



City of Grande Prairie
Birch Hills County
County of Grande Prairie
Saddle Hills County
MD of Greenview
M.D. #144 Spirit River
Town of Wembley
Town of Beaverlodge
Town of Sexsmith
Town of Spirit River
Village of Rycroft
Village of Hythe

Regional Seniors and Family Housing Needs Assessment Study: 2019

November 2019



and

Focus Consulting

Focus on what you **Can** do
Not what you cannot

Table of contents

1	Executive Summary.....	i
2	Introduction.....	1
2.1	Purpose	2
3	Method and Approach	3
3.1	Data and Information Sources.....	5
3.2	Report Structure.....	5
4	Regional Needs Assessment.....	6
4.1	Regional Overview	6
4.2	North Communities.....	16
4.3	West Communities	20
4.4	East Communities.....	24
4.5	City of Grande Prairie	28
4.6	Indigenous Need	32
4.7	Homelessness	33
4.8	Special Needs Housing.....	36
5	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Highlights	39
5.1	Key Issues and Priorities Identified	39
6	Summary, Implications and Conclusions	41
6.1	Summary of outstanding need (2016).....	41
6.2	Looking to the future	41
7	Appendices:.....	45
	Appendix 1: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary	46
	Appendix 2: Sources	53

1 Executive Summary

The Grande Spirit Foundation partnered with the City of Grande Prairie and commissioned Gordon & Associates to prepare a Regional Family and Seniors Housing Needs Assessment. The purpose of the project was to complete a housing accommodation needs assessment that encompasses families, seniors, indigenous peoples, and individuals in need of housing accommodation that clearly identifies housing needs and priorities across the region.

The need assessment was conducted across the entire region covered by the Grand Spirit Foundation, encompassing the City and County of Grande Prairie, the northwestern part of the Municipal District of Greenview and nine communities around Grande Prairie. To ensure that data was statistically significant and meaningful, the territory was divided into four aggregations, three rural (North, West and East) as well as the City of Grande Prairie. The assessment draws on a range of data sources, including CMHC housing market data and a set of custom tabulations from the 2016 Census.

Housing needs assessments were completed for each of the four geographies and include a regional perspective. The assessment includes a housing market overview, assessment of current housing need, an estimated of future need, an overview of existing and future housing requirements and needs by household type and age and potential options to address the housing needs for consideration.

Although not currently included in the mandate of the Grande Spirit Foundation Indigenous housing need, homeless and special needs populations were covered in the analysis.

A summary of existing and future housing requirements and needs by household type and age is provided for each geographic area. While the primary focus is a needs assessment, policy implications and options are outlined for consideration.

The analysis examined two aspects of need (or more accurately, requirements): market housing need and need for assistance. Housing need typically focuses on households unable to address their housing requirements in the market. For example, in the Grande Prairie region roughly 11% of all households are deemed to be in core housing need. Framed this way, the challenge is to reduce need below 11%. An alternate way to view this is that 89% of households in Grande Prairie are appropriately housed, most without assistance in market-based housing. Here the challenge is to extend the reach of the market (grow the 89% to 90%+) such that fewer remain unserved (i.e. minimize the need for public assistance). It is for this reason that the assessment extends to include an assessment of the market conditions and performance.

Key findings and insights

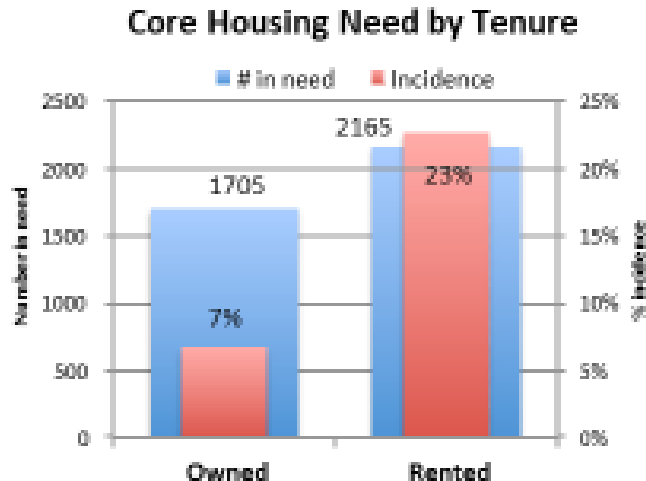
The analysis identified distinct differences in the existing stock of housing and in recent construction activity between the City versus the three rural areas. It also revealed a significant mismatch between housing requirements and market supply.

- Many households in the rural communities and smaller households, seek smaller homes, but wish to remain in those areas. To date there has been only a limited market response.
- For smaller households that are renting, often the only option is a single detached home, for which the rent exceeds 30% of income, so they fall into core housing need. If there were smaller lower rent options, such households may not be in need.
- Housing need in the rural communities is more often, but not exclusively, found among low-income seniors that own their home. If options, including smaller dwellings either for sale or for rent were available, many may liquidate their equity and downsize – but those options are not being created in the housing market.

There is a need to encourage and incent market-based solutions to persisting housing need.

This assessment draws on the widely used CMHC core housing need measure to identify both the quantity and nature of housing need, where some form of assistance is required.¹

- First looking at an overall assessment of core need across the region, the data show that in total some 3,900 households, (almost 2,200 renters and 1,700 owners) accounting for 11% of all households are estimated to be in core housing need.



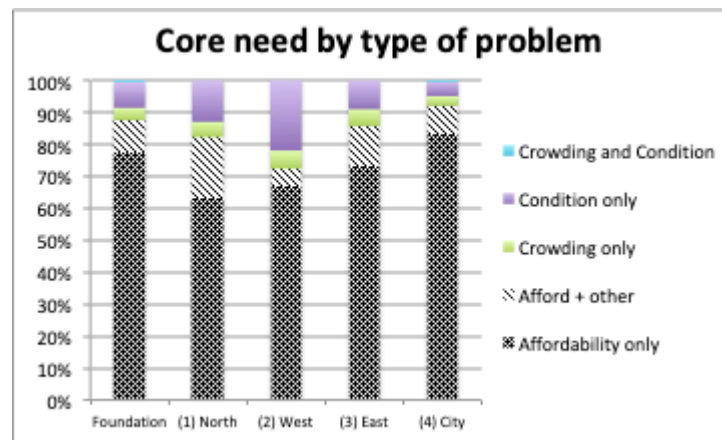
¹ Core Housing Need is a methodology developed by CMHC in the 1980's to assess housing need. It involves a two-step process drawing on three specific housing standards – affordability (pay over 30% of gross income for shelter cost); adequacy (dwelling in need of major repair); and suitability (a measure of crowding that compares number of bedrooms to size and composition of household). Second it establishes an income threshold to further refine the count of those in need. This is determined based on having an income above that required to pay no more than 30% to afford a median rent home of suitable size in the market area. So, if the median 2-bed rent were \$750, the income threshold would be \$30,000 ($\$750 / 0.30 \times 12$ months). A household living below any of the three standards and with an income below the income threshold is deemed to be in core need.

In addition to counting the number of households in need, the analysis also examined the incidence of need (the proportion within a specific population group that are estimated to be in need. As shown in the chart above:

- While the number of owners in need is significant (and mainly in the rural areas), the incidence of need among owners is much lower 7%, or one on every 14 owner households) compared to renters where almost one in four are in need. And owners have accumulated equity that can be used to assist, while renters have few or no assets and generally much lower incomes.

Nature of Need

As noted, the core need methodology distinguishes type of need, incorporating the three housing standards: affordability, adequacy (condition) and suitability (crowding).



The vast majority of problems relate to affordability, either alone, or in combination. That said, in the three rural areas, there is a higher incidence of homes in poor condition.

- Where the most prominent problem is affordability (and as noted earlier, this impacts mainly renters in the City) an effective remedy is some form of housing allowance or rent supplement to help improve the household's financial capacity to cover their rent.
- It is not necessary to build a new affordable home for all households in need, especially if the need is exclusively related to affordability only – the households already lives in a suitable home in reasonable repair.
- To address issues of poor condition some form of home rehabilitation program, possibly including some retrofit to support senior independence could be explored as a low-cost option to enable seniors to remain in their own home.
- Supply based solutions are often better directed to special needs populations, where the target clients require delivery of ancillary support services. A

congregate housing model can help to facilitate economies of scale in such service delivery. E.g. home care and personal supports can be more efficiently delivered to a Lodge versus to a dispersed group of senior homeowners. And similarly, for those experiencing chronic homelessness (in excess of 180 days in the emergency system, or recurrent periods of 3 months or more) congregate purpose-built housing may also be an effective way to deliver Housing First responses.

Some imbalance in current stock versus need

The existing stock of assisted housing is heavily skewed in favour of seniors, especially outside of the city, where the existing stock serves almost exclusively seniors. In the city there is a more diverse mix, including 386 rent supplement units mainly in the city, which are the main source of assistance to singles and families.

- Some rebalancing in this assisted stock may be required by adding non-senior development. This is especially true for singles in core need, many of which are between 45-64. This suggests responses targeting singles, regardless of age, rather than more narrowly targeting seniors (except where ancillary supports for supportive living for the frail elderly are planned). And, as noted, family housing, particularly for lone parents should be prioritized (although as suggested above, this can be accommodated using rent supplements or housing allowances).

There is an absence of options for indigenous households

The incidence of core need among Aboriginal households is also disproportionate. Even though total households in need count 630, this represents 14% of all Aboriginal households (compared to incidence of 11% in the Non-Aboriginal population).

- A critical challenge in addressing this disproportionate level of indigenous need is the absence of indigenous housing provider in the region.

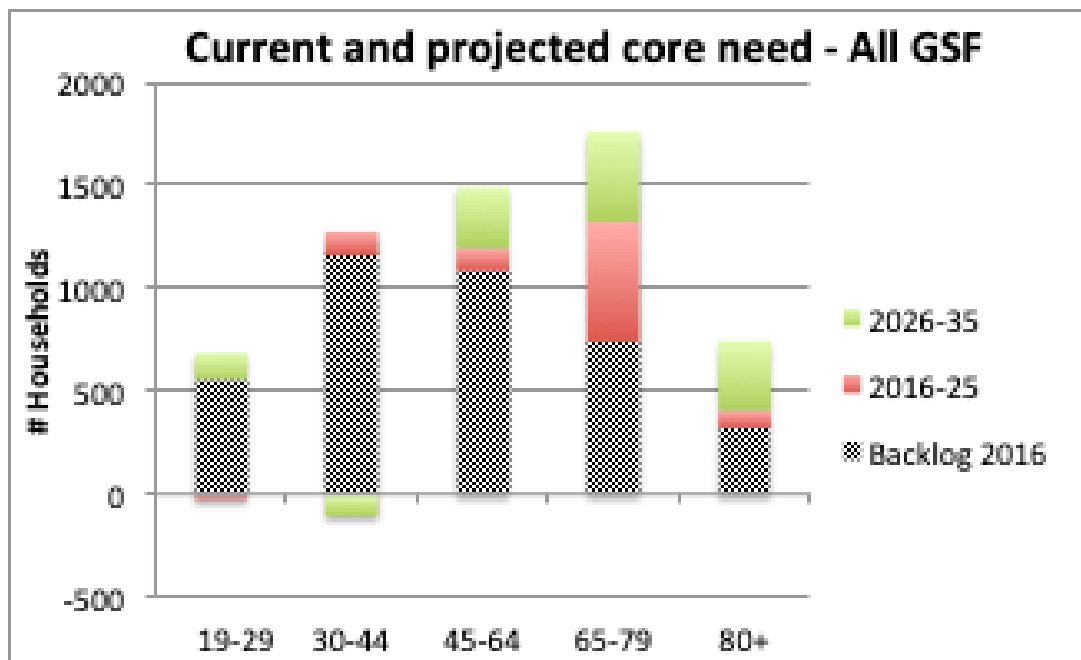
Addressing the backlog and anticipated growth in housing need.

As a way to quantify need, the following table presents total core housing counts, for each of the four area groups and by tenure. This excludes homelessness and special needs.

Summary of Core Housing Need Across the Grande Prairie Region (2016)					
	North (G5)	West	East	City	Totals
Owners	210	370	375	750	1,705
Renters	95	160	185	1,720	2,165
Total	305	530	560	2,470	3,870

- As suggested earlier it is important to note that not all those identified here as in core housing need will in fact seek assistance.
- And equally important, not all those in need require the construction of new affordable housing, especially the large majority facing only an affordability problem. Complementary options, including rehabilitation (rural owners); housing allowances (mainly for renters); as well as potential market supply initiatives can be effective in addressing this backlog.

An estimate of future growth has been determined by drawing on population projections prepared by the Province for 2016-36. A base projection was used to first generate an estimate of household growth, and from this using the 2016 incidence rates of core need, by age the number of potential new core need households is estimated.



- While the current backlog is more pronounced for the 30-64 age groups, and high levels of need among lone-parents and non-elderly singles, the projection shows that over the current decade (2016-25) the greatest growth will be in households age 65-79; in the subsequent decade (2026-35), growth will be

more broadly spread across the three older groupings (45-64, 65-79, and 80 and over).

This will increase requirements for seniors housing and as these populations move into the older (80+) group for various levels of supportive living and long-term care.

The detailed core housing need data for the Grande Spirit Foundation is contained in the tables below (note Statistics Canada rounds to nearest 5).

Detailed Core Need Data - Grande Spirit Foundation						
Core Housing Need (2016) by Tenure and Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Owners and renters	560	1160	1085	735	315	3860
Owner	85	465	590	395	170	1705
Renter	475	700	500	335	155	2145
Core Housing Need (2016) by Age and Household Type						
Couple no children	40	55	210	165	70	540
Couple+children	120	300	130	0	0	550
Lone-parent	185	520	175	30	0	910
Multiple-family	0	20	10	10	0	40
One-person	145	235	505	505	245	1635
Two + non-family	60	50	60	20	10	200
Total	550	1180	1090	730	325	3875
Current and Projected Core Need, by Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Backlog of need (in 2016)	560	1160	1085	735	315	3860
Projected growth each 5 yr period						
2016-20	-85	76	44	220	18	273
2021-25	60	37	69	362	67	596
2026-30	82	-69	128	334	124	599
2031-36	49	-36	166	104	213	497
Total	105	9	407	1020	423	1965

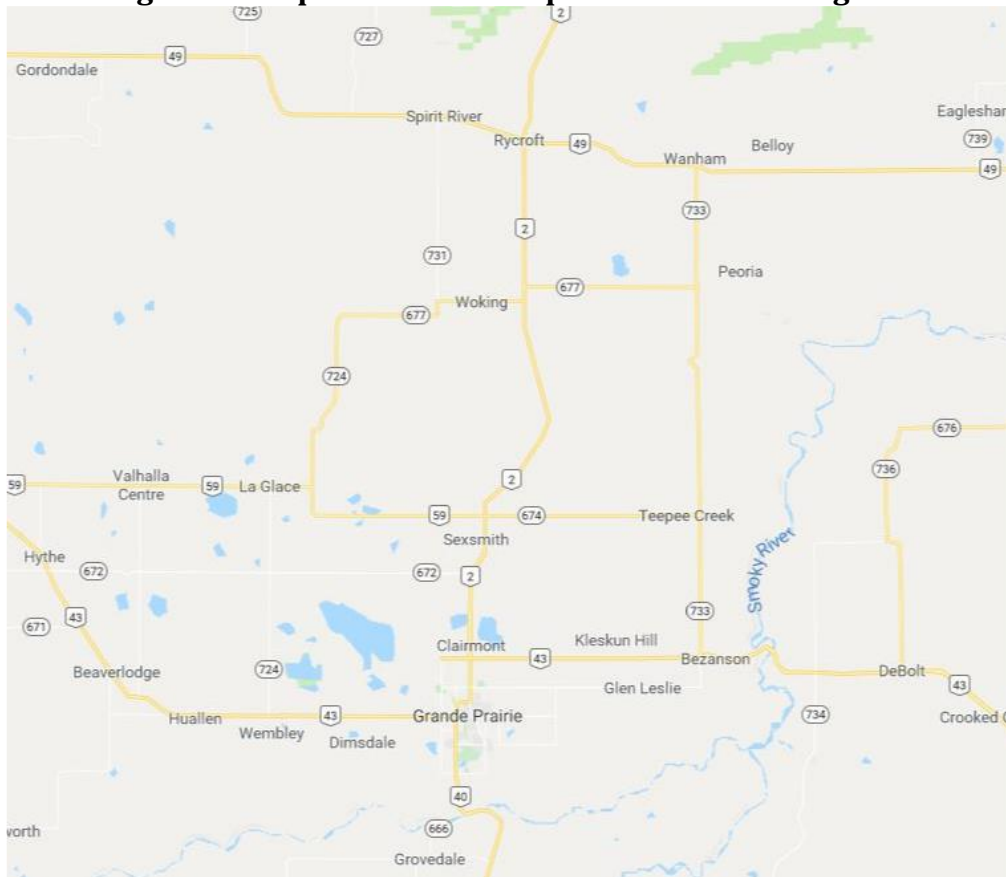
2 Introduction

The Grande Spirit Foundation (GSF) is a Housing Management Body that operates under the Alberta Housing Act and Regulations and has been providing housing for seniors and families in the Grande Prairie area since 1960. GSF provides housing for 1,500 residents through senior and family housing programs in various communities across the region. The Foundation is comprised of twelve municipalities which are all represented on the Board of Directors:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. City of Grande Prairie | 7. Town of Beaverlodge |
| 2. County of Grande Prairie | 8. Town of Sexsmith |
| 3. County of Saddle Hills | 9. Town of Spirit River |
| 4. County of Birch Hills | 10. M.D. # 133 Spirit River |
| 5. MD of Greenview | 11. Village of Rycroft |
| 6. Town of Wembley | 12. Village of Hythe |

The map below shows the Grande Spirit Foundation region.

Figure 1: Map of the Grande Spirit Foundation Region



The vision of the Grande Spirit Foundation Region is to “provide progressive housing to address a significant lack of available progressive housing for seniors and families to address the challenges of varied stages within the region”. The size and diversity of the communities within the foundation area creates varying housing needs and demands across the region. These housing needs and demands are driven by the supply and demand profile, employment, demographic and socio-economic factors in each community. GSF’s waitlist continues to support the need for more non-market housing across the region.

A new 150-unit seniors’ facility was opened in Clairmont in 2017 containing a combination of self-contained apartments and lodge units. The recent 2019 Alberta Budget included funding approval for the construction of a new senior’s facility in the Town of Spirit River. It will contain 40 lodge units to replace those in the aging Pleasant View Lodge and 52 Supportive Living (SL) units (26 SL4² and 26 SL4D³) for a total of 92 housing units.

2.1 Purpose

The Grande Spirit Foundation partnered with the City of Grande Prairie and commissioned Gordon & Associates to prepare a Regional Family and Seniors Housing Needs Assessment. The purpose of the project, as stated in the Request for Proposal (RFP), was to:

“complete a housing accommodation needs assessment that encompasses families, seniors, indigenous peoples, and individuals in need of housing accommodation that clearly identifies housing needs and priorities across the region. The expectation is that development of the assessment will involve consulting and working with key stakeholders including federal, provincial and local governments and local stakeholders. The completed needs assessment will be leveraged to assist in the development of future business case(s) for submission to the Alberta Government for capital funding request(s) for construction of new housing, as well as assisting GSF in designing local responsive actions to address the identified needs”.

² DSL4 is a setting that provides you with accommodation, meals, housekeeping, linen and recreational services and a higher level of personal care and health care services onsite.

³ DSL4D provides specialized dementia (memory) care

3 Method and Approach

Housing affordability is not a fixed line; it is a continuum based on household capacity and affordability ranging from emergency shelters aiding the homeless to market housing, as displayed in Figure 1 below. Success would have individuals and households moving from the left to the right or toward more independence. However, the housing system does not function in a way that supports this movement because the building industry responds to demand not need. Virtually all of the non-market housing need is provided with some form of subsidy – either one time and/or ongoing. Current and projected future supply gaps across the continuum are the focus for where policies and strategies need to be developed.

Figure 1: Housing Continuum

		NON-MARKET HOUSING				MARKET HOUSING	
		SHORT-TERM		LONG-TERM			
Housing	Emergency Shelter	Short-term Supportive Housing	Long-term Supportive Housing	Subsidized Housing	Affordable Housing	Market Affordable Housing	Market Housing
Alberta examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult □ Women's emergency• Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Second-stage shelters• Community residential treatment facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PSH• Special Needs Housing• Continuing Care	Seniors Lodge Seniors self-contained housing Community housing Rent supplement	Affordable Housing Initiative (capital grant)	No direct subsidies Reduced costs (e.g., regulations, standards & const.)	Rental and home ownership through the private market

Level of Support & Subsidization

While the GSF Regional Housing Needs Assessment will cover the housing continuum, the focus is on affordability needs of families, seniors and individuals, and subsidized and affordable housing solutions which HMBs in Alberta and elsewhere have used to address needs. This is the middle section of the continuum, as illustrated in the circle above.

Aggregating the data – The challenge of finding relevant data

One of the challenges with quantifying housing requirements and need is finding relevant data. Working with rural jurisdictions can present the challenge of having a sufficient size population to generate a robust and meaningful set of housing and

demographic housing from the Statistics Canada census. In order to resolve this challenge, the municipalities outside of Grande Prairie were aggregated into 3 sub-regions or areas. Two actions were taken to determine the 3 geographic groupings:

- Only half of the MD of Greenview is within the GSF. To address this issue, the MD of Greenview was split down the middle (west to east) and the area within GSF was geo-coded and included.
- To help distribute the population more evenly, a line was drawn from north to south in the County of Grande Prairie on the west side of the City and each half was geo-coded.

After reviewing the impact of these actions on the population totals for each group, it was agreed that the regional housing needs assessment would be based on the four distinct geographies containing the following municipalities:

- 1. North:** Saddle Hills County, Birch Hills County, Town of Spirit River, MD of Spirit River, Village of Rycroft (6% of pop)
- 2. West:** Wembley, Beaverlodge, Hythe, County of Grande Prairie West (18% of pop)
- 3. East:** MD of Greenview (NW), Sexsmith, County of Grande Prairie East (14% of pop)
- 4. City:** Grande Prairie (62% of pop)

With the four geographic areas defined and coded, Statistics Canada was able to generate aggregate data on each of them. A data specification was developed with Statistics Canada containing the data elements required for the housing assessment. Relevant housing and household characteristics were ordered by individual municipality and in aggregate for the four geographies.

- Dwelling types, age, condition, etc. of the housing stock
- Number of households by type, tenure, income and age
- Trends in housing starts and house prices and rental rates
- Core Housing Need data was specified by household type and age and included both the number and incidence of need by aboriginal and non-aboriginal households.

Population projections from Alberta Treasury (2019) for Census Division #19, which is slightly larger than the GSF geographic area, were used to estimate population growth over the next 20 years in 5-year intervals. The headship rate method was used to convert population into households by type and age group. The incidence of need in 2016 was kept constant over the 20-year forecast to estimate the number of households in need.

3.1 Data and Information Sources

The following housing data sources were used to develop this report:

- 2016 Census of Canada - Custom tabulation of select housing and household variables;
- Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) housing market reports -historical rent levels and vacancies rates, and housing starts for Grande Prairie);
- Grande Prairie Real Estate Board (EREB) sales data on existing house prices from the Multiple List Service (MLS) for the City of Grande Prairie;
- Various forms of administrative data related to non-market housing were sourced from GSF, participating municipalities, Alberta Government Ministries,
- Numerous documents on housing and population were considered during the development of the housing needs assessment. These documents are included in Appendix 2.

3.2 Report Structure

Housing needs assessments were completed for each of the four geographies and include a regional perspective. The assessment includes a housing market overview, assessment of current housing need, an estimated of future need, an overview of existing and future housing requirements and needs by household type and age and potential options to address the housing needs for consideration.

Indigenous housing needs within the GSF geography are also assessed. The housing needs of the homeless and special needs populations are discussed here, but the data is sourced externally - from the City of Grande Prairie and the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) for the homeless and from the Alberta Government for special needs housing.

A summary of existing and future housing requirements and needs by household type and age is provided for each geographic area. While the primary focus is a needs assessment, policy implications and options are outlined for consideration.

4 Regional Needs Assessment

This section first provides an overall regional review of the findings regarding the housing need assessment. It includes comparisons across the region, and especially between the urban (city) part and the more rural surrounding communities. Specific highlights within each of the four groupings are subsequently presented.

4.1 Regional Overview

As outlined in the approach and methodology, the housing need analysis examined two aspects of need (or more accurately, requirements): market housing need and need for assistance. This summary address each of these two separately.

Housing need typically focuses on households unable to address their housing requirements in the market. For example, in the Grande Prairie region roughly 11% of all households are deemed to be in core need (nationally this is 14%).

Framed this way, the challenge is to reduce need. An alternate way to view this is that 89% of households in Grande Prairie are appropriately housed, most without assistance in market-based housing. Here the challenge is to extend the reach of the market (grow the 89% to 90%+) such that fewer households remain unserved (i.e. minimize the need for public assistance). It is for this reason that the assessment extends to include an assessment of the market conditions and performance.

Assessing the market

This involved an examination of both the housing stock and recent additions to this stock through new construction, compared to the demographics and household characteristics of the people that live in this housing.

First looking at the existing housing stock, the data show that the predominant form of housing is the single-family dwelling (SFD), especially in the three areas (North, West, East) outside of the City. Concurrently there are very few multiple unit forms (semi, row and apartment) outside of the city).

And new construction activity is building more of the same – in the non-urban areas almost exclusively detached homes. The existing stock in the City is more diverse, with the existing stock and new activity including a more complete range of multiple unit structures.

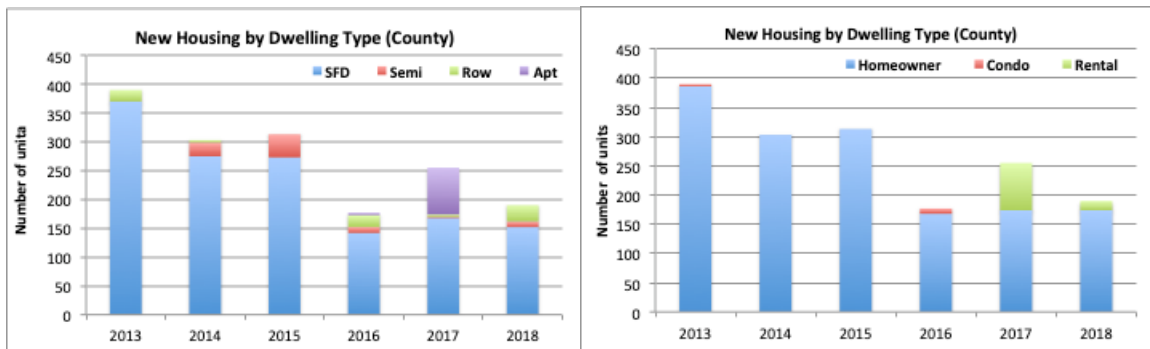


This is important because single detached homes are more often than not owner occupied (in the three rural areas the ownership rate is over 85%); while multiple forms are more often rented (for this reason, in the city, with more multi-unit attached housing, the ownership rate is only 65%).

Lack of market options for smaller households

The data show a very substantial number of households are one or two persons (singles and childless couples). And this is especially the case in the three rural areas. While many households may be content in a single-family home, some may wish to downsize to a smaller home with less upkeep, or lower cost. But options to downsize and stay in their own community are rare. This preference was highlighted in community consultations, where seniors expressed a strong preference to remain in their own communities.

Many have potential home equity that would enable them to convert into small condo properties, but such options are not being created. Similarly there are few rental options for those that wish to cash out their equity as part of a downsizing process (the receipt from sales would enable them to pay rent, beyond what their fixed pension income may allow, and also provide a nest egg of savings to fund other activities rather than being locked into home equity).

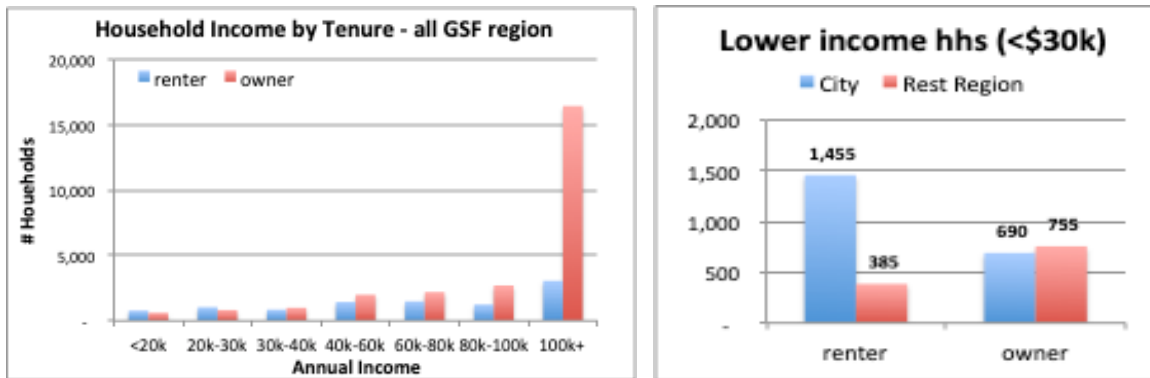


In addition to a lack of existing options, the new construction charts (for the county only) show that in the three rural areas the construction industry is not building a product that provides such choice – neither smaller units, nor rentals.

One consequence is that in the smaller communities often the only options are Lodges and independent (social housing) apartments but with limited turnover and availability, and many seniors may not be ready for or need supportive housing.

There is a need and potential for market-based solutions to expand these options, and remove pressure from social housing waiting lists.

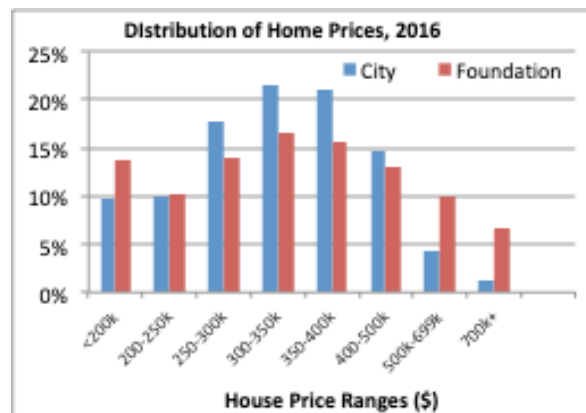
In terms of market-based solutions, the data show that in the three rural areas (rest of region) there are few households with very low income, below \$30,000, less than 800 owners and under 700 renters.



At an annual income of \$30,000 households can afford to pay up to \$750 – based on the 30% of income benchmark used to measure need. Most lower income households are renters and live in the City – there are few renters in the other three areas. Many of these under \$30,000 households in the three rural area are owners, and with accumulated equity there is some purchasing power to support market-based solutions.

Existing property values, most over \$200,000 provide these lower income owners with an option to liquidate their equity, and either purchase or rent a smaller more appropriate dwelling.

In the city there is a greater diversity of dwelling types and in recent new construction activity have included a good supply of rental apartments. However there still remains an undersupply of new rentals.



There are potential opportunities to expand rental options though new supply: the recently implemented federal Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCFI) provides very favourable lending to support such development (by either private or non-profit proponents).⁴

At the same time there is very little new condo apartment construction (and almost none outside of the city), so options for seniors and other small households that may wish to downsize (and do not require a large detached home, but seek to own) are limited.

⁴ Details on the CMHC RCFI program are available here: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/nhs/rental-construction-financing-initiative>

The data on household characteristics also reveal tenure patterns and show that in the three rural groupings, households are predominantly owners; in the City the majority are still owners, but the scale of the rental sector is much larger, accounting for over one-third all households.

These tenure patterns are important in the determination and differentiation of housing need as discussed in the next section. Notably, the limited stock and supply of smaller (1-2 bedroom) rental options means that many renters have no choice other than to rent larger single detached homes, which tend to have higher rents (and utility costs). And, for some, it is these higher rents that cause them to spend over 30% and be in core need. It is possible that if smaller, lower rent options were available in the market fewer renter households would be in core need.

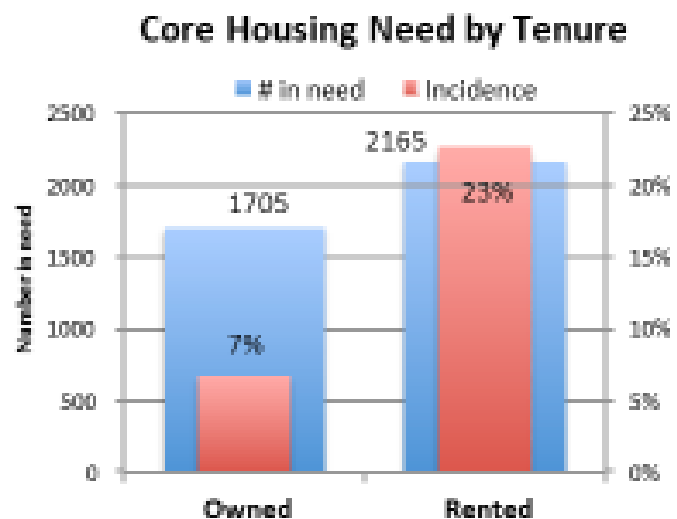
The key point here is that it is possible to address some core need without subsidy, simply by enabling a more responsive set of market options (grow the reach of market as an indirect way to reduce need).

Examining housing need

This assessment draws on the widely used CMHC core housing need measure to identify both the quantity and nature of housing need, where some form of assistance is required.⁵

First looking at an overall assessment region, the data show that in total some 3,900 households, (almost 2,200 renters and 1,700 owners) accounting for 11% of all households are estimated to be in core housing need.

At an aggregate level across the GSF service area a slight majority (56%) are renters, and these are mainly in the City of Grande Prairie; meanwhile 44% (counting 1,700) are owners, and these are mainly found in the other three rural groupings. Details for each area are discussed later, but the data reveal a distinct difference between the urban and rural areas.



⁵ Core Housing Need is a methodology developed by CMHC in the 1980's to assess housing need. It involves a two-step process drawing on three specific housing standards – affordability (pay over 30% of gross income for shelter cost); adequacy (dwelling in need of major repair); and suitability (a measure of crowding that compares number of bedrooms to size and composition of household). Second it establishes an income threshold to further refine the count of those in need. This is determined based on having an income above that required to pay no more than 30% to afford a median rent home of suitable size in the market area. So if the median 2-bed rent were \$750, the income threshold would be \$30,000 ($\$750 / 0.30 \times 12$ months). A household living below any of the three standards and with an income below the income threshold is deemed to be in core need.

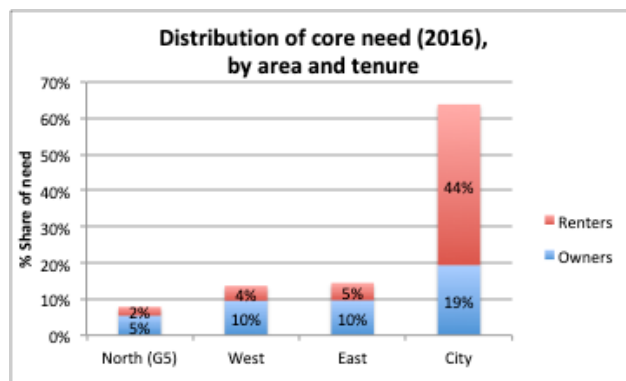
It should be noted that the core need methodology does not consider home asset values of owners, and as such overlooks their capacity to draw on their asset to help resolve their need (i.e. selling and using resulting proceeds as a source to pay rent, as discussed in previous section).

While there are a substantial number (1,700) of owners in need, the frequency of need (incidence) among owners is much lower (at 7%, or one in every 14 owner households) than among renters. For renters one in every four households (23%) is in need.

And as noted earlier, renters in need have fewer options (no asset or equity). For this reason, housing interventions (as reflected in the recently announced National Housing Strategy), tend to focus more on renters, where need is more extensive and acute.

Notably, when CMHC initially developed the core need concept in the 1980's it was for the purpose of allocating federal funding across the country on the basis of need (vs. simply per capita). We can similarly examine how need is spread across the GSF area, and potentially use it as an allocation mechanism.

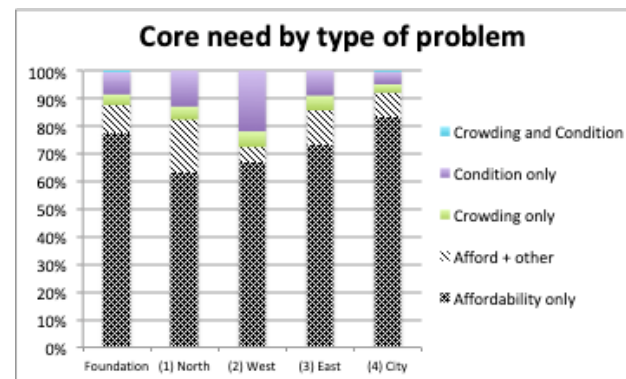
Reflecting the population distribution, most need is in the City (63%), and is found mainly among renters. The north has the smaller number while the western and eastern communities each have about 15% of need. And in these three rural areas need is mainly among owners.



Nature of Need

As noted, the core need methodology distinguishes type of need, incorporating the three housing standards: affordability, adequacy (condition) and suitability (crowding).

The vast majority of problems relate to affordability, either alone, or in combination. That said, in the three rural areas, there is a higher incidence of homes in poor condition. This suggests that some form of home rehabilitation program, possibly including some retrofit to support senior independence be explored as a low-cost option to enable seniors to remain in their own home.



In the city, the most prominent problem is affordability (and as noted earlier this impacts' mainly renters).

Here a potential remedy is some form of housing allowance or rent supplement to help improve the household's financial capacity to cover their rent. It is not necessary to build a new affordable home for all households in need, especially if the need is exclusively related to affordability only – the households already lives in a suitable home in reasonable repair.

In fact, supply based solutions are often better directed to special needs populations, where the target clients require delivery of ancillary support services. A congregate housing model can help to facilitate economies of scale in such service delivery. E.g. home care and personal supports can be more efficiently delivered to a Lodge versus to a dispersed group of senior homeowners. And similarly, for those experiencing chronic homelessness (in excess of 180 days in the emergency system, or recurrent periods of 3 months or more) congregate purpose-built housing may also be an effective way to deliver Housing First responses.⁶

Who is in need?

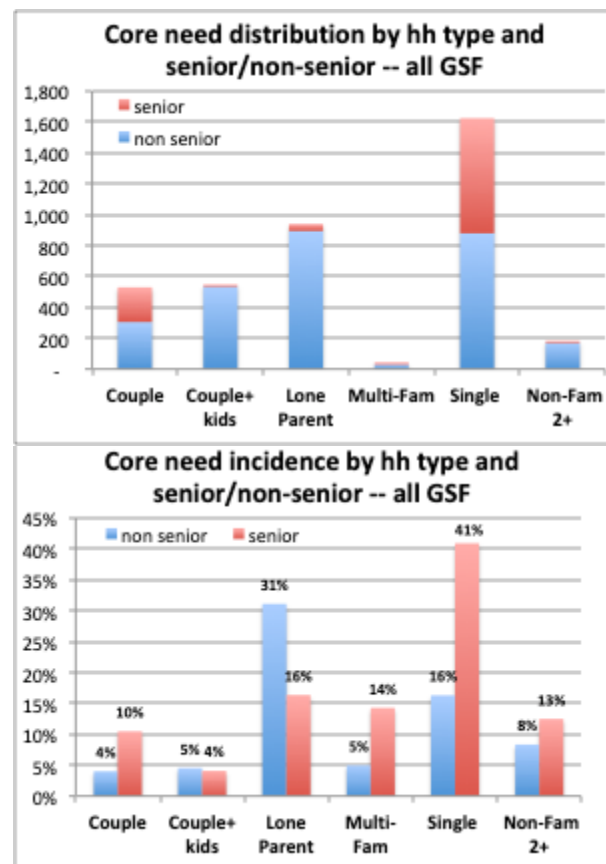
These issues are experienced differently among different household types. Because the main issue is one of affordability, it is not surprising that it tends to impact households with only one income more than that for two-income households.

So single persons and lone-parents (most female led) are most impacted.

This is seen both in the absolute count of households in need (upper chart) as well as the incidence of need (lower chart, which measures the frequency of need within each category (e.g. for non-senior lone parents 31% of this group are in need).

These charts reveal that while seniors do have a significant level of need, this is not the largest group in need – non elderly singles and lone parents both account for 23% each, compared to 19% among senior singles).

Actually, seniors account for only 27% of need in the region; non-seniors have a much higher count and represent 77% of all core need (in 2016).



⁶ Addressing homelessness is not part of the GSF mandate, but is another important part of a need assessment, especially with the current focus on Housing First approaches – housing plus appropriate wrap around supports, calibrated to the acuity levels of target homeless population.

However, on the basis of the incidence of need (lower chart on previous page) the incidence of need is higher in certain populations:

- 41% of senior singles are in need, compared to 18% among non-senior singles;
- 31% of non-senior lone parents are in core need

Across all household types, the incidence of need for seniors is 23% versus 9% for non-senior (mainly due to the large count of non-seniors that are not in core need).

Note that incidence rates should be read in conjunction with the absolute count, because some groups have a very small total count (for example senior lone-parents appear to have a high incidence of need, at 16%, but there are very few (less than 45) such households.

As suggested above, it is not necessary, nor appropriate to construct new housing (supply response) to address all households in need. A variety of responses are possible, including rehabilitation, housing allowance (more often directed to renters, but also possible to alleviate high shelter cost burdens for owners) as well as building purpose built rental or special needs housing (with partnerships to deliver appropriate services, depending on the target client group).

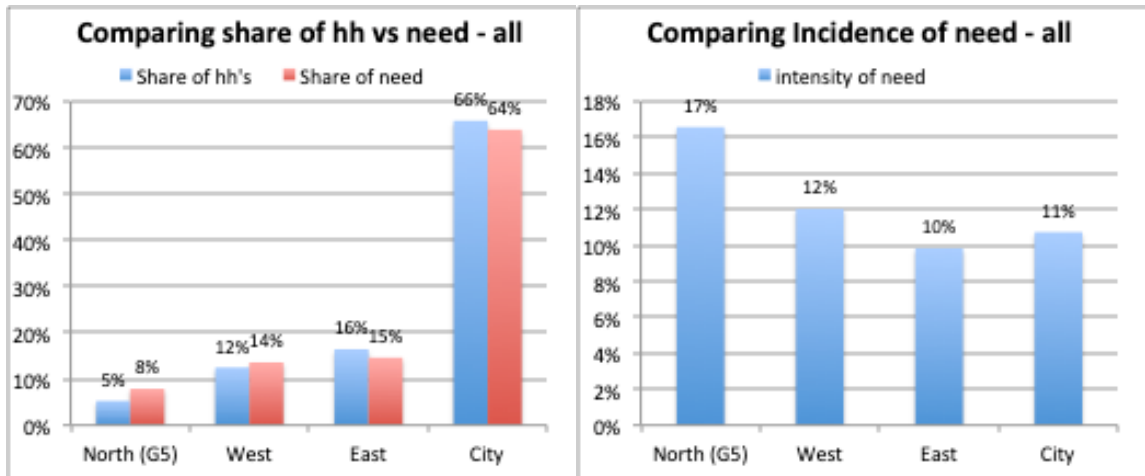
Distinguishing need from demand

It is also important to distinguish demand from need – for various reasons not all households in core need seek out assistance. Indeed, while almost 3,900 households are estimated to be in core housing need, the GSF waiting list for housing is only one tenth of this number (around 400).

In particular those in the rural areas that wish to stay in that community may not be interested in facilities being built in the City. And some seniors may prefer to age in their own home, rather than moving (in part because having retired the mortgage, they see this as the lowest cost option compared, for example, to renting).

Allocation of need

Quantifying both the nature and type of need, and who it impacts can however be useful in designing an array of remedies as well as being a way to allocate limited budgets across different client types and geographic areas.



Looking across the region we can examine the distribution of all households compared to the distribution of core need. This can show areas that have a disproportionate level of need (share of all households vs. share of households in need).

As shown in the left-hand chart, in the City and the Eastern communities the share of need is slightly less than the share of core need; however, in the North and West, the share of need exceeds the share of households – so need is over represented.

The incidence of need adds another dimension to this assessment (right chart). It determines, for each of the 4 groups, what proportion of all households' experience core housing need. Here we see the highest incidence of need, in 2016, was in the North (at 17% of all households in need, vs. overall region incidence of 11%), which also had the greatest mismatch between share of households and share of need.

If the 4 areas are ranked on these two measures (disproportionate share of need and incidence of need), the North ranks highest of the four areas. This validates the decision to allocate funding to build a new seniors project in that part of the region. Using the same ranking, the West ranks 2nd both on mismatch and in incidence, and as such is arguably the next highest priority area.

Such a prioritization ranking approach does, however, overlook the absolute level of need, which is much higher in the City (where 64% of all core need exists, and mostly affects renters, who have fewer assets and ability to address their need without assistance).

So it remains necessary to consider this distribution in the allocation of resources to address need, but again emphasizing this should include a mix of responses and some, such as rehabilitating assistance and housing allowance, may involve a lower cost per household assisted.

Another consideration is that if there were a total budget allocated to the GSF region by the province and this is then allocated to each community or group of communities, the level of dispersed funds may be insufficient to build a project in any one area, so some consolidation or prioritization over a few years would likely be required.

Smaller increments of funding for rehabilitation or housing allowances are however more meaningful at smaller geographies.

Current resources

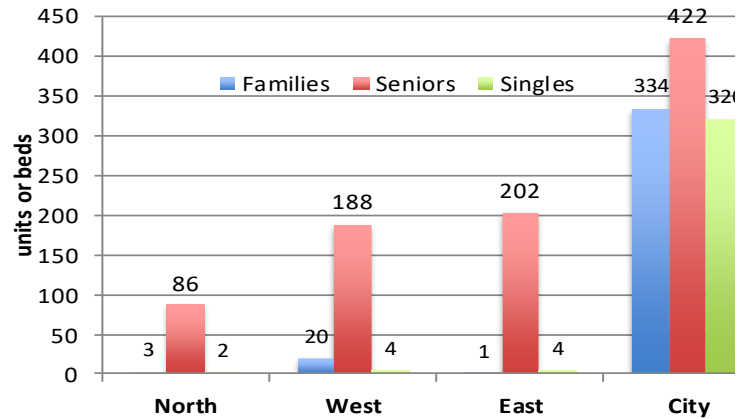
Historically the GSF had a mandate to deliver seniors housing, initially via Lodges, and subsequently through social housing. While this has evolved to encompass families, and more recently non-elderly singles, the existing stock of assisted housing is heavily skewed in favour of seniors, as shown in the top chart.⁷

Outside of the city, the existing stock is exclusively seniors⁸. In the city there is a diverse mix, including 386 rent supplement units, which is the main source of assistance to singles and families.

Some rebalancing in this assisted stock may be required by adding non senior development. This is especially true for singles in core need, many of which are between 45-64. This suggests responses targeting *singles*, regardless of age, rather than more narrowly targeting *seniors* (except where higher levels of continuing care are required). And, parents should be prioritized (although as suggested above, this can be accommodated using rent supplements or housing allowances).

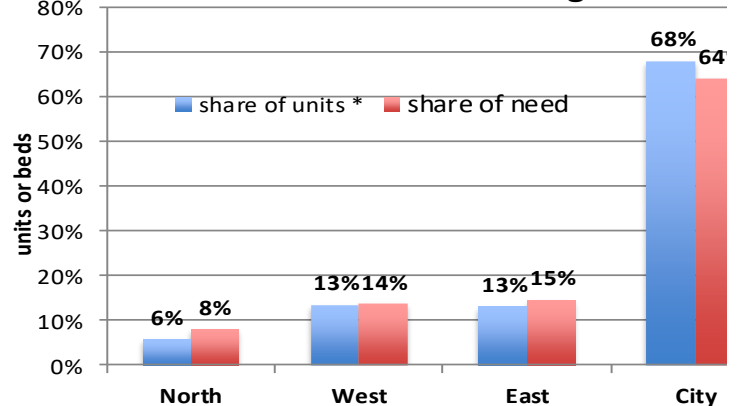
As with the comparison of household share vs. need (lower chart), here the share of units appears to over-serve the City and there is a shortfall in East and North communities.

Existing social-affordable by client type



* Excludes 371 Student single, emergency and transitional in City

Share of core need and existing units



* Excludes 371 Student single, emergency and transitional in City

⁷ These charts capture all permanent housing (lodges, social and include 386 rent supplements, mainly in the City) The counts here exclude emergency shelter beds and transitional housing for persons seeking to exit homelessness, and also exclude 371 student units, as these are not generally available other than to students.

⁸ The recently approved 92-unit facility in Spirit River is included in the North region. The lodge units are a replacement for the Pleasant View Lodge and supportive living units are not included in the non-market housing portfolio.

That said, there is a shortage across all areas, as revealed later in discussing the persisting backlog of need.⁹

The next sections highlight some key variations across each of the three rural areas and the City of Grande Prairie, drawing on charts and information presented for each of these four areas as part of the engagement process.

Detailed Core Need Data - Grande Spirit Foundation

Core Housing Need (2016) by Tenure and Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Owners and renters	560	1160	1085	735	315	3860
Owner	85	465	590	395	170	1705
Renter	475	700	500	335	155	2145

Core Housing Need (2016) by Age and Household Type						
Couple no children	40	55	210	165	70	540
Couple+children	120	300	130	0	0	550
Lone-parent	185	520	175	30	0	910
Multiple-family	0	20	10	10	0	40
One-person	145	235	505	505	245	1635
Two + non-family	60	50	60	20	10	200
Total	550	1180	1090	730	325	3875

⁹ This distribution reveals a small existing stock and underserved northern community. It is noted that funding has been awarded to Spirit River and will create 92 new beds – replacing 42 older lodge units and adding a further 50 care beds.

4.2 North Communities

This grouping encompasses the communities of Saddle Hills County, Birch Hills County, Town of Spirit River, MD of Spirit River and the Village of Rycroft (sometimes identified as the “G5”). The area accounts for 6% of the area population and 6% of all households.

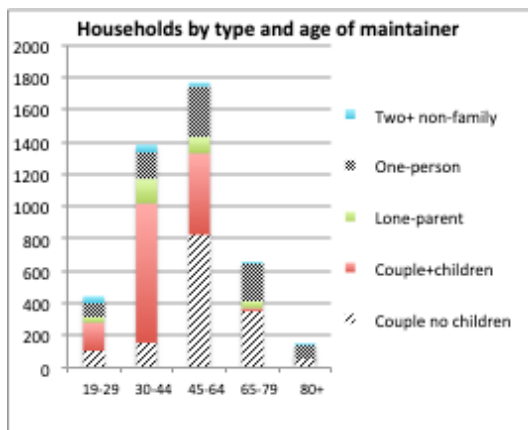
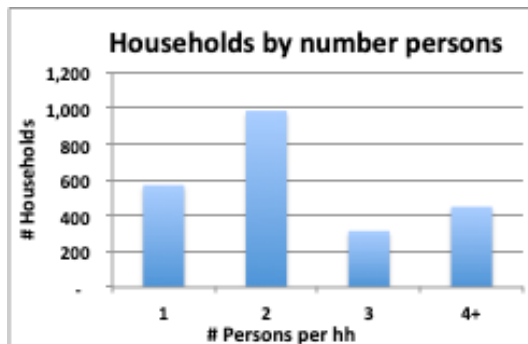
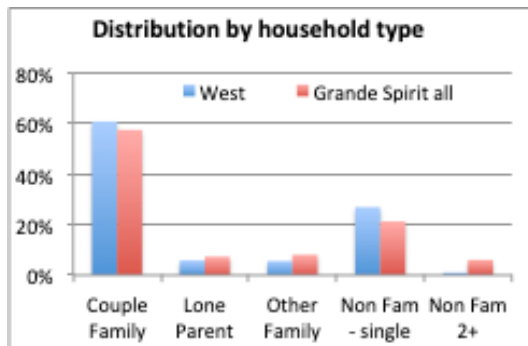
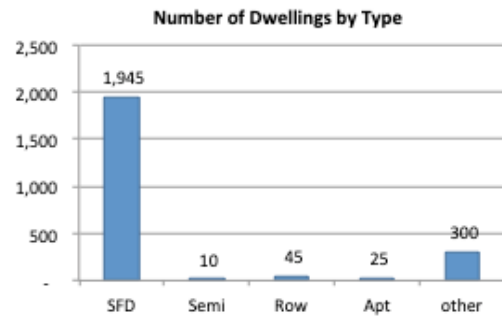
The vast majority of homes (83%) are owner-occupied single detached or mobile homes so there are few multi-unit properties, which are more often rented. Most homes are in good repair, although the proportion in need of major repair (10%) is higher than the overall GSF average (6%).

Most households are families, reflecting the predominance of detached homes. However more than half of families are couples with no children (reflected in high number of 2 person HHs, and fewer 3 and 4 person+). Single person households are over-represented (27%), compared to the larger region (21%).

A substantial number of households are middle aged (45-64) empty nesters, and ownership rates are very high, especially among the elderly – possibly reflecting lack of rental options.

Most couples with children are in the 30-64 age group and only a small number are lone parents. In the 30-44 and 45-64 age groups – couples without children and singles dominate.

Despite small number of “traditional families” single-family detached dwellings remain dominant – and also make up most of new construction. (for the county – data unavailable for the smaller communities).



Housing start data is not available for this sub-region, but the starts for the County shown earlier are likely representative – with almost all new construction in the form of detached houses.

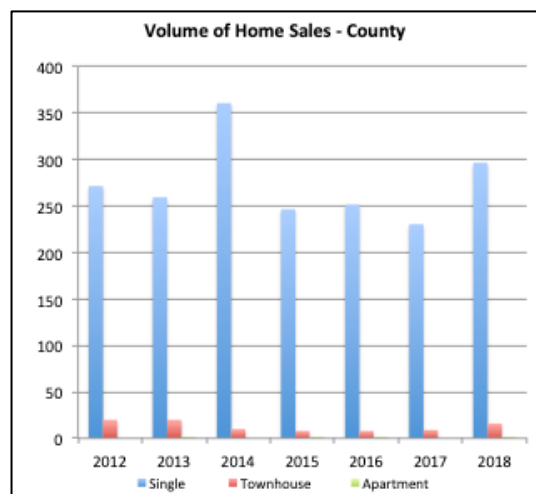
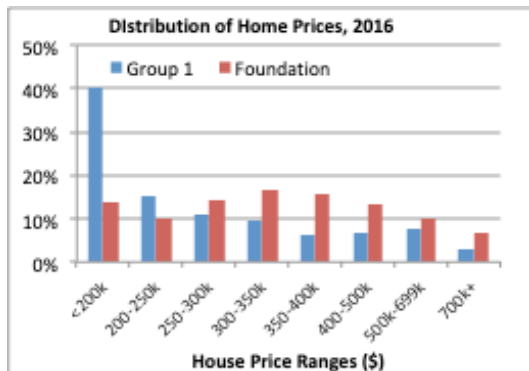
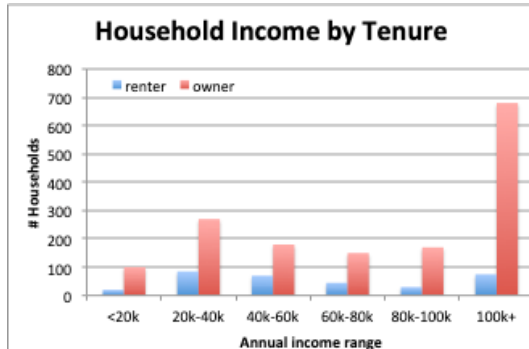
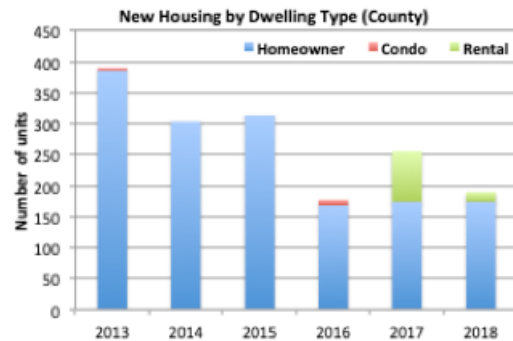
Data for incomes shows that renter incomes are much lower than owners, here the median renters is 68% of owner. This is the closest difference in Foundation - this area has higher percent of low-income households and fewer over 100k.

Reflecting generally lower owner incomes, the number of owners below \$30k is what drives predominant affordability need.

There is a good stock of lower priced homes – although this means limited equity on sale for existing owners. And there are a higher proportion of lower rent units in this area compared to across Foundation area.

And recent home sales data show that there is ongoing demand for existing homes, so the opportunity to sell exists, with average home prices in recent years softening but remaining in the \$350,000-\$400,000 range.

But as noted with few options in their local community this precludes downsizing, if they do not wish to relocate into the city.



Examining core housing need in the North

Exploring core-housing need, as defined earlier, this group accounts for 8% of need across the GSF. Need is mostly among owners (210), although the incidence of need (14%) is only half that of renters (29%).

Most in need experience and affordability problem – 64% afford only, and another 20% a combination of affordability and poor condition.

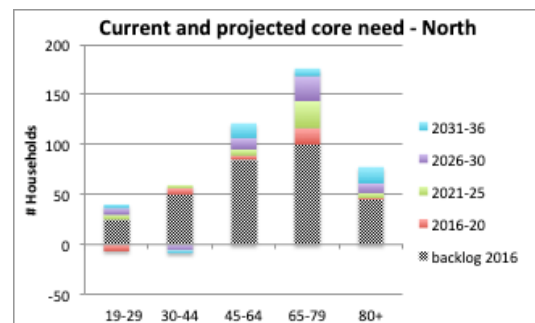
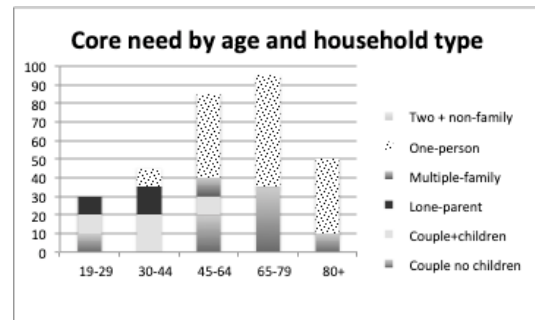
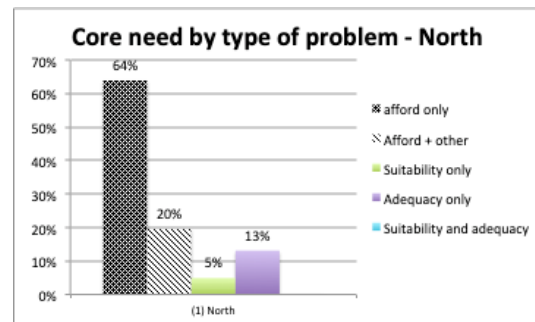
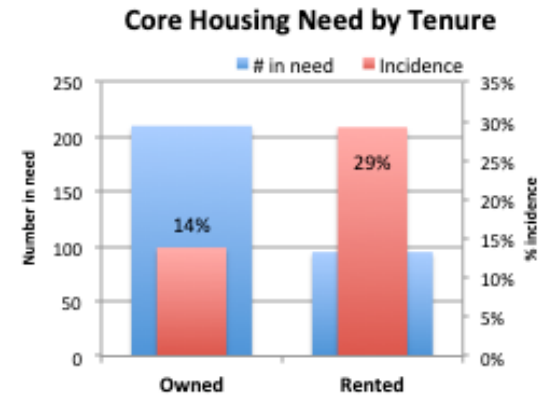
Looking at need by type of household and age we see that in the North group households in need are mainly singles (half of all need) and mainly seniors (1/3 of all need). See tables on the following page.

This need assessment for the five northern communities shows that most need is one of affordability and is experienced mainly by seniors. This suggests possible options including sale of homes to augment incomes.

But for those wishing to remain in the same community, there are currently few options. There is a need to construct smaller apartments either as rental or condo, and perhaps some potential for home-sharing approaches (adapt one home for sharing among 3-4 single seniors, who can sell their income).

Combining the existing backlog of need with projection of household growth and future need (explained in Section 7 below) reveals that most growth in the Northern communities will be in the elderly ages, over 65. Initially most growth will be in the 65-79, but this shifts after 2026 to greater growth among those over 80.

need for facilities with higher levels of seniors supportive, to enable these seniors to remain in their home community.



Detailed Core Need Data - North Communities

Core Housing Need (2016) by Tenure and Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Owners and renters	25	50	85	100	45	305
Owner	10	25	70	75	30	210
Renter	20	25	20	20	15	90
Core Housing Need (2016) by Age and Household Type						
Couple no children	10	0	20	35	10	75
Couple+children	10	20	10	0	0	40
Lone-parent	10	15	0	0	0	25
Multiple-family	0	0	10	0	0	10
One-person	0	10	45	60	40	155
Two + non-family	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	30	45	85	95	50	305
Current and projected core need, by age of household maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Backlog of need (in 2016)	25	50	85	100	45	305
Projected growth each 5 yr period						
2016-20	-7	6	4	16	1	21
2021-25	5	3	6	27	5	46
2026-30	6	-6	11	25	10	47
2031-36	4	-3	15	8	16	40
Total	8	1	36	76	33	154

4.3 West Communities

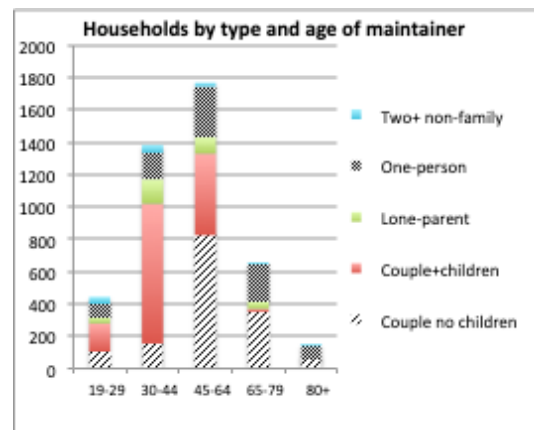
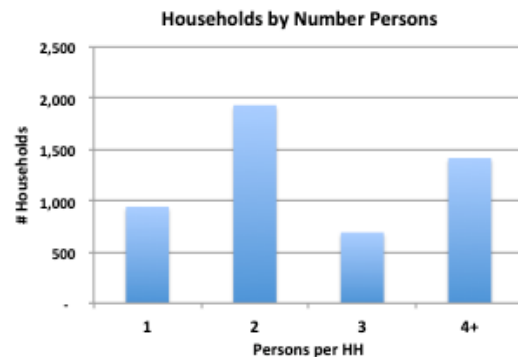
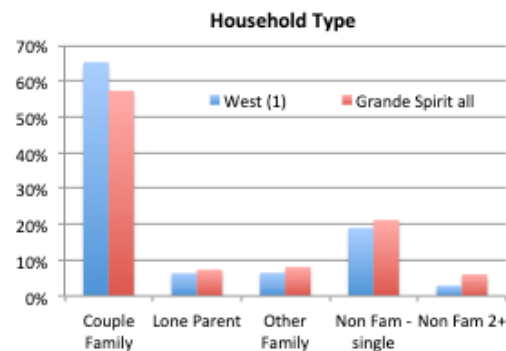
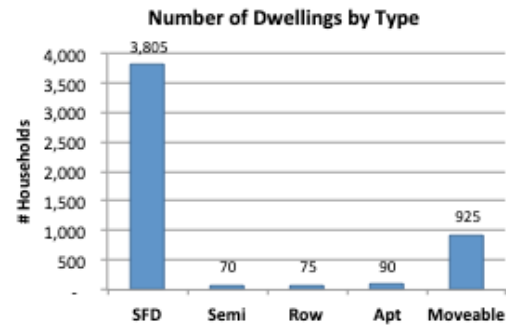
This grouping encompasses the communities Hythe, Beaverlodge, and Wembley together with the west half of the County of Grande Prairie. The area accounts for 13% of the area population and 14% of all households.

Typical of the rural areas, most dwellings are detached single-family homes and a significant number of mobile homes. And most households are owners (85%), much higher than the regional (73%) rate.

While couple families dominate, it is notable that like other rural areas, a large number are childless couples. The high number of two-person households reflects this. And together with single persons, combine to create substantial demand for smaller dwellings – which are few and far between in the existing stock.

Similar to the City, there is a diversity of household types – although there are fewer under 30. With the large number of couples, many are in the 30-64 age group: those under 45 usually with children; those over 45 mainly empty nesters. As noted earlier there are a large number of childless couples, alongside two-parent families with fewer lone-parents than in the City. Singles and non-family households are significant as well.

Against this existing stock of mainly single-family homes, the substantial number of smaller (1-2 persons) households suggest that the industry is not building to meet the demand from empty nesters and seniors that may prefer to remain in the community - there are few options to downsize.



Housing construction data is not available for the smaller communities, but the distribution of starts found in the County, as shown in section 4.2 is likely representative – mainly detached homes.

Typically, renter incomes are much lower than that of owners. Here the median renters' income is \$60,350 and well below owners who have median over 100k). That said, few households have incomes below \$30,000 per year and there are a large number of owners well over \$100,000. Those with lower income will be found in the core need count, discussed below.

With a majority of households owning their home, those deemed to be in core need are typically income poor, but asset rich, and thus have options to draw on their equity.

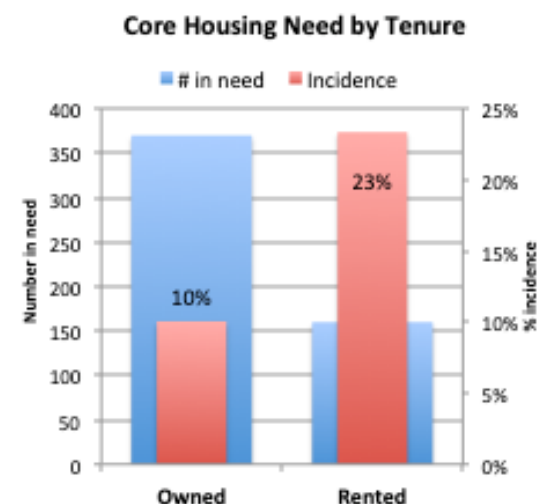
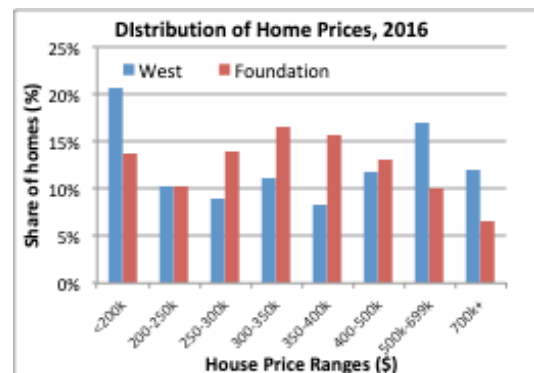
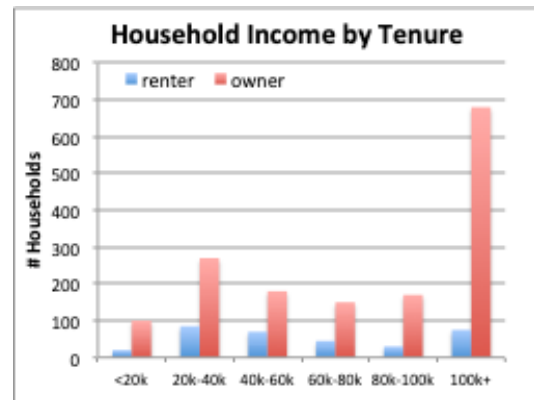
And recent home sales data show that there is ongoing demand for homes, so the opportunity to sell exists, with average home prices in recent years softening but remaining in the \$350,000-\$400,000 range.

But as noted with few options in their local community this precludes downsizing, if they do not wish to relocate into the city.

Examining core housing need in West

In total in these western communities there are just over 500 households in core need (370 owners and 160 renters).

While fewer in number, the incidence of need is much higher for renters (23%) almost one in every 4 renters; meanwhile for owners, the incidence of need is only 1 in 10.



These communities have 8% of the total core need across the Foundation area (compared to 14% of total households).

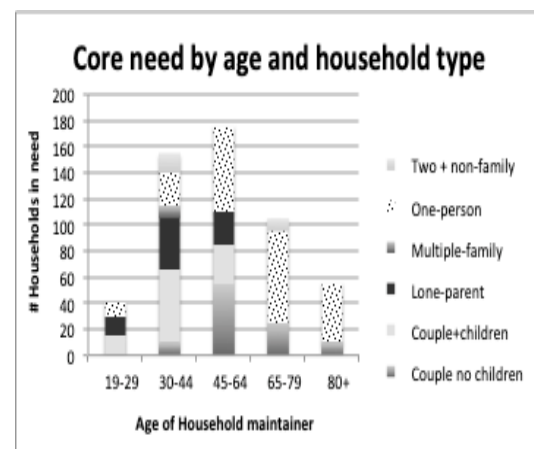
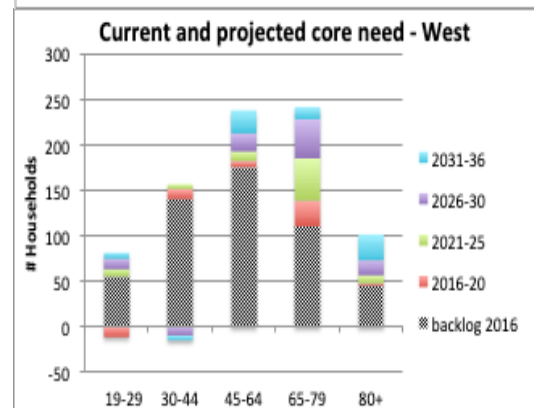
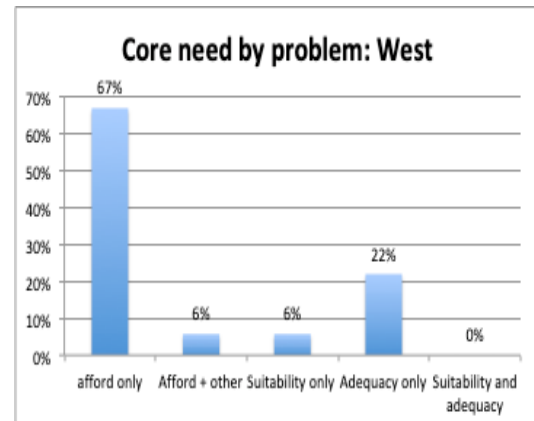
Examining the nature of need reveals the single largest problem is one of affordability: 67% of households pay over 30% while another 22% experience a combination of affordability and poor condition.

Core need is greatest among lone parents and singles (both non-elderly and seniors). As most problems are affordability (few suitability or adequacy), housing allowances are also an effective response for renters. See tables on the following page.

For owners, as noted earlier adequacy problems suggest the need for a rehabilitation program (including accessibility elements).

Combining the existing backlog of need with projection of household growth and future need (explained in Section 7 below) reveals that the backlog is greatest among singles of all ages, so there is a need to create housing options for singles – not specifically for seniors.

Projected growth in these western communities will be in ages 45-64 and seniors over 65. Initially most growth will be in the 65-79, but this shifts after 2026 to greater growth among those over 80. This implies need for facilities with higher levels of continuing care to enable these seniors to remain in their home community.



Detailed Core Need Data - West Communities

Core Housing Need (2016) by Tenure and Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Owners and renters	55	140	175	110	45	530
Owner	30	105	130	80	20	370
Renter	20	40	45	30	30	160
Core Housing Need (2016) by Age and Household Type						
Couple no children	0	10	55	25	10	100
Couple+children	15	55	30	0	0	100
Lone-parent	15	40	25	0	0	80
Multiple-family	0	10	0	0	0	10
One-person	10	25	65	70	45	215
Two + non-family	0	15	0	10	0	25
Total	40	155	175	105	55	530
Current and Projected Core Need, by Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Backlog of need (in 2016)	55	140	175	110	45	530
Projected growth each 5 yr period						
2016-20	-12	11	7	28	2	37
2021-25	8	5	11	47	9	80
2026-30	11	-10	20	43	16	80
2031-36	7	-5	25	13	28	69

4.4 East Communities

This group includes the eastern half of the GP County, MD of Greenview – West and Sexsmith. Together these communities represent 18% of population with 16.4% of households. 87% are owners, compared to 68.4% nationally and regional rate of 73%.

Like the two other rural groups, and reflecting high ownership rate, this area is dominated by single detached homes, although moveable homes are also significant. In contrast there are few multi-unit dwellings and reflecting this, few rentals.

Two-thirds of households are families, although a significant number of these are couples with no children. 41% of these families are childless couples – reflected in large number of 2 person households.

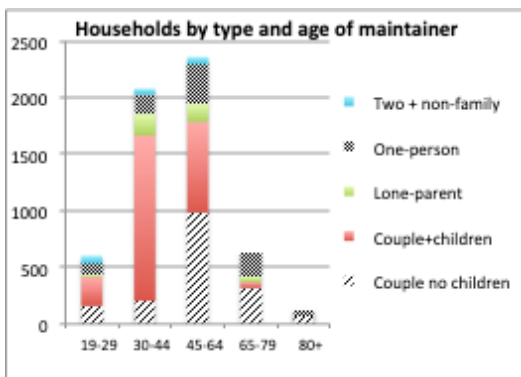
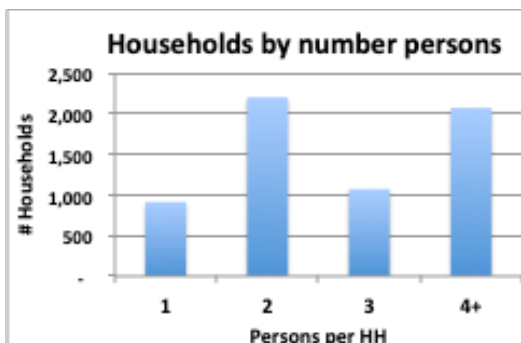
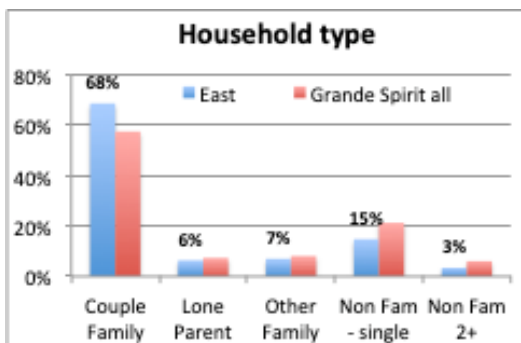
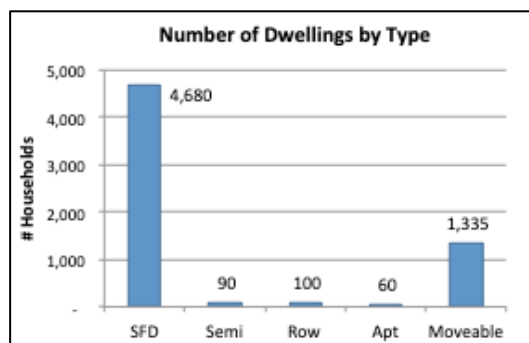
Non-family and single person households make up 18% of all households, well below the overall Foundation average (26%)

This is a fairly young set of communities – and has the highest proportion of families. The largest age group are middle aged (45-64), which will become future seniors.

Compared to other sub-regions, there are a larger proportion of families with children both in the under 45 group, as well as among households with heads aged 45-64.

Also, in comparison to the two other rural groups, there are fewer single person and lone parent families.

To a larger degree than the other areas, new housing construction more closely aligns with demand – and using County



starts as a proxy for all areas in this group (shown graphically in Section 4.2), is primarily single detached homes, with a small number of apartments (81) completed in 2017. Typically, renter incomes are much lower than owners, and here the median renters' income is \$70,850, which is highest among the three ex-urban areas. That said, renter incomes are well below those of owners (median is over \$100k). The number of renters is also the smallest across the three ex-urban areas.

Due to the relative size and dominance of the City, it heavily influences regional income distribution.

Almost 2/3 of households (mainly owners) have income over 100k, compared to 55% for overall Foundation area.

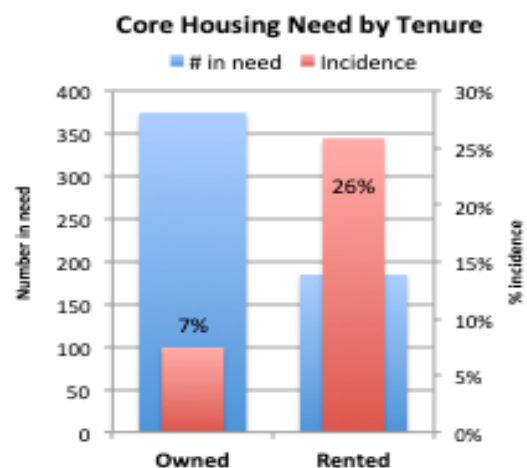
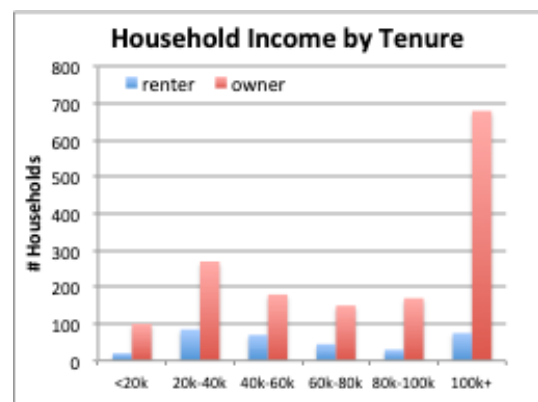
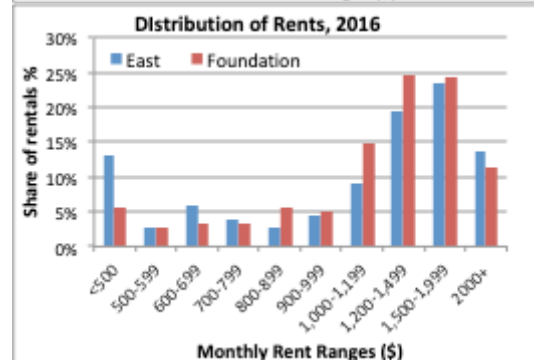
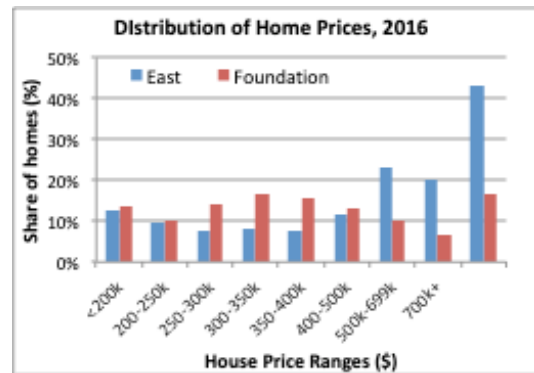
Reflecting the higher income profile of the East area, the home price distribution is skewed toward higher prices. In this area 43% of homes are values over \$500k vs. only 17% across the larger Foundation area.

Noting that the universe of rentals is quite small, the distribution of rents is bipolar – either very low (\$500/month) or over \$1,250. These higher rents are predominantly rented detached homes.

Examining core housing need in the East

Similar to other ex-urban areas, majority of core need is among owners. In this group 3 (East) there were 375 owners and 175 renters in need (2016). These communities have 15% of the total core need across the Foundation area

But incidence is much higher for renters (vs. owners) 1 in 4 renters (26%) are in need vs. 1 in every 14 owners (7%).



In terms of the nature of housing need, three quarters (73%) of households in core need experience only an affordability problem. A further 12% experience affordability combined with either suitability or poor condition). One in ten (9%) of homes have an adequacy problem (need for major repair).

Drilling further into who (which family type) are in need, we see that core need is greatest among lone parents and singles (both non-elderly and seniors) – although significant number of couple families (30-44) also stand out. See tables on the following page.

As most problems are affordability (few suitability or adequacy) housing allowances are also an effective response for renters

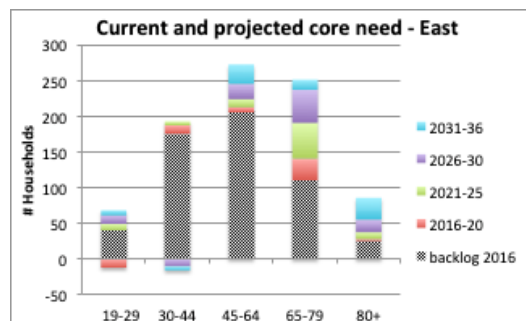
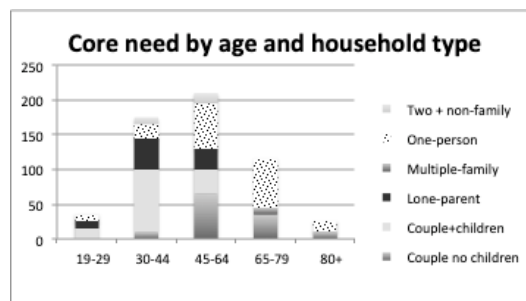
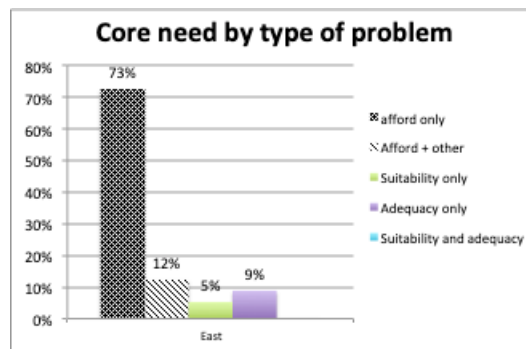
For younger owners, facing affordability – for many the degree of need may be low (pay over 30% but building asset) implying it is a choice.

And for those with adequacy problems, especially seniors, some form of renovation-rehabilitation program might help, especially if combined with retrofit to sustain independent living.

As shown in current and projected need, there is a large backlog of need, and this is spread across all ages, not just seniors. Many of those in need (2016) are non-elderly singles.

Projected growth in the eastern communities will be mainly in ages over 65. Initially most growth will be in the 65-79, but this shifts after 2026 to greater growth among those over 80.

This implies need for facilities with higher levels of continuing care, to enable these seniors to remain in their home community.



Detailed Core Need Data - East Communities						
Core Housing Need (2016) by Tenure and Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Owners and renters	40	175	205	110	25	565
Owner	10	115	165	80	10	375
Renter	30	60	45	35	20	185
Core Housing Need (2016) by Age and Household Type						
Couple no children	0	10	65	35	10	120
Couple+children	15	90	35	0	0	140
Lone-parent	10	45	30	0	0	85
Multiple-family	0	0	0	10	0	10
One-person	10	20	65	70	15	180
Two + non-family	0	10	15	0	0	25
Total	35	175	210	115	25	560
Current and Projected Core Need, by Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Backlog of need (in 2016)	40	175	205	110	25	565
Projected growth each 5 yr period						
2016-20	-12	12	7	30	3	40
2021-25	9	6	11	50	10	86
2026-30	12	-11	21	46	18	86
2031-36	7	-6	27	14	31	74
Total	16	1	67	141	60	286

4.5 City of Grande Prairie

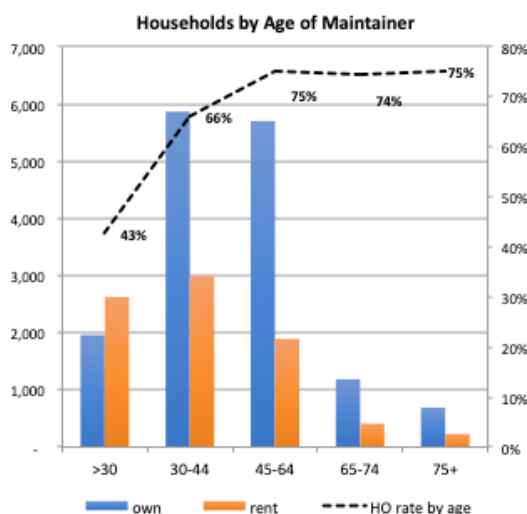
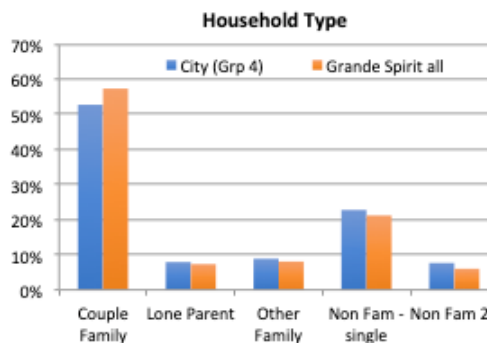
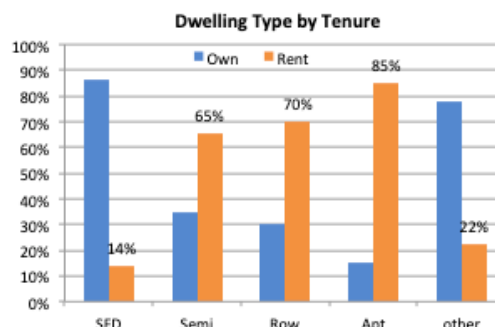
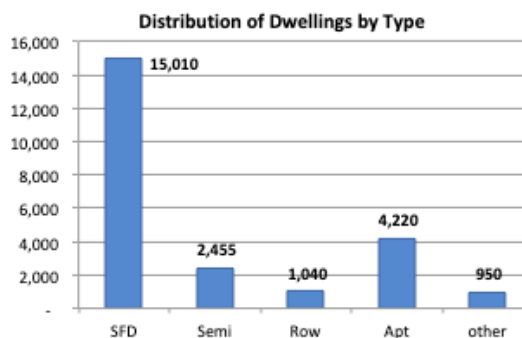
Due the large size of the city, representing two-thirds of the GSF population, it has a large influence on the overall regional profile already discussed in section 4.1.

Compared to the other 3 groups, there is a greater diversity in built form. A majority (63%) of homes are single detached homes (fewer than the 68% in whole region) and multi-unit properties are more prominent. 96% of all apartment units (and 82% of row) across region are in the City, and most multi units are rented (there are few condo units).

Reflecting the predominance of detached homes, most households are families. Half of these families are childless couples – reflected in large number of 2 person households. Non-family and single person households account for a larger proportion than in other areas and the overall GSF proportion.

Most households are middle aged (30-64) and the majority are homeowners.

The homeownership rate among 30-44-year-old's is quite low, compared to national average (58%) and the rest of the region (83%). This implies a more temporary, economically transient population, especially compared to the three rural areas.



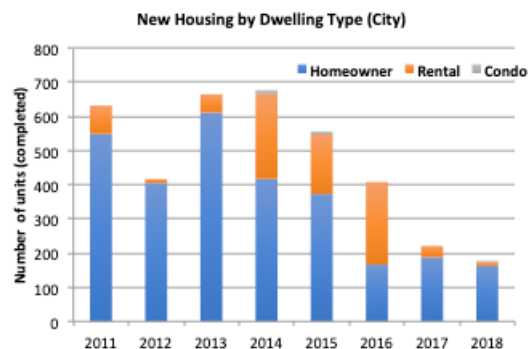
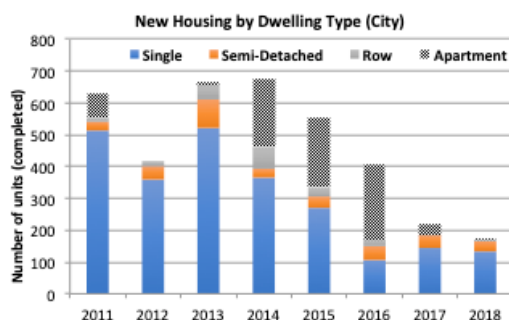
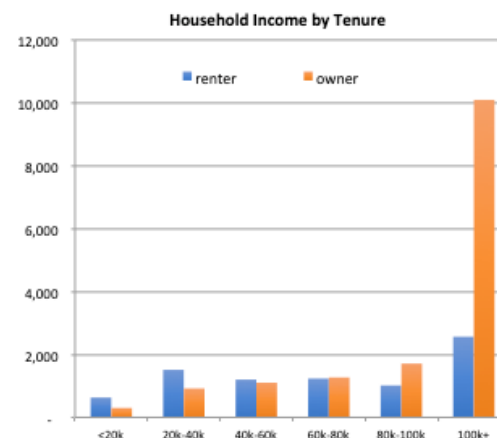
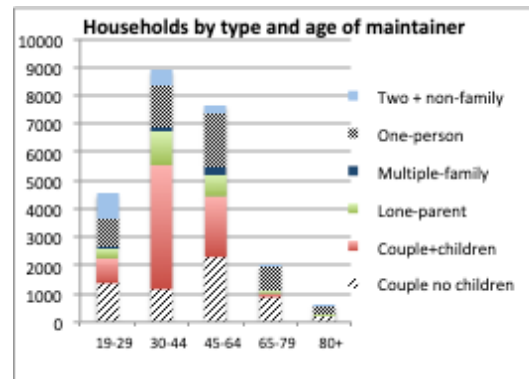
Across all ages – there is a rich diversity of household types – more so than outside the urban boundary. City households are generally younger than the rest of the region.

Singles and non-family households as well as lone parents are significant. Today's older lone parents may become tomorrow's low-income single seniors.

And again, due to the relative size and dominance of the City, it heavily dominates the regional income distribution. There are many more renters with income under \$30k and this drives renter affordability need. Meanwhile, more than half of the households (mainly owners) have income over 100k.

Compared to the other areas, the new homes being constructed include a broader range and more multi unit forms, appropriate for smaller households and renters. Reflecting the economic slowdown, since 2015 new home construction has slowed considerably (charts show completed homes, not starts). And there was a notable shift toward more multi unit apartment development – responding to renter demand, but very few condominiums.

Another feature of a cyclical economy is a high variation in rental vacancy rates. In the last five years these have vacillated from a low of 1.2% (2014) to 22% in 2016. – influenced by variable migration (economic cycles) as well as impact of new construction (rental completions 2014-16). It has since declined to 3.6% (2018).



Core housing in the City

As noted in the regional overview, housing need in the city is opposite that in the other three areas – mainly renters. In total there are almost 2,500 households in core need (750 owners and 1,700 renters). Two-thirds of renters need and just under half of owner need across GSF is in the city.

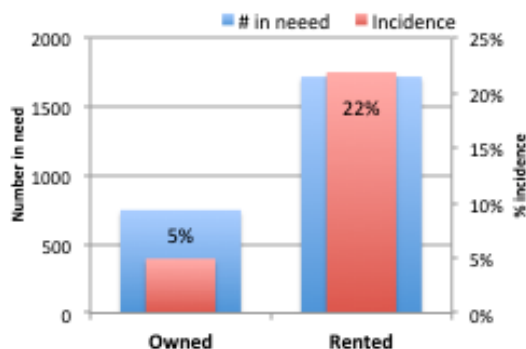
In addition to need being more skewed to renters, the incidence of need is also much higher for renters – one in every five renter households (22%) is in need. This compares to only one in every 20 owners (5%).

As in other areas, the primary issue is affordability and this is even more dominant in the City. 83% of households experience an affordability only problem, while another 9% experience affordability plus either suitability or condition, so a total of 92% face affordability challenges. The percent of households living in homes in need of major repair (4%) or overcrowded (3%) are low.

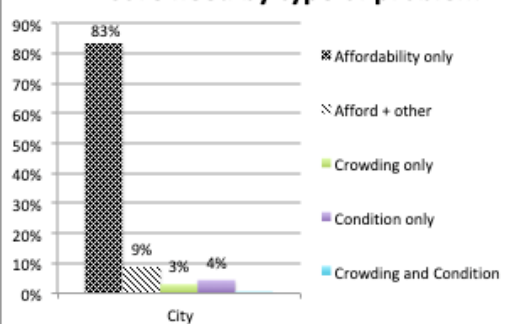
Current core need is greatest among younger households (mainly renters) and most prominent among lone parents and singles (both non-elderly and seniors). As problems are affordability (few suitability or adequacy) housing allowances can be an effective response. See tables on the following page.

Projecting to the future growth in need will be mainly among those over 65, initially in the 65-79 age but gradually shifting more into the over 80 group.

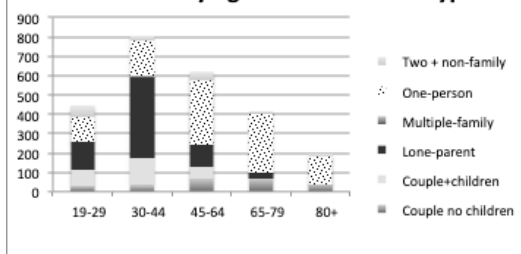
Core Housing Need by Tenure



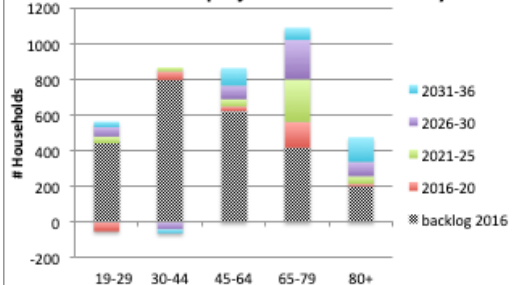
Core need by type of problem



Core need by age and household type



Current and projected core need - City



Detailed Core Need Data - City of Grande Prairie

Core Housing Need (2016) by Tenure and Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Owners and renters	440	795	620	415	200	2,460
Owner	35	220	225	160	110	750
Renter	405	575	390	250	90	1,710
Core Housing Need (2016) by Age and Household Type						
Couple no children	30	35	70	70	40	245
Couple+children	80	135	55	0	0	270
Lone-parent	150	420	120	30	0	720
Multiple-family	0	10	0	0	0	10
One-person	125	180	330	305	145	1,085
Two + non-family	60	25	45	10	10	150
Total	445	805	620	415	195	2,480
Current and Projected Core Need, by Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Backlog of need (in 2016)	440	795	620	415	200	2,460
Projected growth each 5 yr period						
2016-20	-54	47	26	145	12	176
2021-25	38	23	41	239	43	384
2026-30	52	-42	76	220	80	386
2031-36	31	-22	98	69	138	314
Total	67	6	241	672	273	1,259

4.6 Indigenous Need

Another aspect of need is the disproportionately high incidence of indigenous persons and households both in the homelessness population and in core need.

Reviewing the core need data (which excludes any on-reserve First nations), the data show that Aboriginal households (as self identified in the Census) make up 12% of the households across the region; but account for 16% of core need.

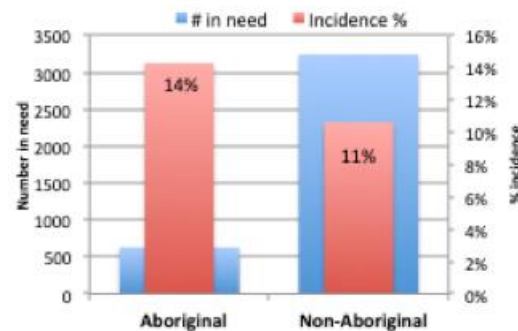
The incidence of core need among Aboriginal households is also disproportionate. Even though total households in need count 630, this represents 14% of all Aboriginal households (compared to incidence of 11% in the Non-Aboriginal population).

Three-quarters of Aboriginal core housing need is in the City, where those in need are mainly renters. As is case with non-Aboriginal, in the three rural groups, most Aboriginal need is among owners.

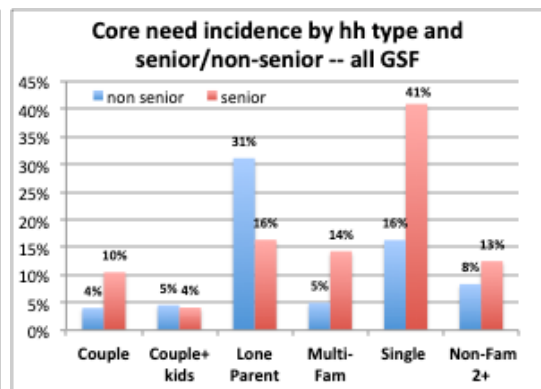
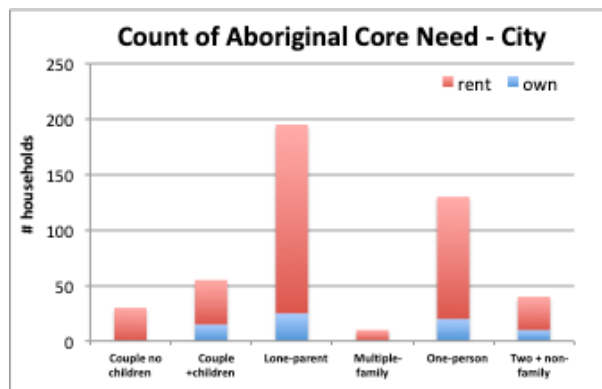
And, also similar to non-Aboriginal urban renters, among the Aboriginal households in need, the household types most impacted are lone parents and singles. These two types make up the largest in number and also experience the highest incidence of need.

A critical challenge in addressing this disproportionate level of indigenous need is the absence of indigenous housing provider in the region.

Aboriginal Core Housing Need



**Aboriginal core need
mainly in City, mainly renters**



4.7 Homelessness

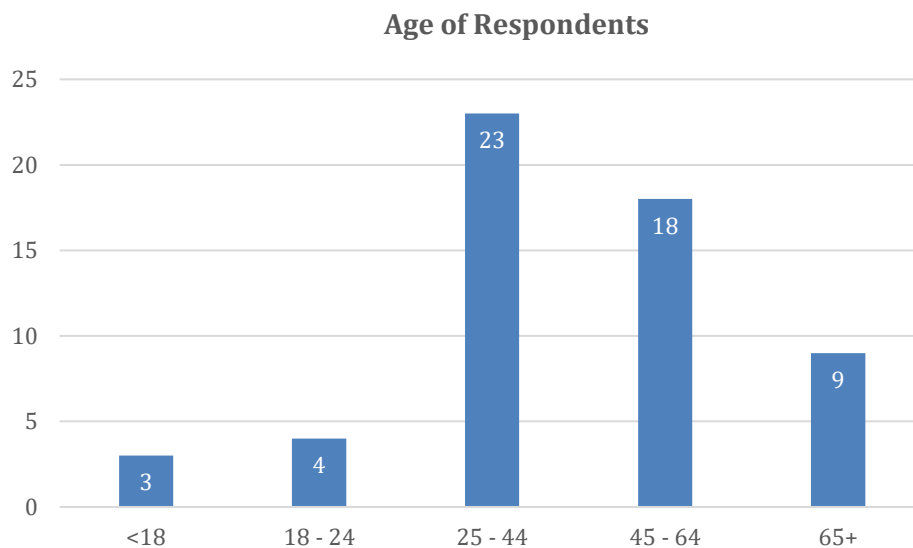
Over the past decade many cities have adopted the practice of a point-in-time count to enumerate homelessness. This complements data collected through shelter admissions. This methodology does not however fit the more elusive nature of rural homelessness. A separate approach is therefore used to assess rural homelessness. This is discussed first, followed by an overview of homelessness in the City.

Rural communities

In a 2018 pilot the Alberta Rural Development Network, in partnership with the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA) undertook a different approach in order to develop estimates of rural homelessness. This involved a survey of various social service agencies in and around the County of Grande Prairie.

Homelessness in the rural communities is not your typical street-engaged individuals or people that are sleeping rough. It's more people that are at risk of losing their housing due to overdue bills or not being able to have the economic status to be able to pay their rent. In some cases, youth homelessness is represented by a more itinerant lifestyle bouncing between friends or relatives, often labelled "couch surfing"

For this reason, rather than conducting a point in time count, an ongoing survey methodology, extending over a full month was used in 2018 as a way to enumerate this more elusive form of homelessness in the rural areas. From a total of 71 survey respondents, 57 people reported that they felt that they could easily lose their housing or that they were uncertain whether their housing situation was stable. Most (72%) were between the ages of 25 and 64.



- The majority of respondents who identified as housing-unstable were born in Canada (93%), identified as Caucasian (56%), and had resided in the County of Grande Prairie area for more than a year (56%);
- 32% of respondents who were housing-unstable (n=56) were employed;¹⁰
- The most common support services needed by all survey respondents (both stably and unstably housed) were “Basic Needs (such as food, shelter, medical, shower, laundry services)”, “Support Services (accessing government programs, accessing technology)”, and “Financial Support.”

The only housing assistance available for this population is a fund provided by the United Way that can be used to help families facing eviction due to rental arrears. They can also help with damage deposits to help someone access housing. The downside is the fund is only \$20,000 annually so it has to be spent very carefully to stretch it as far as possible.

In situations where an individual is homeless, the only housing options are emergency shelter spaces and transitional housing units, all of which are located in Grande Prairie, which results in migration into the City and its shelter system.

Grand Prairie

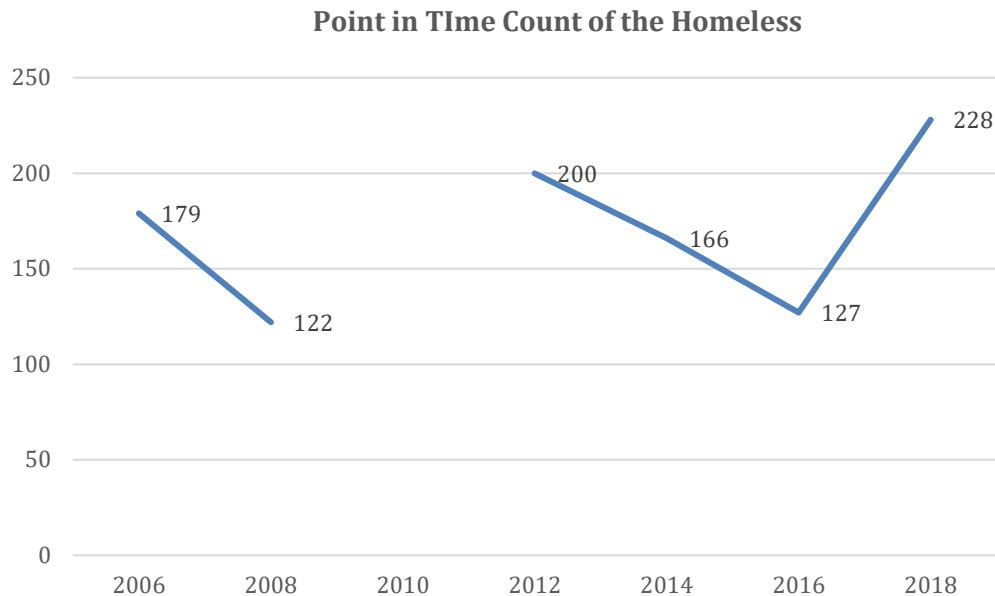
The City of Grande Prairie has been actively involved in addressing homelessness through a number of initiatives over the past 10 years. The City adopted an Affordable Housing Master Plan in 2011 to help guide key decisions to increase affordable housing in Grande Prairie. The City also developed and implemented a Multi-Year (2011) and Five-Year Plan to End Homelessness (2015-2019). The result has been the creation of several programs and initiatives to help address individual and family homelessness.

The City of Grande Prairie supports local Housing First and prevention programs with funding from Alberta Community and Social Services and the Government of Canada’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Between 2009 and 2018, 1,255 people have gained stable housing in Grande Prairie through Housing First programs.

A key part of the homeless serving system used to monitor progress in addressing homelessness is the Point in Time Count of the homeless.

While the impact of these various initiatives can be seen in some of the downward trends in the overall counts, the results from the 2018 count recorded the highest number of homeless since the counts started in 2006 (see graph and numbers below). This represents an increase of 101 people or 80% from just 2 years ago in 2016.

¹⁰ County of Grande Prairie Community Report May 2019 (ARDN)



While the reasons for the increasing numbers of homeless are varied, the trend is similar to other urban centers in Alberta, although Grande Prairie and Lethbridge experienced the largest increases.

One of the leading factors has been the lack of new affordable housing development over the past 4 or 5 years, and this is especially true for Grande Prairie. The City's Five-Year Plan to End Homelessness (2015-2019) called for the creation of 550 affordable housing units, including 75 permanent supportive housing units.

However, only 275 new affordable housing units were created, or about 50% of the planned development. No permanent supportive housing units were created. The result is a shortfall in the supply of affordable housing units in Grande Prairie, the results of which are felt most acutely by lowest income households, including the homeless.

Demographics

Some of the key demographics from the City 2018 homeless count are:

- 63% were male and 37% were female
- Adults age 25 - 44 comprised 48% and youth comprised 22% of the population
- 44% identified as Aboriginal compared to 10% of the population
- 9 families were staying at an emergency shelter for women and 11 couples without children were being sponsored at hotels/motels.

While continuation of the Housing First with the goal of providing more affordable housing units will continue, it has become obvious that, in addition to the housing, intensive case management with around the clock supervision is one of the solutions.

And that is why the creation of a permanent supportive housing for those with chronic mental health and addictions continues to be a top priority in Grande Prairie.

The disproportionately high presence of aboriginal people in the homeless population requires housing that is culturally sensitive and supportive of the community – ideally delivered by or in partnership with Indigenous service agencies.

4.8 Special Needs Housing

There is limited information on the number of people with special needs who require supportive and affordable housing. Accordingly, provincial disability caseload data is used to illustrate the size of the issue and then the same ratio is applied to the GSF region, which represented 2.5% of the population of Alberta (101,782/4,067,000) in 2016.

Two key sources of caseload data are used to estimate the need for supported subsidized housing: Persons with Developmental Disabilities and Assured Income for the Severely Disabled.

Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)

- There are currently 3,497 overnight residences across Alberta for people with developmental disabilities (2016) and 209 are located in the northwest. Based on the population share (2.5%), the GSF region should have 87 of them.
- Caseload data on PDD shows that the caseload has grown by over 3% on average since 2012. About one-third of the caseload, on average, live in an overnight staffed residence.
- This translates in a need for 111 new overnight staffed residence every year in Alberta. However, the number of overnight staffed residence has only grown by 1.6% province-wide or 52 new overnight staffed residences annually, less than half of what may have been required.
- The Northwest Region has been growing at about 13 units annually between 2011/12 and 2015/16 or 8.5% annually. Comparatively, the number of overnight staffed residence in the Northwest has grown faster than any other region in Alberta.
- The need for number of new overnight staffed residences in the Northwest will continue to grow by about 3 units annually.

Caseload for Persons with Developmental Disabilities, 2011-2016.

	2011/2012	2015/2016	Average Annual Growth
Alberta Caseload	9,688	11,020	333
% Change			3.4%
Overnight Staffed Residences	3,292	3,497	52
Northwest	156	209	13
Northeast	212	19	-48
Edmonton	1,299	1,473	44
Central	686	716	8
Calgary	374	455	20
South	338	390	13
North Central	227	235	2

Source: Alberta Community and Social Services

Assured Income for the Severely Disabled (AISH)

- The AISH caseload was 54,634 in 2016 and has been growing by 5% per year for the past five years. This translates into approximately 2,503 new people entering the AISH program in 2016.
- Many AISH clients do not require immediate housing assistance. For example, some live at home with their parents, and others are already housed. Previous experience suggests that 5- 10% of AISH clients will require long-term supportive subsidized housing.
- Using the caseload volume and housing needs as a benchmark, GSF region should have about 1,366 individuals who receive AISH and between 68 - 132 of them who require supportive/affordable housing units to address their needs.
- The table below shows the AISH caseload and growth by region over the past year across its five administrative regions. This translates into a need and demand for between 3 - 6 permanent supportive housing spaces annually ($2,503 \times 0.025 \times 0.05$) in the GSF region.

AISH Caseload by Region, 2015-2016

	Aug 2015	Aug 2016	Change	
			#	%
North	6,116	6,474	358	5.9%
Edmonton	18,369	19,044	675	3.7%
Central	7,582	7,897	315	4.2%
Calgary	14,329	15,127	789	5.6%
South	5,735	6,092	357	6.2%
Total	52,131	54,634	2,503	4.8%

Source: Alberta Community and Social Services

General Comments:

- It appears that the northwest has experienced above average growth in the number of new overnight staffed residence for PDD individuals.
- It is unclear whether the same can be said about AISH recipients. There is likely a shortage of overnight staff residents for AISH recipients and due their pension amount, they cannot afford market rental housing. Many cannot live independently without ongoing supports and services which adds to their cost of living.
- Low income households with special needs should be included in the core housing needs data (e.g. Canada Census)
- The number of households with special needs will continue to increase by 6 - 9 annually in the foreseeable future.

5 Community and Stakeholder Engagement Highlights

We engaged with the Grande Spirit Foundation region in two ways: informing community members and the public about the housing needs assessment, and; consulting directly with housing stakeholders through face to face meetings.

Informing

- Town Hall meetings were held in each of the four geographic areas. Posters were distributed via social media, municipal websites and email advertising the time, date and location of the public events
- A PowerPoint presentation was delivered to explain the project, show key findings from the data analysis and set the context for discussion. A variety of housing and other related issues were raised and discussed by the participants. Attendance ranged from about 10 to over 50 individuals.

Consulting

- Key housing stakeholders were identified and invited to five different face to face meetings – one in each of the four geographic areas and one with the Indigenous community. This included local staff and elected officials, representatives from Family and Community Services, and some housing/care providers. A presentation was also made to the Inter-Municipal Group of elected and senior officials. And a separate session was held with Indigenous service organizations.
- Similarly, a PowerPoint presentation was delivered to explain the project, show key findings from the data analysis and set the context for discussion. Attendance ranged from about 8 to 25 individuals.

The engagement sessions will also inform overall strategic priorities and immediate housing needs for the Grande Spirit Foundation and support the development of its future strategic plans and business cases. The sessions with the aboriginal communities were also intended as the beginning of an on-going dialogue to work together to address the housing issues for all in the region.

Following is the schedule of community and housing stakeholder meetings held in mid October in the Grande Spirit Foundation communities.

5.1 Key Issues and Priorities Identified

The key issues and priorities raised at the engagement sessions are summarized below;

- Lack of housing options in the region – mainly in rural communities

- Seniors want options that allow them to remain in their home communities (rural)
- Limited rental housing stock impacts low income households
- Need multi-level supportive living facility
- Need more FCSS supports in rural areas
- Need more affordable housing and day care for single parents
- Need more family housing
- AHS hospital discharging policy downloading health care costs onto lodges
- Older lodges need upgrading or replacing
- Opportunities to partner with Industry to provide housing for higher income rural seniors
- Need permanent supportive housing (PSH) in Grande Prairie
- Municipal taxation issue for non-market housing
- Lack of accessible housing
- Need more emergency and transitional housing for the homeless
- Need more fully adapted suites
- Need renovation program
- Need supportive housing for people with special needs

Issues Identify by and about the Indigenous community in Grande Prairie

- Challenges Accessing Housing due to discrimination
- Parkside Inn Tenants eviction hurting the Indigenous community
- Student Housing (GPRC) only temporary
- Need another Elders Caring Shelter in Grande Prairie
- Need rooming house and transitional housing in Grande Prairie
- Coordination and cooperation between housing agencies and Indigenous organizations is required

An explanation and discussion of each issue is contained in Appendix 1 of the report.

6 Summary, Implications and Conclusions

6.1 Summary of outstanding need (2016)

As a way to quantify need, the following table presents total core housing counts, for each of the four groups and by tenure. This excludes homelessness and special needs.

Summary of core housing need across the Grande Prairie region (2016)					
	North (G5)	West	East	City	Totals
Owners	210	370	375	750	1,705
Renters	95	160	185	1,720	2,165
Total	305	530	560	2,470	3,870

As suggested earlier it is important to note that not all those identified here as in core housing need will in fact seek assistance.

And equally important, not all those in need require the construction of new affordable housing, especially the large majority facing only an affordability problem. Complementary options, including rehabilitation (rural owners); housing allowances (mainly for renters) as well as potential market supply initiatives can be effective in addressing this backlog.

In addition, the National Housing Strategy (2017) sets out a goal of reducing the severity of need for 50% of those in need in 2011 (nationally 530,000 households). Given that most of the funding resources over the next decade will come via either unilateral federal or cost shared federal-provincial programs funded under the NHS, it may be appropriate to establish a parallel goal across the region (this implicates a wider set of stakeholders and providers beyond the Grand Spirit Foundation. This would mean assisting an additional 200 households annually for each of the next 10 years, for a total of 2,000 assisted by 2030.

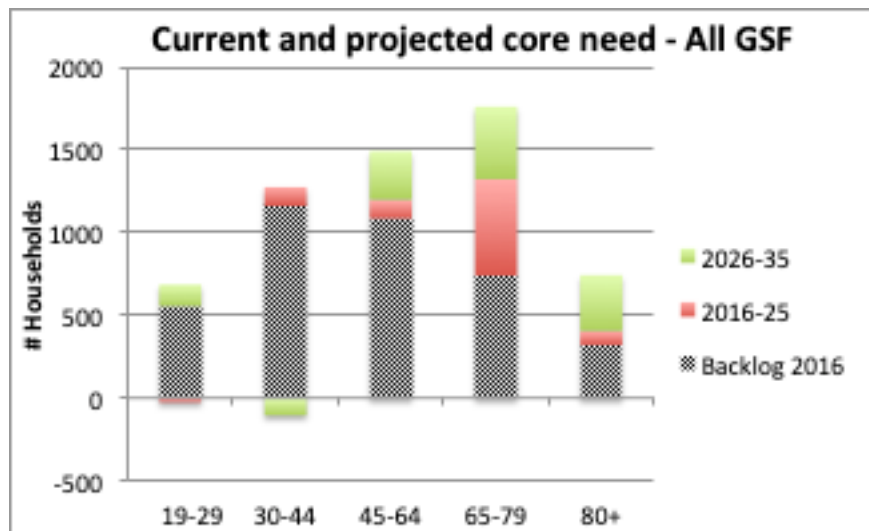
6.2 Looking to the future

The needs data presented above is based on the 2016 Census. As discussed in the 4 sub-regional summaries, this quantifies a backlog of unmet need that includes a diverse range of household types, age groups and tenures (mainly owners in the three rural areas; renters in the City). In total some 3,900 households were estimated to be in core housing need in 2016.

Responding to, and reducing, this backlog is an important challenge – and may be assisted with a number of new funding streams under the National Housing Strategy (both Fed-Prov cost shared, delivered by the Province; and unilateral federal programs). In addition, well-designed market interventions, especially in the three rural areas can also help to indirectly remove some households from core need.

But inevitably as the population continues to grow, this will include additional households in need.

An estimate of future growth has been determined by drawing of population projections prepared by the Province for 2016-36.¹¹ A base projection was used to first generate an estimate of household growth, and from this using the 2016 incidence rates of core need, by age the number of potential new core need households is estimated.



The projection shows that over the current decade (2016-25) the greatest growth will be in households age 65-79; in the subsequent decade (2026-35, growth will be more broadly spread across the three older groupings (45-64, 65-79, and 80 and over). This will increase requirements for seniors housing and as these populations move into the older (80+) group for various levels of assisted living and care.

Similar data by 5-year increments was previously presented for each of the 4 sub-regional groups. See the table on the following for more details.

¹¹ Alberta Population Projections, 2019-2046 - Alberta, Census Divisions and Economic Regions - Data Tables. The population projection for the slightly larger Census Division 19 was used, and prorated to reflect the 2016 population of the GSF service area. In developing the projections of core need, the "low" projection was used, as this appears more realistic on expected recovery in the local economy and return to inter- and intra-provincial migration, which is the largest determinant of growth.

Detailed Core Need Data - Grande Spirit Foundation						
Core Housing Need (2016) by Tenure and Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Owners and renters	560	1160	1085	735	315	3860
Owner	85	465	590	395	170	1705
Renter	475	700	500	335	155	2145
Core Housing Need (2016) by Age and Household Type						
Couple no children	40	55	210	165	70	540
Couple+children	120	300	130	0	0	550
Lone-parent	185	520	175	30	0	910
Multiple-family	0	20	10	10	0	40
One-person	145	235	505	505	245	1635
Two + non-family	60	50	60	20	10	200
Total	550	1180	1090	730	325	3875
Current and Projected Core Need, by Age of Household Maintainer						
	19-29	30-44	45-64	65-79	80+	Total
Backlog of need (in 2016)	560	1160	1085	735	315	3860
Projected growth each 5 yr period						
2016-20	-85	76	44	220	18	273
2021-25	60	37	69	362	67	596
2026-30	82	-69	128	334	124	599
2031-36	49	-36	166	104	213	497
Total	105	9	407	1020	423	1965

Data Collection and Maintenance Strategy

The sub-regional approach and subsequent geo-coding of the sub-regions used in the 2019 Regional Housing Needs Assessment proved to be a useful way to assess housing need and demand across the GSF region.

Now that the GSF geography is geo-coded, the data can be collected from the Canada Census every 5 years and used to update the need assessment. This will enable a consistent data method for comparability and evaluation over time and reporting periods and help inform housing decision making in the Grande Spirit Foundation region. The data specifications are detailed and can be used again to make the custom data request in 2023 for the 2021 Canada Census (there is a lag of about 18 months after the Census (May 2021) before the relevant data sets are made available).

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Grande Spirit Foundation adopt a data collection and maintenance strategy that:

- Supports the sub-regional approach and geographies used in the 2019 Regional Housing Needs Assessment, and;
- Continues using the same data specifications to custom order data for future Canada censuses and build a consistent set of data over time to enable meaningful trend comparisons and analysis.

7 Appendices:

Appendix 1: Stakeholder and Community Engagement Summary

We engaged with the Grande Spirit Foundation region in two ways: informing community members and the public about the housing needs assessment, and; consulting directly with housing stakeholders through face to face meetings.

Informing

- Town Hall meetings were held in each of the four geographic areas. Posters were distributed via social media, municipal websites and email advertising the time, date and location of the public events
- A PowerPoint presentation was delivered to explain the project, show key findings from the data analysis and set the context for discussion. A variety of housing and other related issues were raised and discussed by the participants. Attendance ranged from about 10 to over 50 individuals.

Consulting

- Key housing stakeholders were identified and invited to five different face to face meetings – one in each of the four geographic areas and one with the Indigenous community. This included local staff and elected officials, representatives from Family and Community Services, and some housing/care providers. A presentation was also made to the Inter-Municipal Group of elected and senior officials. And a separate session was held with Indigenous service organizations.
- Similarly, a PowerPoint presentation was delivered to explain the project, show key findings from the data analysis and set the context for discussion. Attendance ranged from about 10 to 25 individuals.

The engagement sessions will also inform overall strategic priorities and immediate housing needs for the Grande Spirit Foundation and support the development of its future strategic plans and business cases. The sessions with the aboriginal communities were also intended as the beginning of an on-going dialogue to work together to address the housing issues for all in the region.

Following is the schedule of community and housing stakeholder meetings held in mid October in the Grande Spirit Foundation communities.

October 15

East Group (3) in Clairmont - MD of Greenview (NW), Sexsmith, Grande Prairie County East

Municipal Administration, local agencies, private sector

North Group (1) in Spirit River - Saddle Hills County, Birch Hills County, Town of Spirit River, MD of Spirit River, Village of Rycroft

Municipal Administration, Local agencies, private sector

North Group (1) in Spirit River - Saddle Hills County, Birch Hills County, Town of Spirit River, MD of Spirit River, Village of Rycroft

Town Hall Meeting

October 16

Indigenous Group Meeting in Grande Prairie

Agencies and Organizations

East Group (3) in Clairmont - MD of Greenview (NW), Sexsmith, Grande Prairie County East

Town Hall Meeting

Inter-Municipal Meeting in Grande Prairie

All Municipal Councils and CAOs except the G5

October 17

City Group (4) in Grande Prairie

Municipal Administration, local agencies, private sector

City Group (4) in Grande Prairie

Town Hall Meeting

West Group (2) in Beaverlodge - Wembley, Beaverlodge, Hythe, Grande Prairie County West

Municipal Administration, local agencies, private sector

West Group (2) in Beaverlodge - Wembley, Beaverlodge, Hythe, Grande Prairie County West

Town Hall Meeting

November 4

Alberta Seniors and Housing and Alberta Health in Edmonton

November 13

CMHC in Edmonton

Key Issues and Priorities

Key issues and priorities raised at the engagement sessions are summarized below;

○ **Lack of Housing Options in the Region - Rural**

There is a shortage of housing options, including a shortage of smaller rental units for one and two person households across the region. The issue is most acute in the rural communities - many of the households can afford market rates but there is nothing available. This makes it difficult to attract younger people to these communities because they usually want to rent for a while to get a feel for the community before making the commitment to buy.

In the case of **seniors, most want to stay in or near their home communities**, but have very limited housing options available for them to downsize. Nearly all of them are homeowners and have some equity in their homes but there are no options for downsizing. This suggests there is an opportunity for homebuilders to address the demand for smaller ownership units for seniors.

- Build smaller projects for seniors in rural areas - more economical to provide home care and home support staffing.
- 2-bedroom units for couple seniors
- Need to be creative in smaller communities to ensure long term sustainability
 - mixed-income (market and non-market)
 - mixed tenants (families and seniors)
 - mixed use (commercial)

Another aspect to seniors (and anyone requiring continuing care) remaining in or near their home community is the impact of the single point of entry operated by AHS. Anyone requiring continuing care is put on a “waiting list” and must take the first available unit within 80 km. This policy is particularly hard on seniors when it causes a couple to be separated by not only a building but also a significant distance, making it difficult or impossible to visit each other.

○ **Limited Rental Housing Stock Impacts Low Income Households**

There is limited supply of purpose-built traditional rental housing (e.g. apartments, row housing). The main type of rental options are single family homes and mobiles in the rural areas. As a result, many renters are forced to rent a larger home than they may want and pay more for utilities, especially in the winter.

Some families and seniors in the region are low-income and can only afford rent that is a portion of a very limited and often fixed income. The lack of one-bedroom purpose built rental units makes the average rent unaffordable. There was strong support for mixed-income projects to help subsidize the cost for lower income families and seniors. It would also provide much needed traditional one-

bedroom market apartments for higher income households, including seniors who want to transition out of their family home into a smaller unit that meets their needs.

- **Need multi-level supportive living facility**

The number of households 80 years and older will continue to grow over the next 20 years. Grande Spirit Foundation and Alberta Health Services need to collaborate on building more continuing care facilities (independent living to SL4D). Non seniors who require supportive living also require these facilities. A combination of market and non-market units are required.

- **Need more FCSS supports in rural areas**

FCSS provides a variety of supports for individuals and families but is struggling with the increasing caseload. Many residents are not aware of the resources that are available to them. More help is required make the public aware and coordinating resources for those who need them.

- **Need more affordable housing and day care for single parents**

Many families with young children cannot afford housing and daycare combined. More rental housing that is suitable and affordable for families is needed in many rural communities. Quality affordable daycare is required for young mothers who would like or need to work.

- **Family Housing**

There is very little affordable housing for families in Grande Prairie. The City of Grande Prairie was setting up a Housing Corporation to address the gaps in family housing and other areas, but the idea was rejected after private landlords complained that they did not want the City in direct competition with them. The rent supplement program designations are used to help provide accommodation for families and individuals in Grande Prairie.

- **AHS and discharging from hospital**

AHS will discharge seniors they would normally keep in the hospital if they reside in a lodge. The lodge is not staffed or funded to provide health care and this places a burden on the lodge. This further supports the need for higher levels of supportive living (SL4 and 4D).

- **Older lodges need upgrading**

The GSF lodges have been well maintained and upgraded several times over the years. While all are in good condition, the older buildings continue to experience mechanical and infrastructure issues that show their age (many over 50 years old).

- **Opportunities to partner with Industry – private sector interested in higher income seniors**

The lack of suitable housing for higher income/asset rich seniors presents an opportunity for industry to meet the demand.

- **Need Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) in Grande Prairie**

Grande Prairie desperately needs a PSH facility for those with mental health and addictions issues. The Parkside Inn is filling the void temporarily until a more appropriate facility can be developed.

- **Municipal Taxation Issue**

When the Alberta Government eliminated the grant in lieu of taxes to municipalities on social housing (except for seniors) a few years ago, Housing Management Bodies and municipalities were left with no alternative to recoup lost tax revenue. This policy encourages municipalities to favor seniors housing as opposed to any other form of non-market housing for solely financial reasons. Some municipalities in Alberta are considering reducing the size of their subsidized non-senior housing portfolio due to the high tax loss.

- **Lack of Accessible Housing**

People with physical disabilities cannot access much of the rental housing (or lodge units) in the region as most stock was built before accessibility standards were mandatory. This presents many obstacles for people with physical disabilities, especially those using wheel chairs or walkers which they are left to solve on their own. Many do not have the money or skills to adapt their accommodation.

- **Homelessness**

Most of the homeless initiatives and people in the region are in Grande Prairie. The City is the Community Entity (for the federal homeless strategy, Reaching Home) and is leading the implementation of the Community Plan. This includes building the 42-unit PSH project noted earlier. In the rural areas, FCSS use the United Way Emergency Fund to prevent some families from losing their housing by providing relief for rent and utility arrears, but the fund is limited (\$20,000 annually). They also help find emergency and transitional accommodation in the City for homeless individuals. Indigenous representatives noted there are a lack of facilities (both emergency and transitional affordable) to assist indigenous homeless

- **Need more fully adapted suites**

More fully adapted housing units are required. Any new housing built with government assistance (under National Housing Strategy programs) must construct 20% of the units with barrier free design. All bathrooms in new purpose-built rental housing should be fully adapted.

- **Need renovation program**

Some evidence of housing in need of major repairs. It was suggested and agreed that some of the housing in the rural areas, especially houses and mobiles occupied by seniors, would benefit from a housing rehabilitation program that enabled these asset rich/income poor households to make the repairs to address poor conditions and also to retrofit for seniors independent to extend the time they are able to occupy the unit and remain in their home communities.

- **Supportive Housing for People with Special Needs**

Several stakeholders raised the challenges faced by people with special needs and the absence of appropriate housing and supports for them. There are few options in GSF region for individuals with special needs. Most live on a disability pension (e.g. AISH) and receive about \$1,600/month and can earn another \$400 without claw-backs. They need affordable housing (\$480 - \$600/month) and many require 24/7 supports, ideally in a supportive living or group home setting. Individuals with special needs in the rural areas have to move to the City to access supportive housing, especially for people with permanent mental disabilities.

Issues Identify by and about the Indigenous community in Grande Prairie

- **Challenges Accessing Housing**

Indigenous people face significant challenges accessing any kind of housing – even non-market housing. Part is related to tenancy history (rental arrears, evictions, etc.) and part is discrimination. As a result, the severity and incidence of housing need (and homelessness) experienced by Indigenous people is much higher than what other households experience.

- **Parkside Inn Tenants**

Concerns were expressed about the recent eviction notices handed out to some of the residents of the Parkside Inn due to a bed bug infestation. Most of them have been banned from other housing facilities and have nowhere else to go. Many of them don't have the skills to manage their housing on their own. They are desperate need of permanent supportive housing.

- **Student Housing (GPRC)**

Indigenous students have access to the 371 housing units through the College. This enables many indigenous students who live on reserves to continue on with higher education and better employment skills and job opportunities. However, once they complete education, they are challenged to find or access market housing.

- **Elders Caring Shelter**

Metis Local 1990 operate an Elders Caring Centre which provides emergency and transitional housing for men and women 55 years and older. The Centre is funded for 15 one-bedroom and 2 two-bedroom units for couples and is often full. Metis Local 1990 have been working on developing a second shelter and are hoping to receive funding soon.

- **Need rooming house and transitional housing in Grande Prairie**

Transitional housing is required to meet the needs of the homeless, many of whom are indigenous. Appropriate supports and treatment are required to successfully transition into permanent and must be culturally sensitive for it to be effective for Indigenous people.

People leaving prison are often without a place to go. Indigenous people are often involved in the “catch and release cycle” and get dropped off in downtown Grande Prairie. A more coordinated effort between police and housing agencies is needed to prevent this kind of homelessness.

- **Coordination and cooperation between Housing Agencies and Indigenous Organizations**

There are few indigenous people living in the Grande Spirit Foundation housing portfolio. Most are accommodated in the emergency shelter space, transitional housing and Housing First Initiatives located in Grande Prairie. Improved coordination and cooperation with Indigenous organizations could help address some of the long-term clients who have demonstrated an ability to maintain their accommodation. This could involve GSF providing technical assistance to an indigenous organization seeking to acquire or build housing specifically for Indigenous people (and could take advantage of an existing off-reserve Indigenous capital fund, allocated by the Province)

Appendix 2: Sources

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