



Fall 2025

NLAR's Plan for

Housing Attainability for All

NLAR's 2025 Election Platform

Housing is a Basic Human Right

Article 25 - Universal
Declaration of Human Rights

Homeownership is the cornerstone of community stability, economic prosperity, and personal security. In Newfoundland and Labrador, this aspiration has long been within reach, with our province consistently reporting some of the highest rates of homeownership in Canada. It's a reflection of our deep-rooted values: self-reliance, pride of place, and long-term investment in our families and neighbourhoods.

But today, **that dream is under growing threat**. Challenges around housing supply, rising costs, and affordability are eroding access to ownership for many hardworking residents. If we wish to preserve this legacy and ensure future generations can share in the security and opportunity of owning a home, decisive action is needed from all levels of government in this election season and beyond.

In the years since the COVID-19 pandemic, Newfoundland and Labrador has seen **increased demand for housing at all levels and in all regions of the province, while the supply of housing has continuously dwindled**. As a result, we are seeing a lack of housing options and the erosion of housing affordability in our province. The impact of this summer's devastating wildfires will only add to the pressures around the supply of affordable housing.

As the province heads into provincial and municipal elections this year, NL REALTORS® are calling for **bold actions** to ensure housing is available and affordable to all.



Newfoundland & Labrador REALTORS®

The NL Association of REALTORS® represents over 840 real estate brokers and salespeople across the province.

We advocate for REALTORS® with government & stakeholders addressing housing policies, strengthening consumer confidence and promoting attainable housing for all.

We promote a high standard of REALTOR® professionalism through continuous education and a strong commitment to ethics.

We empower REALTORS® with the technology & tools to drive productivity, minimize risk, and build trusted relationships.



Three Key Issues



Housing Supply

Record Low Inventory

We've not witnessed a shortage of housing across our province like this since the post-WWII era. The supply of housing on NLAR's MLS® System has been chronically low for four years.

Housing Affordability

Supply and Demand are Out of Balance

At the same time as we see record low inventory, a growing economy and increasing population have increased the demand for housing - both new construction and existing home sales. As a result house prices have increased over 40% in the past five years. The cost of new construction continues to grow as well.

Consumer Protection

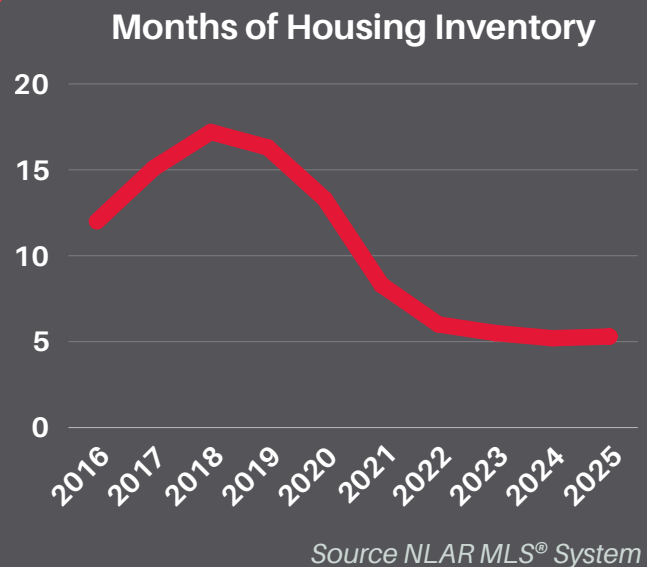
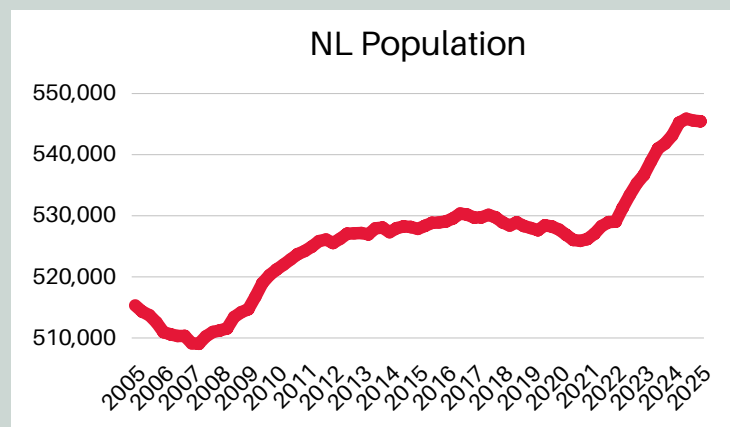
Reduce Risk in Real Estate

At a time when home buying has gotten more complex and represents an even greater share of the household budget, consumers still face risks as a result gaps in regulation of real estate and archaic land registration infrastructure and management processes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Housing Supply

The inventory of homes has never been lower in our history. By several measures we are seeing tighter supply in many communities around the province. From the St. John's CMA to Labrador West, the number of homes available to buy or rent has been at historically low levels for two years or more. There are fewer active listings on the NLAR MLS® System, and we've been hovering around 5 months of inventory for the past three years.

At the same time, for the first time since the cod moratorium was put in place in 1992, our province has seen real, measurable population growth. In just over 4 years since January 2021 the population of NL has grown by 3.7 percent (by nearly 20,000 people) to 545,500. (By comparison, NL population grew by the same number over a nearly fifteen-year period from 2007-2021 after years of decline).



Our population is aging, yet our housing stock has not kept pace and has not evolved. We are still building almost exclusively single-family and two-apartment homes. Of the \$1.36 billion invested in new residential construction in NL since January 2021, only 16% has targeted multi-unit (more than three) construction. The options for retirees looking to downsize to quality rental accommodations are limited at best.

At the same time there are federal funding programs to stimulate housing construction, we've seen the number of housing starts in the province continue to lag. Municipalities talk about wanting to be innovative and bold, but development turnaround times, planning requirements and other indicators do not seem to be improving. This needs to change if we are to meet the housing needs of the province.

Source: Statistics Canada, Table 17-10-0009-01
Population estimates, quarterly

Housing Affordability

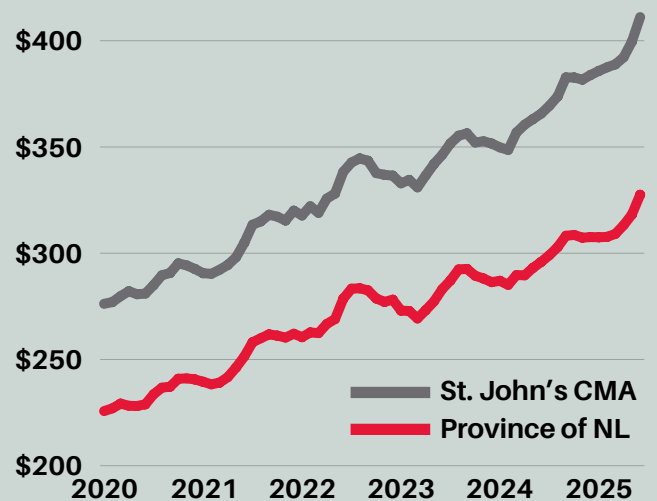
House Price Inflation at 40% or more since 2020

For many years Newfoundland and Labrador was one of the most affordable jurisdictions in Canada for housing. A balanced approach of new development, a flat or declining population curve, and an economy often described as “open and fragile” meant our housing prices remained quite affordable. In fact, until five years ago, average house prices and rents in NL were among the lowest in the country.

That is no longer the case. Over the past 4 years, housing values have climbed by over 45%. The MLS® Home Price Index (HPI) benchmark single family home price in St. John’s was \$276,000 in January 2020. That has risen to \$411,000 today – an increase of 48.9%. The provincial numbers have climbed from \$226,000 to \$328,000 (45.1%). During the same period (Jan. 2020-May 2025) average weekly wages in NL rose 22.1% - roughly half the rate of house prices.

A more concerning statistic is the rate of house price inflation. The MLS® HPI measures housing inflation. Nationally, despite a pandemic-induced peak in early 2022, HPI in June 2025 sits at the same value as at May 2021. During the same period in NL, HPI has grown 32.6%. That is three times the rate of inflation in our province (CPI) over the same period.

MLS® HPI Single Family Benchmark Price (‘000s)



Consumer Protection

Crown Lands Administration. There are a myriad of issues related to the administration of Crown Lands. The Auditor General issued a report on its review of Crown Lands Administration in October of 2024. In that report the AG determined:

The foundation of Crown lands administration has been built on an inadequate lands registration system. Policies and procedures are significantly outdated, informal, or non-existent, and the Crown Lands Division has an incomplete inventory of lands records. Processes are notably inconsistent between regions and divisional oversight of those responsible for administration is informal. Key performance indicators and risk management processes were not formally documented or clearly defined, and reporting of performance at any level was ad hoc at best.

Source: Report of the Auditor General of Newfoundland and Labrador: Administration of Crown Lands

In addition to administrative deficiencies, Crown Lands division has no real plan to deal with the lack of historical records, and the implications for homeowners who have claimed adverse possession against the crown as the root of their land title. Section 36 of the Lands Act is a significant hindrance to an efficient and effective real estate market and recent tweaks made to the Act have not adequately addressed the issues. In some cases, homeowners have to buy back their land from the government for market value, despite being deeded owners and having paid property taxes for decades.

Registry Modernization. Newfoundland and Labrador remains one of the last provinces in Canada to modernize and digitize its land title system. Our antiquated dual system of Crown Lands records and an incomplete Registry of Deeds needs to be brought from the 1800s into the 2020s.

Properties owners need to have confidence in their ownership documents and transferring title for property should be no more complex than doing the same thing for a vehicle. Property transfers in NL are often held up for days or weeks (and in some cases years) as result of inefficiencies, inaccuracies and missing information in our land records.



Raising the Standard

A Standard of Education. While **NLAR members** are required to undertake regular professional development and training as a condition of calling themselves a **REALTOR®**, there is currently no requirement for real estate licensees to undertake professional development to maintain a license from the provincial government. It is unfathomable to think, in today's increasingly complex world of technology, home construction and regulation that a real estate licensee does not require any educational updating. Its entirely possible that someone who was granted a licence by the province in the 1980s has not set foot in a classroom or online course since that time. We are the only province in Canada in which that is possible. Its time to protect consumers by requiring all licensees to do annual education.

A Standard of Practice. The licensing process is a partnership between the Government of NL and NLAR in which NLAR delivers the training and administers the exams for newcomers to the industry. The self-paced study material prepares candidates to write the exam, however real estate is highly complex and the pre-license training cannot possibly equip a new licensee with all the skills, knowledge, expertise and experience they need to succeed in the industry, and provide informed services to consumers. We have long recommended a phased approach to licencing requiring a period of mentoring or supervision from an experienced licensee – similar to an apprenticeship period.

A Standard for Home and Property Inspection. NLAR recommends every home buyer have a home inspection completed prior to purchase. However, the home and property inspection trade remains unregulated. While many operators have significant training, meet the standards of a professional association, and adhere to a rigid code of ethics, not all do, and consumers have no way of knowing. There is no provincial standard home inspection and there is no provincial standard for home inspector qualifications. Anyone in the province could hang out a shingle tomorrow as a home and property inspector. Consumers deserve better.



REALTOR® Recommendations

The issues we are facing require creative collaboration involving all levels of government, the private sector, community organizations, industry and homeowners themselves. No level of government can solve these challenges on their own.

We are calling for:

A **provincial housing roundtable** to develop a housing strategy for all. Lets bring together governments (federal , provincial and municipal), industry, investors, community advocates, REALTORS, the construction industry (home builders and related sub trades) and all of those who can play a role across the entire housing spectrum. Collectively with a common vision of affordable housing for all, we can tackle the ambitious actions required to meet the future. All players need to be in the same boat, pulling on the same oar. Lead times for new development must be reduced.

The issues of housing supply and affordability can only be addressed by a strategy to increase the supply of available housing across the full spectrum. For example, increased availability of quality purpose built rental units would allow an over-housed senior couple to downsize from their under-utilized 4 bedroom 2-storey, making that house available to a young growing family to move up to, which would in turn open a starter home for a new first-time homeowner, which will then open up a starter apartment for a student or newcomer to the country.

Modernization of our land registration system. A Public-Private Partnership can bring the billions of dollars it will take to fully redevelop our systems to be comparable to that in other provinces. Even with investment it will take years (perhaps decades) to reconcile Crown Lands records and the Registry of Deeds and develop a Torrens title system. That journey starts with the first bold step of recognizing we need to get started. In the meantime, full implementation of the AG's recommendations for Crown Lands administration would be a good first step.

Better consumer protection at a time when transacting in real estate has become more expensive and more complex. Introduction of graduated licensing, or a mentoring system for new licensees, implementation of mandatory professional development for license renewal, and increased oversight of the home and property inspection profession will better serve consumers by reducing risk and ensuring greater professionalism across the sector.



www.nlar.ca/election