# Town of Torbay

# Housing Needs Assessment

A comprehensive review of the current status of housing options available within the Town of Torbay as well as existing gaps and opportunities to diversify and strengthen the housing stock within the Municipality

Submitted by: Julia Schwarz MCIP, CSLA
Director of Planning & Development
Prepared by:
Planning and Development Department &
Economic Development Department
Town of Torbay

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## Executive Summary: Housing Needs Assessment

This Housing Needs Assessment evaluates the current housing landscape, identifies key challenges, and offers strategic recommendations to address both immediate and long-term housing needs in the Town of Torbay. The study was conducted to assess the availability, affordability, and quality of housing, with a particular focus on diversifying our existing housing stock to address the growth we are expected to see over the next several years in low and very low-income households, seniors, and other households experiencing barriers to accessing affordable housing.

## Key Findings:

**Housing Shortage:** The Town of Torbay faces a significant shortage of affordable housing units, with demand exceeding supply. This shortage affects both renters and potential homeowners, and left unchecked – will contribute to the overall cost of housing in the Town as well increased negative impacts on our ability as a growing municipality to attract and retain new residents, including single parent households and newcomers.

**Affordability Crisis:** A substantial portion of households, especially single parent households and those in very low and low-income categories, spend more than 30% of their income on housing, classifying them as cost-burdened. Low- and moderate-income families are disproportionately affected, making homeownership increasingly unattainable for many.

**Rising Housing Costs:** Both rental rates (the decrease in rental properties) and home prices have risen sharply in recent years, outpacing income growth. This trend is particularly challenging for young families, first-time homebuyers, and individuals on fixed incomes. It is especially challenging for households in low income categories, that are in core housing need.

**Diversity of Housing Stock:** The assessment revealed that for the Town of Torbay to accommodate projected growth, especially in priority populations, it will need to immediately address the gaps in existing housing stock to ensure that we are moving in a direction that will see greater construction of high-density housing, more seniors housing and more affordable housing targeting both renters and potential buyers.

**Demographic Shifts:** The community is experiencing demographic changes, with an increasing population of seniors and a growing need for accessible, supportive and affordable housing options. The recognition of these shifts in population growth and the ability to address them through innovative planning and policy measures will ensure more sustainable growth.

## Key Recommendations:

**Expand Affordable Housing:** Increase the availability of affordable housing through zoning changes, incentives for developers, and innovative partnerships that bring an increased focus to addressing the challenges and barriers in the local housing market. In addition, prioritize projects that target low-to-moderate-income households.

**Encourage Mixed-Use Developments:** Promote the development of mixed-use, mixed-income communities that integrate affordable housing with commercial and retail spaces, creating vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods. Work proactively with developers to help shape these areas.

**Address Homelessness, Poverty and Other Social Barriers to Housing:** Work towards long-term strategies and solutions, including partnerships with key organizations to help educate and bring greater understanding to the root causes of homelessness, the barriers faced by seniors and other priority populations in securing affordable housing. such as permanent supportive housing, to address the root causes of homelessness.

**Collaborate with Stakeholders:** Work with local governments, non-profits, and developers to create comprehensive housing policies that reflect the diverse needs of the community.

**Conclusion:**

This Housing Needs Assessment highlights a critical need for increased investment in affordable housing solutions, improved housing quality, and targeted support for vulnerable populations. Addressing these challenges will require coordinated efforts from government, community organizations, and private sector stakeholders to ensure that all residents have access to safe, affordable housing. Working towards addressing these challenges / barriers identified in this report will help create a more equitable and sustainable housing market, fostering a stronger and more resilient community.

# 1. Methodology

## 1.1 Methodology and Assumptions for this HNA

With the help of RAnLab[1], quantitative data was collected from the following sources:

- Statistics Canada Census Data (2021 & 2016 Census)
- Statistics Canada Housing Statistics
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC): Urban Rental Market Data
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC): Housing Completions
- Housing Assessment Resource Tool (HART)
- AirDNA

In addition to this data, the Town of Torbay collected qualitative data from our Municipal Plan, Economic Roadmap, and Strategic Plan.

## 1.2 Methodology and Assumptions for Stakeholder Groups

Key stakeholder groups in the community who would provide value to the HNA through a robust engagement framework include:

- Residents in the Town of Torbay
- Seniors organizations
- Youth organizations
- Faith groups (who could speak to the need for affordable housing for marginalized populations within the community)
- Organizations with a broad mandate to advocate for / secure housing for their constituents – these include but are not limited to
  - Choices for Youth;
  - Association for New Canadians;
  - Seniors NL;
  - Quadrangle;
  - Transition House Association of NL;

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[1] RAnLab is a part of the Harris Centre at Memorial University that aims to support evidence-based policies for regional development through capacity building initiatives and regional economic and spatial analytics.

- o St. John's Status of Women Council;

- o Newfoundland and Labrador Housing and Homelessness Network;

- o Stella's Circle;

- o Eastern Health / NL Health Services; and

- o NL Federation of Co-operatives

- The local business community, especially those involved in home construction, renovations, along with property management forms;

- Local real estate brokers;

- Other municipalities who have gone through a similar process;

- Elected officials at the municipal level (and provincial / federal representatives); and

- Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

The type of engagement will include the following:

- Strategic interviews with key organizations and individuals;

- Facilitated workshops and focus group sessions with key groups such as seniors / youth / community organizations;

- Community consultation - in-person workshops with identified stakeholders; and

- Online portal to submit comments.

## 1.3 Methodology and Assumptions for Engagement with Priority Groups

Priority groups will be mostly comprised of residents – but will mirror the list and methodology listed in the above section.

The Town of Torbay looks forward to completing the public engagement component of the HNA is the near future.

## 2. Community Profile and Trends

### 2.1 Existing Municipal Housing Policy and Regulatory Context

The Town of Torbay is nearing the completion of its municipal plan and development regulations review. A key component of the review is to overhaul existing municipal housing policies and related regulations and focus them on creating an environment that will lead to an increased diversity in our housing stock, one that will produce new and additional forms of housing resulting in additional units along with the development of a denser and more diverse housing mix.

As a starting point - the Town intends to revise permitting processes and development regulations for multi-unit development and for affordable housing developments to streamline applications. This will include a review of the classes of use for different types of development and allowing for specific forms of multi-unit developments throughout the Town and within specific zoning areas as permitted uses, eliminating the need for the discretionary use process and its associated hurdles (there will be an added focus on (basement apartments / accessory dwellings / duplex / row dwellings) combined with a strategic approach to incentivize mixed use development.

### 2.2 Community Profile (all data comes from statistics Canada 2021 census unless otherwise stated[2])

| 2.2.1 Population | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Total Population (Number) | 2001 | 5,580 |
| | 2016 | 7,895 |
| | 2021 | 7,852 |
| | Total | 2272 |

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[2] https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&SearchText=Torbay&DGUIDlist=2021A00051001509&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&HEADERlist=0

| 2.2.1 Population | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Population Growth (Number) | Percentage | +40.7% |
| Age (Years) | Average | 40.3 |
| | Median | 42.8 |
| Age Distribution | 0 - 14 years | 18.2% |
| | 15 - 64 years | 67.9% |
| | 65+ years | 13.9% |
| Mobility | Non-movers | 5,575 |
| | Non-migrants | 505 |
| | Migrants | 1,400 |

| 2.2.2 Demographic Information | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Immigrants | Total | 205 |
| Non-Immigrants | Total | 7,570 |
| Recent Immigrants (2016-2021) | Total | 30 |
| Interprovincial Migrants (2016-2021) | Total | 205 |
| Indigenous Identity | Total | 320 |

### 2.3 Population Changes Affecting the Housing Market

Torbay has seen significant population growth over the past two decades, within a province that has predominantly experienced minimal population growth outside the St. John's CMA[3] (census metropolitan area), and for many rural regions – significant population decline.  Population growth in the last decade has put significant pressure on the local housing market, and has served to shine a light on the need for greater diversity in our housing stock, especially as it relates to seniors housing, affordable housing, the availability of accessible rental units and other types of higher density housing units. Unchecked, this will negatively impact our ability to grow as a community will impact our ability to develop as a sustainable community, community development, economic development and also complicate efforts around economic development, social development and environmental sustainability.

## 3. Household Profiles and Economic Characteristics

### 3.1 Household Profiles

| 3.1.1 Household Income and Profile | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Total number of households | 2016 | 2,860 |
| | 2021 | 2,985 |
| Household income (Canadian dollars per year) | Average | $126,600 |
| | Median | $108,000 |
| Tenant household income (Canadian dollars | Average | AVAILABLE FOR ST. JOHN'S CMA ($56,550) |

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[3] The St. John's metropolitan area is the most populous census metropolitan area (CMA) in the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador. With a population of 212,579 in the 2021 Canadian Census, the CMA is the second largest in Atlantic Canada and the 22nd largest CMA in Canada.

| 3.1.1 Household Income and Profile | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| per year, only available at census agglomeration level) | Median | AVAILABLE FOR ST. JOHN'S CMA ($46,000) |
| Owner household income (Canadian dollars per year, only available at census agglomeration level) | Average | AVAILABLE FOR ST. JOHN'S CMA ($129,200) |
| | Median | AVAILABLE FOR ST. JOHN'S CMA ($108,000) |
| Average household size (Number of members) | Total | 2.6 |
| Breakdown of household by size (Number of households) | Total | 2,985 |
| | 1 person | 580 |
| | 2 persons | 1,015 |
| | 3 persons | 610 |
| | 4 persons | 600 |
| | 5 or more persons | 180 |
| Tenant households (Number of households) | Total | 530 |
| | Percentage | 17.8% |
| | Total | 2,460 |

| 3.1.1 Household Income and Profile | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Owner households (Number of households) | Percentage | 82.4% |
| Percentage of tenant households in subsidized housing | Percentage | 3.8% |
| Households within 800m of a higher-order/high frequency transit stop or station | Total | 0 |
| Number of one-parent families | Total | 350 |
| | Percentage | 14.6% |
| Number of one-parent families in which the parent is a woman+ | Total | 255 |
| Number of one-parent families in which the parent is a man+ | Total | 90 |
| Number of households by Income Category | Very Low (up to 20% below Area Median Household Income - AMHI) | 75 |

| 3.1.1 Household Income and Profile | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| | Low (21% – 50% AMHI) | 695 |
| | Moderate (51 – 80% AMHI) | 555 |
| | Median (81% - 120% AMHI) | 575 |
| | High (>120% AMHI) | 1,205 |

### 3.2 Household Profile Context

Currently the housing market within Torbay is dominated by large single-family homes. Given the market over the past decade, there has not been any movement towards the construction of affordable housing, high density housing, multi-unit residential housing. Housing market demand in Torbay and surrounding rural communities has been towards larger homes on larger building lots. The data has clearly demonstrated that if the Town is to successfully diversify its population, the current housing stock needs to grow significantly and be reflective of the needs of today's market.

### 3.3 Suppression of Household Formation

This type of quantitative data is unavailable for the Town of Torbay – given its small size. However, we are aware anecdotally that this type of household formation occurs with greater regularity as it does in other municipal jurisdictions. Affordability is a key element in local housing markets when it comes to retaining residents, attracting new families, and also in the attraction and retention of existing and new businesses.

Although this data is not available for Torbay due to the small sample size; we do see the value in having this data and will endeavour to collect and compile it going forward to use in developing housing related strategies, policies and regulations.

### 3.4 Economic Conditions

| 3.4.1 Economy and Labour Force | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Number of workers in the labour force | Total | 4,300 |
| Number of workers by industry (Top 10 only) | Industry 1: Health care and social assistance (62) | 590 |
| | Industry 2: Public administration (91) | 530 |
| | Industry 3: Retail trade (44-45) | 480 |
| | Industry 4: Educational services (61) | 355 |
| | Industry 5: Professional, scientific, and technical services (54) | 335 |
| | Industry 6: Construction (23) | 295 |
| | Industry 7: Transportation and warehousing (48-49) | 255 |
| | Industry 8: Accommodation and food services (72) | 230 |

| 3.4.1 Economy and Labour Force | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| | Industry 9: Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (21) | 195 |
| | Industry 10: Other services (except public administration) (81) | 185 |
| Unemployment rate and participation rate (Percent) | Unemployment rate | 9.7% |
| | Participation rate | 67.8% |
| All classes of workers (Number) | Total | 4,205 |
| Employees (Number) | Total | 3,885 |
| Permanent position (Number) | Total | 2,955 |
| Temporary position (Number) | Total | 930 |
| Fixed term (1 year or more, Number) | Total | 270 |
| Casual, seasonal or short-term position (less than 1 year, Number) | Total | 660 |

| 3.4.1 Economy and Labour Force | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Self-employed (Number) | Total | 315 |
| Number of commuters by commuting destination | Within census subdivision | 375 |
| | To different census subdivision | 2,160 |
| | To different census division | 20 |
| | To another province/territory | 30 |
| Number of commuters by main mode of commuting for the employed labour force with a usual place of work or no fixed workplace address | Car, truck or van | 2,885 |
| | Public transit | 25 |
| | Walked | 55 |
| | Bicycle | 0 |
| | Other method | 145 |

## 3.5 Labour Conditions Impacting Housing

From a labour market perspective, the Town of Torbay performs better on most provincial labour market indicators. These include a lower unemployment rate, higher participation rates, average household incomes that are greater than the provincial average as well as average incomes that are above the provincial median. As a rural community adjacent to the largest urban population in the province, most residents commute outside the municipality for work. Given these factors, Torbay has not seen a significant demand for other types of housing, or more importantly, has not realized the impact on long-term

sustainability by not having more non-traditional types of housing. This negatively impacts both population growth and diversity, and overtime negatively impacts business growth, attraction and expansion. More diverse housing options will help attract more residents, bringing with it a more diverse and skilled labour pool for the business community (current and future) to draw upon.

### 3.6 Households in Core Housing Need

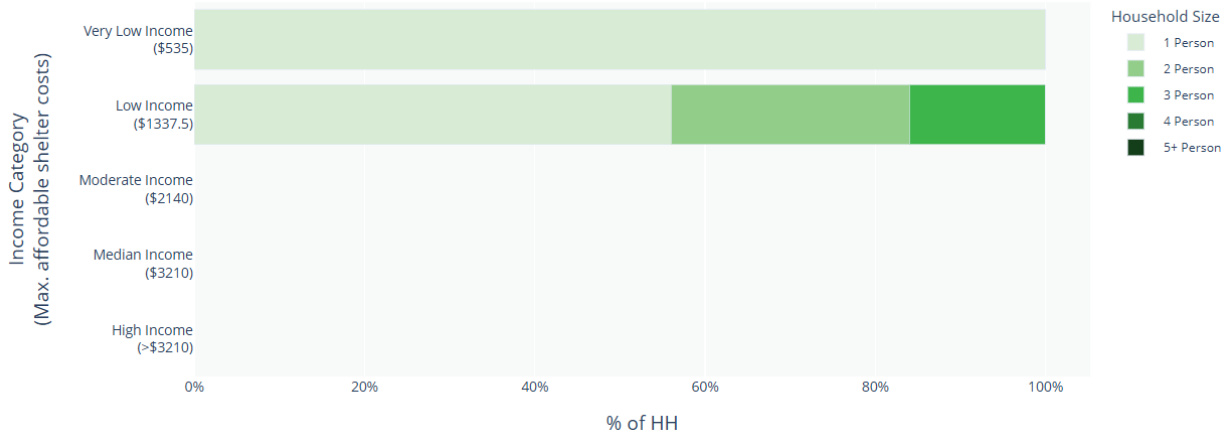There are two criteria that a household would need to meet to be considered in core housing need:

I.  A household is below one or more of the national adequacy, suitability, and affordability standards.
    a.  Adequate housing = it is not in need of major repairs.
    b.  Suitable housing = there are enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of the household.
    c.  Affordable housing = when housing costs less than 30% of before-tax household income.
II. The household would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax household income to access local housing that meets all three standards.

## Income Categories and Affordable Shelter Costs

| | | | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Income Category | % of Total HHs | Annual HH Income | Affordable Shelter Cost (2020 CAD$) |
| Area Median Household Income | | $107,000 | $2,675 |
| Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI) | 1.53% | <= $21,400 | <= $535 |
| Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI) | 19.19% | $21,400 – $53,500 | $535 – $1,338 |
| Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI) | 18.85% | $53,500 – $85,600 | $1,338 – $2,140 |
| Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI) | 19.52% | $85,600 – $128,400 | $2,140 – $3,210 |
| High Income (121% and more of AMHI) | 40.92% | >= $128,401 | >= $3,211 |

# Percentage of Households in Core Housing Needs, by Income Category and Household Size

Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need, by Income Category and HH Size, 2021
Torbay SNO (CSD, NL)



# 2021 Affordable Housing Deficit

| Income Category (Max. affordable shelter cost) | 1 Person HH | 2 Person HH | 3 Person HH | 4 Person HH | 5+ Person HH | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Low Income ($535) | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Low Income ($1337) | 70 | 35 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 125 |
| Moderate Income ($2140) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Median Income ($3210) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| High Income (>$3210) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 100 | 35 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 155 |

Torbay SNO (CSD, NL)

| 3.6.1 Households in Core Housing Need | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Affordability – Owner and tenant households spending 30% or more on shelter costs (# and %) | Total | 415 |
| | Percentage | 14.1% |
| Affordability – Tenant households spending 30% or more of income on shelter costs (# and %) | Total | 145 |
| | Percentage | 26.9% |
| Affordability – Owner households spending 30% or more of income on shelter costs (# and %) | Total | 280 |
| | Percentage | 11.2% |
| Adequacy – Households in dwellings requiring major repair (# and %) | Total | 115 |
| | Percentage | 3.9% |
| Adequacy – Tenant households in dwellings requiring major repairs (# and %) | Total | 15 |
| | Percentage | 2.9% |
| Adequacy – Owner households in dwellings requiring major repairs (# and %) | Total | 95 |
| | Percentage | 3.9% |
| Suitability – Households in unsuitable dwellings (# and %) | Total | 75 |
| | Percentage | 2.5% |

| 3.6.1 Households in Core Housing Need | | |
|---|---|---|
| Characteristic | Data | Value |
| Suitability – Tenant households in unsuitable dwellings (# and %) | Total | 25 |
| | Percentage | 4.8% |
| Suitability – Owner households in unsuitable dwellings (# and %) | Total | 45 |
| | Percentage | 1.8% |
| Total households in core housing need | Total | 165 |
| Percentage of tenant households in core housing need | Percentage | 17.5% |
| Percentage of owner households in core housing need | Percentage | 3.1% |

## 3.7 Other Information about Core Housing Need

It is worth noting that over the past two decades that the bulk of new home construction has been primarily single-family homes. Priority Groups identified by CMHC have not been the focus of builders and only recently has the Town began to strategize on how to address the gaps that currently exist with core housing need amongst these groups.

CMHC 13 Priority Groups:

1. Women and children fleeing domestic violence
2. Women-led households, especially single mothers
3. Seniors 65+
4. Young adults aged 18-29

5. Indigenous Peoples

6. Racialized people

7. Recent immigrants, especially refugees

8. LGBTQ2S+

9. People with physical health or mobility challenges

10. People with developmental disabilities

11. People dealing with mental health and addictions issues

12. Veterans

13. People experiencing homelessness


### 3.8 Housing Needs and Challenges of Priority Groups in Torbay

Within CMHC priority groups, the Town of Torbay is aware of the need for increased seniors housing and in general more affordable housing which intersects with all 13 priority groups listed above. As a province and a community, our demographic profile reflects the increase in demand for seniors housing as both the average and median age of our population is above the Canadian average. While most of these priority groups would first seek to be within the urban core, Torbay is close enough to key services to be able to attract members of these various groups with the right mix of housing in place. In addition, we are currently undertaking a feasibility study on developing a regional transportation system in partnership with neighboring communities which will provide a cost-effective option for transportation into the capital city connecting into the public transit network.

### 3.9 Homelessness in Torbay

Although there is no specific dataset for Torbay around homelessness, there is data for the metro St. John's region as well as the province. However, we do know that there are many types of homelessness other than chronic homelessness that occur in all

**Metro St. John's Homelessness**

Homeless Population: 176 (March 2022), 209 (December 2022), 236 (February 2023), 374 (February 2024)

*Chronically Homeless Population: 109 (March 2022), 134 (December 2022), 139 (February 2023), 261 (February 2024)

Legend: Month Year, March 2022, December 2022, February 2023, February 2024

communities and that we have seen the growth of marginalized populations in our communities. We also recognize that there is a percentage of the population that is precariously close to becoming homeless at any given point in time. Although Torbay does not have any data in this area, we are aware that we are not immune and we do recognize that there is a need to, at any given point in time, to be able to support residents that experience homelessness.

### 3.10   Factors Contributing to Homelessness in Torbay

Although we do not have data to measure homelessness in the community, the causes would be similar to those found in other communities, such as loss of employment, mental health challenges, poverty, lack of affordable housing, lack of rental properties and other reasons.

### 3.11   Temporary and Emergency Relief Resources in Torbay

Torbay does not currently have temporary or emergency relief shelter space within the municipality, as most residents who would need such supports would avail of them within the capital city.

### *3.12   Core Housing Need of Other Groups*

Torbay has not seen a demonstrated need for other groups who are excluded from publicly available core housing need data sources, however we do see opportunity to attract and house newcomers, and similar groups who may be seeking accommodation outside the urban core.   The need for these groups is essentially affordable rental housing.

We do not have any number of temporary foreign workers (TFW's) and given the most recent changes to this program we do not foresee an increase among local employers towards this labour source.

## 4.  Housing Profile

### *4.1 Key Trends in Housing Stocks*

For the period 2016 – 2021, construction of new homes declined 50% from the preceding 5-year period with 170 new dwellings being built from 2016 – 2021.
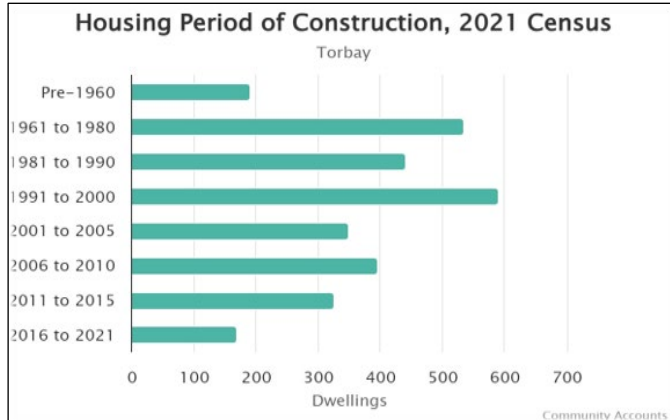


As reported by the 2021 Census, 82.4% of homes in Torbay were owned versus rented compared to 75.9% for the province and 66.5% for Canada.  The average monthly shelter costs for owned dwellings in 2021 was $1,526.  For the province, the average monthly shelter costs for owned dwellings in 2021 was $1,014.  The average monthly shelter costs paid by those who rented in 2021 was $1,052.  Provincially, the average monthly shelter costs paid by those who rented in 2021 was $903. [4]

This data shows that Torbay has high levels of home ownership, but low availability of affordable homes and rental properties. There is definitely space in the local housing

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[4]
https://nl.communityaccounts.ca/profiles.asp?_=vb7En4WVgaauzXVqXQ__#:~:text=The%202021%20Census%20population%20for,Torbay%20was%2043%20in%202021.

market as well as demonstrated demand for affordable housing, seniors housing and other forms of housing that would align with CMHC's priority groups. Torbay's reliance on traditional housing construction has contributed to stagnate populate growth over the past 5 years and in the long term will have negative implications on the long-term sustainability of the community. The focus on larger single-family homes has come at the expense of building housing that would meet the needs of those groups that fall within the core housing need cohort.

### 4.2 Other Forces Shaping Housing in Torbay

The current economic climate, especially as it impacts housing construction and availability has had a major impact on the housing environment in Torbay. Key factors include:

○ **Infrastructure** access to Town water and sewer is currently a major challenge with our existing water system being at capacity forcing most new construction to use artesian well systems and septic. This is not an impediment to home construction on large lots, however it can present challenges when it comes to high density housing, apartment buildings and other forms of affordable housing.

○ **Access to public transit** in Torbay is not available at this time. The Town is in the process of developing a regional transportation initiative that would see a small regional transportation network put in place for Torbay and surrounding communities.

○ Young residents and families who want to enter the housing market in Torbay face **significant barriers to home ownership** given that the existing and any new housing is too expensive for first-time homebuyers. Given that most people work in St. John's, the attraction of residing outside the urban core is attractive for many but our ability to attract these residents as potential homeowners or renters is limited due to these factors.

*4.3 Affordable Units in Torbay*

Currently there are 12 affordable units located in the Town of Torbay – all provided by Newfoundland and Labrador Housing directly (2 units) and through their Partner Managed Housing Program (10 units). Partner Managed Housing refers to subsidized housing to assist individuals and families of low to moderate income that fall within the required Housing Income Limits. Households may consist of families, seniors, and singles, some of whom may also have physical disabilities or other complex needs. (Such individuals benefit from this initiative provided they can cope with independent living with or without special support from the community at large).

Overall, there have been minimal affordable units for low / very low-income households built in Torbay over the past five years. The loss or lack of construction of affordable units available for individuals and families has negatively impacted our community in several ways. The absence of any ability to attract or retain those who require low income housing or other affordable accommodations is a contributing factor to our community's stagnate population growth over the past 5 years. While the demand for affordable housing of all types has increased dramatically, we have not created an environment that could incentivize the construction of these types of housing. Going forward – the Town of Torbay will be proactive on all fronts to ensure that our housing stock is diverse and aligned with the needs of current and future residents.

*4.4 Rent Changes in Torbay*

Torbay has experienced the same challenges related to increases in rental costs and decline in supply that other municipalities across Newfoundland and Labrador and Atlantic Canada have experienced in recent years. Rental costs have increased dramatically in Torbay over the past 5 years – to a point where in 2021, rental costs exceeded the average rental costs for the province. The latest census data for Torbay shows monthly shelter costs paid by those who rented in 2021 was $1,052. Provincially, the average monthly shelter costs paid by those who rented in 2021 was $903. These trends have continued over the past two years with demand increasing and supply remaining stagnate. The rising cost of living and inflationary impacts have contributed to these

increases.  In addition, landlords / property owners have opted to take advantage of these high rents, removing units from the low rent market and increasing the cost or converting units to short term rentals.

### *4.5 Vacancy Rates in Torbay*

Vacancy rates for housing units in Torbay have remained low over the past 5 years with little change.  Rental units available have not been in great supply nor has there been any increase in the construction of rental units.  The Town has been successful in attracting a developer to potentially construct an apartment building with 48 units.  This will be a major addition to our community and is a major addition to our housing stock.

### *4.6 Core Housing Need Trends*

CMHC's Core Housing Need (CHN) metric measures whether a household's living situation does not meet three criteria and whether there exist alternatives in the market to meet said criteria. These criteria are adequacy (the state of repair), suitability (the prevalence of overcrowding), and affordability (less than 30% of before-tax household income spent on shelter costs).  Although we do not have accurate data for Torbay around core housing trends, we are confident that those who meet the threshold would have limited options available that would allow them to remain in the community long term without solutions or support.

With more individuals and families in core housing need – it only adds to the complexity of the housing crisis facing our community and the province.  Census data from 2021 indicates that the number of households 'spending 30% or more of income on shelter costs' or 'not suitable' or 'major repairs needed' numbered 565 or 18.9%.

### 4.7 Non-Market Housing

Current options available in the Town of Torbay for non-market housing are limited. Newfoundland and Labrador Housing has two regular units in the community and 10 units that are partner managed. Partner Managed Housing (PMH) refers to subsidized housing to assist individuals and families of low to moderate income that fall within the Housing Income Limits. The people who live in PMH housing may be families, seniors, and singles, some of whom may also have physical disabilities or other complex needs. Such individuals benefit from these programs provided they can cope with independent living with or without special support from the community at large.

### 4.8 Other Affordable Housing Options / Needs

Although large-lot single family developments have fueled Torbay's growth over the past decade, current research and trends indicate that more varied and affordable housing choices will be required throughout the community. Particular attention will need to be paid to the needs of seniors who will become a more important economic force in the Town - projected to increase by 113-115% by 2035 with an increase in income of 137%. Actions will include looking at a condominium / apartment complex in conjunction with the Town Centre development, incorporation of smaller homes and or multi-unit housing into existing and/or new neighbourhoods and ensuring that assisted living and long-term care options are available at sufficient levels.

### 4.9 Housing Trends

Within the St. John's CMA income is correlated with home ownership and subsidized renters. Of note here is that 53.2% of the $30,000 to $59,999 income class are owners while only 29.2% of the $30,000 or less class are owners. There are 29.8% of the households earning $60,000 or more living in subsidized rentals and 7.1% of these households earn $100,000 or more.

In 2016, 80.9% of the houses in Torbay were single detached dwellings, 18.2% were apartments and 0.9% were row houses/semi-detached dwellings.  When considering age of the primary household maintainer:

- 14.5% are aged 30 years or less;
- 70.3% are in the 35-64 age cohort; and
- 15.2% are in the 65+ cohort.

Note that in 2016, 62.9% of the households in Torbay contained 2 persons or less, 18.3% had 3 persons, 12.9% had 4 persons and 5.8% had 5 persons or more. Given the fertility and demographic characteristics of the Town it is likely that the future dominant household sizes will be 3 persons or less and in 2016 this class of household size accounted for 81.2% of the households. Given that it is projected that from 2016 to 2035 the population age 65+ will increase by 115%. This raises a question of the suitability of existing housing stock for smaller households and seniors.

Future housing demands will have to consider the suitability of existing housing stocks to meet the shift in household sizes and whether renovating unsuitable houses is a viable option. This issue of existing stock suitability is evident by the predicted trends for household size where the largest future demand is for 1 to 2-person households.

## 5.  Projected Housing Needs and Next Steps

### *5.1 Projection Methodology*

The primary source of data for incorporating projections into this housing needs assessment for the Town of Torbay is the Housing Assessment Resource Tools (HART). This robust user-friendly economic model provides municipalities, especially smaller rural communities with less capacity, access to robust and reliable data which will ensure that housing related decisions at the municipal level are grounded in the most current and reliable information.

It also ensures that housing policy and solutions are focused on those areas in which there are gaps while ensuring a focus on equity, accessibility, and the ability to set realistic goals and targets that address the real challenges that exist within the community.  It also

ensures that any housing needs assessment produced by a community is focused on addressing challenges in building up housing stock to address individuals / households (especially those in marginalized populations) that encounter significant barriers accessing housing that aligns with their income and needs.

It provides all communities equal access to standardized essential data on core housing need segmented by income, household size, tenure and priority population.

The following data comes from the HART resource tool and shows where the predominant need exists and where the gaps are for the Town of Torbay. The income thresholds / categories used in HART housing data is based on the area median household income (AMHI)[5] for a specific region.

### 5.2 Income and Household Growth 2016 - 2021

## Income Categories and Affordable Shelter Costs, 2016 vs 2021

The following table shows the range of household incomes and affordable housing costs that make up each income category. It also shows the portion of total households that fall within each category.

| Area | | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) 2016 | | | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) 2021 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Income Category | % of Total HHs | Annual HH Income | Affordable Shelter Cost (2020 CAD$) | % of Total HHs | Annual HH Income | Affordable Shelter Cost (2020 CAD$) |
| Area Median Household Income | | $103,000 | $2,575 | | $107,000 | $2,675 |
| Very Low Income (20% or under of AMHI) | 3.93% | <= $20,600 | <= $515 | 1.53% | <= $21,400 | <= $535 |
| Low Income (21% to 50% of AMHI) | 16.43% | $20,601 - $51,500 | $516 - $1,288 | 19.19% | $21,400 - $53,500 | $535 - $1,338 |
| Moderate Income (51% to 80% of AMHI) | 17.68% | $51,501 - $82,400 | $1,289 - $2,060 | 18.85% | $53,500 - $85,600 | $1,338 - $2,140 |
| Median Income (81% to 120% of AMHI) | 20.36% | $82,401 - $123,600 | $2,061 - $3,090 | 19.52% | $85,600 - $128,400 | $2,140 - $3,210 |
| High Income (121% and more of AMHI) | 41.61% | >= $123,601 | >= $3,091 | 40.92% | >= $128,401 | >= $3,211 |

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[5] Statistics Canada calculates this as part of HART's custom data order in order to categorize households into HART's specified income categories, which are based on this AMHI for each area.

## Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need, by Income Category, 2016 vs 2021

In relation to the above chart – the following chart shows the percentage of households in each income category that are in Core Housing Need (CHN).
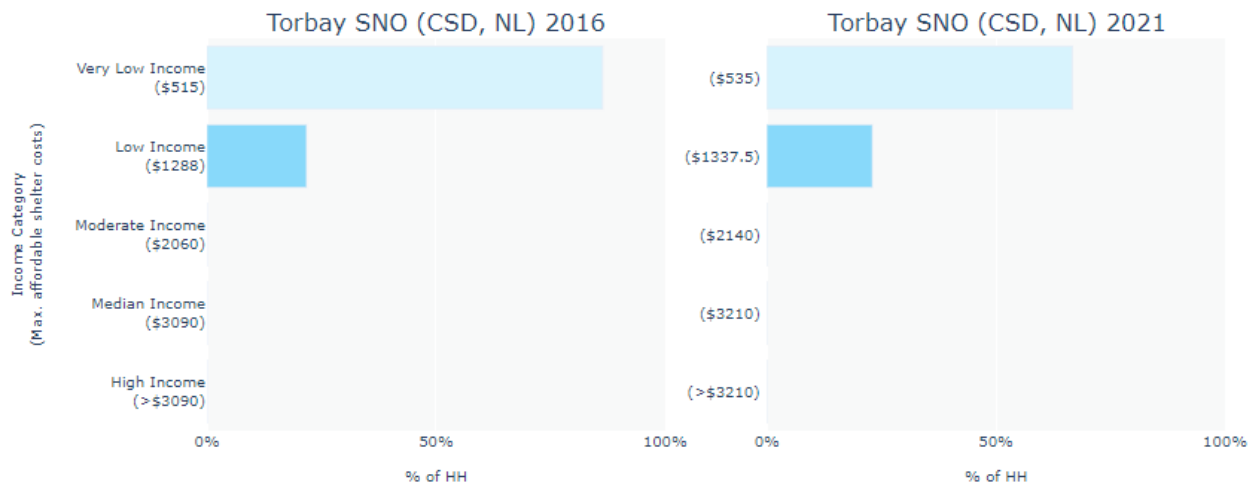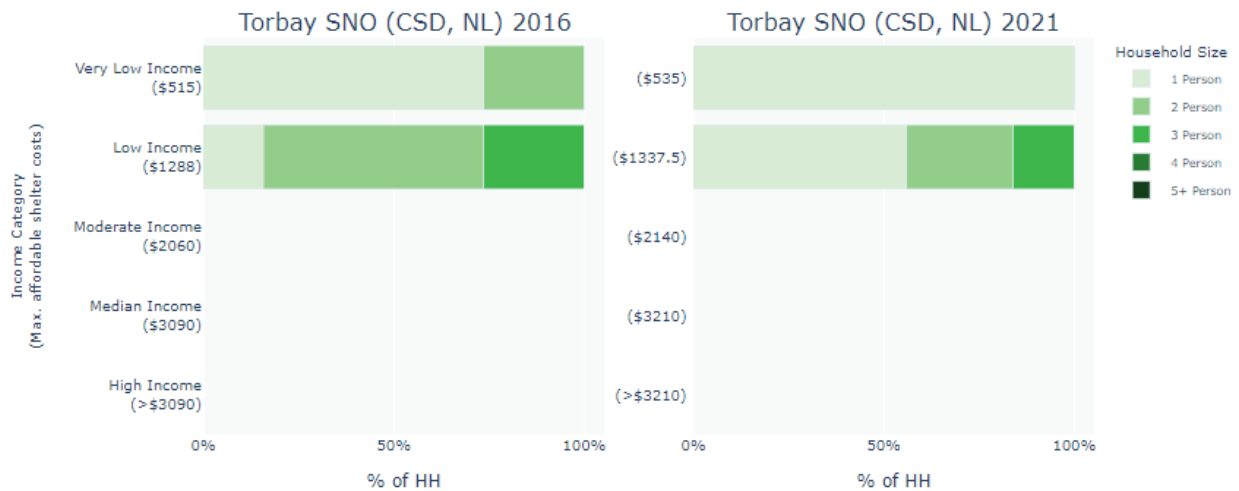


While households in the very low-income cohort experienced a decline in numbers from 2016 to 2021, the two lowest income categories did experience an increase in shelter costs over that period.

## Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need, by Income Category and HH Size, 2016 vs 2021

Also, we are able to show those households in Core Housing Need (CHN) and their relative distribution by household size.  For 2021, the entirety of households comprising those in CHN in the very low-income category was entirely made up of one-person households.  Those in the low-income category were as follows:

- 1-person household – 56%
- 2-person household – 28%
- 3-person household – 16%

**Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) 2016**

**Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) 2021**

Household Size: 1 Person, 2 Person, 3 Person, 4 Person, 5+ Person

Income Category (Max. affordable shelter costs) — % of HH

## 2016 vs 2021 Affordable Housing Deficit

The table below shows the number of households experiencing CHN by household size and income category.  These numbers are representative of the existing deficit of housing options in the Town of Torbay.  It clearly shows that our current housing stock is not sufficient to meet the needs of those in low-income categories.

| Area | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) 2016 | | | | | | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) 2021 | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Income Category (Max. affordable shelter cost) | 1 Person HH | 2 Person HH | 3 Person HH | 4 Person HH | 5+ Person HH | Total | Income Category (Max. affordable shelter cost) | 1 Person HH | 2 Person HH | 3 Person HH | 4 Person HH | 5+ Person HH | Total |
| Very Low Income ($515) | 70 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 95 | Very Low Income ($535) | 30 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Low Income ($1288) | 15 | 55 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 95 | Low Income ($1337) | 70 | 35 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 125 |
| Moderate Income ($2060) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Moderate Income ($2140) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Median Income ($3090) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | Median Income ($3210) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| High Income (>$3090) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | High Income (>$3210) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 85 | 80 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 190 | Total | 100 | 35 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 155 |

## Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need by Priority Population, 2016 vs 2021

The following chart compares the rates of CHN across populations that are at high risk of experiencing housing need. The "Community (all HH)" bar represents the rate of CHN for all households in the selected community to act as a point of reference. The population with the greatest rate of CHN is highlighted in black. Given that the Town of Torbay represents a small sample size for data – some data points are too small to report.



Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) 2016 vs 2021
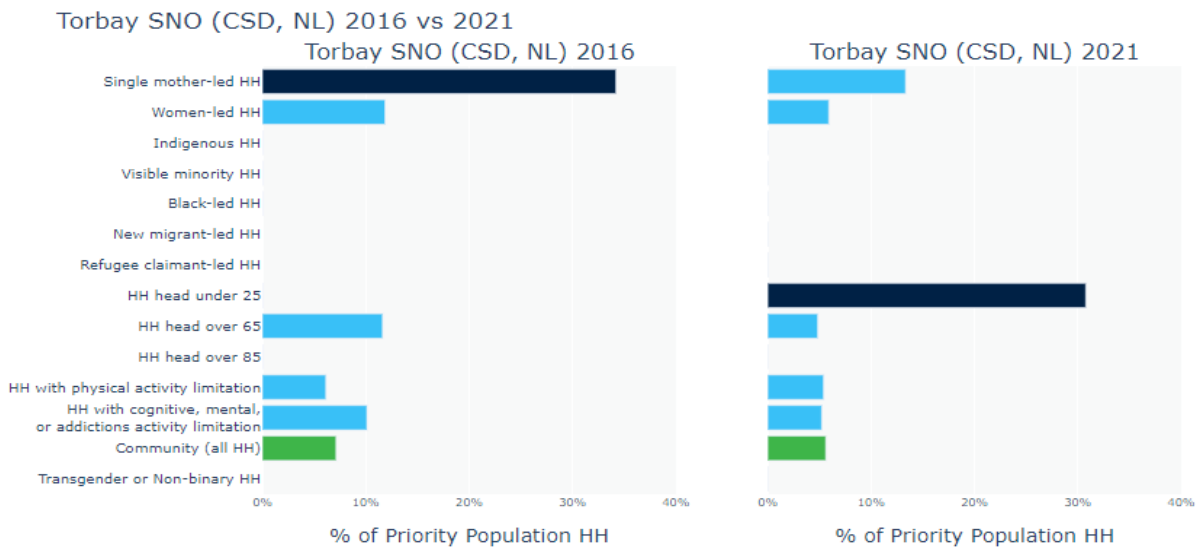
## Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need by Priority Population and Income Category, 2016 vs 2021
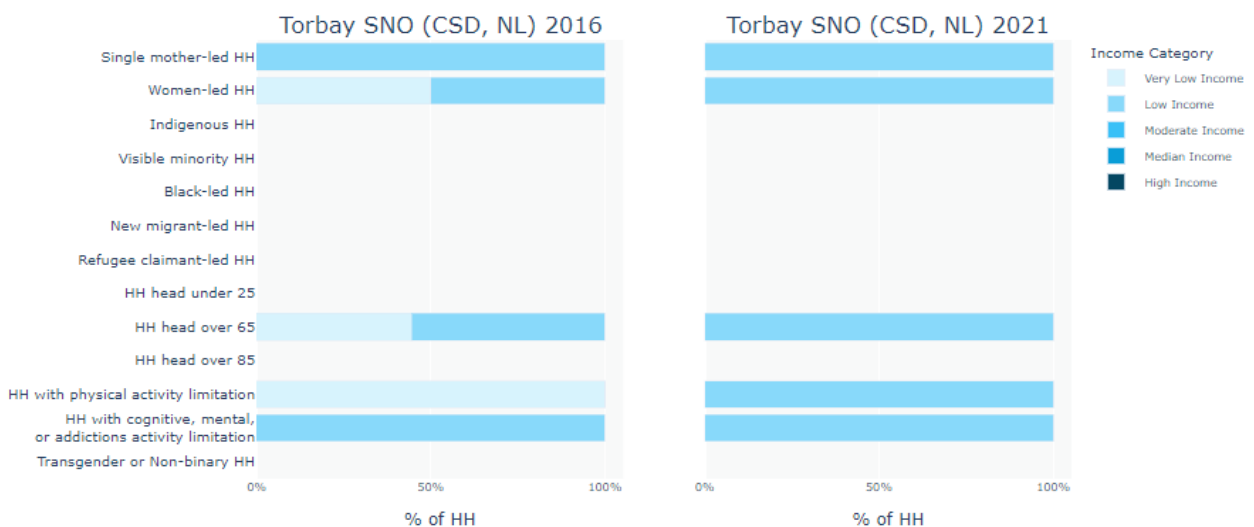
The above chart clearly identifies single parent households led by women, seniors, individuals living with a physical disability and those with mental health issues dominate those who are in need of housing in the Town of Torbay.

### *5.3 Projections*

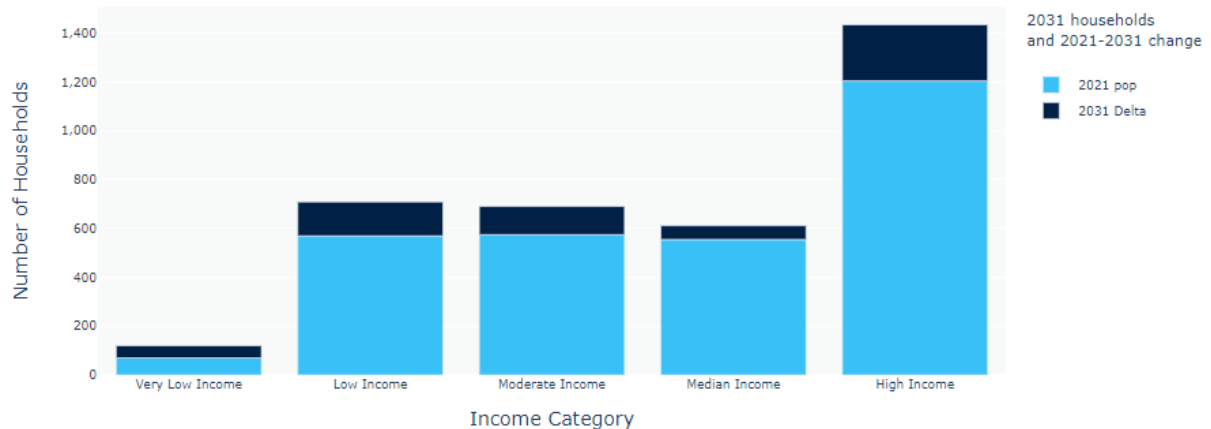## 2031 Household Projections by Income Category

The following table shows the total number of households in 2021, for each household income category, the projected gain (positive) or loss (negative) of households between 2021 and 2031, and the total projected households in 2031.

| | | | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) |
|---|---|---|---|
| HH Income Category | 2021 HHs | Projected Gain/Loss of HHs by 2031 | Total |
| Very Low Income | 70 | 50 | 120 |
| Low Income | 570 | 139 | 709 |
| Moderate Income | 575 | 116 | 691 |
| Median Income | 555 | 57 | 612 |
| High Income | 1,205 | 230 | 1,435 |
| Total | 2,975 | 592 | 3,567 |

The following graph illustrates the above table, displaying the total number of households in 2021, for each income category, with the projected gain of households between 2021 and 2031 on top. The gains (in households) for each income category are as follows:

- Very low-income      50 households
- Low-income      139 households
- Moderate income      116 households
- Median income      57 households
- High income      230 households

2031 Household Projections by Income Category
Torbay SNO (CSD, NL)



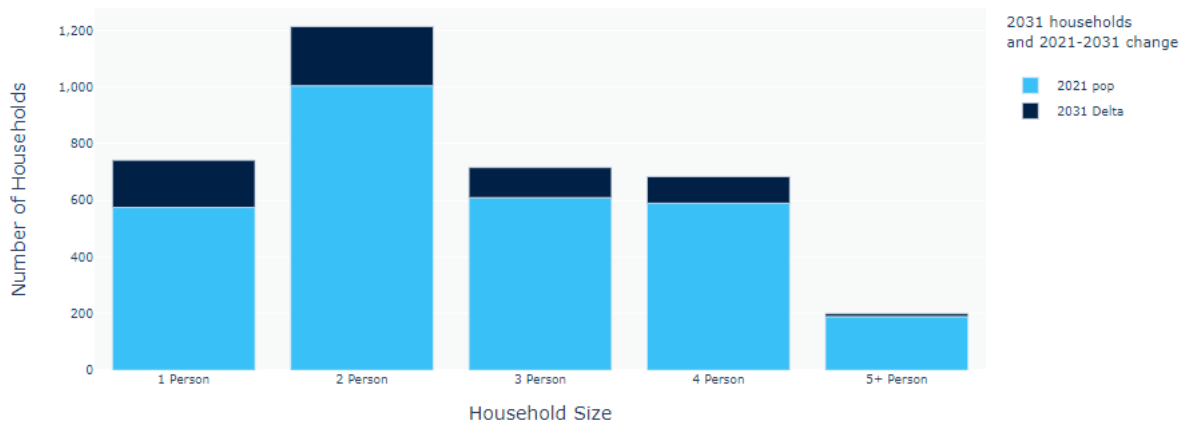## 2031 Household Projections by Household Size

The following table shows the total number of households in 2021, for each household size, the projected gain (positive) or loss (negative) of households over the period between 2021 and 2031, and the total projected households in 2031.

| | | | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) |
|---|---|---|---|
| HH Size | 2021 HHs | Projected Gain/Loss of HHs by 2031 | Total 2031 HHs |
| 1 Person | 575 | 167 | 742 |
| 2 Person | 1,005 | 209 | 1,214 |
| 3 Person | 610 | 106 | 716 |
| 4 Person | 590 | 94 | 684 |
| 5+ Person | 190 | 10 | 200 |
| Total | 2,970 | 586 | 3,556 |

The following graph illustrates the above table, displaying the total number of households in 2021, for each size of household, with the projected increases between 2021 and 2031 on top (black).  The gains for each household category are as follows:

- 1 person          167 households
- 2 person          209 households
- 3 person          106 households
- 4 person          94 households
- 5 person          10 households

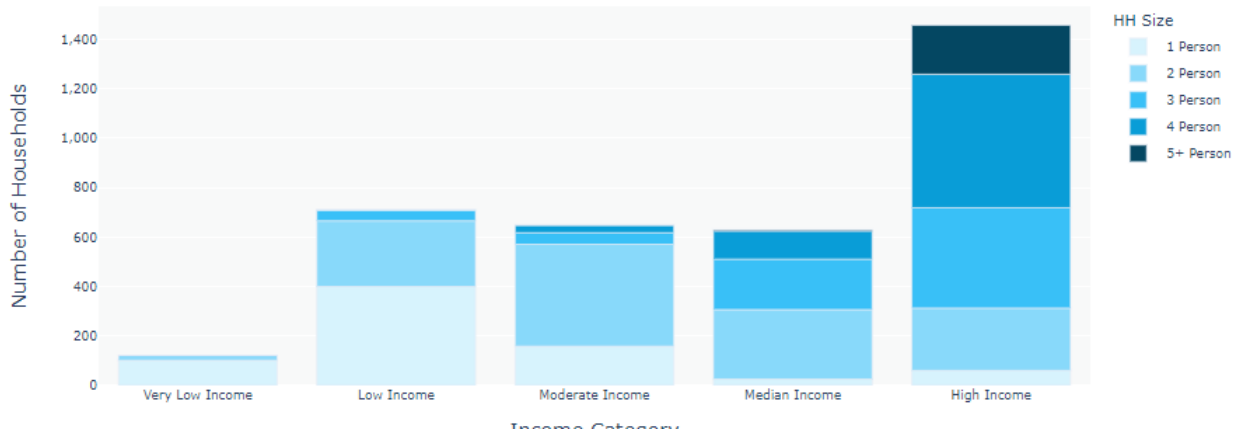2031 Household Projections by Household Size
Torbay SNO (CSD, NL)



## 2031 Projected Households by Household Size and Income Category

| HH Income Category | 1 Person | 2 Person | 3 Person | 4 Person | 5+ Person | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Low Income | 102 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 122 |
| Low Income | 400 | 266 | 44 | 0 | 0 | 710 |
| Moderate Income | 159 | 412 | 47 | 30 | 0 | 648 |
| Median Income | 26 | 281 | 204 | 114 | 4 | 629 |
| High Income | 61 | 252 | 406 | 540 | 198 | 1,457 |
| Total | 748 | 1,231 | 701 | 684 | 202 | 3,566 |

The following graph illustrates the above table, displaying the projected total number of households in 2031 by household size and income category. Each bar is broken out by the projected total number of households within each income category.

2031 Projected Households by Household Size and Income Category
Torbay SNO (CSD, NL)



## 2031 Projected Household Gain / Loss (2021 to 2031)

The following table shows the projected gain or loss of households by household size and income. These are projections of total households for the period between 2021 and 2031. Note that gains and losses in population, as well as mobility between income categories and household size, which can cause greater impacts in households in lower income brackets.  (i.e. – the impact of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit - CERB).

| HH Income Category | 1 Person | 2 Person | 3 Person | 4 Person | 5+ Person | Total | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Very Low Income | 37 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 57 | |
| Low Income | 80 | 71 | 14 | −20 | 0 | 145 | |
| Moderate Income | 39 | 107 | −33 | 0 | 0 | 113 | |
| Median Income | −14 | 46 | 34 | 9 | −21 | 54 | |
| High Income | 31 | −23 | 86 | 110 | 43 | 247 | |
| Total | 173 | 221 | 101 | 99 | 22 | 616 | |

The following graph illustrates the above table, displaying the projected gain or loss of households between 2021 and 2031 for each size of household.



## 2031 Projected Municipal vs Regional Household Growth Rates by Income Category

The following table illustrates the projected total household growth rates between 2021 and 2031 in the community and its surrounding region for each income category.

| | | | | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HH Income Category | 2021 HHs | Muni. Growth Rate (%) | Regional Growth Rate (%) | 2031 HHs (Muni. Rate) | 2031 HHs (Region. Rate) |
| Very Low Income | 70 | 71.4% | 10.5% | 120 | 4,564 |
| Low Income | 570 | 24.3% | 16.3% | 709 | 25,778 |
| Moderate Income | 575 | 20.8% | 11.9% | 695 | 23,264 |
| Median Income | 555 | 9.9% | 6.9% | 610 | 24,159 |
| High Income | 1,205 | 19.1% | 13.9% | 1,435 | 53,687 |

The following graph illustrates the above table, displaying the projected household growth rates between 2021 and 2031 in the community and its surrounding region for each income category.



## Municipal vs Regional Growth Rates by Household Size

The following table illustrates the projected household growth rates between 2021 and 2031 in the community and its surrounding region for each household size.

| | | | | | Torbay SNO (CSD, NL) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HH Size | 2021 HHs | Muni. Growth Rate (%) | Regional Growth Rate (%) | 2031 HHs (Muni. Rate) | 2031 HHs (Region. Rate) |
| 1 Person | 575 | 29.1% | 23.0% | 742 | 40,884 |
| 2 Person | 1,005 | 20.8% | 18.1% | 1,214 | 52,449 |
| 3 Person | 610 | 17.3% | 1.2% | 716 | 19,135 |
| 4 Person | 590 | 16.0% | -4.0% | 684 | 14,411 |
| 5+ Person | 190 | 5.3% | -13.2% | 200 | 4,573 |

The following graph illustrates the above table, displaying the projected household growth rates between 2021 and 2031 in the community and its surrounding region for each income category.



2031 Projected Community and Regional Household Growth Rates
Torbay SNO (CSD, NL)
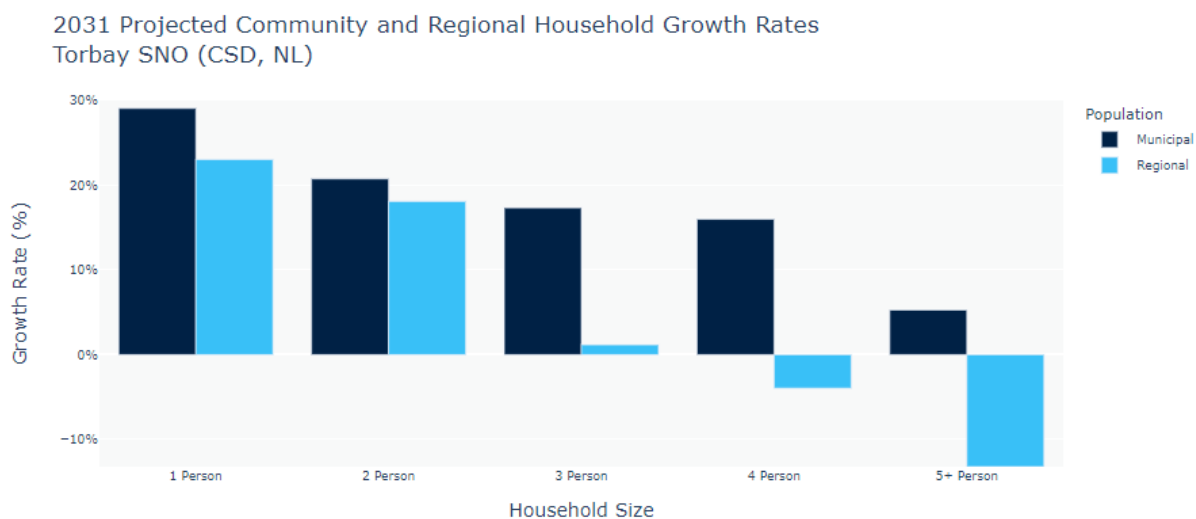
Of note in this graph and the corresponding table is that the Town of Torbay is projected to exceed growth in all household categories compared to household growth in the region.

Based on the above data extracted from the HART model – we can make the following assumptions / conclusions:

1. The majority of households in core housing need are concentrated in the following income categories:
   a. 86% of households in the very low-income category are in core housing need
   b. 21.7% of households in the low-income category are in core housing need
2. The majority of these households are either one person or two-person households.
3. The largest or most severe need is found in the following groups:
   a. Households that are single mother led
   b. Women led households
   c. Households where the head is under 25 years
   d. Households that experience mental health issues, addiction or are living with a physical limitation
   e. Seniors

4. For the period 2021 to 2031 – the increase in households that will be in core housing need are:

   a. Very low-income from 70 to 120 – and increase of 50 households

   b. Low-income from 570 to 709 – an increase of 139 households

   c. Over that time period, households in core housing need in very low-income and low-income will increase by 376. The majority of the households will be one person and two-person households.

5. For the period 2021 – 2031 – the Town of Torbay will experience growth rates in very low-income and low-income households that is significantly greater than growth in the region.

6. The Town of Torbay will require in excess of 190 housing units to accommodate growth in very low and low-income households

7. Key strategies to address this housing deficit amongst priority populations include

   a. High density affordable housing;

   b. Affordable rental units;

   c. Homes that occupy a smaller footprint;

   d. Multi-unit developments; and

   e. An additional strategy should focus on regional transportation into the urban region to access key services.

# 6. Use of Housing Needs Assessment in Long-Term Planning

### 6.1 Anticipated Use of Results and Findings

The HNA provides the Town of Torbay with a strategic document and a path forward based on the most current research and data with which to guide the efforts of the municipality in addressing housing challenges. Currently, the Town of Torbay has commenced our new 10-year municipal plan. This HNA will help guide discussions and solutions around the development of required housing related policies, including progressive zoning regulations that will align with increasing and diversifying our housing stock.

The data and research referenced above will allow the Town of Torbay to maximize its efforts in diversifying housing stock. It will also facilitate increased awareness and

knowledge among residents, business owners, developers, and Town staff as well as elected officials in relation to the critical importance of ensuring that key initiatives, growth strategies and other major developments within the Town are aligned with infrastructure investments.  Planning is critical for success in this area and infrastructure investment will need to be targeted and aligned with housing policies and regulations to ensure the Town has capacity to accommodate future development.

For the Town of Torbay, the key challenge in developing additional and diversifying existing housing stock is access to municipal water and sewer.  Currently this is a priority in our infrastructure planning.  We are developing a long-term strategy to ensure that we have sufficient capacity within our municipal water / sewer infrastructure going forward to meet future anticipated residential and commercial needs.

# 7. Sources

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f. Town of Torbay Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025 (2023). Accessed August 2024. https://torbay.ca/site/uploads/2023/03/torbay-stategicPlan2023-2025.pdf