



END  
HOMELESSNESS

ST. JOHN'S

# The Evolution Of Plans To End Homelessness

CAEH - November 2016



# St. John's, NL

- ▶ **Population:** 197,000 CMA (106,000 City), provincial capital & province's largest city
- ▶ **Key Industries:** Public services, oil & gas, retail, service & business sectors
- ▶ **Location:** Avalon peninsula, most easterly city in North America
- ▶ **Homeless Population:** 800, Over-representation of youth (16–24), 30% of shelter population



Waves of change:  
From fishery collapse to oil boomtown

# Housing first – a basic need

- ▶ Housing is a basic human need.
- ▶ **Housing stability supports healthy, prosperous, inclusive communities.**



# But not for all...



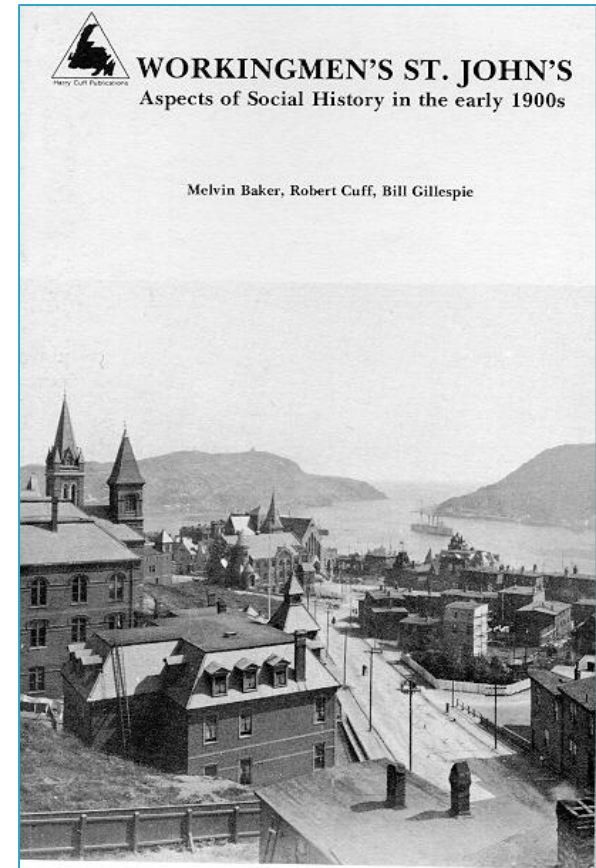
- ▶ 1.5 million Canadian households in “core housing need” (2006).
  - 27,300 in NL.
  - 9,255 in St. John’s
- ▶ **Undermines our communities.**

# 10,000 homeless in St. John's, 1892



# Pre- & post-Confederation

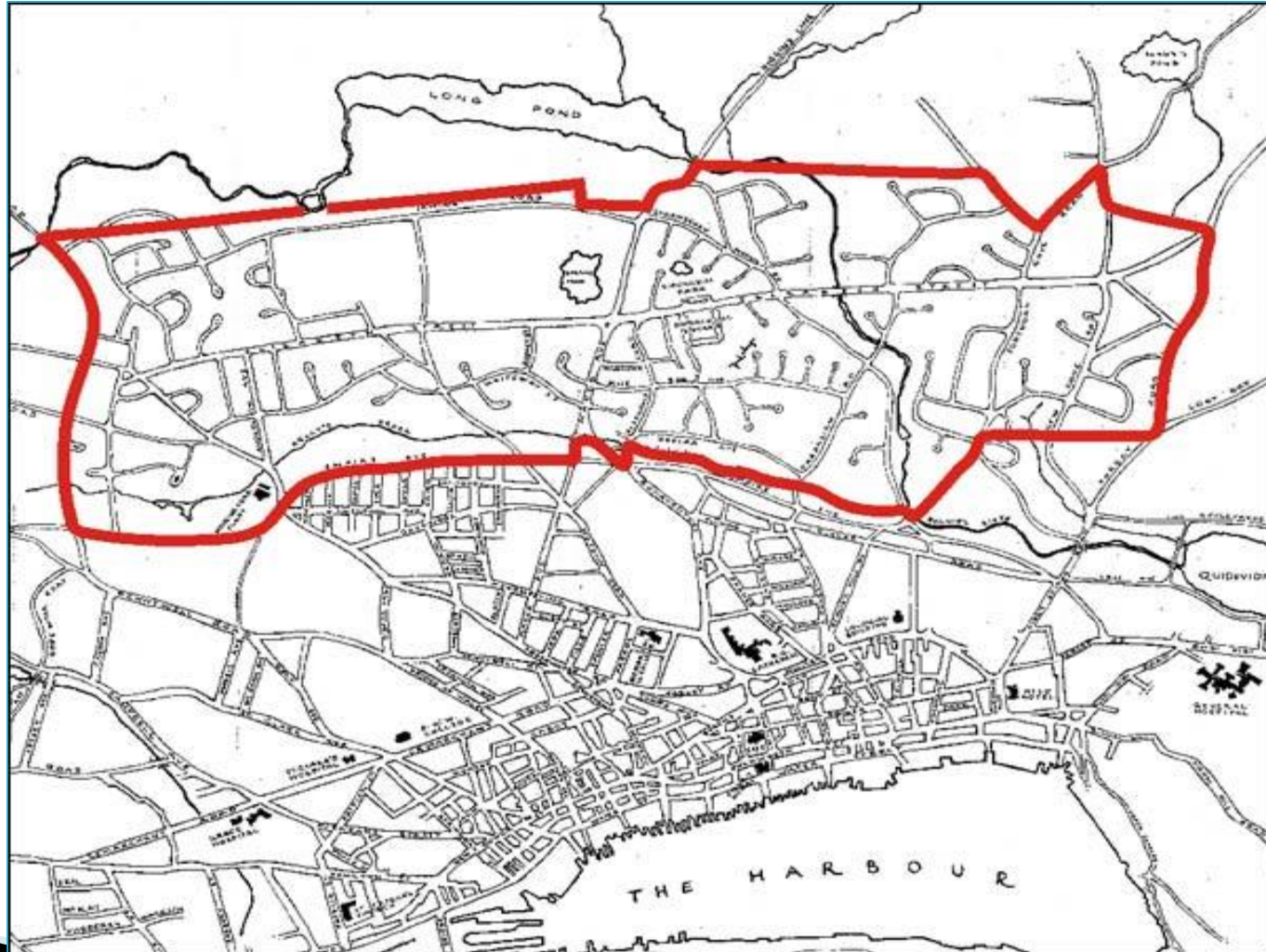
- ▶ At Confederation in 1949, St. John's had practically no public housing.
- ▶ By 1961, it was home to 5% of all of Canada's public housing units, despite having only 0.5% of Canada's urban households.



1950 *“An Act to Provide for Slum Clearance & the Development of Housing Accommodation”*



# Churchill Park Garden Suburb





# Post-war housing: a peace dividend



## Legacy of Churchill Park 1940s–1950s:

233 homes, 92 apartments. 250 co-op homes & hundreds of units for low-income families.

- ▶ We owe thanks to this generation.
- ▶ They built 650,000 units of affordable housing for over a million Canadians, fuelling our prosperity.
- ▶ **Imagine Canada today if they hadn't!**

# Canada emerges as a world leader



- ▶ **1940s:** A new era for housing in Canada.
- ▶ **1950s:** From home building to community building.
- ▶ **1960s:** The Renaissance of Canadian cities.
- ▶ **1970s:** Focus on social housing.

# Social housing

- ▶ 2,000 NL Housing units & 450 City housing units in St. John's.
- ▶ St. John's is the only municipality in the province with a municipal social housing stock.



# St. John's rental vacancy

- ▶ In 1998, St. John's vacancy rate was 15%.
- ▶ From 2000–2013 private rental vacancy rates were historically low across NL:
  - 3.2% St. John's (2.3% 10 year average)
  - 1.2% Gander
  - 2.2% Grand Falls
  - 0.0% Corner Brook
- ▶ 2016 St. John's vacancy rate rises to 5% amid an economic downturn.

# Home purchase costs

- ▶ St. John's 2013–2014:
  - Average home prices:
    - MLS \$310,000
    - New \$403,000
  - Prices effectively doubled since 2006
  - In 2015 home prices begin to decline with a weakening economy.

# Rising rents – St. John's

Month-Year	1 Bedroom Average Rent \$	2 Bedroom Average Rent \$	Consumers Price Index NL (all goods)
Oct 2008	563	636	
Oct 2009	600	687	
Oct 2010	659	736	
Oct 2011	673	784	
Oct 2012	718	813	
Oct 2013	744	877	
Percentage increase	32%	38%	8.6%

# The making of a crisis



- ▶ Canada a world leader in affordable housing until the 1990s, then the cuts...
- ▶ Senior governments withdrew from developing new housing.
- ▶ Homelessness became increasingly visible in Canada's largest cities.
- ▶ Big cities call for action on homelessness disaster in 1998.

# Cities call for national action

- ▶ In 1998, St. John's joined municipalities across Canada calling for national action to address Canada's growing homelessness.
- ▶ In 1999, Canada announced the National Homelessness Initiative to be delivered by 61 designated communities through local plans.
- ▶ St. John's is the only designated community in NL.

ST. JOHN'S

**FCM**  
Federation of Canadian Municipalities



# Homelessness Partnering Strategy



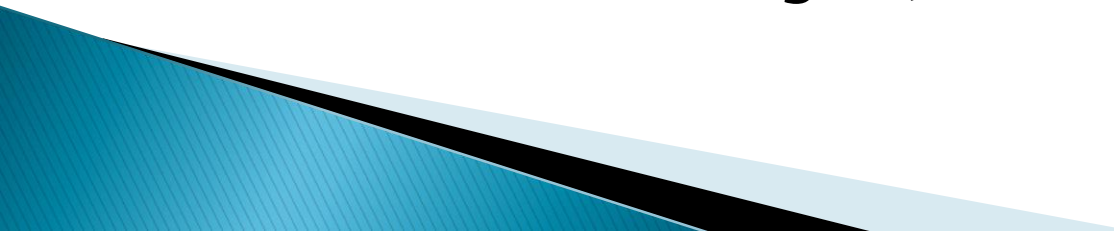
- ▶ Canada's 10 big communities share 80% of HPS national funding.
- ▶ 51 other communities (including St. John's) share 20%.
- ▶ In Atlantic Canada:
  - **NS** – Halifax, Sydney
  - **PE** – Charlottetown, Summerside
  - **NB** – Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, Bathurst
  - **NL** – St. John's
  - **NL – Rural & Remote:** (Grand Falls–Windsor)

# End Homelessness St. John's



- ▶ We are a community-led, multi-stakeholder Board founded in 2000, committed to ending homelessness.
- ▶ We have a plan to achieve this.
- ▶ As the only designated community in NL under Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), we've levered provincial, municipal, business & philanthropic investment with \$21.8 million from HPS towards local solutions.

# Why are we here?

- ▶ We believe every person has a right to safe, appropriate housing and supports tailored to their strengths and needs.
  - ▶ To develop and implement an integrated, coordinated community plan to prevent, reduce and end homelessness.
  - ▶ As the ‘backbone’ for the Plan, our Board – in partnership with the City of St. John’s – is entrusted with resources from the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and others to translate this belief into meaningful, concerted action.
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# St. John's priorities 2000-2013

1. Supportive housing
2. Homelessness prevention
3. Outreach
4. Community development

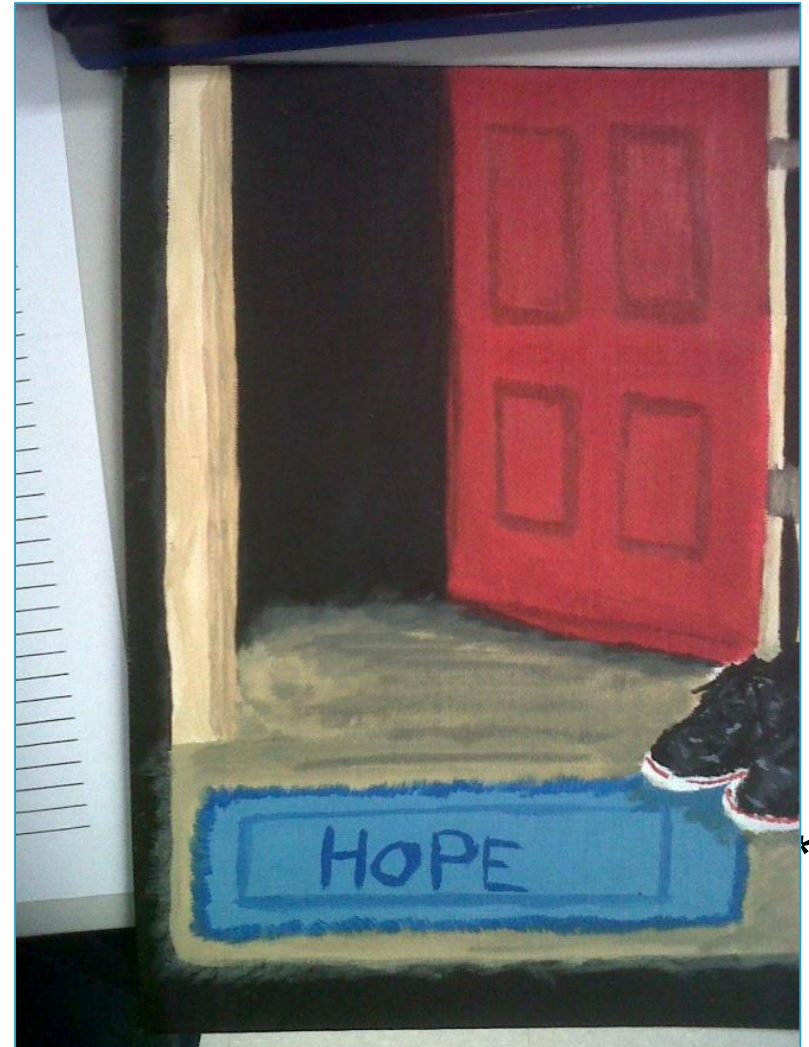


Canada's first national youth homelessness conference:  
Beyond the Street, St. John's, NL 2006

# Guiding principles

## The right to:

- ▶ Choice
- ▶ Self-managed housing
- ▶ Self-identification of support needs
- ▶ Disability-related supports
- ▶ Choose where one lives
- ▶ Respect
- ▶ Personal safety
- ▶ Take risks
- ▶ Change one's mind

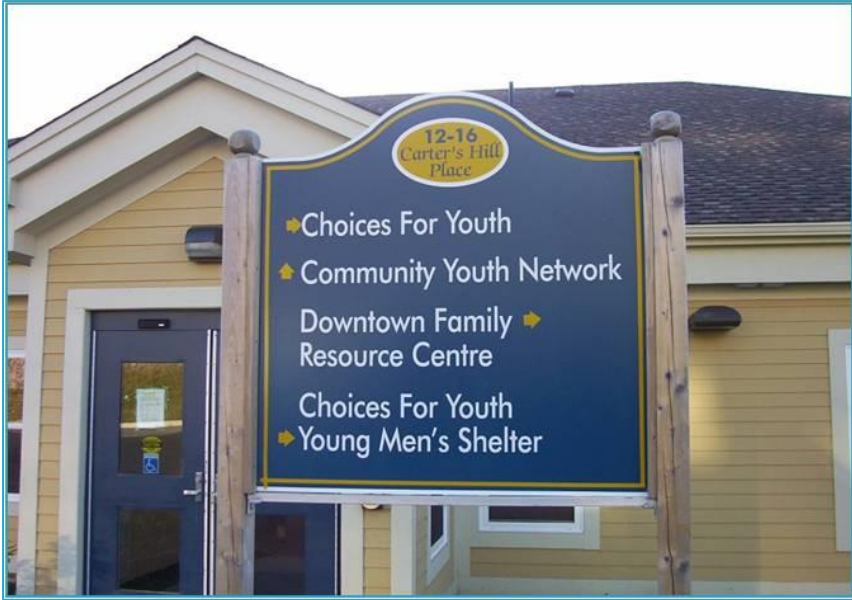


# St. John's projects 2000–2013

- ▶ 237 supportive housing beds (163 units).
- ▶ 37 transitional housing beds (22 units).
- ▶ 63 emergency shelter units

**That's 337 spaces to date**

- ▶ Plus a range of initiatives to engage partners, raise awareness, mobilize knowledge, and build capacity (including investments in the City's housing action).



# Planning together



Planning charrette  
Murray Premises, 2007



# Impact Construction



2008

“I can see my future”



Impact Construction, 2008

# Housing takes shape



2008

# Built by youth, for youth



[www.stellascircle.ca](http://www.stellascircle.ca)

# Stella's Circle

Hope Lives Here



# Hungry Heart Café



Social enterprise provides training & employment for participants

# Hope lives here





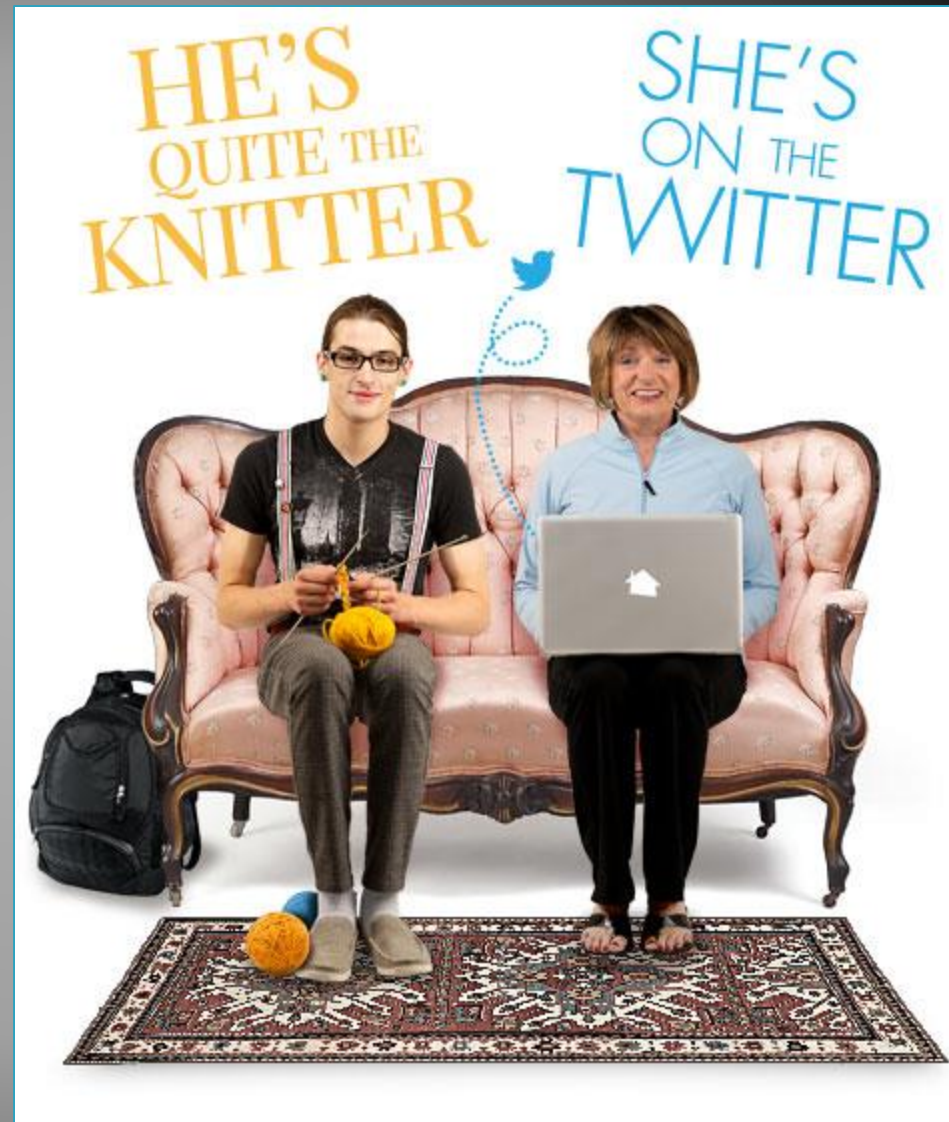
Baked Goods  
Tea  
Catering  
Coffee  
Lunch





# HomeShare NL

- ▶ A community-led initiative matching students with seniors to share housing.
  - 26,000 St. John's post-secondary students.
  - 93% of NL seniors own their own homes.

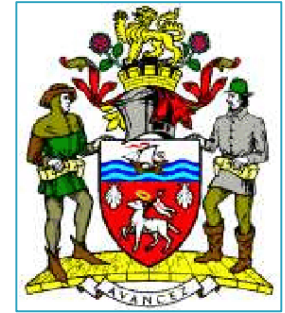


# Higher education & healthy aging

- ▶ Housing stability for youth so they can grow & learn.
- ▶ Housing stability for older adults so they can age in place.
- ▶ Future expansion to other populations?



# A civic awakening

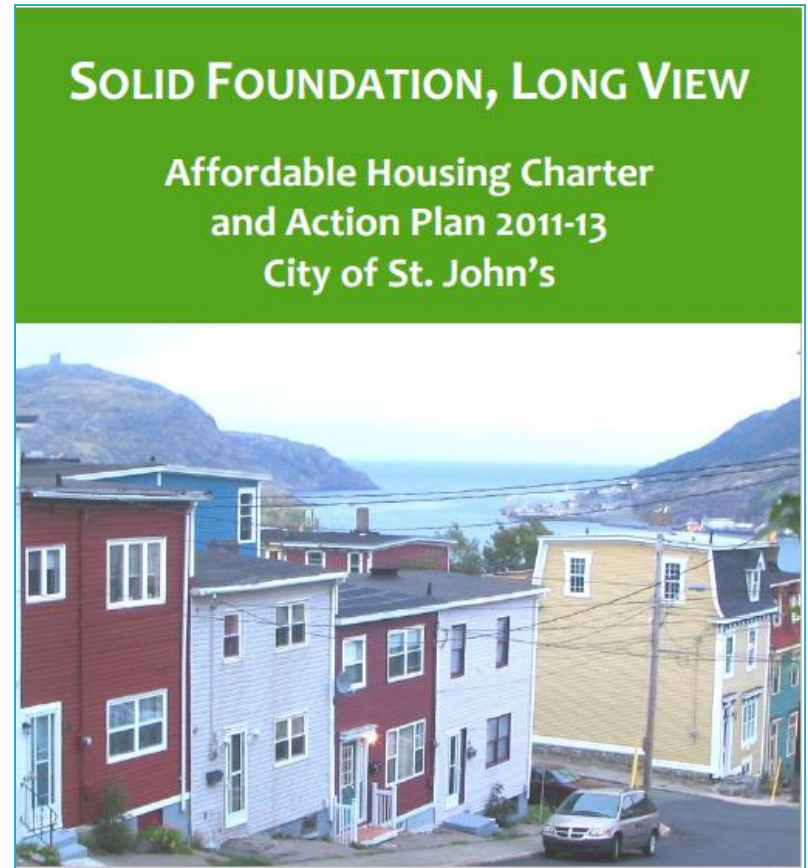


- ▶ St. John's completes a study of housing needs (2007).
- ▶ Mayor's Advisory Committee on Affordable Housing created in 2008.
- ▶ Affordable Housing Working Group created in 2014.
- ▶ In 2012 the City becomes the HPS Community Entity for End Homelessness St. John's

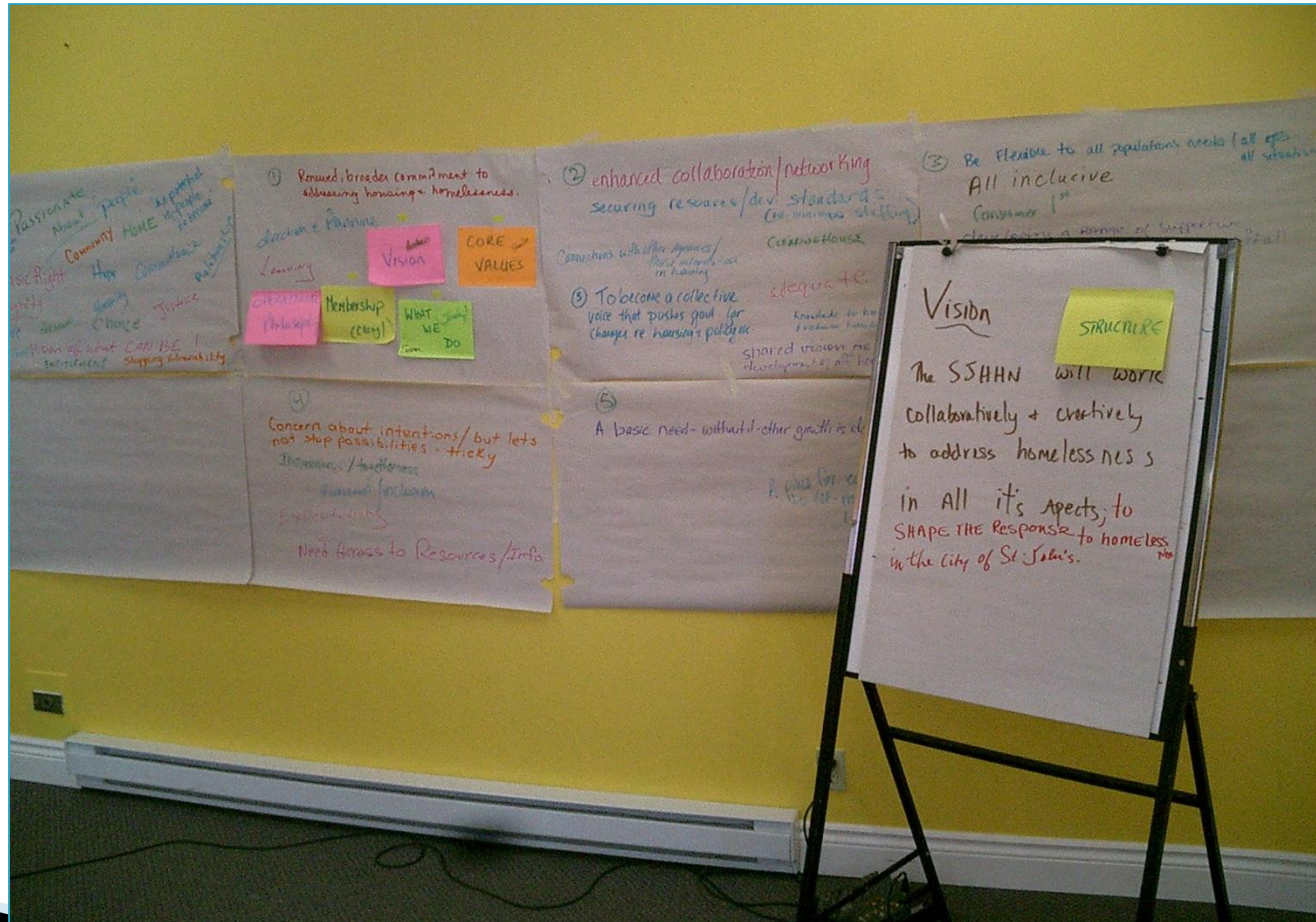


# Housing a growing City priority

- ▶ Council adopts an **Affordable Housing Action Plan** (Feb 2011).
- ▶ Revised Plan unanimously approved in 2014.



# In 2007 we saw the need to expand our work to include policy change, skills development, shared learning...



Founding vision for a new network

# We created the St. John's Housing & Homelessness Network



Founding planning day  
2007

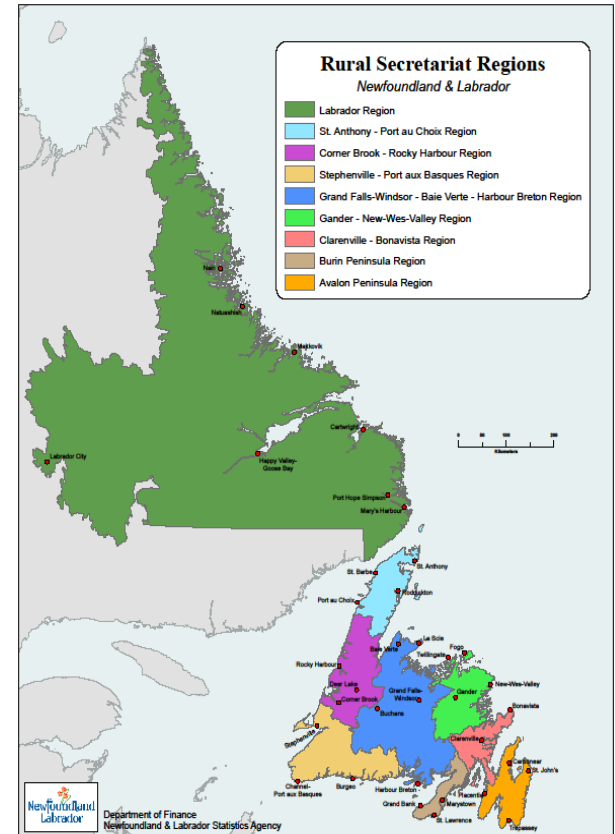
# Now a province-wide network



Established 2009

# CABs & Community plans now in place across NL

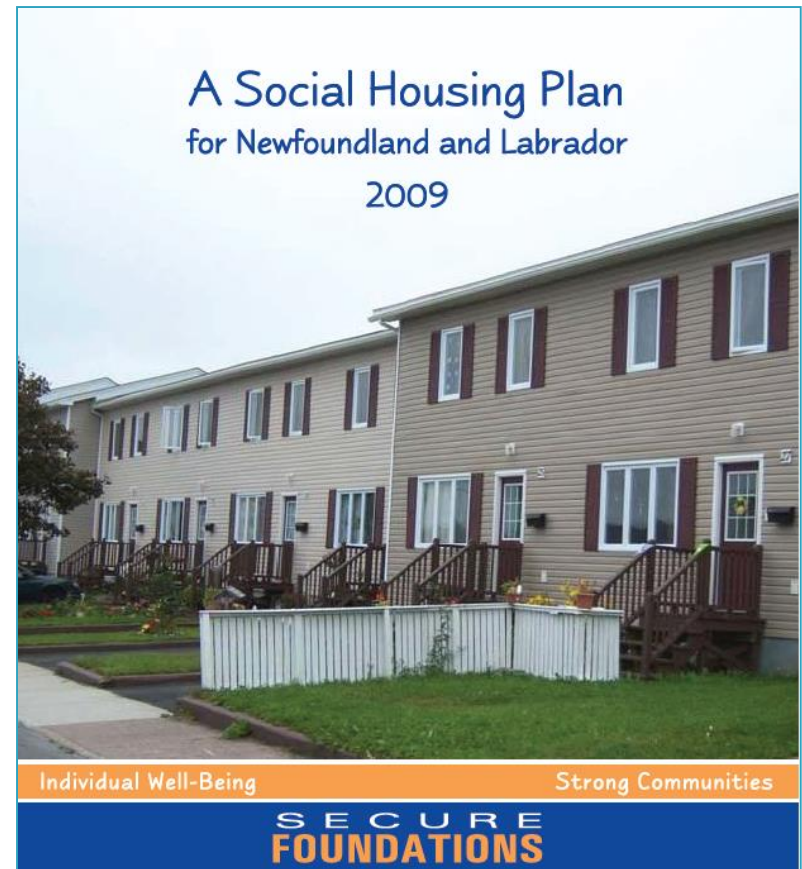
- ▶ St. John's
- ▶ Marystown – Burin Peninsula
- ▶ Clarenville – Bonavista
- ▶ Grand Falls – Windsor
- ▶ Corner Brook
- ▶ Stephenville
- ▶ Happy Valley/Goose Bay
- ▶ Labrador West
- ▶ Baccalieu
- ▶ Gander–New–Wes–Valley
- ▶ Mount Pearl – Senior's Committee
- ▶ Northern Peninsula & Coast of Bays





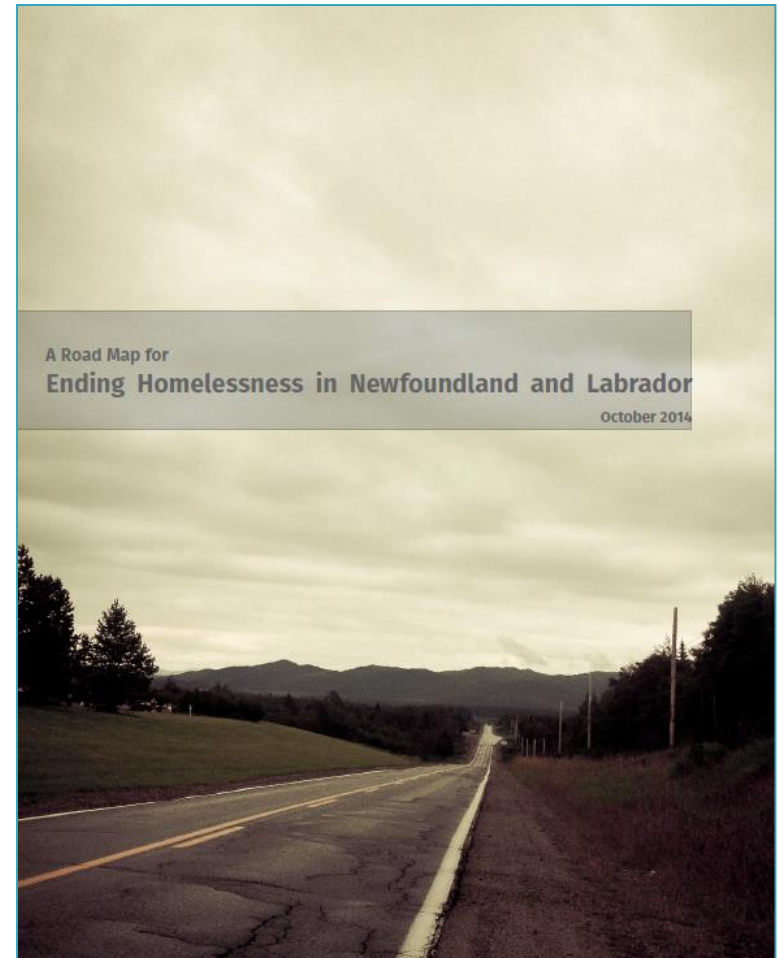
# Provincial momentum

- ▶ Provincial Social Housing Plan adopted in 2009.
- ▶ New provincial government pledges in 2016 to develop a social housing strategy AND a plan to end homelessness.



# Paving a way forward for NL

- ▶ In 2015, NL releases ‘A Road Map for Ending Homelessness in Newfoundland and Labrador’.
- ▶ The consultant’s report is reviewed by a multi-stakeholder task force and End Homelessness St. John’s.



# It's time to shift gears:

From managing homelessness,  
to ending it



community planning forum day

**Housing First:  
Homelessness strategy headed in a new direction:**  
The Telegram, May 28, 2014

# Dr. Alina Turner, Calgary



- ▶ St. John's engages Dr. Alina Turner to assist the community in creating the 2014–2019 Plan to End Homelessness.
- ▶ Turner is the former Vice President of Strategy for the Calgary Homeless Foundation.

# 2014–2019

## Community Plan priorities

1. **End chronic and episodic homelessness.**
2. **Re-house and support 528 homeless persons, and prevent homelessness for those at risk.**
3. **Reduce the average length of stay in emergency shelters to 7 days.**
4. **Develop a coordinated homeless-serving system.**
5. **Enhance the integration of public systems to reduce discharging into homelessness.**
6. **Align resources and funding across diverse sectors to support the St. John's Plan to End Homelessness.**

# Priorities in detail:

## 1. System Coordination

- Organize the homeless-serving system.
- Implement coordinated access & assessment.
- Develop discharge planning measures.

## 2. Information & Research

- Implement an integrated information system.
- Build partnerships with the research community.

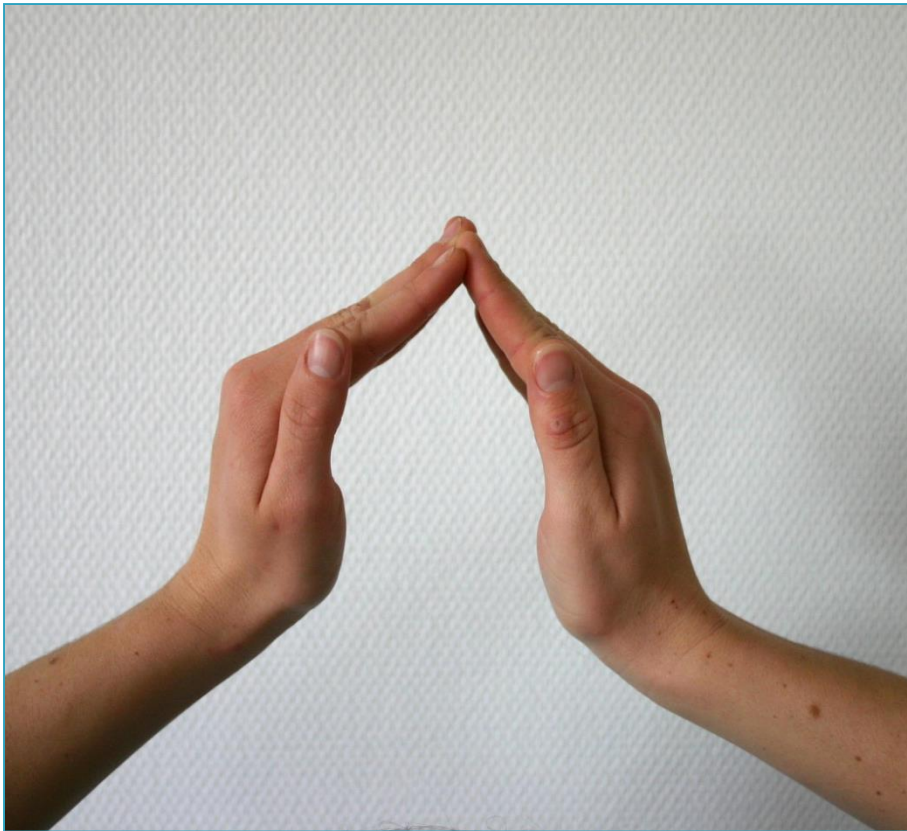
## 3. Housing & Supports

- Support measures to increase housing affordability & reduce homelessness risk.
- Introduce & ramp up a range of Housing First programs.
- Tailor supports to meet the needs of diverse groups.
- Support the enhancement of service quality & impact.

## 4. Leadership, Resources & Engagement

- Develop the infrastructure necessary to implement the Plan.
- Coordinate funding to maximize impact.
- Champion an end to homelessness.

# Housing outcomes



- ▶ St. John's aims to be the 1<sup>st</sup> Atlantic Canada community to end chronic & episodic homelessness – by 2019.
- ▶ Once we've ended chronic homelessness, it will never return to our community.



# What we're doing along the way

2014

- Establish a solid foundation

2015

- Housing First ramp-up to end chronic & episodic homelessness

2016

- Moving upstream: Homelessness prevention & rapid re-housing

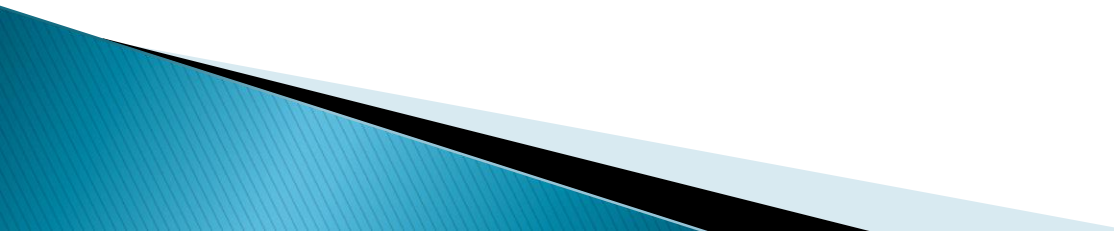
2017

- Maintain focus

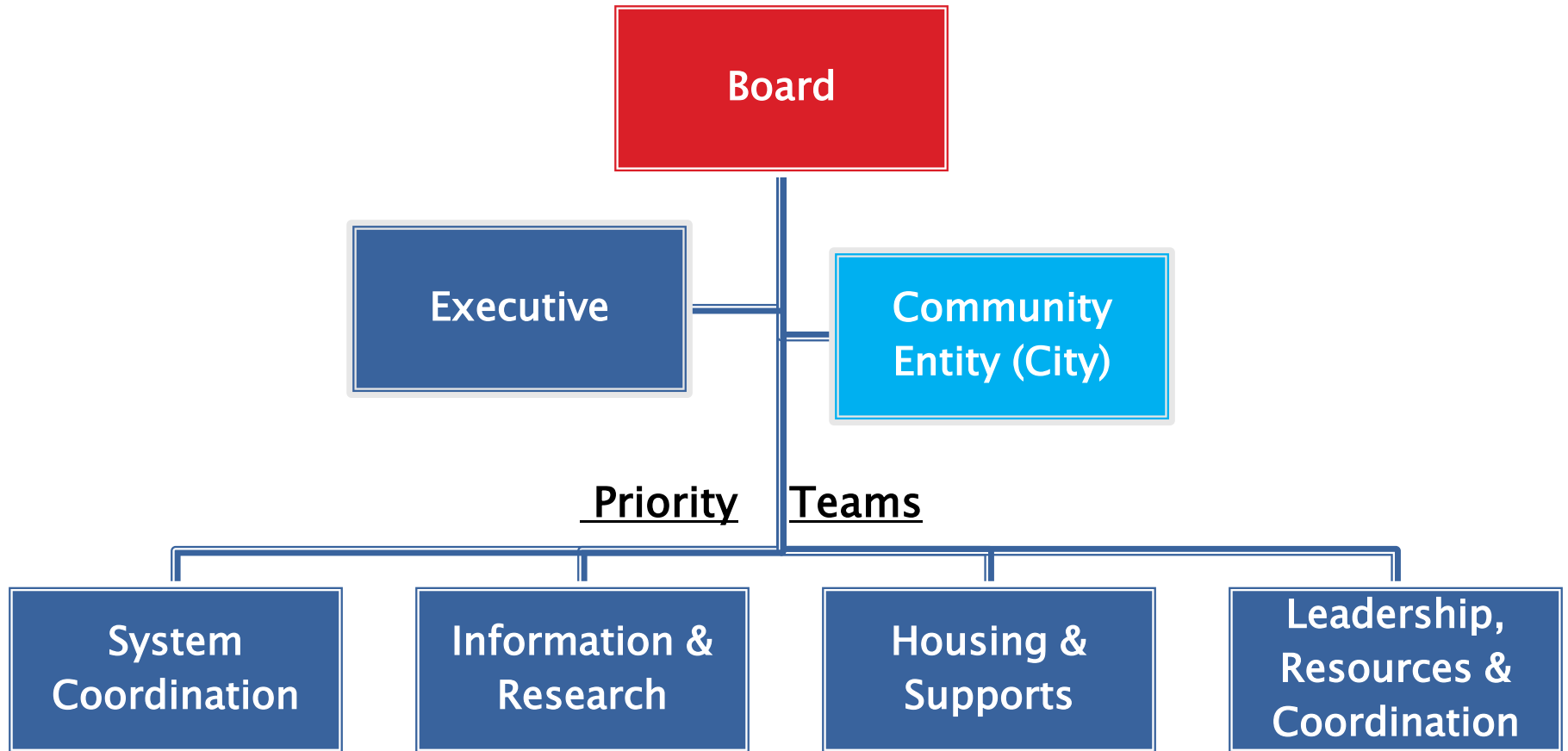
2018

- Focus on sustainability

# How will we get there?...and know that we're on the right path?

- ▶ Guided by Housing First principles.
  - ▶ Meaningfully engaging our communities.
  - ▶ Through inclusion, collaboration & consensus.
  - ▶ Having each other's back.
  - ▶ Leaving our hats at the door.
  - ▶ Learning & doing together.
  - ▶ Celebrating our milestones, acknowledging & overcoming our hurdles.
  - ▶ Assessing our progress, using 'ground truth'.
- 

# End Homelessness St. John's



# End Homelessness St. John's – Meet our Board

- **Shawn Skinner** (Chair)
- **Elizabeth Davis**, Co-chair, The Gathering Place
- **Tammy Davis**, Executive Director, United Way of NL
- **Aisling Gogan**, Coordinator, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Dept. of Seniors, Wellness & Social Development
- **Annemarie Johnson**, Senior Development Officer, Service Canada (Ex-officio)
- **Cynthia King**, Director, Income & Social Supports, Dept. of Advanced Education & Skills
- **Bruce Pearce**, Community Development, End Homelessness St. John's (Ex-officio)
- **Sheldon Pollett**, Executive Director, Choices for Youth
- **Colleen Simms**, Director, Mental Health & Addictions, Department of Health & Community Services
- **Gail Thornhill**, Director of Supportive Housing, Stella's Circle
- **Gail Tobin**, CEO, Iris Kirby House
- **Judy Tobin**, Manager, Non Profit Housing, Community Services Dept., City of St. John's (Ex-officio)
- **Madonna Walsh**, Manager, Affordable Housing, NL Housing
- **Jenny Wright**, Executive Director, St. John's Status of Women Council/Women's Centre

# Homelessness in NL & St. John's

A closer look

# NL homelessness estimates

## During 2012:

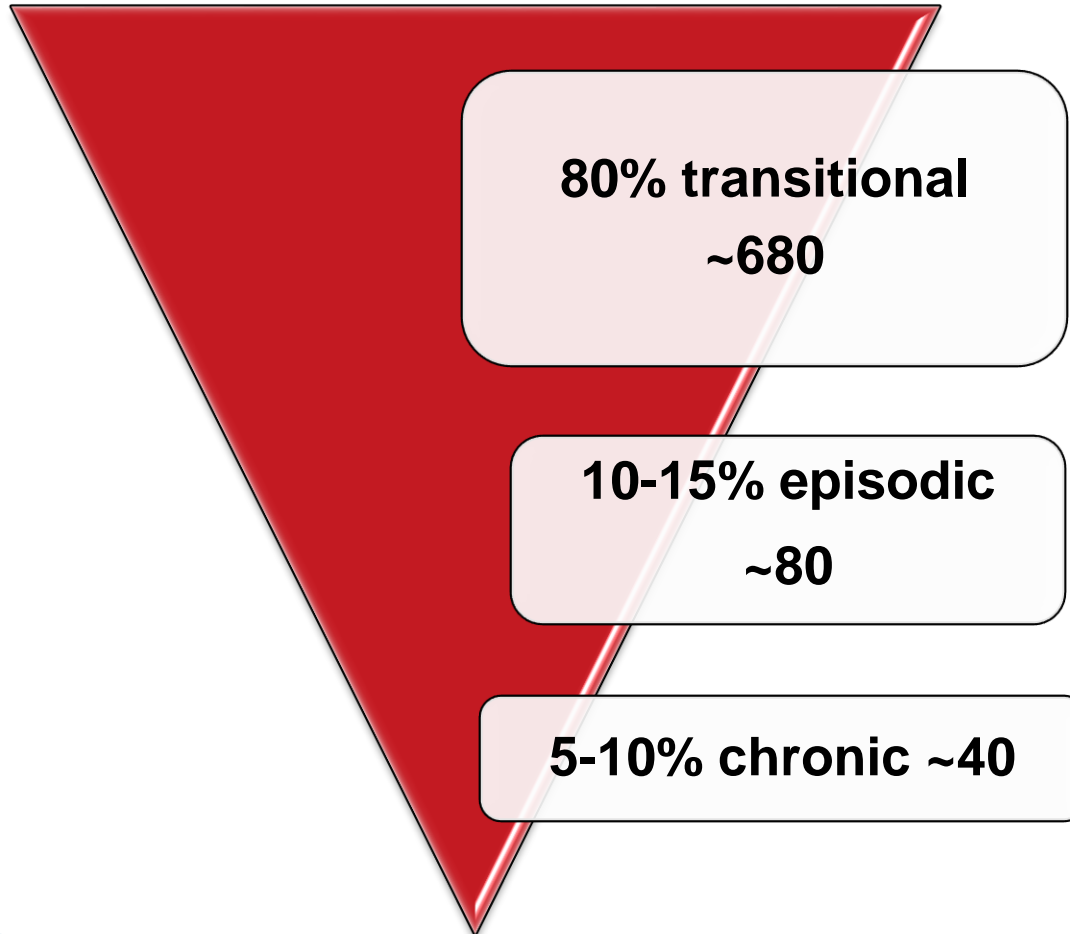
- 1,685 individuals required emergency shelter (this includes domestic violence shelters)
- 141 Individuals experienced unsheltered homelessness (people living on streets, in wooded areas, etc..)
- 3,743 individuals experienced hidden homelessness (temporarily living with friends or relatives)
- **An estimated total of 5,569 persons in NL experienced homelessness.**

# Estimates – By region

A breakdown of the 1,685 sheltered homeless estimate:

Region	
<b>St. John's</b>	<b>854</b>
Rural Avalon	154
Burin	124
Clarenville & Gander	114
Grand Falls– Windsor	34
Stephenville	92
Corner Brook– St. Anthony	143
Labrador	170
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,685</b>

# St. John's homeless population ~800





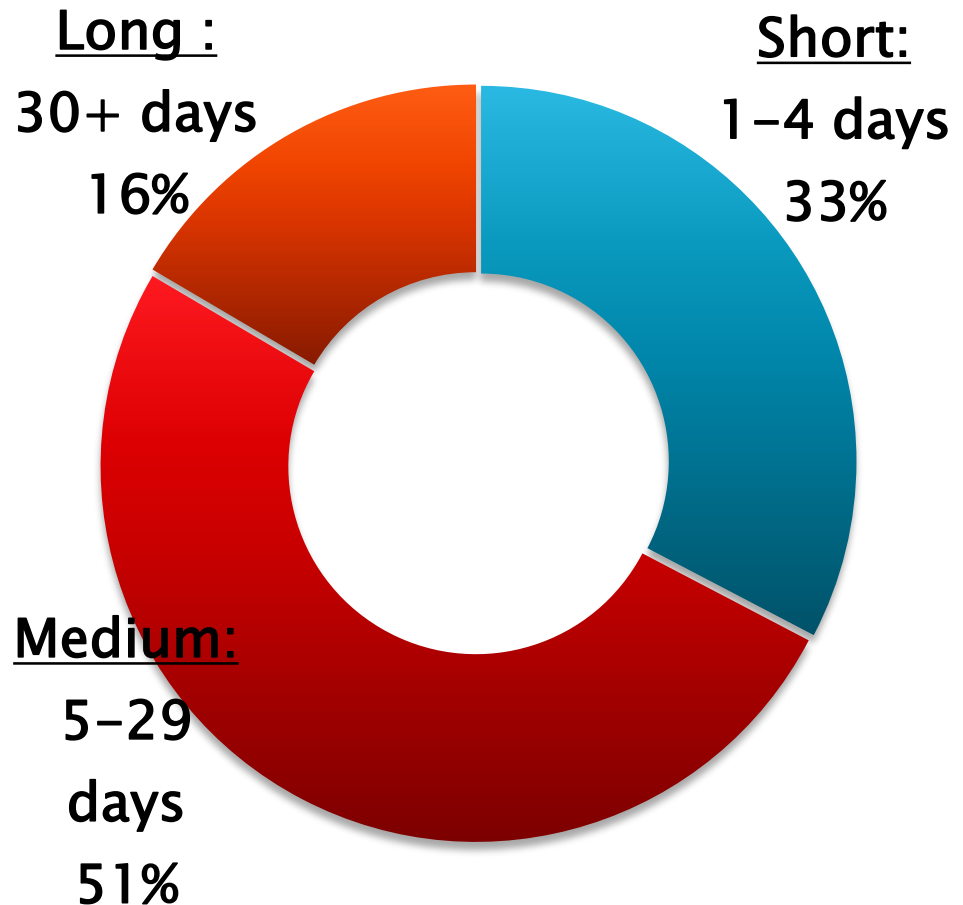
# St. John's shelter use

- 61.5% males
- 38.5% females
- 17.7% families
- 9.2% youth < 16
- 30% youth 16–24

## Data not available for:

- Aboriginal or ethnic identity, migration, rough sleeping, those with No Fixed Address (institutions, hotels).

## Length of stays:



# Why people use shelters

- ▶ **Main reasons for service:**

- Partner abuse, eviction, personal safety, lack of housing, family/relationship breakdown.

- ▶ **Contributing factors:**

- Mental health issues, substance use, conflict with the law, lack of housing (eviction, unsafe, etc.), family/relationship breakdown.

# Homeless counts

- ▶ St. John's will conduct its first biennial Count on November 30, 2016.
- ▶ EHSJ has also recruited the NL Statistics Agency in partnership with NL Housing & the NLHHN to develop data sharing & coordination.
- ▶ HIFIS-4 selected as our HMIS.



# Embedded research

- ▶ Commitment to evidence-based decision-making and planning, a “Homelessness Research Agenda” will be built into our community's approach to system planning.

## **Community Impacts of the St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness: 2000-2012 – A Research Report**

Prepared for:  
St. John's Community Advisory Committee on Homelessness

Prepared by:  
Goss Gilroy Inc.  
Management Consultants

For more information contact: Bruce Pearce  
709-689-9615  
[bpearce@nl.rogers.com](mailto:bpearce@nl.rogers.com)

September 23, 2012



GOSS GILROY INC.  
Management Consultants  
Conseillers en gestion

# Our interventions & investments

**A closer look**

# Matching interventions to needs

## Lower Needs

Prevention, Rapid Re-housing, Affordable Housing



## Moderate Needs

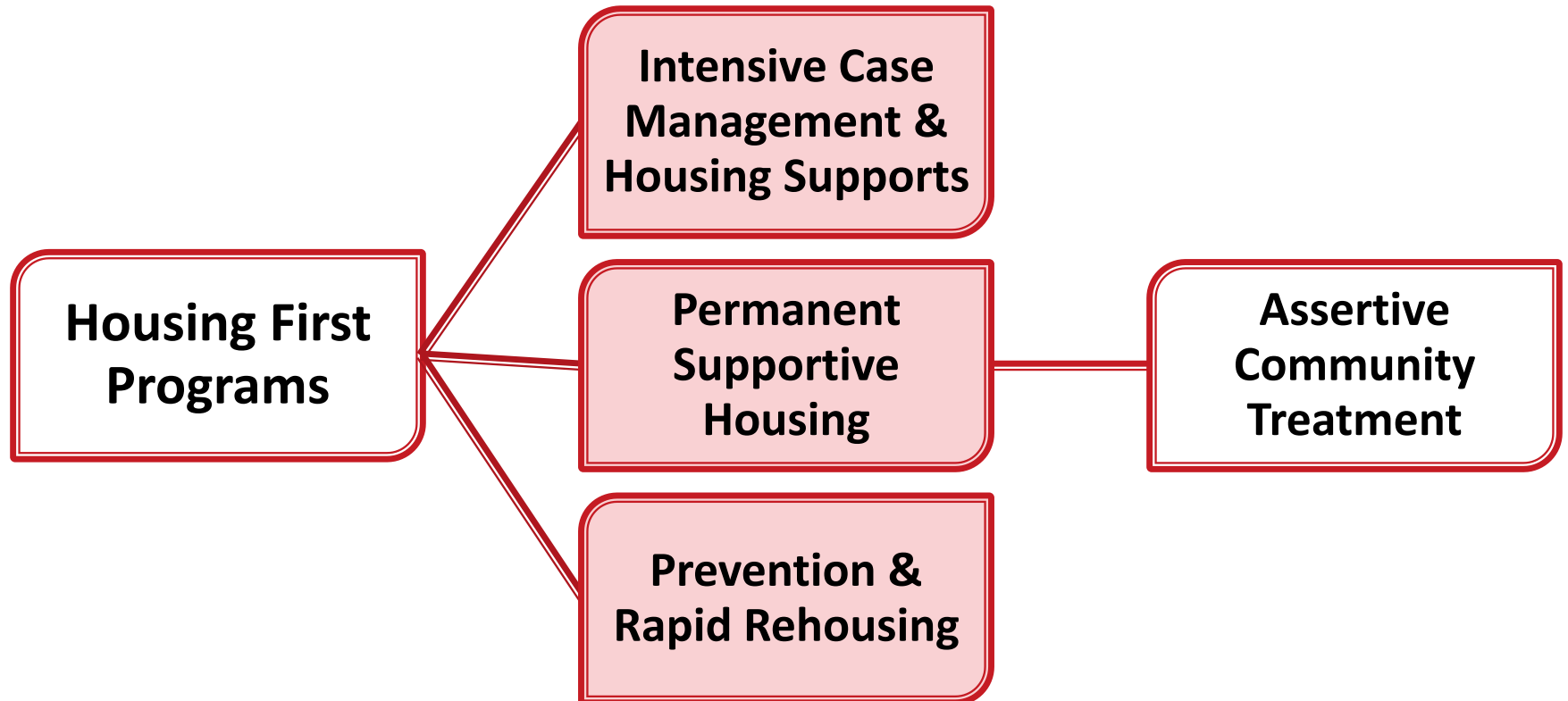
Intensive Case Management, Transitional Housing



## Higher Needs

Permanent Supportive Housing  
(Assertive Community Treatment)

# Our Housing First programs



<b>EHSJ Programs: 2014–2019</b>	<b>Client Type</b>	<b>Total Estimated Individuals Served</b>
<b>Intensive Case Management</b> (Launching 2015, sustain to 2019)	Chronically & episodically homeless	155
<b>Permanent Supportive Housing (capital)</b> (2014–2015)	Chronically homeless	13
<b>Prevention &amp; Rapid Re–housing</b> (Launching 2016, sustain to 2019)	Transitionally homeless	360 (approximately 240 households)

**528 Total**



# St. John's system framework

- ▶ In 2015 we engaged Dr. Alina Turner – supported by a local coordinator recruited from the community – to work with our Board's Housing First System Coordination Framework Advisory Team to develop the Framework through a best practices review & stakeholder engagement (COH assisted our PiT Count).
- ▶ In May 2016 – following a Provincial Housing First Forum and a Framework Design Review Session with stakeholders – our Board approved the resulting Framework and a supporting 2016–2019 investment plan for its implementation.
- ▶ In October 2016 we recruited a System Planner & Performance Management Planner to work with the community, people with lived experience & public systems to implement the Framework.
- ▶ The 3-year, \$1.83 million slate of Framework activities is 70% funded so far (with the 2016 starting year fully funded), thanks to contributions from HPS, the Government of NL, the City of St. John's & the United Way NL.

# St. John's hybrid CA model

- ▶ We are implementing a hybrid Coordinated Access (CA) model with multiple locations throughout the community using the same assessment form, targeting tools, and referral processes, with End Homelessness St. John's playing a key coordinating role supported by the new System Planner.
- ▶ St. John's has a limited number of providers working with the target population, which already act as access points to housing and support services.
- ▶ Need for enhanced coordination and alignment across these providers and methods of analysing trends system-wide, rather than on a case-by-case basis.
- ▶ Model aims to ensure there is 'no wrong door' to access coordinated services using the same protocols.

# St. John's CA Agencies

- ▶ Key agencies who are part of the homeless-serving system would become CA Agencies using consistent protocols.
- ▶ Capacity building, ongoing technical assistance and coordination support needed (EHSJ)
- ▶ Rollout would be phased, starting with 3-4 agencies in the next 12 months and expanding pending buy-in and capacity.
- ▶ Designated phone line to facilitate information and referrals using a standard protocols.
- ▶ The level of the authority for the CA Agencies is that of screening & assessment, rather than mandatory admissions where CA decisions are binding to the receiving program.

# Progress at work:

Ending chronic & episodic homelessness  
in St. John's, NL

# Front Step's interim evaluation

- ▶ Between Jan–Mar 2016, our new Intensive Case Management program 'Front Step' had accepted 32 referrals and housed 25 persons who had experienced chronic & episodic homelessness.
- ▶ The program is on target to house 70 persons during 2016.

# % of Front Step clients who say they've been helped to...

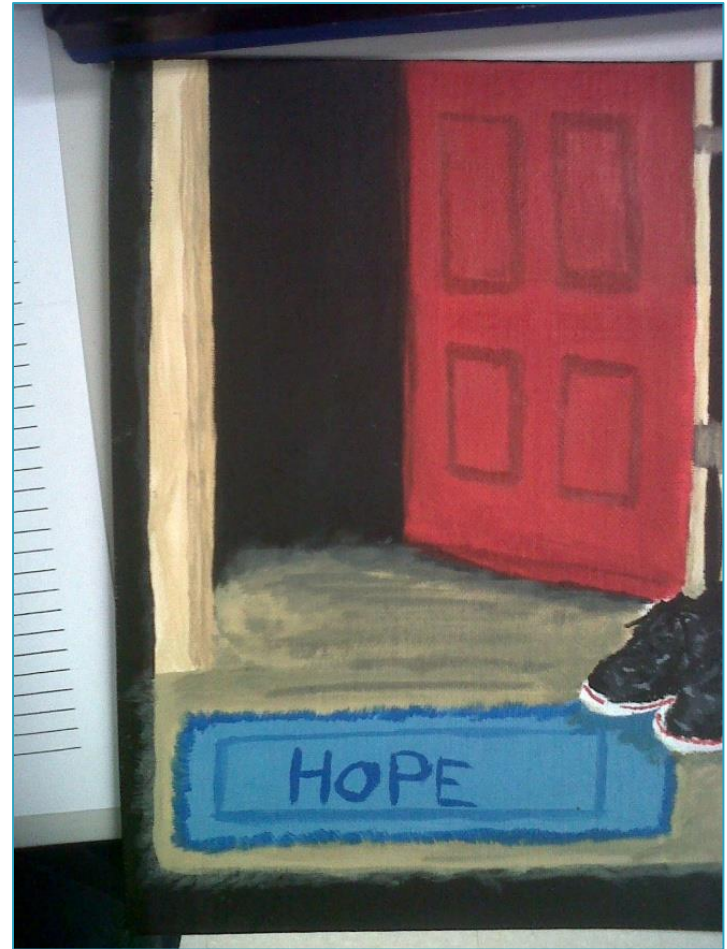
- ▶ Find housing (92%)
- ▶ Keep housing (100%)
- ▶ Help to plan for and get what they need (92%)
- ▶ Get to appointments (92%)
- ▶ Talk to landlords (85%)
- ▶ Build their daily skills (85%)
- ▶ Get needed funding/access Income Support (85%)

# Client satisfaction with Front Step

- ▶ On a scale of 1–10 (where 1 = not at all satisfied, and 10 = very satisfied), 83% of Front Step participants rated their degree of satisfaction highly (8 to 10 out of ten), with 50% rating it 10 out of 10.
- ▶ All of the participants surveyed felt the program will help them work on their challenges and move forward, thanks to the support and encouragement provided and the circle of care and safe housing which allows for focusing on other life issues.

# Opening doors together

- ▶ We see our Community Plan as a prime opportunity to address shared priorities, build partnerships with all governments & sectors, and forge an integrated system to end homelessness.
- ▶ Let's open new doors together!







Contact:  
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