



South Shore Housing Action Coalition

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SouthShoreHousingActionCoalition

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Darren Shupe, Senior Planner

Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

darren.shupe@modl.ca

SSHAC submission for MODL2040 project

Dear Darren,

South Shore Housing Action Coalition (SSHAC)¹ is a community coalition seeking to build awareness and facilitate action on the need for improved access to healthy, safe and affordable housing options for all, at every stage of life. As residents of MODL and of neighbouring municipalities, SSHAC members have completed the MODL2040 Community Goals Survey. In addition, this letter addresses the urgent need for the improvement of housing options in the region.

There are several factors converging to create a shortage in the supply of suitable, adequate, and affordable housing of all types, in MODL and beyond. As outlined in the Background Report on Demographics & Housing, as well as in recent media reports, these factors include in-migration (permanent and seasonal), the increase in short-term rental operations, an ageing population, a frenzied real estate market and an ageing housing stock, to name these few. As a result, SSHAC calls for MODL's Planning & Development Services Department to consider the following recommendations for the MODL2040 project:

1. Engage in the development of rental units, assisted living units, transition housing, accessible units and a greater diversity of housing unit types, on the South Shore. We recognize that rental housing is an important option for a range of community members at every stage of life, and that the rate of rental housing in the region is very low. Whereas this matter is briefly addressed in Community Goals Survey, we recommend that MODL:
 - a. collect qualitative and quantitative data on rental housing, assisted living, transition housing and accessible units in the region;
 - b. seek opportunities to support the development of these housing types, through both non-profit and for-profit models;
 - c. restrict the possibility for affordable rental housing developments to be used for short-term rentals; and
 - d. through these actions, cultivate a cultural acceptance of rental housing as a permanent, long-term option for MODL residents.
2. Engage in the regulation and taxation of short-term rentals and of second-home purchases and ownership. We recognize that the proliferation of vacation rentals and seasonal homes is threatening the social and economic landscape by limiting the housing stock, competing directly with traditional tourist accommodation providers, and contributing to the inflation of property values. Moreover, whereas there are many types of short-term rental providers, we are especially concerned with the operation of entire apartments and houses as unlicensed and/or un-registered vacation rentals. We recommend that MODL:
 - a. collect specific quantitative and qualitative short-term rental data, including the rate of short-term rentals of entire apartments and houses, especially those offered by operators based outside of the region;

¹ For more information, visit our website at <http://sshac.ca>.

- b. encourage short-term rental providers, including those offering rentals locally and based outside of the region, to register their tourist accommodations with the province²;
 - c. develop revenue streams from short-term rentals, for example by implementing a municipal tax on tourist accommodation rentals, charging commercial tax rates to tourist accommodation providers, etc.; and
 - d. collect data about second-home sales and ownership, and consider a sales and/or taxation model applied specifically to second-home purchases and ownership.
3. Engage in rigorous quantitative and qualitative assessment of vulnerable populations living within MODL, as well as those forced to move away from the region due to inadequate housing and services provided locally. From an intersectional perspective, we recognize that vulnerability relates to gender, race, nationality, class, age, physical and cognitive (dis)ability, family structure, education, etc. However, social differences are not addressed in the Community Goals Survey. We recommend that MODL:
 - a. collect primary and/or secondary data, especially qualitative data, relating to the experiences of a range of vulnerable populations both within, and excluded from, the region; and
 - b. seek opportunities for accessing and/or developing relevant research agendas by engaging with experts, including universities, local non-profit organisations and housing advocacy organisations.
 4. Finally, seek opportunities for collaboration with neighbouring municipalities in relation to all of the above-noted recommendations. For example, Energize Bridgewater and the newly implemented Coordinated Access System are important community-based initiatives in the region.

As this letter highlights, the improvement of housing options in the region is a complex matter requiring immediate attention. SSHAC is committed to ongoing participation in, and support of, the MODL2040 planning and development process. We look forward to connecting with MODL again.

Sincerely,

Myra Coulter, Kelly Goudie, Helen Lanthier
On Behalf of the South Shore Housing Action Coalition

Healthy, affordable housing options for all, at every stage of life

² Information regarding tourist accommodation registration can be found here: <https://beta.novascotia.ca/register-your-tourist-accommodation>