



Phoenix Bedrock Project

Housing for Youth Research and Modelling Study

Final Report

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Executive Summary

Affordable housing in Canada has become more scarce in recent decades, and many cities and regions have been attempting to increase their supply of affordable housing through various strategies. Several local reports and grey literature indicate an increase in the demand for affordable housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). However, barriers to development of affordable housing include weak relationships with government, financing, lack of awareness of funding programs and supports, declining condition of existing non-profit stock, lack of collaboration between stakeholders involved in the development of housing, lack of agency at the municipal level, and low development capacity among non-profit housing providers.

Young people face a number of barriers to accessing housing, including low incomes, high housing costs, discrimination in the housing and labour markets, drug and alcohol use, lack of life skills, lack of transportation, lack of identification and references, and complex eligibility rules. Non-profit housing operators that provide options for youth often focus on both physical housing and supports, which aim to stabilize youth and offer them opportunities to learn the life skills they will need in the housing market, such as budgeting and developing good relationships with landlords and other tenants. Phoenix Youth Programs provides housing options for youth in HRM and would like to expand their current housing to include more transitional housing options for youth. This report summarizes a study conducted for Phoenix Youth Programs from April to October 2020.

In order to determine what models would be most suitable for Phoenix to use in future expansion, we asked the following research questions:

1. What trends are happening in the market that need to be addressed to both create and maintain youth housing supply?
2. What is the full range of factors currently affecting the supply of appropriate and affordable housing for youth in Halifax and key communities (i.e., Lower Sackville; Dartmouth)?
3. What is the five-year outlook for appropriate youth housing and related supports in our region?
4. What types of housing and supports are needed for youth? What projects have been successful in meeting these needs? (e.g. independent vs. communal living, partner organizations to deliver services, project implementation and management?)

In order to answer these questions, we used descriptive statistics, First Voice interviews (9), a survey of housing providers and service providers (20), and a comparison of housing models in Canada and elsewhere (30). Then we consulted the Phoenix Youth Housing Advisory Committee and asked them to prioritize several models.

Research Results

Our statistical analysis revealed that the Halifax CMA faces historically high demand for housing, resulting in very low vacancy rates, particularly in Sackville (0.5 percent in 2020) and Dartmouth (1.5 percent). Youth aged 15-24 represent 13 percent of the population in the Halifax CMA and youth who are primary household maintainers represent 12 percent of the population, but 20 percent of youth were in core housing need (they live in housing that is not the correct size for their needs, not affordable, or is in need of major repairs).

The First Voice interviews revealed a desire for independent living arrangements, with decreasing need for supports as they gained the skills they needed (e.g. life skills, managing relationships with landlords and other tenants, financial skills). Most would like to live in mid-rise or low-rise housing five years in the future, although most did prefer urban locations due to their proximity to transportation and services. Participants acknowledge the usefulness of many Phoenix programs but did note that there is a gap the mental health support system in HRM.

The survey of housing and service providers showed that there are many different physical and program models that have worked well across the country. Most organizations run multiple programs which have contributed to multiple physical models to match the level of support needed and the age of the residents/clients. The main barrier identified by participants in continuing their operations was funding, with a particular emphasis on how rapidly the gap between incomes and housing costs is widening. A few are currently developing/building more housing to accommodate their growing needs, and several others are in the planning and scoping stages of expansion. They indicated that balancing the need for well-trained staff was critical, and that building partnerships with governments, developers, and the community was necessary to help garner support for new projects. Partnerships were also essential in managing the development process, since non-profits often lack this capacity.

Insights from the eight HRM adult-based organizations indicated that barriers included the gap between what people can truly afford and what housing really costs, financial instability, low wages, low income assistance rates, lack of supportive housing options, criminal records/records checks, substance use, and stigma, and desire to live in select locations. Respondents noted that housing was needed in all areas of HRM and three of them noted that demand had increased but were unable to quantify this. There were no changes noted to systemic barriers for youth and young adults in accessing affordable housing. There was no consensus on the trends affecting local housing, but participants mentioned discrimination in the housing market (e.g. discrimination based on LGBTQ2S youth living in shelters (CMHC 2019), low inventory, low vacancy rates due to the influx of newcomers to the region, the closure of boarding houses, renovation and development of low income units resulting in the eviction of tenants, higher cost options being built, barriers for organizations and landlords/developers in creating affordable housing, and difficulty navigating the federal housing program through CMHC. The housing model that garnered the most support was co-op housing on scattered sites, and the services that were most recommended were life skills training, access to financial information, mental health support, and family support.

Housing Model Prioritization

We presented the results from our comparison of housing models in Appendix C. The Phoenix Youth Housing Advisory Committee prioritized five: foyers, Housing First for youth (HF4Y), scattered site approaches, co-operatives, and a multi-service centre/neighbourhood house. In the final section of the report, we provide more detail on each of these models in relationship to Phoenix's targeted demographics (youth aged 16-19, youth who are frequently rehoused, youth with more independence, young families, and newcomers), timeliness (immediate to long-term), hard and soft costs, and funding options. Finally, we presented three scenarios for Phoenix Bedrock Project:

- **Option 1:** Choose a model that is quick to implement along with a longer-term model: **Foyers + Multi-Service Centre**
- **Option 2:** Choose a quick to implement model that is easy to expand over time: **Scattered sites + Co-ops**
- **Option 3:** Choose a model that is quick to implement: **Housing First**

Introduction

Affordable housing in Canada has become more scarce in recent decades, and many cities and regions have been attempting to increase their supply of affordable housing through various strategies. Provincial rent supplements and renovation rehabilitation programs, as well as targeted programs such as supporting the development of secondary suites (e.g. Province of Saskatchewan, Province of Alberta) and municipal approaches (e.g. property tax exemptions, fast-tracking development applications for affordable housing projects, and selling municipal land to non-profit developers at less than market rates) have also helped increase supply of affordable housing across the country. The National Housing Strategy is currently funding innovative housing approaches such as rental housing with a percentage of affordable units, renovations to community housing units (e.g. co-operatives), and approaches to support vulnerable populations such as seniors. However, many cities, including mid-sized cities like Halifax Regional Municipality still face affordability crises.

Several local reports and grey literature indicate an increase in the demand for affordable housing in HRM (Housing and Homelessness Partnership, 2015a; Donovan, 2016; Grudic, 2016). The social housing sector is described as fragmented and working in silos (AHANS, 2011, HHP, 2015b): providers are overextended and ill-equipped to deal with the growing demand and associated services along with it (AHANS, 2011). Meanwhile, although the City Council approved the Housing and Homelessness targets of 5,000 new or preserved units of affordable housing in 2016, construction so far has been inactive (Woodford, 2018; Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee, 2018). Social housing providers in HRM have been forthcoming about concerns and fears for their housing stock, some larger non-profits in the municipality having sold units to sustain operations (McMillan, 2015; HHP, 2015a). These problems have been magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has contributed to unemployment leading to eviction notices for renters and increased vulnerability for people experiencing homelessness, who cannot self-isolate at home.

Non-profit and cooperative housing organizations independently and compete for the same limited resources in the public and private market, regardless of their divergent needs (Cantwell and Tomalty, 2004). Non-profit housing organizations in Halifax have the potential to increase their housing supply, but face several barriers in implementing and operating projects: weak relationships with government, financing (including declining subsidies from governments), lack of expertise among board members, lack of awareness of funding programs and supports, and the declining condition of their existing stock (Thomas and Salah 2019). Lack of collaboration between stakeholders involved in the development of housing, lack of agency at the municipal level, and low development capacity among non-profit housing providers are important barriers to widespread development of affordable housing (Thomas, Moos and Dottin 2019, Thomas and Salah 2019, Phoenix Youth Programs 2020).

Among the most vulnerable groups are youth and young adults. Young people face a number of barriers to accessing housing, including low incomes, high housing costs, discrimination in the housing and labour markets, drug and alcohol use, lack of life skills, lack of transportation, lack of identification and references, and complex eligibility rules (Kraus et al. 2007, BC Coalition to End Homelessness 2020). Youth exiting the care system, including foster care, can face a number of legal issues such as the need for legal guardianship and restrictions for certain programs (e.g. the need to access counselling sessions to access the Agreements with Youth Adults program) (BC Coalition to End Homelessness 2020). Youth are also socially vulnerable to risky sexual activity, predatory/recruitment activity, and gang activity (BC Coalition to End Homelessness 2020, MacKay 2005).

Non-profit housing operators that provide options for youth often focus on both physical housing and supports, which aim to stabilize youth and offer them opportunities to learn the life skills they will need in the housing market, such as budgeting and developing good relationships with landlords and other tenants. Some youth, particularly those who have lived in foster care or who have experienced homelessness, may not have learned these life skills from their own family members. Lacking these, and facing multiple barriers, they are unable to find housing. Transitional housing programs and options provide a path for young people to learn the skills they need to live independently. Like many housing and service providers, Phoenix Youth Programs has identified a growing need and would like to expand their operations.

This report summarizes a study conducted for Phoenix Youth Programs from April to October 2020. The report structure is as follows: first, we present our research methodology for the study and ethical considerations. We follow this with a literature review that gives an overview of transitional housing options for youth. Following this, we present our research results: the descriptive data analysis of the housing context in HRM, First Voice interview results, survey results, and a comparison of housing models. We then present more details on the five housing models prioritized by the Phoenix Youth Housing Advisory Committee, and three potential scenarios for their adoption.

Methodology

In order to best assist Phoenix Youth Programs in developing a housing model that meets the needs of youth and young adults, the research took a collaborative approach where possible. Using both primary and secondary data, we focused on the following questions:

1. What trends are happening in the market that need to be addressed to both create and maintain youth housing supply?
2. What is the full range of factors currently affecting the supply of appropriate and affordable housing for youth in Halifax and key communities (i.e., Lower Sackville; Dartmouth)?
3. What is the five-year outlook for appropriate youth housing and related supports in our region?
4. What types of housing and supports are needed for youth? What projects have been successful in meeting these needs? (e.g. independent vs. communal living, partner organizations to deliver services, project implementation and management?)

In order to answer these questions, we used descriptive data analysis, a comparison of housing models based on case studies identified in the literature review, First Voice interviews, and a survey of housing and service providers across Canada.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In order to provide the context for affordable housing in the Halifax Regional Municipality, we performed a descriptive statistical analysis using CMHC rental housing reports (2019), Census data (2016), and the Survey of Household Spending (2017). The Statistics Canada Market Basket Measure reports and updates (2020) were also useful in understanding the short- and long-term outlooks for youth housing. This method aimed to answer Questions 1, 2, and 3.

First Voice Interviews

In order to help determine potential transitional housing models that would work for youth in HRM, we conducted a series of semi-structured interviews with nine youth that have been or are involved in the Phoenix's various residential program. Interviewees were asked about their experience regarding current housing situation, access to housing, programs that Phoenix offers, location of accommodation, and essential or non-essential services that they might consider when obtaining housing. Questions also focused on their future goals and the amenities they look for in their search for housing. This research methodology aims to target question 4. A list of the interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

Phoenix staff assisted in the recruitment of the First Voice participants. Interviews were held online using Zoom, and in some cases where internet access was not available or unreliable, interviews were conducted over the phone. Where possible, interviews were recorded with the consent of participants to allow analysis of the data. Each participant was compensated to acknowledge their participation.

We provided information on the project to each participant at least one week prior to the start of the interview, answered any questions from participants, and obtained signed consent forms outlining risks and privacy protection before proceeding with the interviews. During the collection and analysis of primary data, we ensured participants' anonymity was maintained and maintained protocols in storing data and using codes in all written records (e.g. transcripts) in order to ensure anonymity.

Survey

We conducted a survey of 20 housing providers and service providers across Canada. The survey had 17 questions (see Appendix A), with an additional seven questions for Halifax-based organizations to help answer Questions 2 and 3. The initial pool for the survey was 70 organizations which were identified through literature review and through Phoenix staff members. The response rate of 29%, although quite high for an online survey, still leads to a small dataset which only allows us to present descriptive, rather than statistical, data.

Of our respondents, 11 identify as non-profit housing providers, 15 as non-profit service providers, and one as a social enterprise. Nine participants indicated that they provide both housing and services. Eight participants are located in HRM.

Housing Model Comparison

The housing model comparison highlights best practice examples from Canada and elsewhere to provide a comprehensive understanding of their housing characteristics, supports and resources, financial structure, pre-requisites and additional features. The 30 examples used were determined through the literature review and included analysis of public websites, media reports, and grey literature (e.g. project reports from youth-serving agencies, annual financial reports), which help round out the full range of factors affecting affordable housing for youth (Questions 1 and 2) and identified case studies of successful projects designed for youth (Question 4).

Transitional Housing Options for Youth: A Literature Review

In reviewing the literature on transitional housing options for youth, we found that there were a range of physical models (e.g. scattered sites with one or several units at each site, purpose-built standalone

buildings) and levels of support (from a full range of supports to very little). Most of the organizations developing and operating the housing are non-profit organizations, and usually the majority of their funding comes from government grants. There are many models that allow youth to transition into more independent options as they develop stronger life skills, such as Supported Lodging Schemes in the United Kingdom, which allows a youth to rent a spare room in a host home and a host to help with life skills training and support. Rolling housing models allow either the supports to follow the youth as they transition to new housing or allow the person to stay in their home as they transition to different programming.

The limited scholarly literature on transitional housing programs shows that they have been quite successful in other countries. For example, Giffords et al (2007) reviewed two programs in New York City, and found that of the 44 youth who participated, 93 percent acquired or continued to practice independent living skills, 91 percent had attended school, participated in vocational training or were employed, and 87 percent moved into an independent living setting when they finished the program. The Real Alternatives for Adolescents program (Bay Area Youth Centres, Hayward, CA) required for youth (aged 16-20) to go to school, volunteer, and attend weekly meetings and services provided by the county. The youth were given stipends for food and did not pay rent. This transitional housing program for older foster youth had excellent results: 96 percent of the participants who had completed the program within the past ten years were living in stable housing, 86 percent were employed, and 58 percent were enrolled in post-secondary education (Lenz-Rashid 2018). Holtschneider (2016) found that, for the 32 participants who had participated in a transitional program for homeless youth in Chicago, IL in the past ten years, people they met in the program often filled traditional family roles for them. They developed empathy for their peers, felt surrounded by others, and enjoyed the everyday rituals that came with having support including scheduled activities. Being part of a community, and strengthening ties to their own families and ethnic/cultural communities, is important, as is feeling safe (MacKay 2005).

The Bill Wilson Centre in Santa Clara, CA been extremely successful with a range of transitional housing programs: 85 percent of their clients in 2019 left the centre's programs to move into stable or permanent housing and 91 percent said they improved their well-being while they were involved in the programs. Of the 1,300 young adults who used housing services at the centre in 2019, 58 percent gained or kept employment and 48 percent were enrolled in school (Bill Wilson Centre 2019).

Physical Models: What does Transitional Housing Look Like?

In terms of physical models, there are a range from standalone/dedicated buildings, with or without services offered on site, to scattered site models which could include subsidized rental units provided in collaboration with a municipal/regional authority and provincial rent subsidies.

A number of housing cooperatives for youth provide scattered site housing, such as Youthab in Belleville, ON. Scattered site units for youth with case management and rental subsidies (in partnership with provincial governments) were among the recommendations from the BC Coalition to End Homelessness (2020). Living in shared houses, young people develop independence by making shared decision-making related to their apartment/house and learn the responsibilities associated with managing a house. Australia's youth foyer model was designed to provide housing and support to youth experiencing homelessness who participated in education, employment, as a transition to adulthood. The UK and Australia have developed several youth foyers, under different structures: in the UK, municipalities are responsible for housing and social services, and they are funded through social

housing grants. Australian youth foyers compete for operational funding with other agencies. Research on five Australian youth foyers indicates that they have been successful in helping youth transition to stable and secure housing (Steen and MacKenzie 2017).

In the case of non-profit organizations who support their housing programs with services provided to the general public, they may operate these within the same building as a social enterprise. For example, Vancouver Native Housing Society operates Vancouver Native Art Gallery, 18 hotel units, and Skwachays Healing Lodge. The proceeds from the lodge and the hotel support the housing for 24 Indigenous artists, their income and professional development. Portland Hotel Society in Vancouver operates a number of social enterprises (DTS Janitorial services, Bugs Be Gone Pest Control, Soap Opera Laundry, Radio Station Cafe, Community Thrift and Vintage) which contribute proceeds to the single room occupancy hotel.

The ability to develop units quickly is a major consideration for housing providers, and may impact the physical models: Vancouver and Stockholm have used temporary modular buildings for youth experiencing homelessness, and Q Male Lodge in Saskatoon renovated a boarding house into a 10-unit shelter that is open 24/7 (Labbey-Krejci, B. 2020). Having support services use common areas and passive spaces like courtyards, and incorporating workshop and teaching spaces are also common. Brightside Community Homes Foundation in Vancouver is a non-profit that owns and manages 26 buildings (940 rental units). Their rent-geared-to-income (RGI) structure allows a surplus operating balance to use to buy and develop new sites: over the years, they bought several market rental buildings and as tenants moved out they slowly converted them to RGI. Glyn Manor was opened on land leased from the City to house youth with barriers to employment.

Program Models: What Supports does Transitional Housing Need?

Generally, transitional housing offers a range of support services. Some typical support services offered for youth include:

- Helping youth access health care
- Helping youth access mental health supports
- Trauma-informed care
- Harm reduction support
- Enhancing personal safety
- Developing food security and skills (e.g. cooking)
- Promoting healthy sexuality, friendships, and relationships
- Facilitating access to education
- Providing job skills training
- Assistance navigating the support, housing, and other systems
- Providing peer and parenting support, family and community support
- Providing legal advice
- Strengthening cultural connections
- Engagement in meaningful activities

While some of these supports are offered by the housing providers themselves, they often refer youth to services across the city: the Boys and Girls Club of Calgary has just one youth housing manager, one program coordinator on the operational side, and several support workers (Gaetz 2017). Q Male Lodge in Saskatoon has a 10-unit shelter that is open 24/7. Q Male Lodge partners with local services to keep youth engaged and develop the community: YMCA allows use of their services and White Buffalo Youth

Lodge offers use of gym and cultural programs (Labbey-Krejci, B. 2020). LGBTQ2S, Indigenous, and racialized youth face particular barriers in the housing and labour markets, such as discrimination from housing providers, youth care workers, and employers. YMCA Sprott House in Toronto, ON, was built to provide the first 2SLGBTQ+ transitional housing for youth in Canada, with a maximum of 25 residents aged 16-24. It has been successful at decreasing unemployment, increasing school enrolment and sense of belonging among the residents (Abramovich 2019).

In some cases, different organizations have co-located staff: Focus Ireland, which provides services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, relies upon partnerships with local municipalities, child protection, and health services in developing relationships with young people to keep them housed (Gaetz 2017). Some programs, like Wrapforce in Kamloops and One Door Initiative in Kelowna, provide one referral document for all services. While this requires coordination between the mental health organizations and housing providers, it has immense benefits for the youth residents (BC Coalition to End Homelessness 2020).

One example of a one-stop centre is the Youth Services Centre in St. John's, NL, which has nine rental units for young men and shared space for three youth support organizations to deliver services. The centre is funded by Service Canada, CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Program, Natural Resources Canada and the Provincial Department of Health. The Bill Wilson Centre, an organization serving homeless, systems, and transition-aged youth in Santa Clara, CA has a transitional housing program for youth from 18-24 who are experiencing homelessness. They complete a comprehensive 12-18 month program counseling, independent living skills training, parenting classes and employment service while living in shared, supervised apartments or houses.

Operating services for the general public can provide valuable employment options for youth. Social enterprises that employ certain demographics (e.g. youth, Indigenous) may also receive government funding such as Human Resources and Skills Development Canada grants or apprenticeship grants for training employees in the construction trades. In addition to Q Male Lodge, Quint Development Corporation in Saskatoon runs affordable rental housing program that manages over 94 units and 200 people annually. They operate BUILD UP, a social enterprise doing construction, employs people with barriers to employment, and Station 20 West which provides services and amenities to all city residents, and a social enterprise cafe, Boxcar Cafe, which employs four people. Wigwamen Incorporated in Hamilton, ON operates Green Tech Services and Upper Canada Property Management to support their non-profit residential corporation.

Most of the transitional housing programs that accept youth have a limited duration, typically up to two years or until a person reaches an age limit (e.g. 26 years old). Many housing programs for youth require either school attendance or employment, and some require sobriety. For youth who are able to live more independently, youth co-operatives are popular in some regions (e.g. Montreal) and countries, (e.g. Sweden), and can offer rental or ownership options. The development of cooperatives often includes resident participation, such as a Swedish scheme that initially invited 36,000 youth on the rental housing list in the city of Göteborg to participate in the development of cooperative housing for young people (Housing Europe 2017). This is an ownership model for young people who cannot afford to buy market housing, proposed by developer Riksborgen: each resident buys shares for 20,000-30,000 Euros that will be sold back to the co-op when they leave.

There is more research underway in Canada, such as the projects recently funded by Making the Shift: Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab. These include One House Many Nations, a project that aims

to join Indigenous youth living on reserve with lived experience of homelessness to researchers and practitioners to design and build new homes in their community (led by Alex Wilson at the University of Saskatchewan), and the Upstream Project Canada which identifies students at risk of homelessness and social disengagement and identifies models that can allow the project to be scaled up from its origins in Australia (led by Rachel Laforest at Queens University).

While transitional housing models differ in their physical forms (e.g. scattered sites, standalone buildings), they tend to offer similar support services. Transitional housing programs have been quite successful in building independence in youth and young adults, giving them the skills they need to succeed in education and employment efforts. While many transitional housing options and support services are limited in scope and the length of time youth may access them, they provide extremely valuable options for youth who face barriers in the traditional housing market, such as those exiting foster care, those with addictions or mental health issues, or 2SLGBTQ+ youth. The physical and program models discussed in the literature review were used to develop categories to investigate further in our comparison of housing models.

Research Results

HRM Descriptive Statistics

The primary data for this descriptive analysis was retrieved from Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Housing reports, Statistics Canada 2016 Census, as well as the 2018 National Household Spending survey. The scope of the data will be primarily represented by the Halifax Census Metropolitan Area (CMA).

As housing affordability has displayed challenges across Canada in previous years, Halifax has become particularly vulnerable to historically low vacancy rates and affordability challenges, thus making it challenging for youth and at-risk populations to obtain safe and affordable housing. While housing affordability is a challenge within the Halifax CMA, the lack of available units has been identified as a significant problem to renters. The decrease in vacancy rates has been attributed to a variety of factors ranging from national and international migration, student populations, as well as rural to urban migration. Although population growth is an economic driver to cities, the availability and diversity of rental units become scarce and pose a threat to vulnerable populations.

As observed by CMHC, the number of new apartments has not been built quickly enough to offset the increased demand. The CMHC 2019 Housing Market Outlook (2019) identified that there are over 4,200 rental apartment units currently under construction in the Halifax CMA. Although the vacancy rate will remain historically low, the vacancy rate is expected to increase into 2021 at 2.0 percent (CMHC, 2019). In accordance to the vacancy rate, rental prices are expected to rise 3.65 percent as new units are entering the rental market (CMHC, 2019).

The 2019 Household Spending Survey identified the rental market vacancy for the Halifax CMA. The CMHC Rental Market Report (2020) identified that the vacancy rates experienced the greatest decrease in areas outside of the Halifax peninsula. A closer look into areas outside of the Halifax Peninsula reveal that the city of Dartmouth, Sackville, and Bedford experience different levels of rental vacancy. Among the three communities mentioned, Sackville identified to have the lowest vacancy rate at 0.5 percent, with an average rent of \$1,101 (CMHC, 2020). Second to Sackville, the city of Dartmouth experienced a 1.4 percent decrease, resulting in a 1.5 percent vacancy rate (CMHC, 2020). The average monthly rent

for the city of Dartmouth was \$954, which CMHC defined as the lowest among all areas surveyed (CMHC, 2020). Despite a decrease in vacancy rates in Dartmouth, the significant reduction was not as apparent in Bedford.

Youth, seniors, international migrants, low-income families as well as people who are at risk of homelessness are particularly vulnerable to high cost of living and low vacancy rates as there are fewer housing choices. Youth, defined as people between the ages of 15-24, represent 13 percent of the population in the Halifax CMA. Within the Halifax Federal Election district, youth who are primary household maintainers represent 12 percent of the population. In comparison to other election districts such as Dartmouth-Cole Harbour (3%), Sackville-Preston-Chezzetcook (2%), and Halifax West (4%), the greater percentage in youth population are primarily due to the presence of universities and colleges on the peninsula, as well as a large population from high school students. The CMHC identified that 20 percent of youth tested for core housing needs (7,250) were constituted as households in core housing need (1,475). In certain scenarios, youth and youth at risk of homelessness rely on support or subsidies to be able to afford the cost of living. The CMHC identified that 3.80 percent of renters between the ages of 15-24 live in subsidized housing.

First Voice Interview Results

As mentioned in the methodology, we interviewed nine youth participants to understand first-hand housing experiences. The main findings represent the most common responses regarding the questions related to their housing experience.

Independent Living

Participants were asked to describe their current housing situation as well as their ideal long-term housing goals. The interview questions revealed that all participants are more inclined to live independently once leaving a shelter housing program and prefer to live in locations surrounded by primary resources supporting their needs. The preference for independent living is ultimately tied to the experience of the participant. One participant indicated that due to the challenges with moving around in group homes, there is little sense of self-ownership in their space and individual space for personal growth. The participant spoke to the feeling of independence:

"I really just wanted to find out who I was and to do that you need to do that alone. You know that's the reality, to live alone."

In their early transitional living stages, all participants expressed they were more dependent on supportive resources than farther along in their transitional path. Two participants indicated that although they would prefer to live independently, specific supports are still required; however, they would only need access to a monthly occasion. While all participants expressed that they would prefer to live independently, three participants said that shared housing models, such as co-ops, would benefit youth who needed a step in between Phoenix Youth Shelter and independent living.

When youth are ready to obtain housing, affordable units create the most significant challenge to independent living as they are in such high demand. When units are in high demand, preference is given to those that are less liable. With this in mind, accessing units are incredibly impactful for young mothers or youth who own pets. One participant described that,

"When the rates are so low, there are so many different people applying, so it's become a thing where the landlords can pick and choose, and that's the part that really sucks, because it's harder when you have a kid or a dog."

Participants who identified as young mothers or pet owners prioritized their location or quality of living based on their child or pet. Another participant described that having pets was a requirement in their searches and states that;

"I would never want to sacrifice animals and having my own space, and that is what I value and kind of why I like where I live now."

Preference for Mid-rise to Low-rise Housing on the Halifax Peninsula

In accordance with living independently, seven participants identified that they would prefer living in mid-rise to low-density housing. Five of the seven participants expressed that their long-term goal would be to live in a single-family home. Multiple participants echoed the feeling of a community in mid to low-rise housing in an urban setting. Despite an attraction to living in a rural location, one participant expressed that they think of their daughter and the importance of growing up in a city. There is exposure to diversity and knowledge that one wouldn't receive when living in rural areas. In addition to the social benefits of living in an urban setting, there are more housing options, resources, and recreational activities.

Restricted Public Transport for Suburban and Rural Dwellers

While some participants expressed community feeling in cities, other participants described their preference for living outside of the city due to the connection from previous lived experiences. One participant explained that the downfall of living outside of city centers is the lack of access to primary resources, such as hospitals or mental health clinics. A significant factor restricting accessibility is the lack of public transportation routes. While specific youth populations live in areas where they are familiar, others state it is due to a location's affordability. Many youths do not have private vehicles as it adds to living costs; therefore, they rely on public transportation networks. Another participant described that housing options near workplaces were unaffordable and settled to live farther due to costs, which resulted in a three-hour daily commute time. Five participants noted that public transportation is a requirement when searching for affordable housing; however, more accessible locations are often serviced by infrequent transit, making it a barrier to youth accessing immediate services.

Missing Supports or Resources

Missing supports or resources identified among participants exist within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) and Phoenix Youth Programs. When examining services related to mitigating homelessness, resources are centered in one location, typically in highly populated urban centres. One participant described their experience being homeless both in Dartmouth and Halifax and stated that Dartmouth supports would direct them to Halifax for additional resources. When supportive resources are not evenly distributed across communities, 'barrier-free' access is not realized. Another participant mentioned that a mental health clinic's proposed location on Bayers Lake Road was not accessible to those who did not own a vehicle. Although the participant no longer requires mental health support, they noted that,

"No one can get to Bayers Lake on a bus, let alone when you need mental health services. That is something to consider. It's not so much now, but when I have children, it would matter then where I live."

While participants identified a gap in the mental health support system within the HRM, five participants mentioned they would like to see more mental health supports offered through Phoenix. Most participants considered the locations of both essential services (e.g. doctor's offices, grocery stores) and non-essential services (e.g. parks) in their housing search, but these were not primary factors in their housing choices.

Within Phoenix Youth Programs, almost all participants identified that financial literacy was among the top skills they would like to improve on. Although trusteeship programs offer the benefit of financial accountability, participants would like to see more budgeting workshops and filing taxes. Skill-building for homeowners such as conflict negotiation and maintenance repairs were other programs requested by participants to gain independence. One participant expressed interest in a food-related social enterprise, providing youth with the opportunity to learn how to cook and give those interested in culinary arts to explore options in this field. In addition to these programs, two participants expressed interest in performing arts or visual arts programs for confidence and character development.

To summarize, the First Voice interviews revealed a desire for independent living arrangements, with decreasing need for supports as they gained the skills they needed (e.g. life skills, managing relationships with landlords and other tenants, financial skills). Most would like to live in mid-rise or low-rise housing five years in the future, although most did prefer urban locations due to their proximity to transportation and services. They consider the locations of both essential and non-essential services in their housing search. Participants acknowledge the usefulness of many Phoenix programs, but they did note that there is a gap in the mental health support system in HRM.

Survey with Non-Profit Housing and Service Providers

We emailed survey questions to over 70 housing providers, service providers, developers. We received 20 responses, for a 29% response rate, which is much higher than typical online surveys (in the range of 10-15%). With this number of responses, we do not have enough data to do a quantitative analysis, so in this section we present the data using thematic analysis. Since the participants agreed that their organizations could be identified in our final report, we refer to them as needed.

Organizational Roles

Eleven of the participants identify as non-profit housing providers, 15 as non-profit service providers, and one as a social enterprise. Nine participants indicated that they provide both housing and services. Figure 1 indicates the services that they provide.



Figure 1. Services provided by the respondents

The participants were asked to select from a list of roles in housing and service provision. Out of these, most (14) indicated that they were housing providers (rent units, maintain existing units, provide shelter spaces) or that they provide assistance for clients trying to find housing (13). Other roles they selected were:

- Providing housing referrals to other organizations (10)
- Housing advocacy (9)
- Housing developer (developing new units, developing new shelter spaces) (6)
- Public sector (e.g. assisting non-profits through a funding program, providing rent supplements) (2)
- Providing access to a coordinated access system (1)
- Providing children’s residential services (1)

When asked what demographics they serve, respondents could select multiple options: one serves children and youth aged 10-24, nine serve youth aged 18 and under, and nine serve youth aged 18-26, and four participants serve all age groups. Five provide services for women, three provide services for

men, eight for 2SLGBTQ+, seven for immigrants, six for Indigenous, and one for individuals with mental illnesses.

Physical Models

Some of the organizations had simple physical models: Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter Society (Grande Prairie, AB) operates four rooms in a shared house. Aspen/Boys and Girls Club of Calgary has two houses, one with 10 units and one with 12 units, with a live-in case manager. Zero Ceiling (Whistler, BC) has four apartments (8 beds) with 7 days per week case management (after hours on call). Akoma Family Centre (Dartmouth, NS) has two facilities, including one for children aged 3-13 with development and behavioral needs. But most of the organizations operate multiple buildings to meet the needs of clients in different programs:

- Adsum for Women and Children (Halifax, NS) owns an emergency shelter, two apartment complexes, transitional housing, condo units totaling space for about 90, and rent dispersed apartments for eight families. They are also piloting a model of shared housing (five individuals plus live-in support). Supports vary from on-site presence to outreach support, and rental assistance (rent geared to income). Adsum is in the process of developing 24 housing units in a standalone project
- Choices for Youth (St. John's, NL) has one housing unit for five young moms and their children, five housing units that provide housing for 16 young people with attached intensive supports, and a 14-bed residential program with 24-hour staffing
- Shelter Nova Scotia (Halifax, NS) has two emergency shelters for 47 people experiencing homelessness, two supported apartment buildings for 31 people, two community residential facilities for 28 people transitioning from halfway houses, a trustee program for 200 people, and a Housing Support Program for 80 people
- YWCA of Greater Toronto provides a 40-bed emergency shelter program, a 25-bed/room transitional shelter for 2SLGBTQ youth, and 10-unit rental supplement for 2SLGBTQ youth
- YWCA Halifax operates two buildings with 15 units for participants and 3 for live-in staff, 23 rented units, and 10 condo ownership units that are owned
- 360° Kids (Richmond Hill, ON) has a 14-unit emergency shelter, 11-unit transitional unit, 13 beds combined in two residential group homes, a 3-bedroom house in the community, 6 units for survivors of human trafficking (two 3-bedroom apartments and 4 scattered site units rented in the community that they lease to youth) and one additional transitional apartment in a subsidized government owned housing facility. For the transitional units, a dedicated staff visits the youth to collect rent and provide supports, life skills, and conflict mediation supports as needed
- Interior Community Services (Kamloops, BC) has seven transitional housing units for youth who are struggling against multiple barriers that make it difficult to maintain housing and require high levels of support. They also have approximately 60 units of Elder-specific housing with maintenance and rent subsidy, and approximately 60 units of family housing with low support

- SHIP (Services and Housing in the Community, Mississauga, ON) provides varying levels of support (community case management to high support and intensive case management) including a short stay crisis support program. SHIP owns six buildings, one ground-lease building, and has units in shared tenancy buildings (multi-agency buildings). The organization manages head leases for approximately 1,050 tenants living in 95 apartment buildings
- Portal Youth Outreach Association (Kentville, NS) has nine Host Homes and five apartments where youth sign the lease and have support
- Youth Impact Jeunesse (Moncton, NB) has a total of 13 residential programs. The Transitional Housing Program, an independent living program, is for youth aged 16-22 and can accommodate eight youth (four male, four female). It can be accessed by any youth in need and has a high level of in-house support (two Youth Care Workers who work at the apartment for approximately 40 hours per week, two live-in peer role models). The agency also operates Youth QUEST Central, a drop-in centre for at-risk youth, that provides support for youth looking for housing as well as other supports
- Canadian Mental Health Association Kelowna operates 124 units of supportive housing, 70 units of scattered site housing, and 22 units of affordable housing

Adsum for Women and Children, Shelter Nova Scotia, YWCA Halifax, CMHA Kelowna, and Interior Community Services indicated that they provide a Housing First Program with appropriate Housing First stock.

Funding

We asked our participants how their programs were funded, and found that it was a mix of public and private funding, with some organizations supporting their programs through their own fundraising. Table 2 provides a full breakdown.

Table 2. Organization Funding

Organization	Housing type/Program	Funding Source			
		Government	Private	Non-Profit	Tenant
Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter Society	Supported/transitional for youth ages 15-24	Municipal: City Homelessness Initiative for rental arrears			Organization leases units, youth pay rent
Adsum for Women and Children	Transitional housing	Provincial: service agreement for 70 percent of operating costs	Fundraising		
	Emergency housing (family units)	Federal: grants Provincial: grants			
	Apartments and condos	Small number of provincial rent supplements			Tenants pay rent
	Diverting Families program	Provincial			

Organization	Housing type/Program	Funding Source			
		Government	Private	Non-Profit	Tenant
Choices for Youth	Four housing units	Federal: Employment and Social Development Canada Provincial: partnership with Newfoundland and Labrador Housing			Organization acts as landlord, collects rent, monitors units
Shelter Nova Scotia	Rebuilding: permanent supportive housing with 24/7 employees	Provincial	Private		Tenants pays rent
	Herring Cove Apartments: supportive housing	Federal	Private		
YWCA of Greater Toronto	Shelter, transitional and housing with supports	Provincial Municipal			
360° Kids	Supportive transitional apartments for youth	Regional government			Tenants pay rent
	Scattered site units		Fundraising		Organization takes on lease, youth pay increasing rent for three years
	Transitional apartments for youth survivors of human trafficking	Provincial: rent supplements			
	Group home for youth under 19	Provincial Local: Children Aid Societies			
John Howard Society	JEC Housing			John Howard Society, Coverdale Courtwork Society, Elizabeth Fry Mainland Society partnership	
Interior Community Services	Four-bed youth shelter for young people 13-18, Acadia transitional housing (7 units, with high levels of support 6 days a week)	Federal: Reaching Home Homelessness Prevention Strategy Provincial: BC Housing			

Organization	Housing type/Program	Funding Source			
		Government	Private	Non-Profit	Tenant
SHIP	Group homes, supportive housing, transitional housing, emergency housing	Federal Municipal		Collaboration with other agencies	
Portal Youth Centre	Host homes	Provincial: host is paid the room and board portion of the youth's income assistance		Portal: \$177/month to host	
	Apartments	Provincial: one youth has a rent subsidy			Youth pay rent through wages or income assistance
Zero Ceiling	Transitional housing with wrap around supports provides including supportive employment placements and support securing market housing upon completion of their program	Provincial: BC Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training for employment services for multi-barriered individuals Federal: Reaching Home Homelessness Prevention Strategy	Private: foundations and donors		
Youth Impact Jeunesse	Transitional Housing Program is for youth age 16-22, 8 youth (4 male, 4 female)	Provincial	Fundraising		
Akoma	Residential care to children age 3-13 yrs in care of community services	Provincial: Department of Community Services			
YWCA Halifax	SHYM (Supportive Housing for Young Mothers), SHYM permanent housing for single mothers, WISH (Women In Supported Housing) transitional housing, WISH long term housing, Safe House for youth exiting sexually exploitative relationships	Federal Provincial	Fundraising		
CMHA Kelowna	HF programs, congregate supportive housing, scattered-site program for adults and youth, Rapid Re-Housing, more independent living	Federal Provincial: Foundry Kelowna MtS project on HF4Y+Integrated Health and Mental Health care	Private: donors and sponsors	In-kind partnerships with other non-profits	
	Semi-independent housing program for	Federal Provincial	Private: local developer	Organization and other non-profits,	

Organization	Housing type/Program	Funding Source			
		Government	Private	Non-Profit	Tenant
	youth with one floor of 18 studio units		Private: donors and sponsors	community organizations	

We expected that funding would be a major challenge for the respondents, and in fact eight indicated that funding was their biggest challenge in providing appropriate housing or services. Respondents indicated a widening gap between incomes and the cost of housing, both for tenants and the organizations operating housing:

“The province contributes to private landlords' profit through rent supplement program, but does not adequately support non-profit owned housing which is available to the community for the long term.” (Adsum)

“Having enough funds to upgrade some of the available housing units. Second, finding units along transit lines. Third, having legislation/zoning allowing for second suites. Four, more rental units to help drive down the cost of housing. The lack of housing is the reason we have focused on renovations to provide access to housing, so we become de facto landlords and housing developers.” (360° Kids)

Some discussed issues specific to the demographic(s) they served or the program. For example, Portal Youth Centre indicated that their biggest challenge is recruiting new host homes, while CMHC Kelowna mentioned effectively supporting people with complex challenges, including substance use, mental health, developmental disabilities and health care issues. More broadly, Choices for Youth said,

“Our biggest challenge is providing more housing choices. People have different housing needs based on size, employment, ability, health, income, stage in life, and a host of other factors...”

Supportive and transitional housing also faces barriers in terms of acceptance: SHIP indicated that breaking the stigma with private landlords for clients receiving social assistance is their biggest challenge, and Zero Ceiling responded that the municipal government and public housing authority do not prioritize supportive housing in their community, so they are currently working to build public awareness of their work. YWCA Halifax noted that they advocate on local and national platforms for the needs of those facing homelessness and many other social justice issues that are intertwined with homelessness.

Changes to Housing Models

When asked what changes they would make to their current housing model(s) to improve them, most of our respondents indicated that they just need additional funding to continue operating their programs. Provincial rent supplements would help support the costs of staffing, programs, and ongoing repairs for Akoma, Youth Impact Jeunesse John Howard Society.

“We just need more! Additional funding - as of September 30, our Navigator program is no longer funded due to funder cuts.” (Grande Prairie)

“24 hour/day supports for youth who are marginalized and who are struggling with high levels of addiction and compromised mental wellness.” (Interior Community Services)

“More options for youth whose mental health struggles are too high for a host home and who are not able to live independently yet. For us it would look like owning a property where we could house a youth and have paid staff available on site to support them.” (Portal Youth Centre)

Several organizations (SHIP, Zero Ceiling, and 360° Kids) said they would extend their timelines for transitional housing, or remove time restraints entirely.

“Make the transitional timelines a bit longer to enable youth to get closer to market rents, which are so high. Also, having more consistent life skills support to ensure that youth are more ready to live independently after their time in the program.” (360° Kids)

Some mentioned the need for specific types of programs:

“Increased access to clinical Mental Health and Substance Use supports, either on-site or an outreach basis (including Intensive Case Management, Assertive Community Treatment, and others).” (CMHA Kelowna)

“We would like to have a multidisciplinary team like the MOSH Housing First program has (i.e., mental health practitioners, primary health practitioners who can meet folks where they are at), and more culturally relevant service provider options for BIPOC.” (YWCA Halifax)

Several organizations suggested changes to their housing stock to meet their needs:

“A challenge is finding the appropriate housing for folks. For example, not everyone can do communal living.” (Choices for Youth)

“If we owned housing stock it would be better - either modular units or a small triplex and provided frontline support charging enough to maintain the spaces/properties.” (YWCA of Greater Toronto)

“More subsidies, affordable housing options and more housing support so folks can have choice and autonomy over where and how they chose to live and have the support available.” (YWCA Halifax)

Organization Location

Most respondents noted that their physical location(s) met the needs of their clients. Table 3 provides a summary of their responses.

Table 3. Organization Location and Client Accessibility

Organization	Location			Does it meet client needs?
	Rural	Suburban	Urban	
Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter Society			•	Yes. Close to transit
Adsum for Women and Children		•	•	Yes and no. Need locations in Sackville
Choices for Youth			•	Yes. Within walking distance of services
Shelter Nova Scotia			•	Yes
YWCA of Greater Toronto			•	Yes. Great access to service and support but more expensive
YWCA Halifax		•	•	Yes and no. Need rural locations in HRM and Cape Breton
360° Kids		•		Yes and no. Further from transit but less expensive
John Howard Society		•		Yes. Staff travel around HRM to meet clients
Interior Community Services			•	Yes. Co-located with services, close to transit
Lake City Works			•	Yes. Within walking distance, close to transit
SHIP		•	•	Yes. Multiple locations
Portal Youth Centre	•			No. Transportation and limited capacity for mental health emergency support are barriers
Zero Ceiling	•			Yes. Proximity to nature for recreational component of program
Youth Impact Jeunesse	•	•	•	Yes. Multiple locations
Akoma		•		Yes.
CMHA Kelowna	•	•	•	Yes. Multiple locations
All Will Be Revealed Solutions Inc	•			Yes. Multiple locations

Future Growth and Expansion

Given the funding constraints the respondents indicated, we were surprised that so many are currently planning to expand their housing or services in the future. CMHA Kelowna has a number of new developments, including 87 units of supportive housing and 18 scattered site units which will be built within the next six months, and 32 units of affordable housing in a mixed residential building being planned (for a total of seven buildings when all of the development is complete). Adsum for Women and Children and Akoma (through Akoma Holdings Inc.), currently have development applications in progress, Portal Youth Centre is in the process of purchasing a property to provide supportive housing, and 360° Kids is developing a partnership with a faith group to provide space in a new rental building. Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter Society is developing an integrated youth hub and a youth sexual exploitation education and intervention program.

Choices for Youth and Shelter Nova Scotia are both looking for land for new housing, and YWCA Halifax is currently working on a plan to expand their affordable housing stock. Lake City Works is working on developing a sample Tiny Home that can be easily replicated and used in a possible low income Tiny Home community or backyard suite.

On the program side, Zero Ceiling contributed to the development of a new resource aimed at recruiting and training employers to be more inclusive in their hiring and retention practices.

Lessons Learned

The respondents reflected on the lessons they had learned in developing and operating supportive transitional housing. For some, the focus was on the balance between a feasible project and investing in the appropriate staff and resources:

“Youth housing programs need to be developed in a way that focuses on wrap around supports and relationships. Small caseloads that allow flexibility in how much time is given to each client in the program—some weeks they need us a lot more than others and we need to be able to provide them that time.” (Grande Prairie Youth Emergency Shelter Society)

“Don't count on ‘the economies of scale’ when it comes to administration. Ensure appropriate management support is budgeted, training and employee cost of living increases.” (Shelter NS)

“Be visionary and bold. Gather private/independent resources in advance. Be prepared to spend money to buy expertise you do not have. Build private/government support. Be prepared to invest your own organization's assets / take a mortgage. Build for the future. It could take as little as a year, but more likely 2-4 to realize new construction.” (Adsum for Women and Children)

For others, relationships and partnerships were critical, especially as they may not have the expertise to develop units or buildings themselves:

“Building partnerships with private landlords, property management companies from the ground up is critical in sustaining opportunities for people with varying and complex needs.” (SHIP)

“Having dedicated project management support who have the expertise to manage the building process.” (360° Kids)

“Condo Boards can be difficult to work with and condo building residents who have lived in the building a long time, some of whom are retired struggle with having patience and empathy for participants who present challenges in the building (IE. lots of guests or noise, smoking, etc.) This can create an unsafe community for participants. This is not always the case. But, has been an experience on more than one occasion.” (YWCA Halifax)

“Garner community support early on in the process.” (Zero Ceiling)

“Community engagement is essential, as housing has to exist within a community, and NIMBY is alive and well in our community.” (CMHA Kelowna)

Current Trends in Housing Models

Participants identified a number of different housing models that inspired them, including supported rooming houses and single apartments that provide privacy but reduce social isolation, shared units (e.g. with seniors), tiny homes, modular homes, second suites, and coach houses. One respondent mentioned modular housing, which has been very successful in BC in getting a 40-unit apartment building up and running within three months. One respondent identified that faith groups are looking for partnerships to help build new types of housing, and another mentioned landlords are creating blended housing and smaller housing options better suited to the needs of clients.

Some respondents discussed the increased role of tenants in designing and building housing, an increasing role for tenants in maintaining and taking ownership of their units, and mixed market housing

co-ops that create intentional community. One respondent mentioned Housing First approaches that are client centered, where the participant has full autonomy and choice in their decision on when and where to be housed and what support they need.

Specific projects mentioned by the respondents include intergenerational models in Europe, Housing First Finland, the Greenland Public Housing model, Homes for Heroes Foundation tiny homes for veterans, zoning approval for garage inserts, and modular housing units built as part of a trades training program with the modular homes as a revenue generating tool (Peel Region). One mentioned the Youth Housing framework developed by A Way Home Canada/Making the Shift.

Insights from HRM-based Organizations

In the hopes of gaining insights on local affordable housing challenges, the last seven questions in the survey were restricted to respondents in the Halifax Regional Municipality. There were 8 organizations based in HRM. They indicated that the main factors preventing youth and young families from finding appropriate housing are the gap between what people can truly afford and what housing really costs, financial instability, low wages, low income assistance rates, lack of supportive housing options, criminal records/records checks, substance use, and stigma, and desire to live in select locations. Two participants noted that there is greater need for youth housing options in the urban core and in Dartmouth, but otherwise the respondents indicated that all areas of the region need more housing for youth. Three respondents indicated that they have witnessed an increase in the need for affordable housing for all demographics, and YWCA Halifax noted that they have definitely seen an increase in referrals and inquiries for housing for their SHYM program. However, none of the respondents could quantify that increase in any way. Systemic barriers exist, such as youth being unable to rent housing on their own and the total lack of support after children/youth leave care, but participants did not identify any changes to these barriers in the past 5-10 years.

Participants mentioned a number of trends affecting the supply of local, affordable housing, including discrimination in the housing market, low inventory, low vacancy rates due to the influx of newcomers to the region. One mentioned the closure of boarding houses and two mentioned the renovation and development of low income units, resulting in the eviction of tenants. One noted that there were more higher cost options being built, while another cited barriers for organizations creating/maintaining affordable housing and for landlords/developers in creating affordable housing. One noted that the federal housing program through CMHC is difficult to navigate when non-profits lack capital, management of multiple sources, and capacity, but that easy quick acquisitions (both large and small scale) and more appropriate supports for non-profit providers could be the keys to turning things around.

The participants felt that for HRM to be able to provide more housing options for youth, the city needs more subsidized housing options, rent control, more inventory, housing with appropriate supports to meet all needs (e.g. mental health, addictions), access to safe, affordable housing options, and supported housing with privacy (e.g. no shared bedrooms or bathrooms). Political will was also mentioned.

When asked to indicate the housing models they thought would be most helpful in addressing the housing crisis for youth and young families, they selected co-operative housing (scattered sites) (6), tiny home village/cluster with shared open space (3), scattered subsidized units in market rental buildings (3), co-housing (2), secondary suites (scattered sites) (2), and dedicated housing for youth in the same

building as support services (2). When asked what types of supports are needed for youth in the community, the responses are indicated in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Services identified as being most useful for youth and young adults in HRM

Summary

Overall, the survey of housing and service providers showed that there are many different physical and program models that have worked well across the country. Most organizations run multiple programs which have contributed to multiple physical models to match the level of support needed and the age of the residents/clients. The main barrier identified by participants in continuing their operations was funding, with a particular emphasis on how rapidly the gap between incomes and housing costs is widening. A few are currently developing/building more housing to accommodate their growing needs, and several others are in the planning and scoping stages of expansion. They indicated that balancing the need for well-trained staff was critical, and that building partnerships with governments, developers, and the community was necessary to help garner support for new projects. Partnerships were also essential in managing the development process, since non-profits often lack this capacity.

Insights from the eight HRM-based organizations indicated that barriers included the gap between what people can truly afford and what housing really costs, financial instability, low wages, low income assistance rates, lack of supportive housing options, criminal records/records checks, substance use, and stigma, and desire to live in select locations. Respondents noted that housing was needed in all areas of HRM and three of them noted that demand had increased, but were unable to quantify this. There were

no changes noted to systemic barriers for youth and young adults in accessing affordable housing. There was no consensus on the trends affecting local housing, but participants mentioned discrimination in the housing market, low inventory, low vacancy rates due to the influx of newcomers to the region, the closure of boarding houses, renovation and development of low income units resulting in the eviction of tenants, higher cost options being built, barriers for organizations and landlords/developers in creating affordable housing, and difficulty navigating the federal housing program through CMHC. The housing model that garnered the most support was co-op housing on scattered sites, and the services that were most recommended were life skills training, access to financial information, mental health support, and family support.

Comparison of Housing Models

In order to develop new housing, we needed to more fully investigate different types of physical and program models of transitional housing. In this section, we provide a summary of the types of housing models that we used and several organizations that use them in Canada and internationally. The full comparison matrix can be found in Appendix B.

Housing First

The three Housing First programs (Infinity Project in Calgary, Focus Ireland, Rock Trust in Scotland) accept youth aged 15-24, though one accepts youth as young as 12. The length of stay ranged from a few days up to three years. Like a hostel, they tend to be shared accommodations, which provide youth protection from the elements but do not offer much privacy. The buildings can range from scattered sites (individual houses broken down into units, host homes) to larger buildings. For example, Rock Trust in Scotland has host homes and scattered houses, and all three have rolling models that allow short-term stays to be converted into long-term stays. Housing First programs helped youth find longer-term housing and family support to rebuild the primary relationships but did not offer many other services such as mental health or life skills workshops. Two of the three programs were federally funded, as all three were non-profits and also relied upon community partnerships. There were no conditions for the youth to access housing (school enrolment, employment, abstinence). Focus Ireland and Rock Trust housing are open 24/7, and Infinity Project's youth and supportive shelters are available 24/7.

Transitional Housing

We included four examples of transitional housing (Peel Youth Village in Mississauga, Cornerstone in London, Reconnect Youth Village in Prince George, and Youthab in Belleville). All four accept youth aged 15-24, men and women, as well as LGBTQ+. Reconnect is focused on Indigenous youth but open to non-Indigenous youth as well. They allow long-term and short-term stays (from a few days to several months), and Youthab has a rolling model allowing youth to move from the shelter to co-op housing. All have one standalone building; Youthab also has scattered sites for its co-op housing. All offer private rooms with shared spaces. All offer housing, employment, educational, and mental health support. Three out the four include live-in mentors and life skills support. Cornerstone runs a cafe as a social enterprise, with funds going towards food stipends for the youth to buy their groceries. All four have non-profit status, and all four receive funding from federal and provincial governments. Cornerstone and Youthab also have private and local funding and benefit from community partnerships. All except Youthab's co-op housing provide breakfast programs, and all four have workshop spaces for youth (e.g. Peel Youth Villages runs after-school workshops). Reconnect provides interactions with Indigenous Elders and a healing center.

Foyers

The Australian foyers are similar to transitional housing: they provide housing for youth 15-24, in individual rooms with shared living spaces. Youth can stay up to three years at Logan and two years at Oxford. Both are standalone buildings. Both offer housing support, mental health support, and interim case support, and Oxford has live-in mentors and employment support, while Logan has educational support. Both are non-profits, and Oxford gets federal and provincial approval. Logan is supported by a local mission. The main difference between transitional houses and foyers is their criteria for acceptance: both require youth to be employed or at school, Australian citizenship, and a signed contract. Oxford also requires references and Logan only accepts homeless or at-risk youth. Both have skill-building and workshop spaces for community events.

Supportive Housing/Lodging

Supportive housing models we examined are similar to Housing First, but they are more permanent. We examined three (Supporting our Youth Toronto, Wigwamen in Hamilton, and More than a Roof in Vancouver). More than a Roof accepts anyone over 25 and families, Wigwamen accepts youth and older, and Supporting Our Youth accept youth up to 30. All offer long-term stays. Wigwamen has scattered sites with one apartment building (41 units). Supporting our Youth has a single standalone building. More than a Roof has 12 different communities with 1700 tenants across Vancouver, Victoria, and Prince George (130 of their units are supportive units on scattered sites). More than a Roof has mental health supports, and Supporting our Youth also has family, educational, educational, mental health supports and interim caseworkers. More than a Roof and Wigwamen are supported by local, provincial, and federal funds while Supporting Our Youth is supported through a faith partnership. In all three cases, the tenants pay rent; Supporting Our Youth has rent-geared-to-income units. Specific facilities include prayer rooms (Supporting our Youth, Wigwamen).

Respite Accommodation (in-place crisis housing)

Respite Accommodation models we examined can be observed as short term accommodation for youth 15-24 years old. We looked at one example, The Portal, located out of Kentville, NS. The Portal accepts youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness for various reasons, and places them in short-term accommodation through their host home program. The host home program allows community members to offer additional rooms that are unused in their homes. Youth from the community are provided with their own room and share space with the host home. Additional programs within The Portal are supportive housing and supervised apartments. These respite accommodation housing models offer housing assistance support, employment services, supportive housing counsellors, additional follow-up, family support, mental health support, and case management. The program office is located in an existing church, claims non-profit status, funded through grants and community partnerships. The Portal also offers external programs that help mitigate youth homelessness by providing summer camps and workshops.

Co-housing

Co-housing models are similar to host-home programs; however, they provide long-term accommodations for youth and young adults. We examined three models (Prairie Sky in Edmonton, Windsong Housing in Langley, and Symbiosis Program at McMaster University). Prairie Sky and the Symbiosis program offer housing for youth aged 15-24, and Prairie Sky and Windsong Housing offer

housing beyond 25 years old. All programs offer long term stays, while Prairie Sky and Windsong Housing also provide short term accommodation. These units are typically in standalone buildings. However, Prairie Sky and Windsong have clustered units within the standalone housing. All three of these programs share living spaces. Support and resources through these programs are mainly life skills and self-management skills to build independence. Since the Symbiosis Program is managed under McMaster University grants, it claims non-profit status, while Windsong Housing and Prairie Sky are for-profit organizations. All three co-housing programs require the tenant to pay rent. Since Windsong Housing and Prairie Sky are clustered units in a standalone building, the organization provides opportunities for events and workshop spaces.

Co-operatives

Co-operative housing models allow residents to actively participate in the management of their housing. We examined three examples (Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op, Youthab Co-op Housing, and Youthlink Co-op Housing). The Youthab and Youthlink co-op housing models offer housing for youth between the ages of 15-24; however, the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op is primarily a skill-building and workshop focused youth co-op. Both Youthab and Youthlink offer long-term stays in scattered sites (older family homes that are converted), while Youthab also provides a housing co-op in a standalone building. In terms of additional support/resources, youth co-ops offer employment assistance services, employment services, family support, life skills, and self-management skills. Other resources that Youthab and Youthlink housing co-ops include are live in mentors and supportive housing counsellors. All three co-ops are non-profit organizations and are supported through local, provincial, private funders, or community partnerships. Additionally, Youthlink requires tenants to pay rent towards their unit. Additional features that all co-op models offered include culturally appropriate services, events, health services, and workshop spaces. Out of the three, Youthab is the only co-op open 24/7.

Multi-service Centres/Neighbourhood Houses

Multi-service centres (MSCs) act as a hub for housing, support, and personal growth resources. We examined three models (Tillsonburg MSC, Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Good Shepherd, Toronto). Of the three neighbourhood centres, Good Shepherd provides housing support for youth 15-24 and housing beyond youth, while Tillsonburg offers seniors accommodation. The Collingwood Neighbourhood Centre is primarily for supportive resources. Tillsonburg and Good Shepherd offer long term stays in a standalone building; however, Good Shepherd also has scattered-site housing options and an emergency shelter. In terms of resources, Tillsonburg and Collingwood offer housing and employment services; however, other services offered by Collingwood or Good Shepherd include additional follow-up, educational support, mental health support, harm reduction, family support, life skills and self-management skills. All of the MSCs analyzed are non-for-profit organizations, except for Good Shepherd, as part of a faith partnership. In terms of financial structure, Tillsonburg and Good Shepherd are funded privately, and Collingwood (or any BC neighbourhood house) is financed from all three government levels. As for additional features, Tillsonburg MSC is open 24/7, and Collingwood and Good Shepherd offer performing arts space, events, health services, workshop spaces, and Good Shepherd also provides community meals.

Tiny Homes

Tiny homes are mobile or permanent structures for independent living, typically located in small communities. We examine three models (CommunityFirst!, Texas, Homes for Heroes, Calgary, and Low-

Income Housing Institute, Seattle). All three models prioritized independent living greater than 25, where the Homes for Heroes community was specifically oriented for veterans. Tiny home communities are intended for long-term residence; however, the Low-income housing institute offers short-term stays. In particular, CommunityFirst! and Homes for Heroes offers a rolling housing model. Each tiny home provides scaled-down living with daily necessities and is clustered in a larger open space. All three communities share common outdoor areas for events and workshop spaces and the main lodge for supportive resources. The Community First and Low-income housing institute offer resources that include housing services, employment services, live in mentors, and supportive housing counsellors.

Additionally, all three communities offer mental health and harm reduction support. The financial structure differs between organizations. CommunityFirst!, Homes for Heroes, and Low-Income Housing Institute is a non-profit corporation that receives financial support from municipal, federal or private funders and works with community partners for additional funding. In contrast to others, Community First! does require residents to pay living tiny home expenses.

Scattered Site Market Units

Scattered site market units are programs that source affordable market rent units and provide youth with an independent living approach. We examined five models (Options for Homes, Toronto Housing, Quint Development, Saskatoon, 360° Kids, Toronto, and St. Clares Developer, Toronto). Four out of five market unit programs offer licensed out units to youth participants. Options for homes are geared towards mature individuals or families. All market units are intended for long-term stays, where 360° Kids has a three-year program limit, and also offered shared accommodation living. Supports are limited in market unit programs as independence is the primary skill; however, Quint Developments have on-site live-in mentors, have housing assistance services and employment services, while 360° Kids pair individuals with supportive counsellors. All market units require tenants to pay rent; however, programs such as Options for Homes and St. Clares (faith group) have community partnerships to support their financial structure. For housing consideration, all programs require youth to be within a particular age group. Most programs also require a signed contract or a thorough application screening of work or intended education.

At this point, we present the entire comparative table to Phoenix staff for their feedback. Our next step will be to prioritize up to three housing models for Phoenix to investigate for their future expansion.

Summary of Research Results

This study aimed to determine trends in the youth housing supply, the factors currently affecting the supply of appropriate and affordable housing for youth in Halifax and key communities (i.e., Lower Sackville; Dartmouth), the five-year outlook for appropriate youth housing and related supports in our region, and housing and support models that have been successful in Canada and elsewhere. In order to accomplish this, we used descriptive statistics, First Voice interviews (9), a survey of housing providers and service providers (20), and a comparison of housing models in Canada and elsewhere (30).

Our statistical analysis revealed that the Halifax CMA faces historically high demand for housing, resulting in very low vacancy rates, particularly in Sackville (0.5 percent in 2020) and Dartmouth (1.5 percent). Youth aged 15-24 represent 13 percent of the population in the Halifax CMA and youth who are primary household maintainers represent 12 percent of the population, but 20 percent of youth

were in core housing need (they live in housing that is not the correct size for their needs, not affordable, or is in need of major repairs).

The First Voice interviews revealed a desire for independent living arrangements, with decreasing need for supports as they gained the skills they needed (e.g. life skills, managing relationships with landlords and other tenants, financial skills). Most would like to live in mid-rise or low-rise housing five years in the future, although most did prefer urban locations due to their proximity to transportation and services. Participants acknowledge the usefulness of many Phoenix programs, but did note that there is a gap the mental health support system in HRM.

Overall, the survey of housing and service providers showed that there are many different physical and program models that have worked well across the country. Most organizations run multiple programs which have contributed to multiple physical models to match the level of support needed and the age of the residents/clients. The main barrier identified by participants in continuing their operations was funding, with a particular emphasis on how rapidly the gap between incomes and housing costs is widening. A few are currently developing/building more housing to accommodate their growing needs, and several others are in the planning and scoping stages of expansion. They indicated that balancing the need for well-trained staff was critical, and that building partnerships with governments, developers, and the community was necessary to help garner support for new projects. Partnerships were also essential in managing the development process, since non-profits often lack this capacity.

Insights from the eight HRM-based organizations indicated that barriers included the gap between what people can truly afford and what housing really costs, financial instability, low wages, low income assistance rates, lack of supportive housing options, criminal records/records checks, substance use, and stigma, and desire to live in select locations. Respondents noted that housing was needed in all areas of HRM and three of them noted that demand had increased, but were unable to quantify this. There were no changes noted to systemic barriers for youth and young adults in accessing affordable housing. There was no consensus on the trends affecting local housing, but participants mentioned discrimination in the housing market, low inventory, low vacancy rates due to the influx of newcomers to the region, the closure of boarding houses, renovation and development of low income units resulting in the eviction of tenants, higher cost options being built, barriers for organizations and landlords/developers in creating affordable housing, and difficulty navigating the federal housing program through CMHC. The housing model that garnered the most support was co-op housing on scattered sites, and the services that were most recommended were life skills training, access to financial information, mental health support, and family support.

These research results were presented to the Phoenix Youth Housing Advisory Committee. In the next section, we provide more details on the five housing models that they have prioritized for the future expansion of Phoenix Youth Programs.

Prioritized Housing Models for Phoenix Youth Programs

Insights from the Phoenix Youth Housing Advisory Committee

Upon reviewing the draft report, the Phoenix Youth Housing Advisory Committee shared insights on the many housing models presented in Appendix C. Primary housing models reflect housing that can offer support without sacrificing their accommodation. Each committee member expressed their understandings of the housing models and how they align with the Bedrock Project goals. Three

members highlighted co-op/shared living accommodations, while two members mentioned scattered sites. Other options mentioned were more independent living styles such as co-housing, market sites, and supported living such as multi-service barrier-free shelters. It was mentioned that different housing models are needed to provide varying support levels, including those reliant on subsidies. The committee acknowledged a gap in the research, as the First Voice participants interviewed had mostly completed Phoenix housing programs, rather than those in the early stages of the housing program with lower levels of independence. When youth are not being moved through the system as quickly due to lack of housing, a bottleneck is created in the system. The advisory committee discussed that for youth to develop independence, there is a need to focus on housing that supports quick transitions from Phoenix programs to independence.

The Phoenix Youth Housing Advisory Committee discussed the demographics for this project and narrowed its youth target to between the ages of 16 and 19. These youth are more susceptible to homelessness because of financial structures, such as credit checks prohibiting them from obtaining housing, inability to sign a lease on their own, or increased difficulty finding housing in a very tight rental market (1.7% rental vacancy in 2020). In addition to this group, newcomers to the region also have difficulties accessing housing due to their immigration status. The committee agreed that newcomers were the second priority client group. Young families, youth who are ready for independence (less support required), and youth who are re-housed regularly are additional demographics that require housing. The main barrier identified by the committee members, which is embedded in youth accessing housing experiences, is mental health.

The committee then assessed the housing models on whether they supported their target demographics' gradual move towards independence. Housing models that did not align with the needs of the target demographics include: tiny homes, respite accommodation, transitional housing, supportive housing, co-housing, and large apartment builds. Housing models that did align with the needs of the target demographics include foyer style accommodation, Housing First for youth (HF4Y), scattered site approaches, co-operatives (primarily for young families) and multi-service centres that incorporate social enterprises.

A future expansion of Phoenix housing will provide options that vary by the level of independence, the time frame for implementation of the model, and hard and soft (operational) costs. In order of increasing independence, the participants' level of independence in the prioritized models is:

1. Housing First for youth (HF4Y)
2. Multi-service centre/Neighbourhood house (+ social enterprises)
2. Foyers
3. Co-operatives
4. Scattered site approach

While rapid housing options such as modular housing or urban renewal of buildings in poor condition were considered an option under CMHC's Rapid Housing Initiative, these housing schemes are not a good fit for youth requiring support. The quickest opportunity for implementation would likely be the followed by foyers, which is similar to Phoenix's existing programs, followed by Housing First for youth, scattered sites, co-operatives, and finally, the multi-service centre/neighbourhood house.

Below, we conceptualize the five models for the target demographic groups, including their hard and soft costs. The models are presented in order of immediate to long-term housing solutions. We then provide three scenarios for a long-term development plan based on available funding programs.

Foyers

Common in the UK and Australia, foyers are similar to transitional housing. They have individual living and shared common spaces for youth aged 15-24; however, they do not provide walk-in services and present a stricter application process. Government initiatives or private funders foyers. While this model reflects transitional housing, it is essential to note that the core concept is not about the building but prioritizes the package of support, including accommodation, services, training, participation in education or employment, bound by a signed contract. The foyer approach is intended to support youth during the developmental phases of independence, essential for long-term personal development, which makes it similar to Phoenix's existing programs. Of Phoenix's target demographics, foyers would be best suited to youth aged 16-19 and those who are frequently re-housed, as they provide more stability.

Foyer models are typically hosted in a single facility with as many as 100-200 residents, but experienced staff in foyers located in the UK suggest no more than 40 residents in one facility. Recognizing the role of economies of scale, foyers are intended to act as part of a local community or economy, rather than be its economy itself. In addition to this, partnerships with community businesses or educational hubs can support a foyer's role as a housing provider for homeless youth or youth at risk of homelessness. Suggestions from Australian foyers include partnering with community educational institutions, such as colleges, to expand student housing accommodation and provide opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to engage in education. For Phoenix, partnerships with school boards or community colleges such as NSCC could provide housing accommodation to youth during the developmental phase, whether as on-site housing or through new development on purchased land. An additional funding opportunity is CERIC (Advancing Career Development in Canada) charitable foundation, including the development of innovative resources for career counselling and career development.

Typically, most foyers have time constraints due to a lack of funding to house youth for more extended periods. While it is essential to apply time constraints to move youth to independent living schemes, it could be argued that one or two years is not enough time for youth to practice independent living and presents a highly institutional approach. Removing time constraints to living in foyers would be beneficial if Phoenix were to implement a foyer housing model; however, further funding is required to accomplish this.

Fast-tracking a foyer could be achieved in various ways, including reconfiguring transitional accommodation into foyer-like facilities. Foyers could also take on a scattered-site approach and adapt to offer dispersed accommodation. Although foyers are mainly constructed as a single facility, a benefit to the dispersed accommodation approach is that it can feel less like a program in an institutional setting. This is especially beneficial for youth leaving group homes, youth leaving juvenile detention facilities, young women, and 2SLBGQT youth. Capital costs for dispersed foyer models are also reduced, making the model more cost-effective (though soft costs like supports may be higher because of client distribution). Standalone foyer housing models would have higher hard costs (e.g. new construction, purchase of property, or renovating/rehabilitating an existing building) and significant soft costs (e.g. program manager, building maintenance, utilities). As the youth would be hosted as a tenant with a

signed contract, they would gain independence and life skills through external programs such as education or employment as a program requirement while still accessing supportive services. Funding sources to alleviate costs include government funding through the CMHC National Housing Co-Investment Fund (New Construction stream) and green infrastructure funding through the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Housing First

Housing First is a philosophy that enforces barrier-free accommodation for youth that is separate from transitional support. The separation of housing and supports allows housing to be obtained without required participation in school or education, and accessing supports is not a condition of receiving or retaining housing. Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) philosophies are intended to provide a quick fix to homelessness through immediate housing accommodation, targeting those who are experiencing homelessness, substance abuse, or complex mental health problems. Implementation of a Housing First program model would create an immediate solution to accommodation; however, it offers mild supportive resources as HF4Y acts primarily as crisis housing and prioritizes getting youth into housing as quickly as possible. To accommodate for a greater number of people, scattered HF4Y housing models were introduced to provide flexibility in housing choices. If the housing scenario did not fit some youth's needs, they could move to a different unit/house instead of returning to homeless services or becoming homeless again.

The HF4Y model can be categorized as a shelter-type accommodation providing age-appropriate support. A critique of this model is that it is an immediate solution, rather than engaging long-term youth development. While these programs work for youth and demonstrate a direct intervention for homelessness, housing programs with more significant support enable youth towards independent living and would prevent bottleneck scenarios in the housing system. This housing model is similar to Phoenix's existing programs; however, Phoenix does not have HF4Y fidelity, including enough housing supply to meet its demand or the appropriate staffing model to fully meet the components of HF4Y. If Phoenix were to continue implementing an HF4Y approach to housing accommodation, selection of housing locations would require thoughtful consideration in accommodating individual youth close to other supportive resources not offered within the HF4Y program. This housing model with a scattered site approach would have low hard costs (no major construction or land purchase) and have high soft costs as supports required to maintain the low-barrier housing accommodation are significant components to HF4Y core principles (e.g. individual case management, mental health services, addictions support, harm reduction). Hard costs would increase with a standalone building (e.g. land cost, renovation/rehabilitation of existing building). Of Phoenix's target demographics, HF4Y would be best suited to youth aged 16-19 and those who are re-housed regularly.

Therefore, application of the HF4Y model would act as a first step to providing barrier-free housing; however, it would require more structured housing and support approaches to engage youth in long-term development and independence. Integrated housing options include individual or scattered foyers, co-ops, or a multi-service center.

Scattered Site Approaches

Although all of the five prioritized housing models could be located on scattered sites, the simplest scattered-site approach would be for Phoenix to rent several apartment units and lease them to youth tenants who are ready for more independent living (e.g. Adsum Women and Children, YWCA of Greater

Toronto, 360° Kids). This approach has several advantages: first, scattered site rental units can be implemented very quickly by renting any available units within HRM. Second, it offers tenant flexibility: the youngest target demographic group, youth aged 16-19, cannot rent apartments on their own and would require an arrangement where Phoenix acts as a property manager, signing the rental agreement on behalf of their tenant. Phoenix could rent different types/sizes of units to accommodate single tenants, young families, and newcomers. Rental agreements/leases could allow a short or long-term period, which provides flexibility for the youth to develop life skills and independence. And third, youth would still have access to Phoenix services and supports as needed, though they would be off-site.

Phoenix could take the approach of supplementing rents initially and gradually decreasing that support annually until tenants are paying the full market rent as they complete their schooling and become employed full-time (e.g. 360° Kids increases rents annually over three years). This financial model would likely require the Provincial government's partnership for rent supplements (e.g. YWCA of Greater Toronto uses ten provincial rent supplements for 2SLGBTQ youth). However, this is a somewhat precarious option given the lack of affordable apartment in Halifax in 2020, the fact that these market rents could increase significantly year-to-year, and the potential for government priorities to shift away from rent supplements. This housing model has low hard costs (e.g. no land purchase, no construction), but significant soft costs (e.g. finding available rental units, managing the units/tenants) and Phoenix would rely upon the continuity of leases and provincial rent supplements to retain the units and their affordability. Another option to offset soft costs would be to operate a social enterprise: Phoenix could offer its employment services, life skills workshops, financial and budgeting skills training, etc., to members of the public, charging fees to non-clients. Virtually any service could be operated as a social enterprise: a coffee shop, a dry cleaner, a youth-run bicycle repair shop. These funds could help supplement rents in the scattered-site units. Fundraising could also help supplement the units.

Co-ops provide another scattered-site approach that allows Phoenix to own the units and offers much more independence for newcomers, young families, or youth who are ready to live with minimal supports and are willing to contribute to the co-op's operations.

Co-operatives

As discussed in the comparison of housing models, co-operative housing models allow residents to be involved in maintaining the buildings and the financial management and community aspects of the co-op (e.g. organizing events, deciding on building maintenance activities). Co-ops are non-profit organizations and are supported through local, provincial, private funders, or community partnerships. Tenants usually pay rent towards their units. Quebec has many co-ops for youth who require no support, and Campus Co-operative Residence at the University of Toronto, the oldest student housing co-op in the country, provides affordable units to students who move out when their studies are complete. Because co-op members are involved in the management of the non-profit, they decide when and how to increase their housing fees, which in the long run, keeps the units affordable.

If Phoenix were to develop a youth co-op, they would play a key role in training youth to participate in the various aspects of managing the housing. For example, youth who have lived in the co-op for several years might want to make decisions about the maintenance of the units, adding gardens to the open spaces, or organizing social events for members. Those who are new members might be members of committees and commit to learning how the co-op operates over several years as part of their agreement to live there. There are also excellent support and training resources through the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, which provides advice and support to the 105 co-ops in the

Atlantic Canada Region. In Halifax alone, there are about 1000 co-op units. Many co-ops also use property management companies to assist with monthly financial reports, annual audits, access contractors for maintenance and/or repairs, and tenant conflicts.

Because tenants play a role in managing co-op housing, the co-op model is most suited to individuals with a high level of independence. For Phoenix, the target demographic would be young families and newcomers who do not require much support. Residents would still be able to access employment assistance services, employment services, health services, family support, life skills training, and self-management training through Phoenix, though these would be off-site. A youth co-op also can have a live-in mentor or supportive housing counsellor, which would make the transition to independent living more comfortable and assist with training the youth in leadership roles within the co-op.

The physical form of a co-op could be either scattered sites (e.g. a collection of houses with individual 2-bedroom units in each) or a standalone building. Most co-ops in Nova Scotia are composed of houses with several units in each house since this makes them easier to establish than building new. Having a shared open space was considered desirable among First Voice respondents, and this can be easily achieved with shared backyards. Considering that there is a higher need for units in the rural parts of HRM, the scattered-site approach could allow Phoenix to buy a few houses in key areas such as Musquodoboit or Lower Sackville. There are some surplus sites owned by HRM that could be used for this purpose: as of November 2020, these include 171 Hwy 36 in Upper Musquodoboit and 191 Cobequid Road in Sackville, but Phoenix would need to contact HRM for the most recent updates to this list. Non-profit organizations can buy these surplus sites from HRM for lower than market prices to develop affordable housing. For sites like these, lots would need to be zoned for residential use.

The scattered-site co-op option is a good fit for Phoenix because it meets a regional municipality's needs with a largely dispersed suburban and rural population. Co-ops can grow over time by purchasing additional single-family houses divided into apartment units. In addition to this, secondary suites could be added to the existing homes, as permitted under the HRM Regional Municipal Planning Strategy. This housing model has higher hard costs than renting scattered-site units (e.g. purchasing the houses, repairs/rehabilitation) and higher soft costs (e.g. training the youth, live-in mentor/supportive housing counsellor, utilities, maintaining the buildings and open spaces). However, as Phoenix would own the units, affordability would be guaranteed in the long term.

Another option would be to approach existing co-operatives in HRM and ask for a youth tenant to be considered for the next available vacant unit. While there is less risk to Phoenix with this option, it would take longer to place tenants because they would not need to buy and maintain the units themselves. Most co-ops have waiting lists and interview several households each time they have an available vacancy. Once the tenant moves on, the unit would be made available to any new applicant, not necessarily a youth from Phoenix. Over time, this option does not provide as much stability as Phoenix buying and maintaining their own units.

Multi-Service Centre/Neighbourhood House

Of the five prioritized housing models, a multi-service centre is the most ambitious. This would include spaces for Phoenix support programs (e.g. job skills development, financial and budgeting workshops, physical and mental health supports, and support finding housing) with youth housing attached. For example, several neighbourhood houses in Vancouver have housing either in the same building or nearby: Kitsilano Neighbourhood House operates Red Oak Place, which has spaces for 15 low-income

seniors and Linden Tree Place, with spaces for 30 low-income seniors who volunteer for the Centre for five hours each month.

Two of the three of the multi-service centres we examined in Appendix C (Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre and Collingwood Neighbourhood House) were non-profit organizations. Good Shepherd operated through a faith partnership. Funding for these centres can come through either private support or government support (e.g. like all neighbourhood houses in British Columbia, Collingwood receives funding from the three levels of government). The potential to receive operational funding is based on the types of services provided, whether fees can be charged to the general public, and the structure of the revenue-generating business (e.g. social enterprise, private company). In Vancouver, for example, the seven neighbourhood houses have a total of over 1,000 daycare spaces. This multi-service centre model could allow Phoenix to run the programs they always have in a community centre that gives back to the neighbourhood. As a mixed-use project, it could receive construction financing through the National Housing Co-investment Fund (New construction stream) if it also had funding through another level of government.

A multi-service centre/neighbourhood centre has the highest hard costs of the five prioritized models because it involves buying land, construction costs, contingency fees (e.g. construction delays, building material cost increases). It would also have the highest soft costs because of the combination of continuous programs and housing (e.g. extensive staff operating services, managing housing and tenants, building maintenance and repairs, utilities). However, it offers Phoenix an incredible potential because it would expand both services that they need among their target demographics, generate revenue, and provide housing units that they would own and operate themselves.

Summary of Funding Opportunities

Table 4: Funding opportunities for the five prioritized models.

Prioritized Housing Model	Funding Sources
Foyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CERIC - Advancing career development in Canada • CMHC National Housing Co-Investment Fund: New Construction • Canada Green Infrastructure Bank
Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federal Reaching Home program (Community Capacity and Innovation stream) • CMHC National Housing Co-Investment Fund for mixed-use buildings that include community-based affordable housing (Revitalization option)
Scattered Site Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial rent supplements (would require a partnership between the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing) • Social enterprise founded by Phoenix would allow proceeds to supplement rents • Tenants pay an increasing percentage of the market rent each year • Fundraising
Co-operatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMHC National Housing Co-Investment Fund for mixed-use buildings that include community-based affordable housing (Revitalization option) • CMHC Affordable Housing Innovation Fund • Efficiency Nova Scotia program for energy-efficiency upgrades to rental units • Tenants pay rent

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundraising • Municipal property taxes are not charged to non-profit housing providers
Multi-Service Centre/Neighbourhood House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMHC National Housing Co-Investment Fund for mixed-use buildings that include affordable housing (build new option) • Efficiency Nova Scotia program: New Home Construction energy efficiency • Fee-based services (e.g. day care, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, mental health services) • NS Works programs (Job Creation Partnerships) could apply if there is a social enterprise where residents could work • CERIC - Advancing career development in Canada • Tenants pay rent • Fundraising • Municipal property taxes are not charged to non-profit housing providers

Potential Scenarios

Of the five prioritized models, the Multi-Service Centre/Neighbourhood House would have the highest hard and soft costs but offer the most potential for both services and housing combined. Phoenix would have the opportunity to become a community hub for fee-based services for the public and free services for their clients. Scattered site approaches offer lower hard costs because they are rented units but still have high soft costs, and provide less stability over the long run. The Foyers and Housing First approaches have significant soft costs due to the high level of support for residents. They may be best suited to standalone buildings because these offers residents the most consistent support within close reach. Conversion of an existing building into housing with supports is likely the best physical form for these higher-support options. There is a range of funding available for each model. Still, these would depend upon the particular site chosen (e.g. land costs), whether Phoenix is building new or renovating/rehabilitating a building, and what level of support is needed (e.g. Reaching Home funding is likely available for the Housing First approach).

Three potential scenarios for Phoenix are:

Option 1: Choose a model that is quick to implement along with a longer-term model: **Foyers + Multi-Service Centre**. This would allow Phoenix to add a small number of units right away using a similar model to what they’re already doing and plan for a significant expansion in the future. Phoenix can also continue to support youth with short-term critical needs (e.g. youth who are at risk of homelessness) while building an option in the future that would allow long-term residency for those ready for more independent living, young families, and newcomers.

Option 2: Choose a quick to implement model that is easy to expand over time: **Scattered sites + Co-ops**. This would allow Phoenix to have flexibility with both rented and owned units to allow for short- and long-term residency and most of their target demographic groups (except those requiring significant on-site supports). Both models are easy to expand by merely renting more units or buying more houses and converting them to apartment units.

Option 3: Choose a model that is quick to implement: **Housing First**. This would meet the most immediate needs for Phoenix’s target demographic (youth 16-19 needing short-term residency with significant supports). A standalone model is preferred to allow residents to access services easily within the same building, which would require significant hard and soft costs.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

1. What is the name of your organization?
2. What is your email address?
3. What demographic group(s) do you serve? (mark X where appropriate)
 - All age groups
 - Youth aged 18 and under
 - Youth/young adults 18-26
 - Women
 - Men
 - 2SLGBTQ+
 - Immigrants/Newcomers
 - Indigenous
4. What types of services do you provide to clients, if any? (mark X where appropriate)
 - Harm reduction
 - Addiction support
 - Mental health support
 - Life skills training
 - Legal support
 - Case management
 - Employment services
 - Educational supports
 - Restorative justice
 - Family support
 - Shelter diversion
 - Immigration services
 - Housing first
 - Access to financial information (e.g. Rent supplements)
 - Prevention services
 - Services for 2SLGBTQ+
 - Cultural services
 - Indigenous Services
 - Other (please specify)
5. We are interested in hearing from organizations who are involved in (or working to get involved in) the provision of supportive or transitional housing. Is your organization a: (mark X where appropriate)
 - Non-profit housing provider
 - Non-profit service provider
 - Public housing authority (municipal)
 - Public housing authority (provincial)
 - Other (please specify)

6. What is your role in housing? (mark X where appropriate)
 - Housing provider (rent units, maintain existing units, provide shelter spaces)
 - Housing developer (develop new units, develop new shelter spaces)
 - Provide housing referrals to other organizations
 - Provide assistance for clients trying to find housing
 - Public sector (e.g. assisting non-profits through a funding program, providing rent supplements)
 - Housing advocacy
 - Other (please specify)
7. Can you describe your current housing stock? (e.g. Number of units, number of buildings, level of support for tenants). If none, type N/A.
8. Do you provide a housing first program that includes Housing First stock?
9. We are interested in examples of housing for youth, but we think it would be beneficial to this process to hear about projects and models of supportive and transitional housing for all demographics. These can include housing with supports all the way to independent housing options (feel free to include a link or name of your project). What types of housing do you manage/operate, if any?
10. For projects you have mentioned, how do they operate? (e.g. Funding, support/collaboration with other agencies, project management). Does your organization receive support from governments or public agencies?
11. If you were able to easily change something about your current housing model(s) to improve them/it, what would it be?
12. How would you describe your location within your city/region (e.g. Urban, rural, suburban)? Does the location meet the needs of your key demographic(s)? Briefly, why or why not?
13. Many housing organizations face challenges such as consistent funding, housing market trends, partnerships/collaborations, maintaining or expanding supply. What's your biggest challenge in providing appropriate housing or providing services, if this is your organizational role? How do you manage it?
14. Do you have any new initiatives or projects in development that you would be willing to share with us?
15. Can you share a lesson learned when developing new housing that would be helpful for others to hear?
16. Do you know about new developments or innovations in transitional or supportive housing that can be shared? (e.g. international examples)
17. What are the trends you're seeing in housing models that make you most excited?
18. Is your organization located in the Halifax region? (mark X where appropriate)
 - Yes
 - No

For organizations in the Halifax Region:

19. Do you think there is a greater need for youth housing option in certain parts of the region? (e.g. North Dartmouth, Sackville, Lower Sackville)
20. Beyond low vacancy rates, what keeps people (youth and young families in particular) from finding appropriate housing?
21. What trends do you see happening that are affecting the supply of local, affordable housing?
22. What do you think needs to happen in HRM to address housing, particular for youth and young families?
23. Have you witnessed an increase in the need for youth housing in the past 5 years in HRM (can you quantify it)?
24. Have there been any systemic barriers that have increased youth housing need in HRM? (e.g. changes related to the 16-18 year-old demographic impacted by child welfare policy in NS).
25. What models do you think would be most helpful in addressing the housing crisis for youth and young families? (mark X where appropriate)
 - Co-operative housing (scattered sites)
 - Secondary suites (scattered sites)
 - Co-housing (e.g. Youth with seniors in a home the senior owns, shared open and common space.)
 - Dedicated housing for youth in the same building as support services
 - Tiny home village/cluster with shared open spaces
 - Scattered subsidized units in different market rental buildings
 - Other (please specify)
26. What types of housing supports do you think are needed for youth in the community? (mark X where appropriate)
 - Harm reduction
 - Addiction support
 - Mental health support
 - Life skills training
 - Legal support
 - Case management
 - Employment services
 - Educational supports
 - Restorative justice
 - Family support
 - Shelter diversion
 - Immigration services
 - Housing first
 - Access to financial information (e.g. Rent supplements)
 - Prevention services

- Services for 2SLGBTQ+
- Cultural services
- Indigenous Services
- Other (please specify)

Appendix B: First Voice Interview Questions

1. What type of housing have you lived in in the past few years? What did you like about it? Was there anything you didn't like?
2. What types of programs or services do you use, e.g. job training, life skills workshops? Who offers them? Are there any services you would like to see offered?
3. What skills would you like to improve on?
4. Have you had any negative experiences with staff or with other tenants?
5. What type of housing would you like to live in two years from now? Five years from now?
6. Is the location of housing or services important to you? Why or why not?
7. Have you had trouble accessing housing because of its location? What kind of challenges are present when trying to access these services?
8. What non-essential services are important to you? (parks, places to gather, etc.)

Appendix C: Housing Model Comparison Table

