

Addressing Poverty throughout the Region of Queens Municipality

- ▶ Through the Formation of a Dedicated Advisory Council Committee
- ▶ Presented by Tara Druzina, Chair, Queens Community Health Board

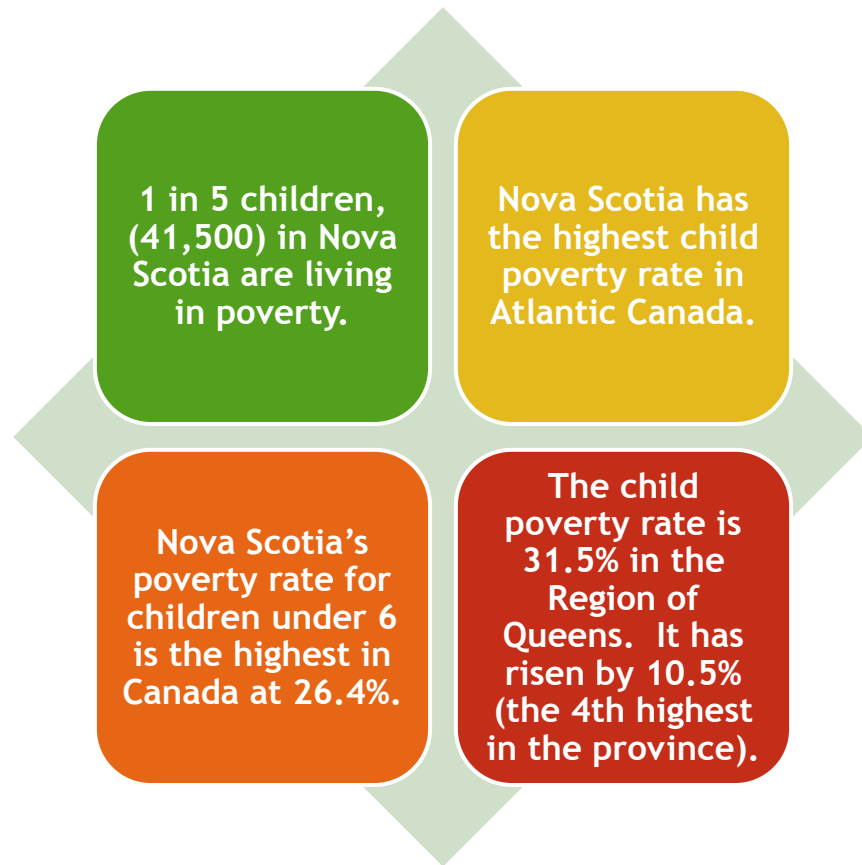
February 2025

Preamble: What We Already Know...

Food and housing insecurity represents a growing crisis in our community:

- Many residents struggling to access safe, affordable housing and nutritious food.
- These insecurities contribute to chronic health issues, mental health challenges, and economic instability.

Statistics: Child Poverty



*Data from *the 2024 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia*.

Statistics: Food Insecurity

40% of Nova Scotians struggle to access fresh, affordable food.

28.9% of Nova Scotia residents experience some level of food insecurity.

Nova Scotia has the highest food insecurity rates among the provinces.

Food insecurity is up nearly 7% from 2023 to 28.9%.

Food banks are being relied on as many are forced to cut food expenses to cover other necessities like medications and housing costs.

* Data from Food Banks Canada 2024 Report Card.



Statistics: Housing Affordability - Renting

- ▶ 70% of low-income families who rent in Nova Scotia pay more than 30% of their income on housing.
- ▶ 38% of low-income renters in Nova Scotia pay over 50% of their income on housing costs.

*Households should spend no more than 30% of their gross income on housing to allow for other life-essential expenses like food, transportation, and healthcare. - Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

*Data from *Food Banks Canada 2024 Poverty Report Card and the 2024 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia.*



Statistics: Housing Affordability - Ownership

- ▶ 70% of low-income homeowners in Nova Scotia pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs
- ▶ 10% of low-income homeowners in Nova Scotia pay over 50% of their income on housing costs.

*Households should spend no more than 30% of their gross income on housing to allow for other life-essential expenses like food, transportation, and healthcare. - Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).

*Data from *Food Banks Canada 2024 Poverty Report Card and the 2024 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia.*



Statistics: Senior Poverty

- ▶ 6% of seniors in Nova Scotia live in poverty, higher than the national average.
- ▶ 13% of seniors living alone are living in poverty.
- ▶ 31% of the population in the Region of Queens Municipality is aged 65+.


**Data from Food Banks Canada 2024 Poverty Report Card and the 2024 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Nova Scotia.*

What Will Happen If We Don't Act Now

- ▶ **Families Forced to Make Impossible Choices**
 - Families will continue to sacrifice health, education, and stability to meet basic needs, perpetuating generational poverty.
- ▶ **Children Will Bear the Brunt**
 - Without stable housing and nutritious food, children will face long-term challenges, increasing societal costs for healthcare and social services.
- ▶ **Seniors Will Be Left Behind**
 - Rising housing costs will push more seniors into crisis, forcing impossible choices between food, medication, and shelter.
- ▶ **An Unsustainable Financial Burden**
 - Public systems will face billions in annual costs due to healthcare, emergency services, and lost productivity.
- ▶ **The Crisis Will Escalate**
 - Delayed action means greater inequality, deeper poverty, and far more resources needed to solve the growing problem in the future.

Call to Action

Food and housing insecurity represent a growing crisis in our community, with many residents struggling to access safe, affordable housing and sufficient, nutritious food,




Addressing food and housing insecurity is a critical step toward a healthier, more stable community,



Addressing these issues requires collaboration among all three levels of government,



Municipal governments are closest to the people and must lead the charge for change,



I therefore, request that Council strike an **Advisory Committee of Council** specifically formed to address the housing and food insecurity crisis within our Municipality.

Is an Advisory Committee solely for this purpose possible?

- ▶ Yes...The Municipal Government Act of Nova Scotia Section 9A states;
- ▶ The purposes of a municipality are to;
 - ▶ (a) provide good government;
 - ▶ (b) provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of the council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality; and
 - ▶ (c) s. 2. develop and maintain safe and viable communities. 2019, c.19,

Alignment
with
Municipality's
Values

**"Strong communities are built on
compassion and collaboration."**



Suggested Committee Mandate

- ▶ **Develop actionable strategies to address food and housing insecurity.**
 - Create a clear and prioritized list of initiatives.
- ▶ **Foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders.**
 - Promote resource-sharing and partnerships with a collaborative focus on advocacy and developing short- and long-term solutions for maximum impact.
- ▶ **Advocate with a unified voice to Provincial and Federal governments.**
 - Focus on securing funding and driving systemic change.
- ▶ **Increase community engagement.**
 - Identify and promote opportunities for public participation.
- ▶ **Raise awareness about food and housing insecurity.**
 - Educate residents on the crisis, and the impact of it in Queens. Work to eradicate stigmas around food and housing insecurities.

Suggested Committee Composition



- ▶ It is requested that the Committee will consist of, but not limited to:
 - ▶ - Two members of Council (Mayor & Deputy Mayor as chair/co-chair).
 - ▶ - Chief Administrative Officer as staff representative.
 - ▶ - At least 5 representatives from diverse groups, including:
 - ▶ - Housing and food security organizations.
 - ▶ Community members with lived experience.
 - ▶ Professionals from public health, social services, and more.

Reporting and Accountability

The Committee will
report to Council after
every meeting,

AND provide updates on
progress, challenges,
and recommendations
for action.

Funding and Support



Council will allocate appropriate funding and administrative support.



This will ensure successful operation of the committee and its initiatives.

WHEREAS food and housing insecurity is a growing crisis impacting the health, stability, and well-being of our community;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Region of Queens Municipality Council establishes a Food and Housing Insecurity Committee to:

Explore strategies to address food and housing insecurity.

Facilitate collaboration among stakeholders and community members.

Provide recommendations to Council on effective policies and initiatives.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee:

Be composed of council members, staff, and diverse community representatives, including those with lived experience.

Meet monthly, report regularly to Council, and ensure progress is shared publicly to maintain transparency and community trust.

Be allocated the necessary resources and support to operate effectively.

RATIONALE: This committee will demonstrate Council's commitment to addressing critical challenges, supporting vulnerable residents, and fostering sustainable, inclusive solutions for a thriving community.

Motion to Establish the Committee

Closing

Thank You for Your Support

- ▶ Together, we can:
 - ▶ Address the urgent challenges of food and housing insecurity.
 - ▶ Support the most vulnerable members of our community.
 - ▶ Build a healthier, more equitable future for all residents.
- ▶ Let's take this critical step to ensure everyone has access to the basic necessities of life.
- ▶ *I would like to open the floor now for questions or further discussion.*