspectives on the short-term and long-term housing issues facing the province. Attendees were given an opportunity to list the most significant short-term and long-term housing issue/challenge/recommendation they see on an individual/organizational level (with their “hats on”). Each table was then helped by its facilitator to “remove their hats” and agree on a single housing issue or need that they feel should be a priority for the province over the short-term, and another issue to be addressed over the long-term.

Each table then presented its single short and long term issues to the audience as a whole. Through collaboration and dialogue, these issues were refined to the point that they could be prioritized through surveys conducted through Turning Point voting.

Items raised through the “hats on” portion of the exercise are listed below. Items raised with “hats off” were used to guide the survey conducted through the Turning Point technology. Summaries of the results of this survey are contained through this report, while full survey results are included as Appendix B.

Short-Term Housing Issues

Issues/Challenges with Individual/Organizational “Hats On”

- Preparing a short-term plan/approach to labour market/economics.
- Displacement of low-income renters in areas where resource development projects are in place (eg. Long Harbour, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador City).
- Affordable/available housing in select areas. Difficulty of low-income people in finding housing or maintaining housing when landlords are significantly increasing rental rates.
- Lack of affordable housing for singles.
- Lack of accessible, affordable housing for persons with challenging needs.
- The need for additional affordable housing for low-income earners.
- The need for industry (developers, architects, landlords, contractors) to take a greater role in making housing affordable.
- Affordable housing for single women.
- Seniors rental housing.
- Lack of public awareness regarding women’s housing needs, particularly women with complex needs.
- The needs of complex justice clients who require living arrangements/housing to enable the best chance for rehabilitation and reintegration.
- Affordable and available, suitable housing for youth with complex service needs.
- Supporting individuals who move towards changing aspects of their lives (eg. Woman leaving a shelter faced with paying high rental costs vs food will probably return to an abusive partner).
- Condition of NLHC social housing and upkeep of existing properties. Current practices are affecting ability to move forward future developments.

Recommendations - Individual/Organizational “Hats On”

Design Approaches

- Working with private developers in creation of innovative housing that includes more secondary units (basement apartments) and integrated affordable housing within new developments.
- Private landlord development, support, incentives (rent supplements, tax incentives).

- Short term: Industry buy-in for universal design: Resources/tools (standards, how to's, specifications, models, guidelines, products).
- Develop more housing to support various family capacities (eg. 2-3-4+ people families. Housing units are also needed for individuals who are living solely).
- Encourage legislating affordable housing components in all new housing developments (eg. 1 in 10 units starting with first).
- Supportive housing options for youth and parenting youth.
- Increase appropriate supportive living options.

Strategic Approaches

- Affordable Housing Initiative should only invest in permanent affordable housing, rather than private developments only required to be affordable for 10 years.
- Development of provincial housing strategy.
- More promotion and information regarding housing programs and services.
- In 2013, announce a unilateral provincial affordable housing initiative proposal call.
- More subsidized housing (rent supplement) for low-income seniors – to include assistance for those living in their own home.
- Develop a comprehensive framework that spans diverse groups and government departments.

Financial Approaches

- Portable rent supplement (rental allowances).
- Rent supplement (on NET income).
- Vast/major increase in rent supplements.
- Better partnership in Advanced Education and Skills to make rent supplements more accessible.
- Increase amount of financial support to reflect today's cost of living (eg. Income support increase).
- Increased funding/programs for seniors/individuals with disabilities to maintain their own homes or expansion of existing programs.

Land Use

- Establish municipal provincial land use committee.
- Elimination of restrictive zoning/planning laws.
- Donation of crown lands/foreclosures for affordable housing.

Short-term Recommendations - “Hats Off”

Participants were challenged to collaborate in groups to identify a single challenge or recommendation for short-term initiatives. Following the group activity, the audience as a whole revised and reached agreement on the initiatives to be prioritized via the Turning Point technology.

**2011 Stakeholder Input Session
Short-term Housing Issues/Challenges**

- Support individuals who receive rent supplements (portability)
- Establish a new division/office/secretariat to coordinate/regulate all housing
- Increase availability of housing for people just above low-income
- Increase available housing for individuals with complex needs (who need it/most need it)
- Increase the maximum value of rent supplements to match local markets
- Dialogue/engagement related to finding solutions to rent stabilization
- Initiate public awareness campaign to change attitudes about social, affordable, accessible housing needs
- Create a housing advocate devoted to housing only

Results of the vote to prioritize these initiatives are as follows:

**The top SHORT-TERM social housing needs/challenges are:
(select 3) (priority ranking)**

Support individuals who receive rent supplements (portability)	7.56%
Establish a new division/office/secretariat to coordinate/regulate all housing	20.91%
Increase availability of housing for people just above low-income	11.39%
Increase available housing for individuals with complex needs (who need it/most need it)	16.05%
Increase the maximum value of rent supplements to match local markets	7.76%
Dialogue/engagement related to finding solutions to rent stabilization	15.01%
Initiate public awareness campaign to change attitudes about social, affordable, accessible housing needs	11.80%
Create a housing advocate devoted to housing only	9.52%
Totals	100%

Long-Term Housing Issues

Issues/Challenges with Individual/Organizational “Hats On”

- Lack of affordable housing.
 - for singles (one bedroom);
 - for low-income households;
 - for persons with disabilities;
 - for seniors;
 - for the hard to house and those with complex needs;
 - for those impacted by increased cost of living.
- Changing demographics.
- Impacts of economic development.
- Availability and affordability.

Recommendations - Individual/Organizational “Hats On”

- Develop safe, adequate housing for youth, young families, those with complex needs. Helping seniors and individuals with disabilities maintain their homes (own homes) when living on fixed income.
- More accessible housing – aging population and increased number of disabilities will mean a significant need for more accessible housing.
- More affordable housing/social housing including additional rent supplements.
- Develop affordable homeownership program for low-income families; Provide grants for down payments.
- Having available a variety of innovative options to keep all people living within their communities specifically persons with disabilities.
- Accessibility for homes and neighbourhoods with aging population and vision of full inclusion – visit ability and accessibility (universal design) become paramount.
- Increasing 1 – 10 ratios for accessible units. Ensuring Universal Design in others so it can easily be retrofitted for future accessible needs.
- AHI being accessible to non-profits on an on-going basis – not every three years. Change low-rent requirements for private developers availing of AHI (currently 10 years).
- More appropriate housing options for clients with complex needs (supportive).

- Long-Term Housing – affordable housing for individuals with complex needs. Bachelor, one bedroom and two bedroom apartments.
- Housing for complex hard to house clients.
- More affordable housing but with more transitional housing and/or emergency housing in rural areas.
- Supportive housing for youth with complex service needs.
- More available housing for persons with mental illness – supportive living.
- A continuum of housing options which are affordable, accessible and available.
- More subsidized housing for low-income seniors.
- Ensuring housing for seniors on fixed income is truly affordable considering aging population, lack of employment –generated pensions and historic low wages.
- Increased demand for safe, secure, accessible, affordable housing for women-headed households and especially senior women.
- Housing for seniors on one level (no stairs).
- Develop a provincial housing and homelessness “lens” to help ensure all departments are playing a role.
- NLHC needs urban planners to work with municipalities in design and layout of new residential developments.
- Provincial housing plan that includes the impact of mega projects on communities. Investment in AHI and support to non-profits to develop plans and proposals.
- Affordable Rental Housing in municipalities.

Long-term Recommendations - “Hats Off”

Participants were challenged to collaborate in groups to identify a single challenge or recommendation for long-term initiatives. Following the group activity, the audience as a whole revised and reached agreement on the initiatives to be prioritized via the Turning Point technology.



2011 Stakeholder Input Session
Long-term Housing Issues/Challenges

- Housing lens for government that provides a variety of housing options and ensures collaborative planning
- More engagement of municipalities (ie. Policy review, tax rebates and industry supplying employee housing)
- Protect, preserve and promote housing
- Availability, affordability, and accessibility
- Provincial housing plan that addresses homeownership
- Negative impacts of “economic boom” on housing (eg. NIMBY)
- Develop a provincial housing strategy

Results of the vote to prioritize these initiatives are as follows:

**The top LONG-TERM social housing needs/challenges are:
(select 3) (priority ranking)**

Housing lens for government that provides a variety of housing options and ensures collaborative planning	22.22%
More engagement of municipalities (ie. Policy review, tax rebates and industry supplying employee housing)	11.31%
Protect, preserve and promote housing	11.51%
Availability, affordability, and accessibility	24.82%
Provincial housing plan should address homeownership	4.40%
Negative impacts of “economic boom” on housing (eg. NIMBY)	12.21%
Develop a provincial housing strategy	13.51%
Totals	100%

Stakeholder Opinion on Additional NL Housing Initiatives

In addition to outlining their issues and setting priorities, stakeholders were also given an opportunity to vote on elements of two NL Housing proposed initiatives:

a) *Reconfiguration of Social Housing Units:* NL Housing has researched and piloted the feasibility of reconfiguring large (3-5 bedroom) units in the social housing stock into smaller 1 and 2-bedroom units.

Stakeholders were very supportive of the concept of reconfiguration. Over 95 percent of attendees agreed that reconfiguration was a feasible idea for NL Housing to pursue and were supportive of NL Housing’s efforts in this area.

There was some divergence of opinion regarding whether reconfiguration was the best approach to address the need for smaller unit sizes, though a majority of respondents did indicate that it was their preferred option:

Select the approach you think NLHC should take to address the need for smaller unit sizes. (multiple choice)

Reconfiguration of current stock	57.14%
Sell larger units using proceeds to build smaller units	14.29%
Increase rent supplements to access smaller private market rentals	22.86%
Not a major concern	0%
Other	5.71%
Totals	100%

b) *Affordable Homeownership:* the Blue Book outlining the Government’s platform for the next four years committed to exploring the possibility of government introducing a down payment assistance program to support low-to-moderate income, first time home buyers.

Overall, stakeholders were supportive of the affordable homeownership concept. Sixty-six percent of respondents expressed strong or very strong support for government funded down payment assistance. There was support for providing this program in both rural and urban centres, and most respondents felt the program should target both low-to-moderate income households, as well as first-time homebuyers.

Responses to the question “what are the most critical obstacles to homeownership” highlight clearly the complexity of the homeownership issue, and the need to provide other financial supports to prospective homebuyers beyond down payment assistance:

**The most critical obstacles to homeownership are...
(select top 3) (priority ranking)**

Closing costs	9.02%
Ability to budget properly	12.11%
Ability to secure a mortgage	16.75%
Property taxes	5.67%
Knowledge of how to maintain a home	3.22%
Poor credit	5.80%
Cost to purchase	26.29%
Cost to maintain a home	18.81%
Other	2.32%
Totals	100%

Conclusion

NL Housing’s annual Stakeholder Input Session is a welcomed opportunity to receive feedback and insights from housing stakeholders from across the province. The issues, challenges and recommendations presented in this forum are used to guide NL Housing’s policy and decision making processes. Perhaps most importantly, it is a prime opportunity to network, share ideas, and collaborate towards our shared goal: affordable, adequate, suitable housing for those in the greatest need.

NL Housing looks forward to future collaboration with stakeholders on the housing issues facing the province. Thanks and gratitude are extended to the facilitators, staff from NL Housing and Rural Secretariat, and especially attendees for their energy and ideas.

Appendix A

Stakeholder Input Session Attendees November 18, 2011

Appendix A - Attendees - Stakeholders Input Session 2011

Community Groups/Organizations	City/Town	Attended
Canadian Mental Health Association	St. John's	4
CHANAL	Mount Pearl,	2
Choices for Youth	St. John's,	1
Coalition for Persons with Disabilities	St. John's,	1
Grace Sparkes House	Marystown,	1
Independent Living Resource Centre	St. John's,	1
Iris Kirby House	St. John's,	1
Kinsmen's Manor for Seniors	Marystown,	1
Municipalities - City of Corner Brook, Mount Pearl & St. John's		3
NL Housing & Homelessness Network & St. John's	St. John's	4
Provincial Advisory Council of Status of Women & St. John's	St. John's,	3
Seniors Resource Centre of NL	St. John's,	2
St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness	St. John's,	1
Stella Burry Community Services	St. John's,	2
Transition House	Corner Brook,	1
MUN	St. John's	1
Western Mental Health Association	Corner Brook,	1
Total Number of Stakeholder Groups	19	30

Advanced Education & Skills	St. John's,	2
Correction Services Canada	St. John's,	1
Dept. Health & Community Services	St. John's,	3
Dept. of Child, Youth & Family Services	St. John's,	1
Dept. of Justice (Corrections & Community Services)	St. John's,	1
Dept. of Natural Resources	St. John's,	1
Disability Policy Office	St. John's,	2
Eastern Health (Mental Health & Addictions)	St. John's,	1
Volunteer & Non-Profit Secretariat	St. John's,	1
NL Housing Board Member	St. John's	1
Total Number of Government Groups	10	14

Summary - Total Number of Groups	Invited	Attended
Stakeholders	44	16
Government	21	10
Municipalities	6	3
Total	71	29

Appendix B

Detailed Results - Stakeholder Survey November 18, 2011

1.) Which Region do you call home? (multiple choice)

Labrador
 St. Anthony – Port au Choix
 Stephenville – Port aux Basques
 Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour
 Grand Falls Windsor – Harbour Brenton – Baie Verte
 Gander – New-Wes-Valley
 Clarenville – Bonavista
 Burin Peninsula
 Rural Avalon
 St. John’s CMA

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Labrador	0%	0
St. Anthony – Port au Choix	0%	0
Stephenville – Port aux Basques	0%	0
Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour	5.13%	2
Grand Falls Windsor – Harbour Brenton – Baie Verte	5.13%	2
Gander – New-Wes-Valley	2.56%	1
Clarenville – Bonavista	2.56%	1
Burin Peninsula	7.69%	3
Rural Avalon	2.56%	1
St. John’s CMA	74.36%	29
Totals	100%	39

2.) At his session, I consider myself most affiliated with: (multiple choice)

Municipal Government
 Provincial Government
 Federal Government
 Non-Profit/Community
 Business
 Academia
 Other

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Municipal Government	7.89%	3
Provincial Government	31.58%	12
Federal Government	2.63%	1
Non-Profit/Community	50%	19
Business	0%	0
Academia	2.63%	1
Other	5.26%	2
Totals	100%	38

3.) I am involved/interested in the housing sector on a ... (multiple choice)

Provincial level
 Community level
 Personal level

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Provincial level	56.41%	22
Community level	38.46%	15
Personal level	5.13%	2
Totals	100%	39

4.) Are you male or female? (multiple choice)

Male
Female

	Responses (percent) (count)	
Male	20.51%	8
Female	79.49%	31
Totals	100%	39

**5.) How many years have you been involved in housing issues?
(multiple choice)**

0-4
5-9
10-14
15-19
20-24
25-29
30-34
34 +

	Responses (percent) (count)	
0-4	28.95%	11
5-9	21.05%	8
10-14	18.42%	7
15-19	5.26%	2
20-24	7.89%	3
25-29	10.53%	4
30-34	5.26%	2
34 +	2.63%	1
Totals	100%	38

**6.) The top LONG-TERM social housing needs/challenges are: (select 3)
(priority ranking)**

Housing lens for gov't that provides a variety of housing options and ensures collaborative planning
More engagement of municipalities (ie. Policy review, tax rebates and industry supplying employee housing)
Protect, preserve and promote housing
Availability, affordability, and accessibility
Provincial housing plan should address homeownership
Negative impacts of "economic boom" on housing (eg NIMBY)
Develop a provincial housing strategy

	Responses (percent) (count)	
Housing lens for gov't that provides a variety of housing options and ensures collaborative planning	22.22%	222
More engagement of municipalities (ie. Policy review, tax rebates and industry supplying employee housing)	11.31%	113
Protect, preserve and promote housing	11.51%	115
Availability, affordability, and accessibility	24.82%	248
Provincial housing plan should address homeownership	4.40%	44
Negative impacts of "economic boom" on housing (eg NIMBY)	12.21%	122
Develop a provincial housing strategy	13.51%	135
Totals	100%	999

**7.) The top SHORT-TERM social housing needs/challenges are: (select 3)
(priority ranking)**

- Support individuals who receive rent supplements (portability)
- Establish a new division/office/ secretariat to coordinate/regulate all housing
- Increase availability of housing for people just above low-income
- Increase available housing for individuals with complex needs (who need it/most need it)
- Increase the maximum value of rent supplement s to match local markets
- Dialogue/engagement related to finding solutions to rent stabilization
- Initiate public awareness campaign to change attitudes about social, affordable, accessible housing needs
- Create a housing advocate devoted to housing only

	Responses (percent) (count)	
Support individuals who receive rent supplements (portability)	7.56%	73
Establish a new division/office/ secretariat to coordinate/regulate all housing	20.91%	202
Increase availability of housing for people just above low-income	11.39%	110
Increase available housing for individuals with complex needs (who need it/most need it)	16.05%	155
Increase the maximum value of rent supplement s to match local markets	7.76%	75
Dialogue/engagement related to finding solutions to rent stabilization	15.01%	145
Initiate public awareness campaign to change attitudes about social, affordable, accessible housing needs	11.80%	114
Create a housing advocate devoted to housing only	9.52%	92
Totals	100%	966

8.) Smaller family sizes need to be addressed by reconfiguring the current stock. (multiple choice)

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

	Responses (percent) (count)	
Yes	91.43%	32
No	0%	0
Unsure	8.57%	3
Totals	100%	35

9.) Reconfiguring units is a feasible option to accommodate smaller family sizes and single persons. (multiple choice)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Not Sure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

	Responses (percent) (count)	
Strongly Agree	59.46%	22
Agree	37.84%	14
Not Sure	2.70%	1
Disagree	0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0%	0
Totals	100%	37

10.) My level of support for NLHC pursuing this idea is: (multiple choice)

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Very Strong	56.76%	21
Strong	37.84%	14
Neutral	5.41%	2
Weak	0%	0
Very Weak	0%	0
Totals	100%	37

11.) Select the approach you think NLHC should take to address the need for smaller unit sizes. (multiple choice)

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Reconfiguration of current stock	57.14%	20
Sell larger units using proceeds to build smaller units	14.29%	5
Increase rent supplements to access smaller private market rentals	22.86%	8
Not a major concern	0%	0
Other	5.71%	2
Totals	100%	35

12.) My level of support for down payment assistance for homeownership is: (multiple choice)

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Very Strong	47.22%	17
Strong	19.44%	7
Neutral	25%	9
Weak	2.78%	1
Very Weak	5.56%	2
Totals	100%	36

13.) The main target group for down payment assistance for homeownership should be: (multiple choice)

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
Modest income households	41.18%	14
Low income households	23.53%	8
First time homeowners	23.53%	8
Households in boom communities with low supply of affordable housing	8.82%	3
Other	2.94%	1
Totals	100%	34

14.) This type of program is most critical to which area? (multiple choice)

Rural
 Urban
 Both
 None of the above

		Responses	
		(percent)	(count)
	Rural	6.06%	2
	Urban	18.18%	6
	Both	75.76%	25
	None of the above	0%	0
Totals		100%	33

15.) This type of program is most effective in which area? (multiple choice)

Rural
 Urban
 Both
 None of the above

		Responses	
		(percent)	(count)
	Rural	0%	0
	Urban	23.53%	8
	Both	73.53%	25
	None of the above	2.94%	1
Totals		100%	34

**16.) The most critical obstacles to homeownership are... (select top 3)
 (priority ranking)**

Closing costs
 Ability to budget properly
 Ability to secure a mortgage
 Property taxes
 Knowledge of how to maintain a home
 Poor credit
 Cost to purchase
 Cost to maintain a home
 Other

		Responses	
		(percent)	(count)
	Closing costs	6.45%	37
	Ability to budget properly	7.32%	42
	Ability to secure a mortgage	22.47%	129
	Property taxes	6.27%	36
	Knowledge of how to maintain a home	1.39%	8
	Poor credit	2.79%	16
	Cost to purchase	32.40%	186
	Cost to maintain a home	17.77%	102
	Other	3.14%	18
Totals		100%	574

**17.) Who is most responsible for the provision of affordable housing?
(multiple choice)**

Private Sector
Municipal Government
Provincial Government
Federal Government
Businesses requiring housing for employees
A shared responsibility
Other

	Responses (percent) (count)	
	3.12%	1
	3.12%	1
	12.50%	4
	6.25%	2
	3.12%	1
	71.88%	23
	0%	0
Totals	100%	32

18.) Provincial Government's most important role in the provision of affordable housing is... (multiple choice)

Partnering with industry/businesses
Press Federal Government for incentives to increase housing supply
Develop programs to fund construction of affordable housing
Other

	Responses (percent) (count)	
	12.12%	4
	18.18%	6
	54.55%	18
	15.15%	5
Totals	100%	33

19.) I found the round table discussions stimulating and useful. (multiple choice)

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

	Responses (percent) (count)	
	69.23%	18
	30.77%	8
	0%	0
	0%	0
	0%	0
Totals	100%	26

20.) I have learned something of value from this session. (multiple choice)

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

	Responses (percent) (count)	
	53.85%	14
	42.31%	11
	3.85%	1
	0%	0
	0%	0
Totals	100%	26

**21.) There was sufficient time for discussion during the session.
(multiple choice)**

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

	Responses (percent) (count)	
Strongly Agree	30.77%	8
Agree	57.69%	15
Neutral	11.54%	3
Disagree	0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0%	0
Totals	100%	26

22.) I found the technology useful to this session. (multiple choice)

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

	Responses (percent) (count)	
Strongly Agree	76.92%	20
Agree	15.38%	4
Neutral	0%	0
Disagree	3.85%	1
Strongly Disagree	3.85%	1
Totals	100%	26

23.) Overall, I was satisfied with this event. (multiple choice)

Strongly Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

	Responses (percent) (count)	
Strongly Agree	60%	15
Agree	40%	10
Neutral	0%	0
Disagree	0%	0
Strongly Disagree	0%	0
Totals	100%	25

Appendix C

**Chairman's Presentation
November 18, 2011**

Social Housing Plan

- Keeping the Momentum



Stakeholder Input Session

- November 18, 2011

- Comfort Inn

Background on Input

- Since 2006 there have been extensive consultations across the Province
 - Initial Input Sessions with Stakeholders all across the province (Bruce Peckford and Dana Spurrell from Cabinet Secretariat)
 - Follow-up Stakeholder Sessions (Elizabeth Bourgeois)
 - Two Input Sessions - charettes (Bobbie Boland – 2007-2008)
 - “What We Heard” document provided
 - Release of Social Housing Plan – August 2009
 - Annual Stakeholder Input Session 2009
 - Annual Stakeholder Input Session 2010
 - “What We Heard” document provided
 - This is the fourth year of sessions

Background on Input

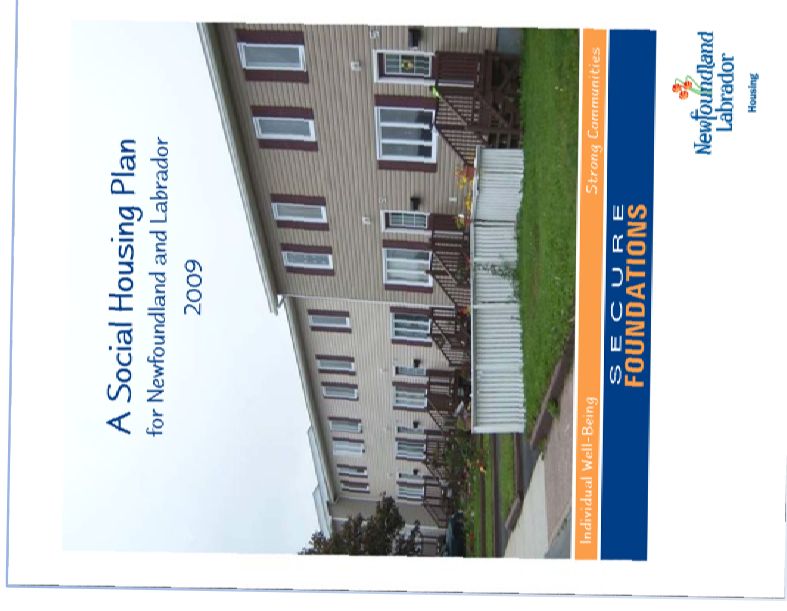
- Participants have included:
 - Community-based organizations/housing providers
 - Affordable Social Housing Advocates
 - Community Centres
 - Tenant Associations
 - Municipalities
 - Government Departments
 - Housing developers, Private-sector landlords
 - NL Housing staff
- All groups have been involved with us from Day 1

Background on Process

- Stakeholder’s session generates ideas for new initiatives to be considered
- Following this session there will be:
 - Meeting of the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Social Housing Plan (NL Housing, HCS, AES, Justice, Women’s Policy Office, Volunteer and Non-Profit Secretariat and Rural Secretariat)
 - Meeting of the Deputy Minister’s Committee - chaired by NL Housing CEO
 - Cabinet Committee on Provincial Social Housing Plan – chaired by Minister Responsible for NL Housing
 - Finalization of a Cabinet Submission for consideration in the Budget

Secure Foundations

Formally Released in August 2009; the Social Housing Plan: *Secure Foundations* has recognized the most significant and primary issues raised by stakeholders for the affordable housing needs of those most vulnerable and most in need.



1. Address the Need for More Co-ordinated Supportive Living Services

- Created a new coordinating supportive living committee with a representative from NL Housing, Advanced Educational Studies and Skills, HCS, and Justice, as part of the Supportive Living Community Partnership Program (SLCPP).
- Provides operating assistance to enable community-based organizations to help people who are vulnerable to homelessness, including many with complex needs such as addictions, criminal records and mental illness.
- Initial budget of \$2.4 million.
- Budget 2011 doubled SLCPP's budget, from \$2.4 million to \$4.8 million.

2. Housing Support: Persons with Complex Needs and those at Risk of Homelessness

- Created a new **Provincial Homelessness Fund** and since 2009, provided \$1M capital funding annually through NL Housing to help many non-profit community groups provide wrap around services vital to help persons with complex needs or others at risk of homelessness.

3. More Emphasis on Energy Efficiency Efforts for Low-Income Households

- \$6.9M allocated for 2-year pilot project for NL Housing's delivery of Residential Energy Efficiency Program for 2009 and 2010.
- Very successful; showing real evidence of savings up to \$800/year, 35% savings.
- Budget 2011 announced a new 3-year, \$12M commitment to continue REEP.
- Developed a very successful partnership with Choices for Youth (Train for Trades and our CUPE Local) to employ at-risk youth to complete retrofits on NL Housing units – 40 in 2010/11 and 60 units in 2011/12.

4. More Investment in Social Housing Infrastructure

- Provincial funding for NL Housing and affordable housing unit renovations and improvements was tripled in 2007-2008 to \$12M from \$4.2M. First increase in 25 years.
- \$43 million for 2 years (2009-2011); the Provincial and Federal Governments cost-matched \$43M (28M Provincial) under Stimulus Program.
- Significant, noticeable improvement province-wide in NL Housing's 5,573 affordable housing units.
- In 2010, the Provincial Government provided an additional \$1.2M to the Heat Subsidy for low-income NL Housing families (first increase in 25 years).
- In 2010, to help maintain existing housing structures, Provincial Government increased NL Housing's maintenance funding by \$1.4M (first increase in 25 years).

5. Press Feds for an Extension to the AHI and PHRP Programs - Ongoing

- Prior to release of original Social Housing Plan, Phase 2 had expired. We were successful in getting agreement on Phase 3. Phase 3 expired in March 2011.
- Now after more lobbying, in April 2011, we successfully negotiated a new 3-year, \$16.2M Phase 4 Affordable Housing agreement (\$8.1M Provincial and \$8.1M Federal) to construct new affordable housing mainly for seniors and persons with disabilities and those with complex and other supportive housing needs as well as those at risk of homelessness.

5. Press Feds for an Extension to the AHI and PHRP Programs - Ongoing

- Since 2007;
 - 620 Seniors and persons with disabilities Affordable Housing units
 - 114 Supportive Living Units for persons with complex needs or at risk of homelessness
 - 154 Non-profit Seniors and low to moderate-income families
 - Total 888
- As well, we negotiated a new 3-year, \$36M extension to PHRP program (\$24M Provincial and \$8M Federal). A big component of affordable housing particularly for low-income seniors living in their own homes.

6. More Private Sector Involvement in the Rent Supplement Program

- Since 2009, the Provincial Government increased their affordable housing Rent Supplement Program funding by 100% from \$4M (since 1985) to \$8M in 2012.
- In 2012, NL Housing will be providing 1,732 rent supplements overall, including a special allocation of 129 to our partners Stella Burry Community Services and the Canadian Mental Health Association for assisting persons with complex needs.

7. More Accessible Housing, Partnerships with Aboriginal Groups & Federal Funding

- One in every 10 houses built under AHI must be fully accessible, and there have been 620 built.
- In this year's call for proposals, for the first time, at the recommendation of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, all developers will be required to include universal design principals in their proposals.
- NL Housing continues to upgrade its own portfolio and address accessibility needs; in recent years, we constructed 25 and fully accessible units in St. John's, Stephenville, Nain and Hopedale.
- Also in 2009, to respond to requests for disability related home modifications through the PHRP, funding was doubled to \$2M (from \$1M in 2006).

7. More Accessible Housing, Partnerships with Aboriginal Groups & Federal Funding

- Budget 2011 provided an additional \$1M to create new Home Modification Program; we then provided the \$2M PHRP funding to create a \$3M Home Modification program.
- In 2009, NL Housing facilitated/coordinated the allocation of \$8.2M in Trust Funds for an Aboriginal Home Repair Program (partnership with Fed. of Newfoundland Indians, Labrador Metis, Conne River, Torngat Housing).
- We also provided inspection training by our staff to these groups.

Keeping the Momentum

We have undertaken many Other Initiatives on our own

- ❑ In 2008-2009, doubled funding for NL Housing's eight Provincial community centres from \$75,000 to \$150,000.
- ❑ In 2011, we increased that to \$200,000.
- ❑ In 2011 - \$100,000 shared by 11 neighbourhood centres.
- ❑ Researching the "reconfiguration" of large 3+bedroom units into smaller 1 and 2-bedroom units .

Keeping the Momentum

We have undertaken many Other Initiatives on our own

- ❑ Changed Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) for working tenants to use their net income rather than their gross income to calculate rent (suggested by our own working tenants).
- ❑ We then reduced RGI for all social housing tenants from 30% to 25% of income.
- ❑ Also reduced RGI from 30% to 25% for Partner-Managed Housing tenants and provided new funding to establish an Educational Incentive Program.

Keeping the Momentum

We have undertaken many Other Initiatives on our own

- ❑ Education Incentive Program increased funding to \$50 per month for adult tenants and tenant children in grades 7-12. Result: in 2007/08—48% of NLHC kids stayed in school; and by Fall of 2011— 68% of NLHC kids in school. In 2010—52% graduated from high school. Budget 2011 provided an additional \$225,000 to expand the Educational Incentive Program.
- ❑ Engineering Technician salary provided to assist non-profit and supportive housing groups in preparing and monitoring AHI projects.

Keeping the Momentum

We have undertaken many Other Initiatives on our own

- ❑ Partnering with the City of St. John's to enable them to construct 35 new Affordable Housing units in City's Pleasantville project. We provided:
 - \$2.3M for an NL Housing 12 unit Affordable Housing Seniors Apartment Building
 - \$2.87M – 23 units (mostly supportive living)
- ❑ By 2012, NL Housing will have contributed over \$1M in funding to Habitat for Humanity NL builds, as well contributed land and labour for 16 builds. Housing staff completely constructed one home.

Keeping the Momentum Going

Where do we go from here?

