

Aging *Well*



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GROUP

prepared for





“Access to safe, quality, affordable housing – and to the supports necessary to maintain that housing – constitute one of the most basic and powerful social determinants of health.”

The health and wellbeing of seniors in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB) are closely tied to their ability to access safe, accessible, and affordable housing. When housing is unavailable or unaffordable, it creates a ripple effect—undermining physical health, increasing isolation, and reducing overall quality of life.

Although recent developments have expanded the local housing supply, significant gaps remain. Chief among them is the lack of dedicated housing options for seniors. Much of HVGB's housing stock consists of single-detached homes, which often do not meet the needs of older adults with mobility challenges. While new apartment construction has helped address some of this shortfall, it has not kept pace with rising demand.

Another critical issue is the absence of transitional housing along the care continuum. Seniors are often faced with a stark choice between fully independent living and long-term nursing care, with few options in between. This lack of intermediate support makes it difficult for residents to age in place safely and with dignity.

Affordability continues to be a pressing concern. Seniors living on fixed incomes often struggle to find housing within their means. Community members have expressed growing frustration with the overall lack of affordable housing—but for seniors, the problem is compounded by a limited supply of rental units designed to accommodate aging needs. As a result, some are left with no choice but to relocate outside the community in search of appropriate housing and care.

Despite recent developments, several gaps remain in the HVGB seniors' housing landscape. One of the primary challenges is the limited availability of dedicated senior-specific housing (Labrador Friendship Centre, 2022). The existing housing stock consists largely of single-detached homes, which can be unsuitable for seniors with mobility issues. While new apartment units under construction address part of this gap, they are not sufficient to meet the community's needs. Gaps in the continuum of care, with few intermediate options between independent living and full-time nursing care, present another challenge. Without these options, seniors find it difficult to age in place or access appropriate care as their needs evolve.

Affordability is another concern, as many seniors struggle to find housing within their budget. Local residents have voiced concerns about the lack of affordable housing options across all demographics. However, the situation is further complicated by the limited availability of rental properties designed for seniors, forcing some individuals to leave the community in search of more suitable accommodations.

In order to further understand and quantify this phenomenon, the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Housing and Homelessness Coalition commissioned The Purposeful Group to undertake a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment for seniors in 2024-25. The study identified four key housing issues facing seniors in HVGB and proposes four primary strategies to address them.

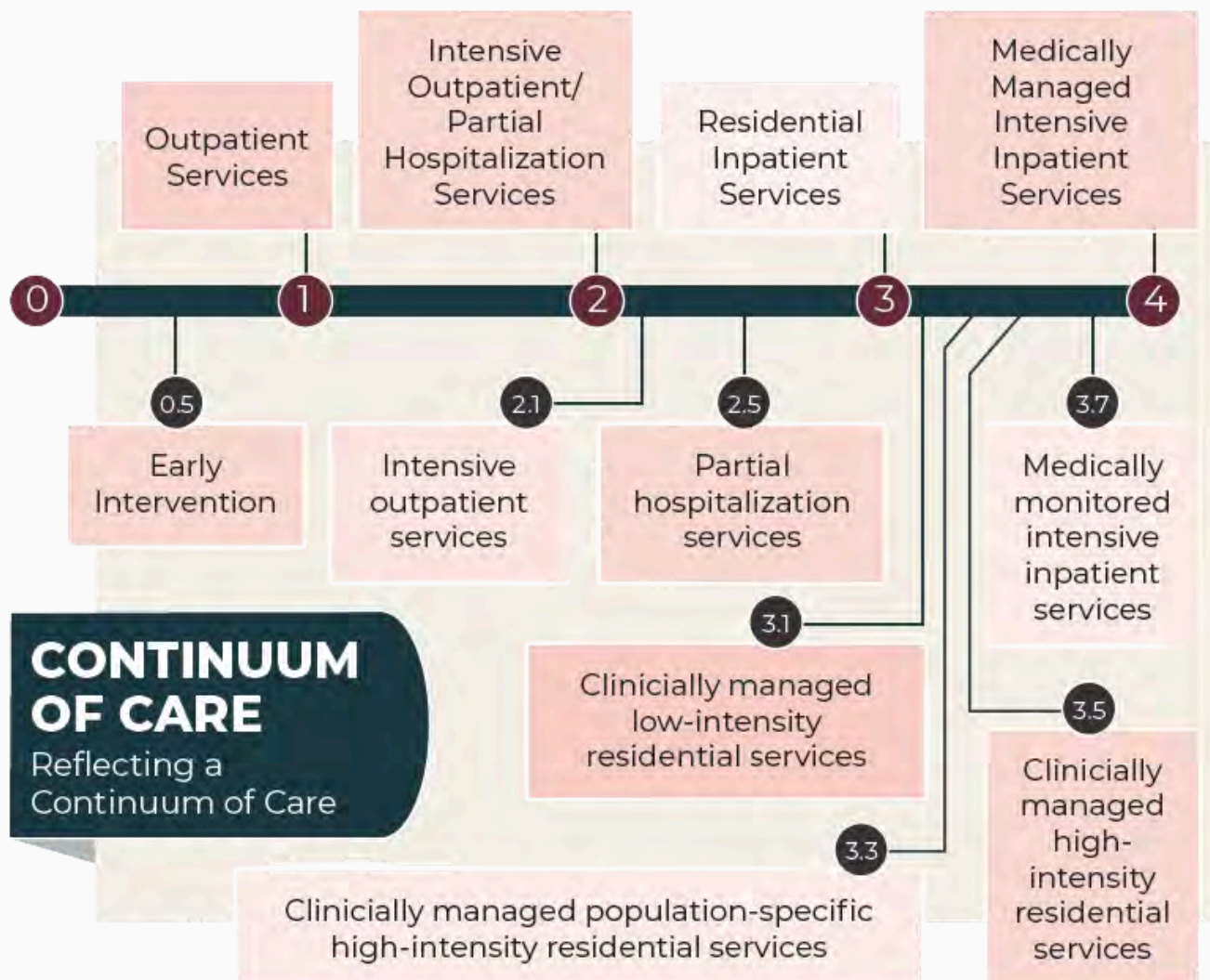


Key Housing Issues

1

Insufficient Assisted Living and Housing Options that Support Aging Transitions

- The few assisted living options available are administered through the Friendship Centre, but they are insufficient to meet the growing demand.
- There are key gaps in the continuum of care, which prevent residents from aging in place with gradual increases in support as needed.
- Current housing options only work for people who can live without support or people who require Level 3 or 4 healthcare support.



2

Limited Access to Health Services:

- Seniors often need to make choices between paying for housing or accessing health services. This is compounded by the costs associated with travel to seek healthcare.
- Current levels of homecare services are insufficient to meet community needs. The low wages (\$17/hour) offered to homecare workers make it difficult to attract and retain adequate staff. Combined with high demand for services, seniors who wish to continue living at home are left with few options.

3

Impact on Physical and Mental Health:

- Living in inappropriate housing, i.e. homes with stairs and lacking safety features, significantly increases the physical health risks facing seniors.
- More accessible, one-level units are needed to enable seniors to age independently.
- A sense of community is crucial for social wellbeing. In HVGB, there is a declining number of public gathering spaces and opportunities. This is compounded by transportation challenges, which results in isolation and negative impacts on mental health.

4

Medical and Housing System Disconnect:

- There is inadequate coordination between the healthcare system and organizations focused on meeting housing needs.
- Homecare is an essential service that bridges health and housing, yet it is not effectively provided in the community.
- Without a Level 2 assisted living facility, seniors feel pressured to leave the area to access appropriate care. This contributes to emotional distress, as many seniors fear leaving the communities they have called home for most of their lives, and further isolates them from the support of family and friends.



Recommendations

1

Introduce Policy Changes to Support Seniors Aging in Place

- At provincial and local levels, introduce policies geared to making it more affordable for seniors to continue living at home. This could include rent geared-to-income solutions, universal basic income for seniors, or tax reductions for senior homeowners.

2

Diversify Housing Options

- Attract and incentivize a broader range of housing providers/developer to create more affordable and diverse housing choices specifically for seniors. This could include senior co-housing or assisted living communities with affordability and accessibility at the forefront.

3

Integrate Health and Housing through Aging in Place Models

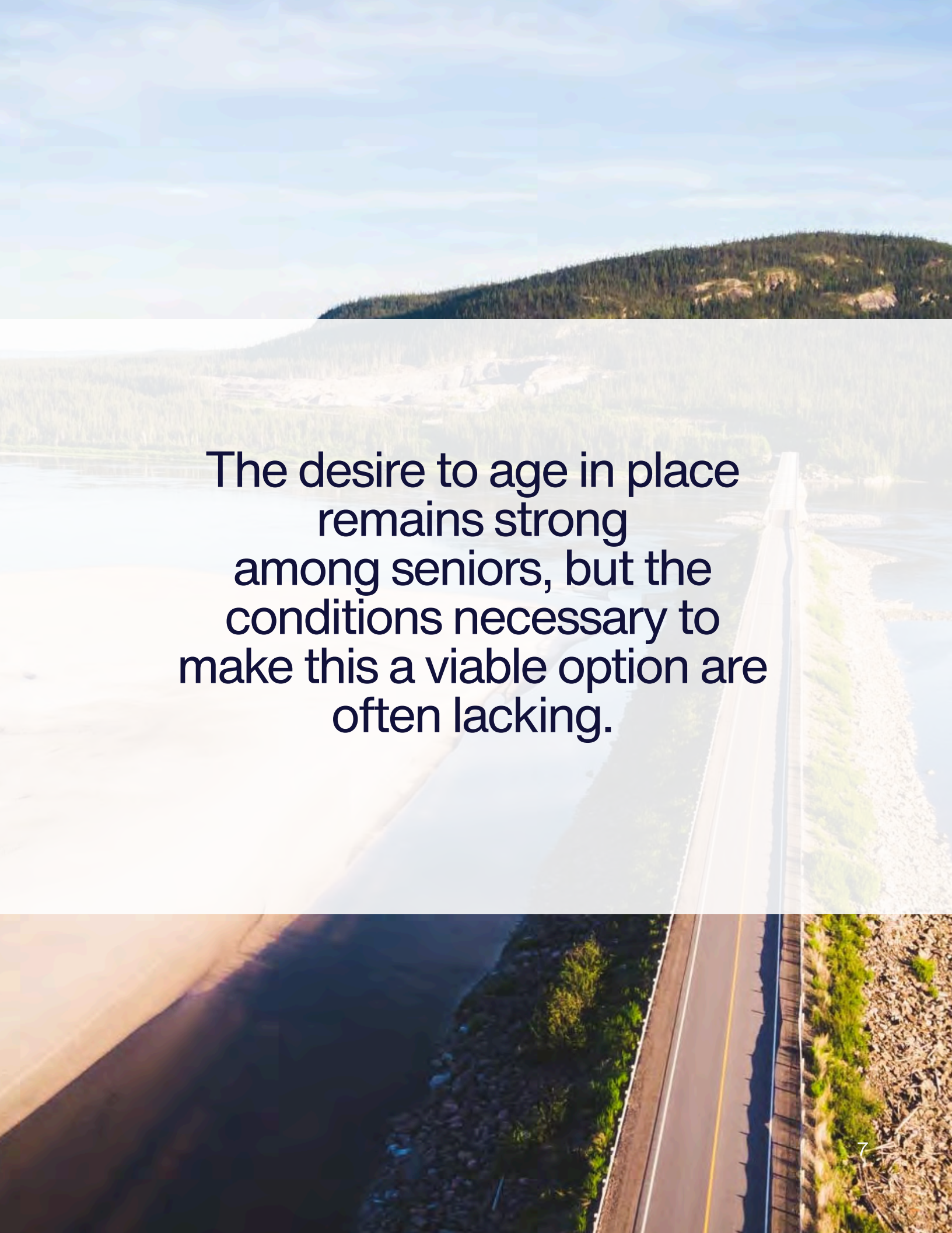
- Increase the availability of Levels 1 and 2 care through enhanced homecare options.
- Invest in housing designed for accessibility and affordability for seniors to age in place

4

Strengthen the Care Industry:

- Address wage disparities in the care industry by advocating for higher pay for homecare workers and exploring paid caregiving roles for family members.
- Home Care: There is a clear and growing need for a home care agency to ensure seniors receive the services they require, enabling them to safely age in place by choice. Home care agencies play a vital role in both preventing health crises and supporting smooth transitions between levels of care, ultimately enhancing seniors' safety and well-being.



The background image is a composite of two photographs. The top half shows a wide, calm body of water under a clear blue sky, with a forested hill in the distance. The bottom half shows a close-up of a paved road with a yellow center line, bordered by green vegetation and a rocky embankment. A semi-transparent white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text.

The desire to age in place
remains strong
among seniors, but the
conditions necessary to
make this a viable option are
often lacking.

Introduction

Housing shortages and gaps in healthcare services are placing increasing strain on residents, particularly older adults and vulnerable populations. This Community Needs Assessment compiles existing research and community insights to offer a comprehensive picture of the current and future housing, healthcare and support needs of seniors. The findings highlight the urgent need for proactive investment and collaborative action to ensure that seniors can age safely and with dignity in their communities.

Challenges with Aging in Rural Communities

Seniors in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and across Labrador face mounting challenges in accessing appropriate housing, healthcare and support services. While rural communities have been long-supported by strong social connections and informal care networks, these traditional supports are under increasing strain. Aging populations, the outmigration and disconnection of younger generations within communities and increasing care needs are stretching families and volunteers beyond their capacity. This reality underscores the urgent need for investment in core infrastructure and the professionalization of senior care services to ensure sustainable, long-term support.

Home care services are limited, transportation is unreliable or unaffordable and there are few intermediate housing options such as assisted living or respite care. For seniors with more complex health needs, access to specialized medical care frequently requires costly and stressful travel to larger centers, disrupting their lives and eroding their wellbeing. Without access to local, integrated services, many seniors face the risk of crisis-driven relocations or remaining in unsuitable and unsafe living situations.

These challenges are compounded by economic and demographic shifts. A shrinking working-age population means fewer people are available to provide both formal and informal care, and less tax revenue to support publicly funded solutions. At the same time, municipalities and community organizations are being asked to fill service gaps without adequate resources.

This imbalance is unsustainable, placing a heavy burden on unpaid caregivers and underfunded non-profits.

Without strategic investment in health and housing infrastructure, workforce development and senior-focused services, seniors and their support networks will continue to bear the brunt of these shortfalls.





Seniors Housing Needs

Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB) has experienced steady population growth in recent years, increasing from 6,678 residents in 2016 to 6,996 in 2021, and reaching an estimated 8,219 by 2023 (Statistics Canada, 2022). This upward trend reflects the community's growing appeal, likely fueled by expanding economic opportunities, infrastructure development, and rising demand for services. Nearly half of HVGB's population identifies as Indigenous, shaping the town's unique demographic profile and influencing culturally responsive service needs and policy planning.

Like many parts of Canada, HVGB is undergoing a demographic shift marked by an aging baby boom generation, senior in-migration, and youth out-migration. Between 2016 and 2023, the number of residents aged 65 and older rose by 15.6%, from 780 to 902 individuals (Statistics Canada, 2022). Although HVGB's median age (39.6) remains below the provincial median of 48, seniors comprise an increasingly significant portion of the population.

Projections suggest continued growth, with the seniors population expected to rise by an additional 11.3% over the near term (Labrador Friendship Centre, 2022).

This demographic shift is placing growing pressure on local housing infrastructure. HVGB faces a mounting challenge in meeting the needs of older adults, with increased demand for both independent living and assisted living options (NLHC, 2024). Limited availability, aging stock, and long waitlists further exacerbate the problem.

This literature review draws on data from the past five years—including government reports, local assessments, and media coverage—to examine the state of seniors' housing in HVGB. It analyzes current supply, unmet demand, and projected needs, considering key factors such as unit availability, waitlists, population trends, and planned development projects (Government of Canada, 2023; Labrador Friendship Centre, 2022). Together, this data provides a comprehensive snapshot of the challenges and opportunities facing seniors' housing in the region.

Demographic Shifts and Social Determinants of Housing Needs

The aging trend in HVGB mirrors national patterns in Canada, where increased longevity and the aging of the baby boomer generation are reshaping community needs (Ahn et al., 2024; Park et al., 2024). If current growth trends continue, the senior population in HVGB could reach approximately 3,500 by 2045—a significant demographic shift that requires immediate and sustained attention to housing planning.

Seniors' housing preferences are also changing. Many older adults now prioritize smaller, more manageable units that support independence while offering access to health services and opportunities for social connection (Jancz & Trojanek, 2020; Gawlak, 2022). Research shows that the quality and stability of housing—the physical environment—are key social determinants of health, influencing everything from fall risk to mental health outcomes (Siltanen et al., 2023; Sirén et al., 2024).

Current Housing Supply in HVGB

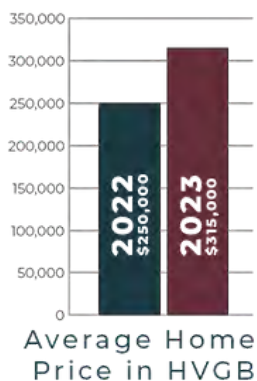
Independent living units for seniors in HVGB are currently limited. The Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) maintains a portfolio of affordable housing units, but demand continues to exceed supply, with 52 seniors reportedly on the waitlist in late 2024 (NLHC, 2024). Private market rentals are often out of reach for seniors living on fixed incomes, with one-bedroom units ranging between \$1,500 and \$1,800 per month—well above affordability thresholds (CBC News, 2024).

Assisted living options remain largely absent in the region. The primary care facility, the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Long-Term Care Home, offers 70 beds with 24-hour nursing, but lacks transitional or mid-level care options (Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2023). This forces many seniors to enter long-term care prematurely or rely on inadequate in-home supports.

Barriers to Supply Expansion

Multiple factors restrict the development of senior-appropriate housing in HVGB. Economic constraints, limited funding, regulatory hurdles, and aging infrastructure all contribute to an undersupply of accessible and affordable units (Ji et al., 2023). Moreover, most existing structures are not built to modern accessibility standards, creating mobility barriers and limiting aging-in-place options (Tang et al., 2024; Larcombe et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities in existing senior housing environments, particularly around social isolation, safety, and inadequate infection control measures. These issues reinforce the need for safe, community-oriented housing designs that foster connection and resilience (Chan et al., 2021).



Socioeconomic Pressures and Housing Affordability

Seniors in HVGB face increasing economic hardship. Rising rental costs and limited income severely constrain housing choices (Redden et al., 2021; Jolanki, 2021). The financial burden can lead to housing insecurity, with some seniors living in unsuitable or unsafe conditions, sharing space with relatives, or even residing in emergency shelters (CBC News, 2024). This inequity highlights the urgent need for targeted affordable housing policies and supports (Ahn et al., 2024).

\$1688
Average Cost of
Monthly Rental
in HVGB
(CareerBeacon 2023)



Demographics in Housing

Category	Percentage	Estimated Number	Source
Population aged 55+	27%	~2,170	Community Accounts, 2021
Population aged 65+	13%	~1,040	Statistics Canada, 2021
Home ownership rate (55+)	75%	~1,615 households	Community Accounts, 2021
Renter rate (55+)	26%	~555 households	Community Accounts, 2021
Households spending 30%+ on housing	11%	~230 households	Community Accounts, 2021



Current Rental and Seniors Housing Stock in Happy Valley-Goose Bay

Happy Valley-Goose Bay has a limited and uneven rental housing stock, which presents significant challenges for seniors—particularly those requiring accessible or age-appropriate accommodations. As of the 2021 Census, approximately 1,105 households in HVGB were renters, accounting for roughly 36% of all private dwellings (Statistics Canada, 2021). Within this group, about 19.5% (approximately 215 households) lived in subsidized housing, including public and non-profit units (Statistics Canada, 2021).

A considerable portion of these subsidized units are managed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC), which operates social housing in the community. While specific figures on seniors-only units are not publicly disaggregated, anecdotal and policy-level evidence suggests that a portion of the public portfolio is designated for older adults, typically in the form of one-bedroom cottages or apartments (NLHC, 2024).

Despite these public efforts, the town's supply of accessible rental units has been critically limited until very recently. In late 2024, NLHC completed a 16-unit affordable housing development in HVGB. This marked a turning point for accessible housing in the region: 2 of the units were built to full wheelchair-accessible standards, and an additional 6 were constructed to be “visitable,” with barrier-reduced features such as no-step entrances and wider doorways (NLHC, 2024). Prior to this, local advocacy groups and housing stakeholders routinely highlighted the near-total absence of wheelchair-accessible rentals in the community (HVGB Housing & Homelessness Coalition, 2023).

In terms of purpose-built seniors' rental housing, the available supply remains modest. There are no large private-sector seniors' apartment buildings or retirement residences in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Most older adults live in general community housing, public units, or long-term care facilities if medical needs dictate such placement (Labrador Friendship Centre, 2022; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2023). The town's 70-bed long-term care home, operated by the provincial government, provides medical care but does not substitute for independent living options (Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 2023).

The new 2024 NLHC development is often informally referred to as “seniors' housing” by local stakeholders due to the high demand from older residents, though it remains formally open to all waitlisted applicants (NLHC, 2024). Housing needs assessments and community planning documents continue to emphasize the critical shortage of affordable, accessible, and age-appropriate housing for seniors (Labrador Friendship Centre, 2022; HVGB Housing & Homelessness Coalition, 2023).

While recent progress has been made in adding a small number of barrier-free and affordable units, Happy Valley-Goose Bay remains underserved in all three core categories: total rental supply, accessible housing, and purpose-built seniors housing. The gap between supply and need is expected to widen as the senior population continues to grow over the coming two decades.



Forecasted Housing Demand

Based on the 2021 data from the Community Accounts for Newfoundland and Labrador, Happy Valley-Goose Bay had approximately 2,160 residents aged 55 and over.

Using this figure as a baseline and applying an annual growth rate of 2.2%, the projected senior population (aged 55+) for the next 5, 10, and 20 years is as follows:

Year	Projected Seniors Population (55+)	Percentage Increase from 2021
2026	2,408	11.50%
2031	2,685	24.30%
2041	3,338	54.50%

Housing Demand Projections

Assuming an average household size of 1.5 persons for seniors, the number of housing units required to accommodate the projected senior population is estimated as follows:

Year Projected Seniors Population (55+) Estimated Housing Units Needed:

2026 1,605 units
2031 1,790 units
2041 2,225 units

This analysis underscores the need for proactive planning to ensure that adequate and appropriate housing options are available to meet the growing demand from the aging population in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.



Changing Needs Across the Continuum of Care

LONG-TERM CARE

Long-term care facilities in HVGB are primarily publicly funded and operated. They provide 24-hour nursing care and medical services for seniors with complex care needs. As of January 2025, there are more than 3,200 long-term care beds in 42 facilities across the province. The average cost for a long-term care facility bed is \$10,200 per person per month and is publicly funded up to a certain income level.

Long wait times for long-term care (LTC) in Canada are driven by staff shortages, underfunded home and community care and poorly managed waitlists. Expanding home and community-based services, especially in rural areas, could ease LTC demand and offer a more cost-effective solution for governments.

Happy Valley-Goose Bay currently has one 70-bed accredited facility that provides Level 3 and Level 4 nursing care. This includes a 13-bed protective care unit designed to support seniors with advanced care needs or cognitive impairments.

Metric	Lab-Grenfell
Number of LTC facilities	4
Number of all LTC beds	151
Average occupancy rate (2021)	100%
Avg. number of clients on a formal waitlist (per month, 2022-23)	23
Estimated annual unique individuals	Likely fewer than 276 (due to repeat months)

ASSISTED LIVING

Personal care homes are privately owned and operated but are licensed and regulated by the government. They provide care and accommodation for seniors and adults who need assistance with daily living but do not require onsite nursing services. The Newfoundland and Labrador government subsidizes 85% of residents in personal care homes. The rate is \$2,395 per person per month, with an average subsidy of \$1,200.

The Labrador Friendship Centre Assisted Living Program is currently the only facility offering residential Level 2 care in HVGB. It offers seven (7) twobedroom apartments, with 24/7 support, serving seniors requiring moderate levels of assistance.

Region	Licensed PCHs	Number of Beds	Average Occupancy	Average Monthly Waitlist
NL (Total)	85	5,103	83%	113
Eastern	41	2,496	83%	31
Central	26	1,678	80%	32
Western	13	785	87%	22
Lab-Grenfell	5	144	93%	28

AGING IN PLACE – HOMECARE SERVICES

Most seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador, like those across Canada, prefer to age in place—remaining in their homes with appropriate support. Home care services play a key role in enabling this, with 86% of NL households receiving home care in 2022 reporting it helped them stay at home, above the national rate of 83%. While data has limitations, this suggests home care is effective for those receiving it, though gaps remain for those not served.

Home care agencies in Newfoundland and Labrador are primarily private businesses. They can be set up as incorporated companies or limited partnerships, as recommended by the government. These agencies provide care services to individuals in their own homes. The province has recently increased funding for home care agencies to improve the quality of care and implement new operational standards. In 2023, the government announced nearly \$8 million in additional funding for the sector.

The province is working towards modernizing and digitizing its home care services, which will connect regional health authorities, service providers and family caregivers through a unified system. This initiative aims to improve data collection, monitoring and overall care quality in the home care sector.



There are currently two sources of home care in HVGB.

Home and Community Care Program (HCCP): This program is offered by the Nunatsiavut Government and provides various home care services including personal care, home management, palliative care and in-home respite. It is designed for beneficiaries of the Labrador Inuit Land Claim Agreement living in the area.

Community Health Services: Provided by Labrador-Grenfell Health, these services include home care nursing and palliative care, along with assessments for institutional placements. Residents can self-refer or be referred by healthcare providers.

Region	# of Home Care Agencies	# of Home Care Clients
NL (Total)	50	6,650
Lab-Grenfell	2	67

Region	% of Hospital Discharges Requiring Extended Stay	Median ALC Days (Hospital Stay)
NL (Total)	11%	9 days
Lab-Grenfell	N/A	6 days





Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to assess the housing, transportation, and care support needs of seniors in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The methodology integrates both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing seniors in the region.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

1. Community Engagement Session

A community engagement session was held with 27 seniors in attendance, providing an open forum for participants to share their experiences and concerns regarding housing, transportation and care support. The session facilitated meaningful discussions and helped identify key barriers and priorities from the perspectives of seniors themselves.

2. Public Survey

The survey was conducted at the public consultation and had 27 responses. Its intent was to gather quantitative data on seniors' housing experiences and preferences, providing additional insight into trends and challenges in the region.

3. Facilitated Stakeholder Conversation

A facilitated stakeholder conversation was conducted with subject area experts representing Labrador Grenfell Health, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Mokami Status of Women. This session provided in-depth insights into policy considerations, healthcare-related challenges and gender specific issues related to seniors' housing and care.

4. Key Informant Interviews

In-depth, one-on-one interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, including representatives from housing agencies, healthcare providers, municipal officials and senior advocacy groups. These interviews provided qualitative perspectives on policy gaps, resource limitations and innovative approaches to addressing seniors' housing and support needs. Interview participants were selected through a review process conducted by the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Housing and Homelessness Coalition, prioritizing diverse perspectives from across the housing, healthcare, government and community service sectors. Efforts were made to include representatives from Indigenous organizations, healthcare providers, municipal officials and senior advocacy groups to ensure a broad, community-driven representation of voices.

DATA ANALYSIS

The research employed a thematic analysis approach for qualitative data, identifying recurring themes, patterns and concerns raised in the community engagement session, stakeholder conversation and key informant interviews. Quantitative survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to highlight trends in seniors' housing experiences, affordability and accessibility challenges.

The integration of both qualitative and quantitative data ensured a balanced and evidence-based understanding of the issues. The following is a summary of the key themes, issues and ideas shared by community members and stakeholders, with primary data integrated to reflect the lived experiences of seniors in the region.

Primary Research

Survey #1: Consultation

n=27

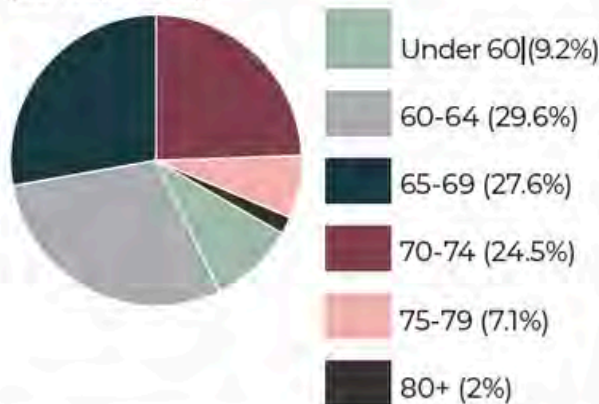
Survey findings highlight the pressing housing and support challenges faced by seniors in HVGB:

- **55.5%** of seniors surveyed reported being “somewhat unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” with the senior housing situation in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.
- **14.8%** of respondents reported having “no” family support, while 25.9%
- reported having “some” family support

Survey #2: Online Survey

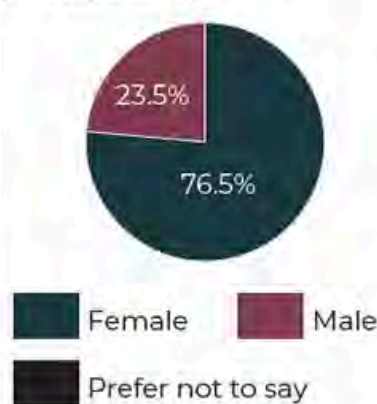
What is your age group?

(98 responses)



What is your gender?

(98 responses)

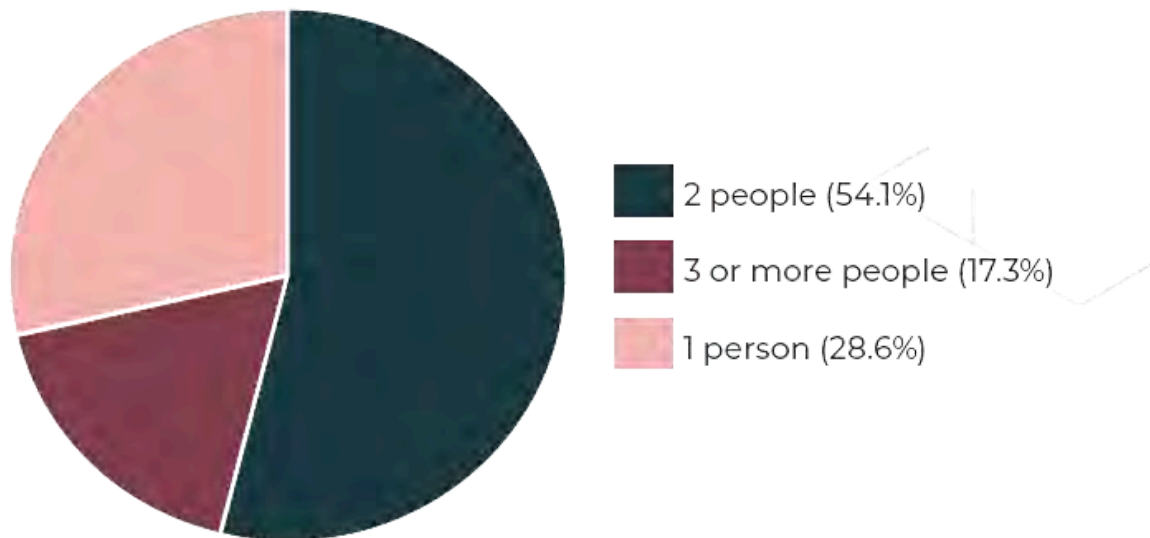


How long have you lived in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB)? (92 responses)

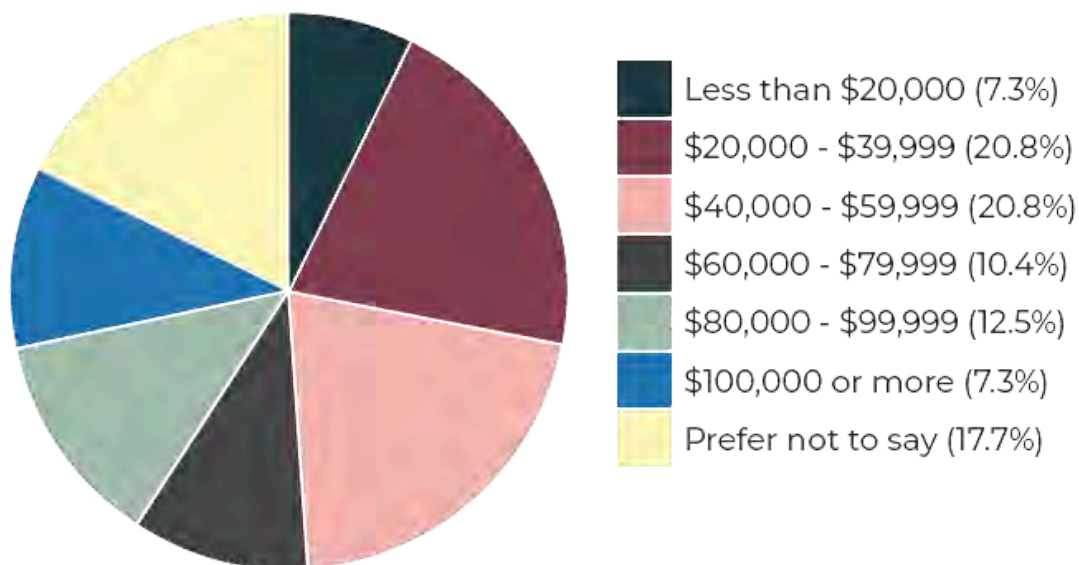


What size is your household?

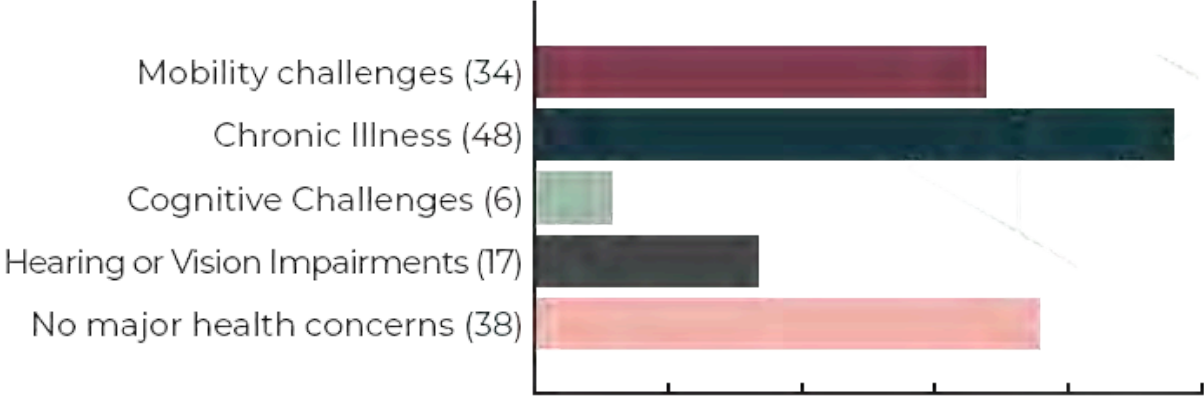
(98 responses)



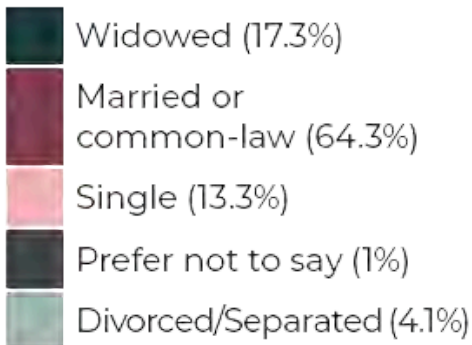
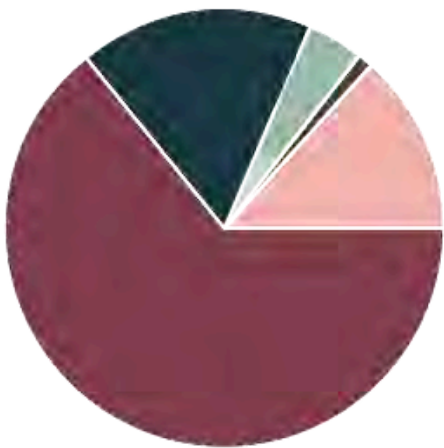
What is your approximate annual household income? (This information is kept confidential and used only for research purposes) (96 responses)



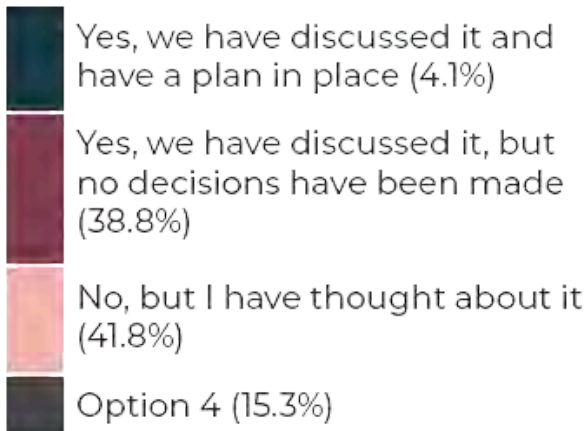
Do you have any health conditions that may affect your housing or care needs? (select all that apply) (98 responses)



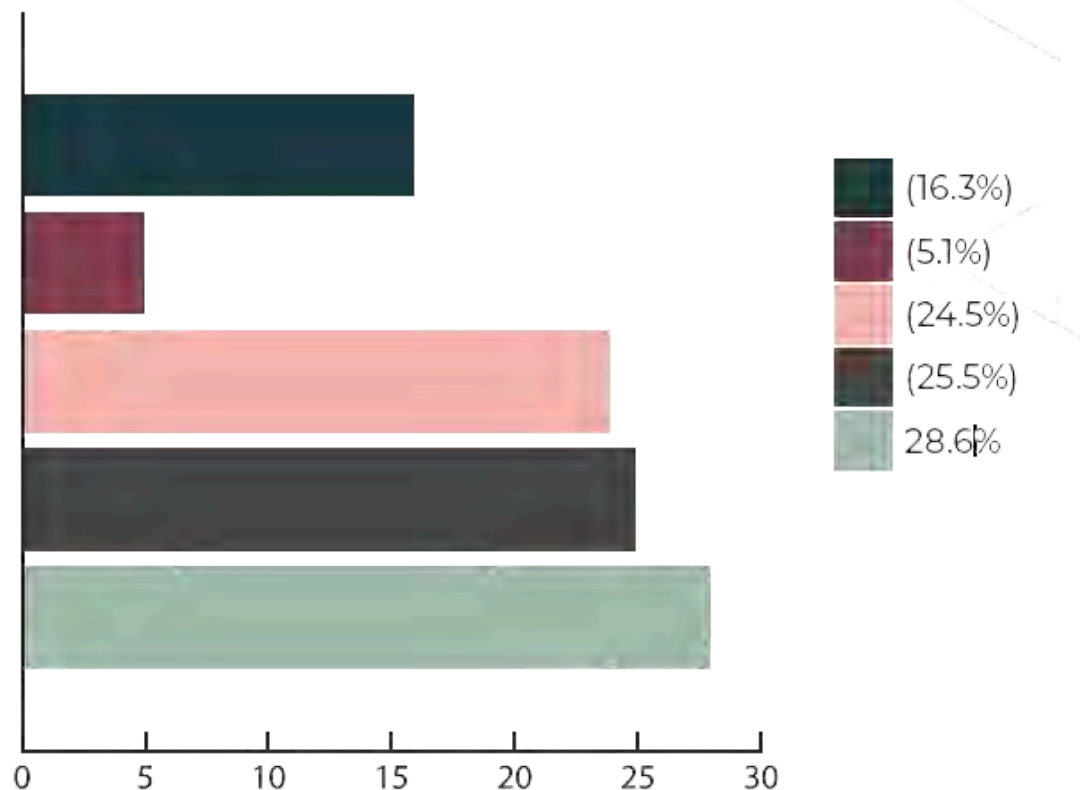
What is your marital status? (98 responses)



Have you had a conversation with your family or friends about downsizing, moving to assisted living, or other future housing options? (98 responses)

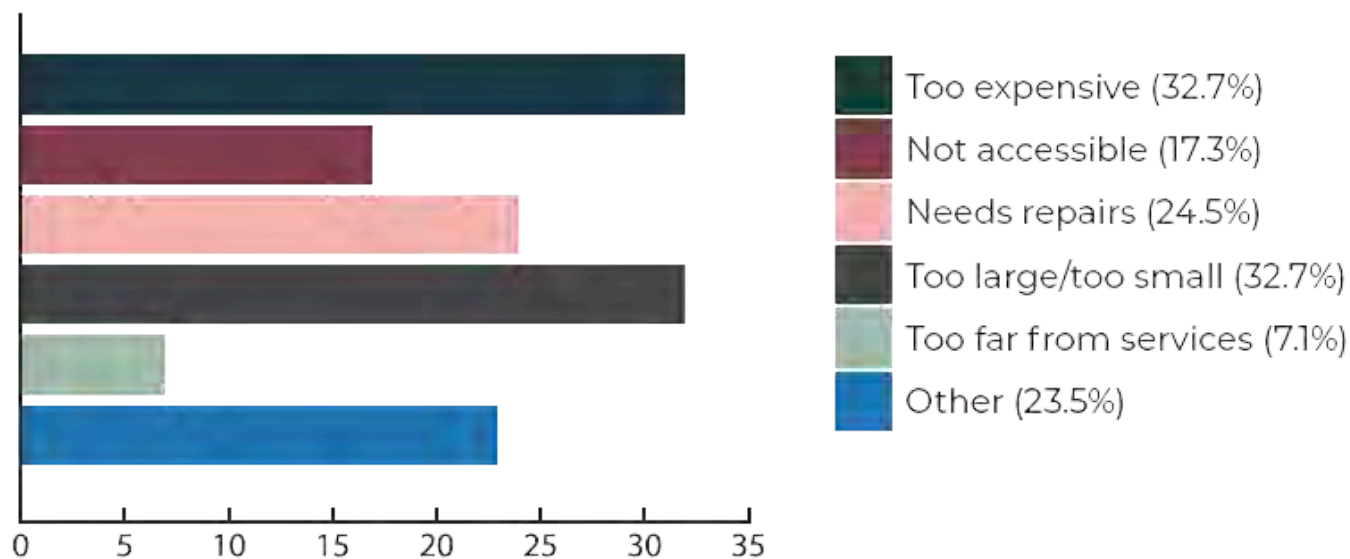


How satisfied are you with your current housing situation?



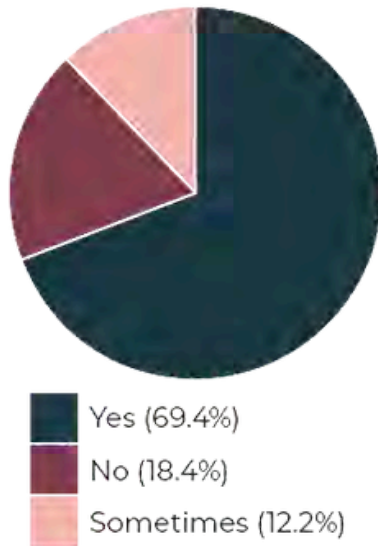
What are the biggest challenges you face in your current home?

(98 responses)



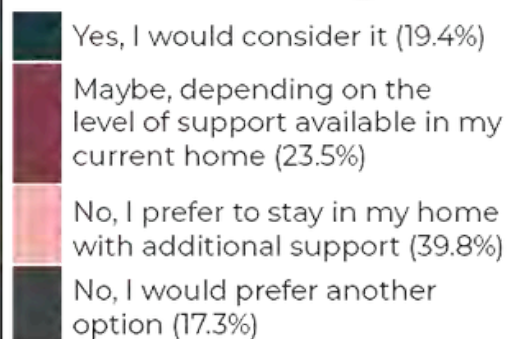
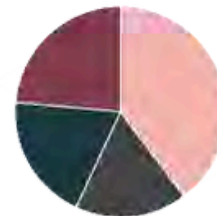
Do you feel safe in your current home or neighbourhood?

(98 responses)

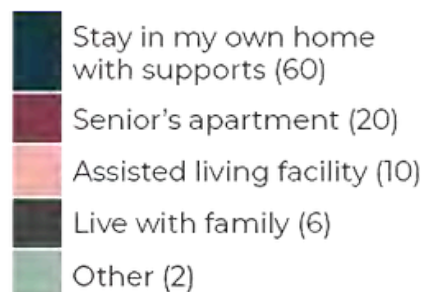
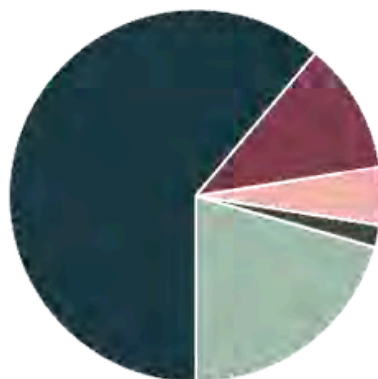


To age in your community and receive the support you need as your health changes, would you consider moving to an assisted living facility?

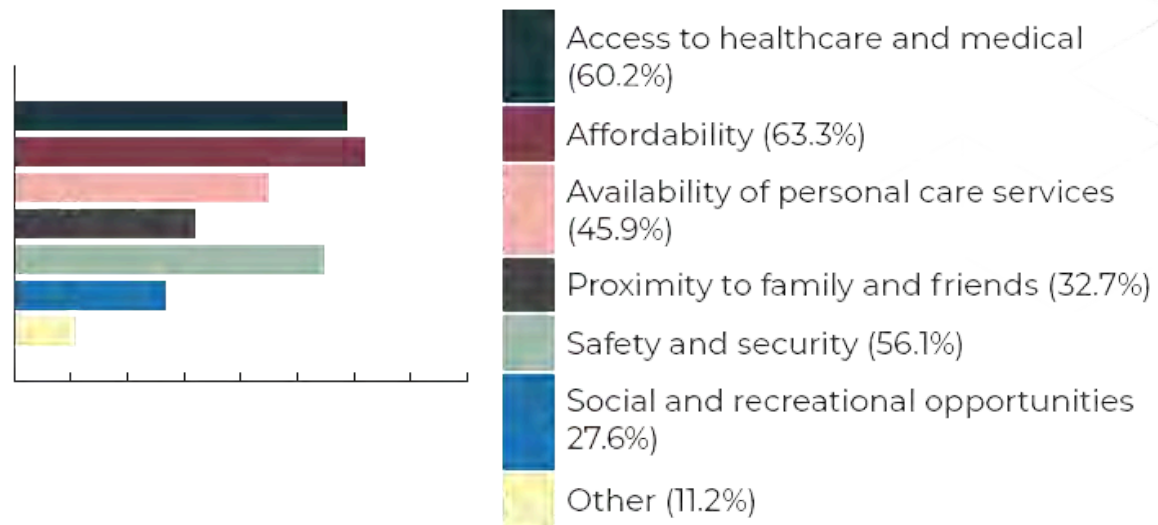
(98 responses)



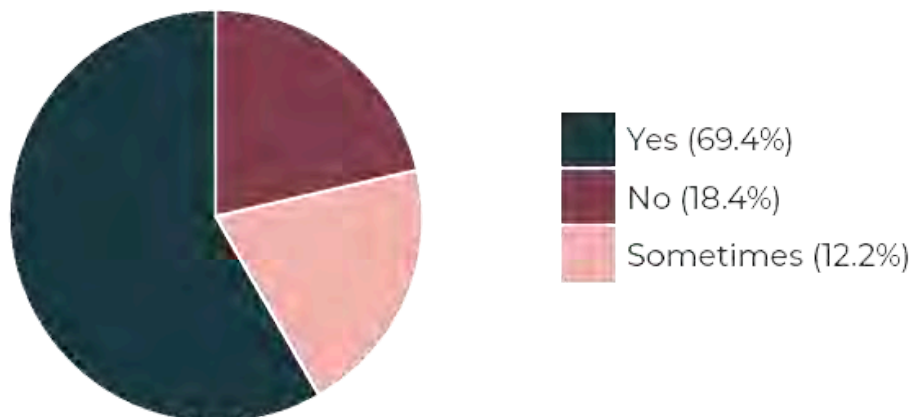
If your circumstances change so that you require more care, what kind of housing would you prefer? *(98 responses)*



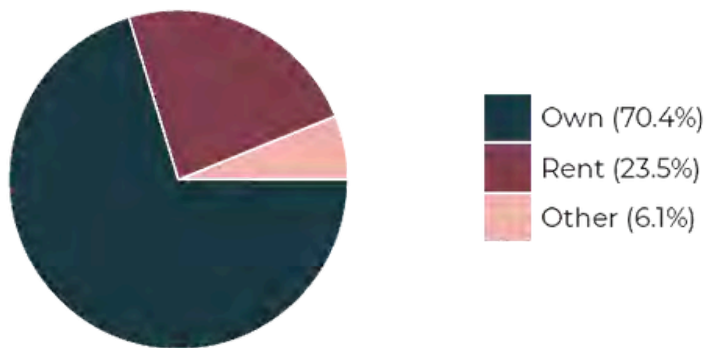
What factors would most influence your decision to move into an assisted living facility? (98 responses)



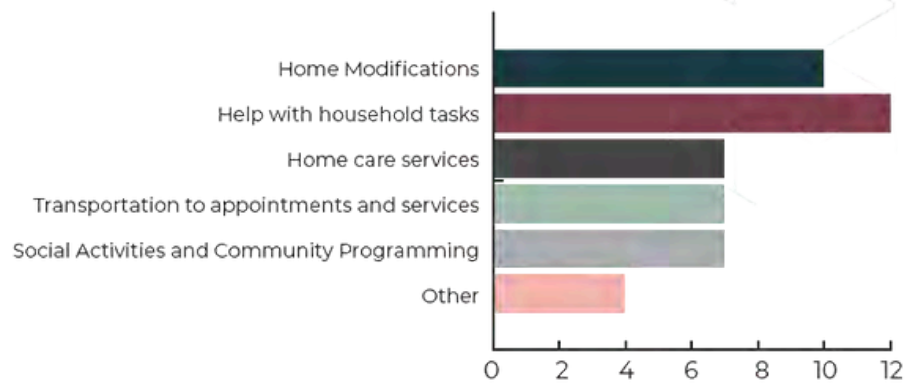
Do you have family or natural supports living nearby? (98 responses)



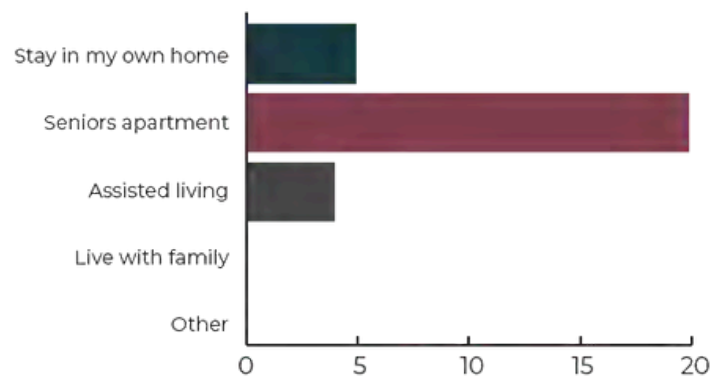
What is your current housing status? (98 responses)



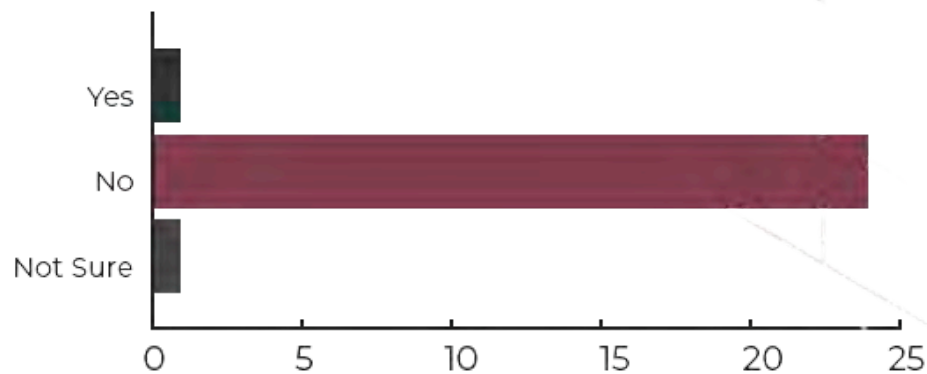
In person consultation: Services that would help you stay in your home as you age (30 responses)



In person consultation: Preferred housing if needing to move (29 responses)



In person consultation: Are there enough affordable housing options in HVGB (26 responses)



In person consultation: Ranked housing priorities as you age (Most Important to Least Important)

Affordability

Accessibility

Safety

Proximity to healthcare and services

Social connections



Summary of Findings

Key Informant Interviews

Current Housing Options

- There are limited senior housing options. Low-income senior housing and Labrador Housing exist, along with a small number of seniors' apartments, but no personal care homes or assisted-living facilities. Long-term care is available at the hospital but insufficient for current demands or future forecasts.
- The Seniors Van and Labrador Friendship Centre offer some support.
- Seniors often live independently, feeling "trapped" in their homes due to a lack of suitable downsizing options. Daily chores and home maintenance pose significant risks to seniors with mobility issues.

Challenges Finding Suitable Housing

- **Affordability:** Seniors on fixed incomes struggle with rising rents. Seniors are often faced with the decision of whether to prioritize paying for rent or other necessities (food, fuel, light, heat, etc.).
- **Availability:** Insufficient housing stock, especially affordable, accessible and suitable units.
- **Access:** Transportation issues limit seniors' ability to view properties or access services.
- **Support:** Seniors often lack help navigating housing options or securing home maintenance services. Family members, neighbours and volunteers can only do so much.
- **Landlord Bias:** Fixed-income seniors are not preferred tenants. They also need more services like mobility aids, ramps, snow clearing and other supports that not all landlords are willing to supply

Availability of Support Service

- Supports exist, including a Seniors Van, the Labrador Friendship Centre (serving primarily Indigenous seniors), a 50+ seniors club and the MHA office for guidance.
- Formal, consistent wraparound supports are lacking.
- Home maintenance assistance is a significant gap, leaving seniors vulnerable.
- There is a disconnect between seniors and younger generations in the community that leaves a gap in socializing, knowledge sharing and property maintenance that existed in previous generations.

Anticipated Future Housing Needs

- Income-geared, accessible housing.
- Housing that allows aging in place with wraparound supports (e.g. personal care, transportation, home maintenance).
- Personal care homes and expanded long-term care facilities.
- Continuum of housing options, from transitional to low-barrier and assisted living.
- Mixed-use or cottage-style communities offering both independence and support.

Recommendations for Improvement:

- **Collaborative Planning and Holistic Solutions:** Engage Indigenous groups, seniors' organizations, service providers and multiple levels of government.
- **Wraparound Supports:** Develop home support services and accessible transportation.
- **Community-Driven Solutions:** Localized planning with input from seniors to ensure housing reflects needs. An existing model should not be brought to HVGB because it works in other parts of the province; instead the solutions should be developed and implemented by HVGB community members who will eventually need to use that solution.
- **Housing Continuum:** Ensure housing solutions span from independent living to personal care and long-term care.
- **Clear Policy:** Flexible and responsive policies addressing diverse senior needs, e.g. safety in transitional housing, women living alone, Indigenous elders.
- **Public Awareness:** Improve communication about available supports.

Community Demographics and Trends:

- Pressure for housing and service options is increasing. Not only are HVGB residents aging, but seniors from other remote communities are relocating to the town to access support and healthcare services.
- More seniors are choosing to stay in the community after retirement.
- Strong Indigenous and family support networks exist, but they are not sufficient for all.
- Younger families are choosing not to relocate to HVGB due to the housing shortage, which is partly caused by seniors not moving into smaller, more suitable housing options.

Policy and Community Engagement

- There is limited provincial government presence in the community.
- Policies need to be adaptable to reflect diverse needs.
- Improved data collection and community consultation are necessary.
- Third-party facilitation is valuable to address competing priorities and build cooperation.

Successful Models

- Cottage-style senior housing with adjacent care facilities (e.g., Lewisporte).
- Churchill Falls' relocation support for retirees.
- Mixed-use community concepts combining independence with shared services.

Key Takeaways

HVGB requires a comprehensive, locally-driven housing strategy for seniors, integrating affordable housing, personal care options and wraparound services. Solutions must reflect the community's unique needs, especially Indigenous and low-income seniors, while addressing affordability, accessibility and safety. Collaboration across government, Indigenous groups and local stakeholders is critical.



Community Consultation

Consultations with seniors and stakeholders in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (HVGB) highlighted significant challenges related to housing, care and transportation, all of which impact the health, safety and quality of life of older residents. These discussions revealed both pressing concerns and a collective vision for the future

Housing Affordability and Accessibility

Rising rental costs and fixed incomes create a financial strain for many seniors, leaving little room for other necessities like food, medication and transportation. Eligibility thresholds for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC) programs vary by region, resulting in inequities. In HVGB, the income cap for housing assistance is \$32,500, while it is \$65,000 in Labrador City, forcing some seniors to reduce their income to qualify.

Beyond affordability, seniors struggle to find appropriate housing that meets their needs. Many remain in homes that are too large, difficult to maintain or unsafe due to accessibility challenges. Smaller, single-level and accessible housing options are limited, restricting their ability to downsize or age in place safely.

Gaps in the Housing and Healthcare Continuum

Seniors expressed a need for housing that integrates health and maintenance supports. There is particular demand for Level 2 assisted living options, which blend housing with healthcare services to support aging transitions. Currently, assisted living and personal care spaces are limited, often requiring seniors to remain in unsuitable housing or leave the community to access appropriate care. These challenges are amplified for Indigenous seniors, low-income individuals and others facing systemic barriers to secure safe, affordable housing.

Health, Wellbeing, and Support Networks

The connection between housing and health was a recurring theme. Unsafe or unsuitable housing increases the risk of falls and injuries, while social isolation can contribute to declining mental health. Survey data showed that 40.7% of seniors reported having little or no family support, further complicating their ability to age in place.

Homecare services, intended to support seniors remaining in their homes, are constrained by low wages (\$17 per hour), leading to staffing shortages and inconsistent service delivery.



Transportation Barriers

Limited transportation options undermine seniors' independence and their access to essential services. The Senior Van service operated by the Friendship Centre is not always available and lacks wheelchair accessibility. Taxi services are often unreliable and expensive, particularly for those with mobility issues. These barriers reduce access to medical appointments, grocery stores and social activities, contributing to isolation and poor health outcomes

Workforce Shortages

A shortage of workers in both the construction and healthcare sectors hinders the development of age-friendly housing and limits homecare capacity. Low wages, particularly in home care, exacerbate recruitment and retention issues, leaving many seniors without the support they need.

Vision for the Future

Participants articulated a shared vision for seniors housing in HVGB. This vision includes:

- Age-friendly, accessible housing that fosters privacy, independence and community connection.
- Housing developments with on-site support for health, home maintenance and social engagement.
- Home modification programs enabling seniors to safely age in place.
- Integrated housing and healthcare models, including Level 2 assisted living facilities.
- Policies and programs that prioritize equity, addressing the specific needs of Indigenous seniors and those with limited incomes.

Key Challenges

The community and stakeholder consultations underscored several systemic barriers that must be addressed to realize this vision:

- The financial strain on seniors due to high housing costs and rigid income thresholds for housing programs.
- Insufficient stock of accessible, appropriately sized housing.
- Disconnect between housing and care services, limiting seniors' ability to transition smoothly as their needs change.
- Inadequate transportation options reducing seniors' mobility and participation in community life.
- Workforce shortages, particularly in homecare, driven by low wages and poor retention.

Moving Forward

Seniors and stakeholders emphasized the need for a coordinated, multi-sector response to address housing, transportation and care challenges. Collaboration between housing providers, healthcare professionals, policymakers and community organizations will be essential to ensure seniors can age safely, comfortably and with dignity in Happy Valley Goose Bay



Case Studies

AVENS – A COMMUNITY FOR SENIORS

Overview

AVENS, formerly known as the Yellowknife Association of Concerned Citizens for Seniors (YACCS), is the leading seniors care organization in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. Founded in 1987 to support aging miners, AVENS has grown into the most important seniors care facility in the territory, providing a range of housing and care services to support seniors aging in place.

Organizational Growth and Strategic Development

Over the past three decades, AVENS has expanded significantly, evolving into a sophisticated organization with over 100 staff members, governed by an eight person Board of Directors. The organization has redefined its strategic direction, focusing on innovation, expanding services and unlocking new potential to meet the growing demands of an aging population.

Programs and Housing Options

AVENS offers a continuum of housing and care options to meet the diverse needs of seniors:

- **Long-Term Care:** Aven Manor is a 29-bed facility, providing nursing and personal care for seniors with higher medical needs.
- **Independent Living:** AVEN Court consists of 24 subsidized housing units designed for seniors seeking independent living with community support.
- **Market-Price Housing:** Avens Ridge offers both market-rate and subsidized rental units, addressing the needs of seniors across various income levels.
- **Dementia Care:** Avens Cottages includes two 14-bed units, specializing in care for residents with dementia and complex needs.
- **Future Expansion** – Aven Pavilion: Scheduled to open in fall 2025, the Aven Pavilion project will add 102 new units to the campus, significantly increasing housing capacity.

Key Strengths and Innovations

- **Accreditation:** AVENS received full accreditation with an Exemplary rating from Accreditation Canada in 2022, reflecting its commitment to high standards of care and operational excellence.
- **Financial Stability:** Strong partnerships with the Government of the Northwest Territories have enabled AVENS to achieve financial stability, balancing service delivery with sustainable growth.
- **Technological Advancements:** AVENS has invested in digital tools, including e-payroll systems, upgraded Wi-Fi and food service technology, enhancing operational efficiency and resident care.
- **Community Engagement:** The organization prioritizes resident well-being and community connection, launching initiatives like Operation Care on Wheels, which funded a new bus for seniors' transportation needs.
- **Fundraising and Activity Spaces:** AVENS actively raises funds to enhance resident experiences, focusing on creating vibrant communal spaces and improving social and recreational areas.



Governance and Leadership

AVENS is guided by a dedicated Board of Directors, overseeing strategic development and operational performance, ensuring the organization remains responsive to the evolving needs of seniors.

Impact and Future Growth

As demand for seniors' housing and services increases in the Northwest Territories, AVENS is positioned as a leader, expanding its infrastructure and programs to meet current and future needs. The Aven Pavilion project represents a key step toward addressing the region's growing demand for senior-friendly housing, while the organization's focus on innovation, community connection and financial sustainability will continue driving its success.

Conclusion

AVENS stands as a model for seniors care in remote and northern communities, demonstrating the importance of adaptable, multi-tiered housing solutions. Through strategic growth, technological investment and a community centered approach, AVENS continues to set the standard for aging-in-place support in the Northwest Territories.



New Dawn Enterprises

Supporting Seniors in Community

Overview

New Dawn Enterprises, based in Sydney, Nova Scotia, is Canada's oldest Community Development Corporation (CDC). Founded in 1976, New Dawn's mission is to identify community needs and respond with sustainable programs and services. Over the past several decades, supporting seniors to age with dignity and independence has become a core focus of their work.

Through housing, homecare and community services, New Dawn has become a trusted provider for seniors in Cape Breton.

Programs and Services for Seniors

Homecare (New Dawn Homecare):

- Provides in-home support services, enabling seniors to remain in their homes while receiving assistance with daily tasks.
- Services include personal care, meal preparation, housekeeping, companionship and respite care.
- Supports aging in place, which aligns with seniors' preferences and reduces pressure on institutional care.

Affordable Seniors' Housing:

- New Dawn owns and operates affordable housing units designed for seniors who need safe, accessible and community-oriented living environments.
- Barrier-free designs support seniors with mobility challenges, promoting independence while offering community connection.

Community Meals & Social Supports:

- Meal delivery programs and opportunities for social connection help reduce food insecurity and isolation among seniors.
- New Dawn recognizes that aging well requires more than shelter—it requires community, nutrition and meaningful social connections.



Community Impact

- **Aging in Place:** New Dawn's homecare and housing services enable seniors to stay in their homes or community longer, which promotes well-being and reduces the burden on long-term care facilities.
- **Affordability:** Affordable seniors' housing provides a stable and secure environment for low- to moderate-income seniors, addressing housing insecurity in the aging population.
- **Reducing Isolation:** Through meal programs and community engagement, New Dawn helps seniors build relationships and stay connected, combating loneliness and supporting mental health.

Key Strengths

- **Holistic Approach:** Combines housing, homecare and social supports, addressing seniors' needs beyond just housing or health services.
- **Local Knowledge & Trust:** Deep roots in Cape Breton, built on decades of service, have established New Dawn as a trusted provider.
- **Community-Driven:** Responsive to local needs, adapting services as the population ages and demands evolve.

Challenges

- **Workforce Shortages:** Like many homecare providers, recruiting and retaining qualified care workers remains an ongoing challenge.
- **Increasing Demand:** Cape Breton's aging population is driving growing demand for affordable housing and home support services, requiring ongoing expansion and innovation.

Future Outlook

New Dawn continues to adapt its services to meet the evolving needs of seniors, with a focus on expanding housing, improving homecare delivery and strengthening community connections. The organization demonstrates the value of a community-driven approach to seniors' care, emphasizing dignity, independence and quality of life.



Overview of Enabling Conditions

Development Regulations

The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay has Development Regulations (2018-2028) that govern land use and development within the Planning Area.

Key points include:

- All persons proposing to undertake land use or development must comply with these regulations.
- Specific rules exist for subdividing land with existing structures.
- Non-conforming uses are addressed, with limitations on how they can be modified or expanded.
- The Town Council has discretion in approving or refusing applications, even if they conform to regulations.

Zoning Bylaws

The town of HVGB has specific zoning bylaws that specify land use, permissible building types, sizes, and other key regulations for each zone

Permitting Process

The town has a permitting process for various types of projects, including residential, commercial and industrial developments.

Affordable Housing Initiatives

The Newfoundland Labrador Housing Corporation operates affordable housing units in Happy Valley-Goose Bay:

- Rents are geared to income at 25% of net income.
- Residents receive a heating subsidy.
- Clients come from an existing prioritized waitlist.



Opportunities

OPPORTUNITY 1

Commission a Level 2 Assisted Care Living Facility

A properly designed Level 2 Assisted Living Facility in Happy Valley Goose Bay would provide moderate support while promoting independence and quality of life for seniors. It should feature accessible, barrier-free units (single-level or with elevator access), onsite personal care services, medication support and meal programs. The facility should offer social and recreational activities, foster a community-like atmosphere and include outdoor spaces to support mental and physical wellbeing.

Healthcare access is key, with on-site staff or visiting nurses and easy coordination with external services. Ideally, the facility would be part of a “campus of care” model, located near independent senior housing and longterm care, allowing residents to transition as their needs.

OPPORTUNITY 2

Invest in Local Homecare Services

One option for quickly standing up broad-based homecare services, is committing to a purpose-built option like Just Like Family Home Care. It is a national social enterprise providing in-home healthcare services for seniors through franchise locations across Canada. Founded in 2010, the company has experienced remarkable growth and transformation, becoming a leader at the intersection of healthcare and social enterprise.

Origins and Growth

Just Like Family began as a small, locally operated office in the Vancouver area. It was founded by an individual with extensive experience in the home care field and a personal connection to caregiving, motivated by a family member’s Alzheimer’s diagnosis. The company’s dedication to quality care fueled its rapid expansion, achieving double-digit revenue growth year after year.

In 2022, Just Like Family underwent a groundbreaking transition through a social acquisition, the first of its kind in Canada. A partnership of impact investors facilitated this transition, resulting in 51% ownership by charitable organizations. As a result, the majority of the company’s profits are now directed toward charitable causes, significantly amplifying its social impact.

Just Like Family operates using a franchise model, offering franchise partners a low-barrier entry into the growing home care industry. Key features of the model include:

- Low initial investment and overhead costs
- Comprehensive training and ongoing support
- Large, protected territories with aging populations
- Advanced website and marketing resources
- Detailed operational manuals and legal documentation.

Through its unique combination of business excellence and social mission, Just Like Family Home Care exemplifies the power of social enterprises to drive both financial success and meaningful community impact in the healthcare sector.

OPPORTUNITY 3

Build on the Strength of Community Partnerships

Despite significant pressures, rural communities have demonstrated resilience and a deep commitment to supporting their elders. Local partnerships between municipalities, non-profits and businesses have driven creative, community based solutions to address gaps in housing and care. While these initiatives are valuable, they cannot replace the need for stable, long-term investment in professional services and senior-friendly infrastructure. Strengthening community-based organizations with the proper resources can help ensure seniors age safely and with dignity in their homes and neighborhoods. By building formal systems that complement the strengths of informal support networks, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and the broader Labrador region can make aging in place not just an aspiration, but a supported and sustainable reality





Conclusion

The findings of this Community Needs Assessment underscore the urgent necessity of reimagining the systems that support seniors in Happy Valley- Goose Bay (HVGB). As the region's demographic landscape shifts towards an older population, the limitations in current housing, healthcare, and support services threaten the well-being and dignity of its aging residents.

While the commitment to aging in place remains strong among seniors, inadequate housing stock, rising affordability barriers, insufficient homecare services, and poor transportation infrastructure undermine this aspiration.

The gaps in the continuum of care—particularly the absence of Level 2 assisted living—leave many seniors stranded between independent living and institutional care, often forcing difficult relocations or unsafe living arrangements. Furthermore, economic disparities and systemic inequities disproportionately impact Indigenous and low-income seniors, amplifying their vulnerability.

Yet, there is also a powerful foundation of community resilience, informal support networks, and local organizations committed to driving change.

Through strategic investment, policy reform, and community-driven innovation, HVGB has the opportunity to become a model for senior centered care in rural and northern communities.

Key to this transformation will be a comprehensive, collaborative approach involving all levels of government, Indigenous partners, community stakeholders, and private sector actors. By embracing proven models, like those of AVENS and New Dawn Enterprises, and adapting them to HVGB's unique context, the town can develop a full continuum of age-friendly housing and care.

As we move forward, we must remain guided by the values of dignity, autonomy, and inclusion for all seniors. The work ahead requires bold leadership, sustained commitment, and above all, the recognition that how we support our elders is a reflection of our collective values. Investing in their future is an investment in the strength and compassion of the entire community.

APPENDIX A

AGING IN PLACE FRAMEWORK

The World Health Organization (WHO) Aging in Place Framework is part of its broader approach to healthy aging and age-friendly environments. It focuses on enabling older adults to live safely, independently and comfortably in their own homes and communities for as long as possible, rather than moving to institutional care settings.

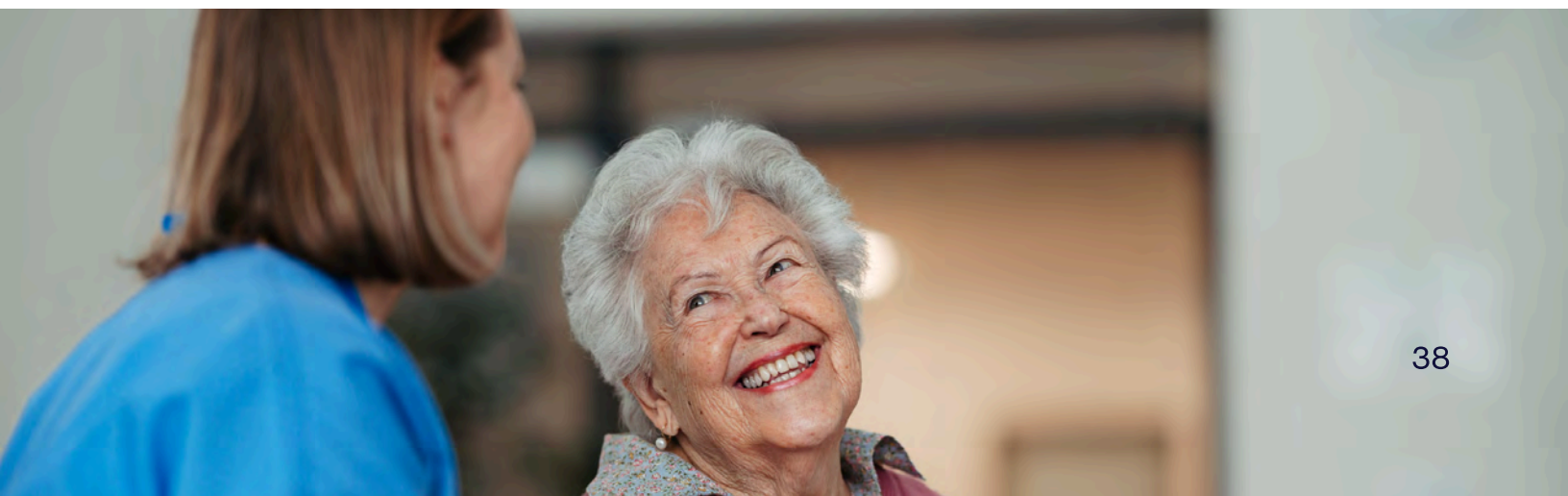
Key Elements of WHO's Aging in Place Framework:

The Ageing In Place Framework aligns with the WHO's Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2016-2030) and the Decade of Healthy Ageing collaboration (2021-2030). It defines aging in place as creating environments that support older people to live independently and participate fully in their communities.

1. Age-Friendly Environments

The WHO's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities framework underpins its Ageing in Place strategy, which in turn supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It identifies eight key domains that need to be adapted to support older adults:

1. *Outdoor spaces and buildings*: Safe, accessible and well-maintained public spaces.
2. *Transportation*: Reliable, affordable and age-friendly public transport.
3. *Housing*: Affordable, accessible and adaptable housing that allows older adults to remain at home.
4. *Social Participation*: Opportunities to engage in social, cultural and recreational activities.
5. *Respect and Social Inclusion*: Efforts to reduce ageism and ensure older adults are valued.
6. *Civic Participation and Employment*: Opportunities for volunteering, paid work and civic engagement.
7. *Communication and Information*: Age-friendly communication channels and access to technology.
8. *Community Support and Health Services*: Accessible, affordable and integrated health and support services.



2. Person-Centred and Integrated Care

Older adults often have complex and diverse needs. The WHO promotes integrated care models that bring together health, social and community services to offer coordinated, person-centered support, with a goal of ensuring older adults receive timely, appropriate and continuous care at home or close to home.

3. Supportive Housing and Home Modifications

Housing adaptation is central to aging in place. The WHO recommends:

- Adapting homes to reduce risks such as falls and increase accessibility.
- Developing innovative housing models such as co-housing, intergenerational
- living and supportive housing with integrated services.

4. Social Connections and Combating Isolation

The WHO recognizes social isolation and loneliness as major risks to health and well-being. Aging-in-place strategies enable older adults to stay connected to their communities, families and support networks.

5. Equity and Inclusion

Aging in place must address the diverse realities of older people, especially those facing disadvantages due to income, health status,

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- *Autonomy and Dignity*: Supporting older adults to make choices about where and how they live.
- *Participation*: Involving older people in decisions that affect their lives and communities.
- *Equity*: Addressing inequalities and ensuring aging in place is possible for all older adults.
- *Accessibility*: Ensuring physical, digital and social environments are inclusive and accessible.

WHY IT MATTERS

Aging in place is recognized as a key strategy to promote healthy aging, reduce healthcare costs and improve the quality of life for older adults. It aligns with the WHO's broader goal of creating environments that enable people to live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives as they age.



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