

Housing Solutions Municipalities Can Control

Practical Actions for Newfoundland and Labrador Communities

*Building homes by removing barriers,
not waiting for someone else.*





Why We're Here

Newfoundland's housing challenge is local



Population growth in some regions and decline in others



Seniors need more housing choices



Young families struggle to find homes



Employers cannot recruit because workers cannot find housing



Construction costs remain high



Every municipality experiences the problem differently



Key message

Municipal governments cannot solve every part of the housing crisis—
but they control many of the decisions that determine whether housing gets built.



Municipalities Matter More Than Ever

Municipalities influence:



Development approvals



Building permit timelines



Land availability



Zoning



Infrastructure planning



Community acceptance



The question is no longer:

“Can municipalities solve housing?”

The better question is:

“How much easier can municipalities make it to build housing?”





Focus on What You Control

Cannot Control



- Interest rates
- Construction inflation
- Immigration targets
- Legislation
- Upper tier funding priorities

Can Influence



- Infrastructure investment
- Partnerships
- Public opinion
- Regional collaboration
- Crown land

Directly Control



- Zoning
- Approval/permit timelines
- Fees
- Municipal land
- Planning policies





Five Municipal Levers

Every municipality—large or small—has these levers.



1

Speed



2

Land



3

Rules



4

Partnerships



5

Leadership



These five levers are within your control.

Use them to create more housing opportunities in your community.





Lever 1: Build Faster by Reducing Approval Time

Every month of delay increases housing costs.

Municipalities can:



simplify application requirements



establish predictable approval timelines



publish development checklists



use concurrent reviews



pre-consult with developers



digitize permit processes



Question

How many approvals in your municipality take longer than they should?



Lever 2: Municipal Land is a Powerful Tool

Do we own or influence land that could become housing?

Options:



surplus land



underused parking lots



old public works sites



vacant municipal property



Crown land



Tax sales



Land is often the municipality's greatest housing asset.

Municipalities can sell, lease, partner, issue RFPs, and more.





Lever 3: Modernize Zoning

Many zoning bylaws were written decades ago.

Consider:



Secondary/garden suites



garden suites



multiplexes/apartments



row houses



mixed-use development



modular housing



reduced requirements (e.g. parking, set backs, lot sizes, etc.) where appropriate



Housing diversity creates affordability.

The “missing middle” is missing in many communities.





Lever 4: Partnerships Create Housing

Municipalities don't have to build homes.

Instead, partner with:



local developers



Indigenous governments



non-profit housing providers



housing co-operatives



private employers



educational institutions



churches



community organizations



Housing succeeds when municipalities convene partners.





Lever 5: Leadership Infrastructure as Housing Strategy

Housing cannot happen without:



water



sewer



roads



sidewalks



broadband



**Prioritize infrastructure that
unlocks housing rather than
only expanding outward.**





Regional Collaboration

Many housing markets cross municipal boundaries.

Regional opportunities include:



shared planning services



joint housing strategies



regional infrastructure



common development standards



shared building inspection



Housing markets are regional.
Planning should be too.





What Can We Do?

Small Communities Can Make Big Changes

Even communities with limited staff can:



review zoning



identify municipal land



simplify permits



improve communication



create housing partnerships



develop a housing action plan



**Small changes produce
large cumulative results.**





What Leading Municipalities Are Doing

Examples from across Canada:



pre-approved housing designs



one-stop permitting



housing accelerators



development concierge services



gentle density reforms



public land strategies



housing dashboards



The lesson:

**Most successful municipalities
changed processes—not just budgets.**





A Municipal Housing Action Plan



Year One



Review zoning



Map municipal land



Measure permit timelines



Meet local builders



Identify infrastructure priorities



Develop partnerships



Set housing targets





Questions Every Council Should Ask



Where can housing be built today?



What rules make building difficult?



What approvals create unnecessary delays?



What municipal land is underused?



What housing types are missing?



Who should we partner with?





The Opportunity

Housing is:



economic development



labour force development



healthy communities



aging in place



attracting young families



sustaining local businesses



**Housing is no longer only a planning issue.
It is a community sustainability issue.**





Every Municipality Can Move Housing Forward

You don't need to control everything.
You only need to improve the things within your control.

Start with:



faster approvals



better zoning



strategic land use



stronger partnerships



clear leadership



Communities that make it easier to build homes
will be the communities best positioned
to grow, attract talent, and thrive.





Questions?
