**Town of Gander Unveils Updated Housing Needs Assessment and Plans for Future Housing Action Plan**

*Gander, Newfoundland and Labrador (Aug. 29, 2024)* – The Town of Gander and Re/fact Consulting have recently completed an updated Housing Needs Assessment to address the evolving housing landscape in the community. This comprehensive update builds on the original 2015 assessment and reflects the significant changes in local demographics, housing demand, and affordability.

The Town of Gander, a key service hub in Newfoundland and Labrador’s Central northeast, has seen its population grow to over 11,800 residents in recent years. As a result, the demand for housing has surged, with projections indicating that more than 700 new homes may be needed over the next decade.

Recognizing the urgency of these developments, the Town elected in 2023 to update its Housing Needs Assessment. The updated report aims to provide a refreshed baseline of local housing needs and to inform the creation of a comprehensive Housing Action Plan that will guide future municipal decisions.

Key findings from the updated assessment reveal several critical areas in need of attention:

* **Growing Demand:** Gander’s population is aging, and while household incomes remain above the provincial average, there is a significant disparity between owner and renter incomes. The town is experiencing sustained demand and low supply, leading to higher rents and affordability challenges.
* **Limited Supply:** Much of Gander’s housing stock consists of single detached homes, with a noticeable decline in new multi-residential developments. About one-third of households rent, with over 60% of rental units falling within the secondary market.
* **Affordability Issues:** Nearly 900 households in Gander are struggling with housing affordability. This issue disproportionately affects renters, with approximately one-third facing challenges compared to only 9% of homeowners. The new housing supply is largely unaffordable for many local households.

Based on these findings, the Town has identified several strategic priorities to address the housing challenges:

1. **Increase Affordable Housing Supply:** Focus on creating more affordable housing for lower-income residents.
2. **Expand Rental Housing Options:** Develop additional purpose-built rental housing, particularly at affordable levels.
3. **Broaden Housing Types:** Introduce more multi-residential options to meet the needs of middle-market households.
4. **Improve Affordability for Ownership:** Enhance access to affordable homeownership for moderate-income households.
5. **Innovate in Housing Solutions:** Encourage a wider range of housing options to provide more choice and affordability.

The updated Housing Needs Assessment also emphasizes the importance of refining local housing policies, maximizing the use of existing land, building partnerships, and advocating for necessary funding and resources. These steps will be integral to the development of the forthcoming Housing Action Plan, which will outline clear strategies, targets, and actions to address Gander’s housing needs over the next 10 years.

The Housing Action Plan, informed by the updated assessment, will be a critical tool in ensuring that Gander remains a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community. By setting clear affordability thresholds, monitoring progress, and regularly reassessing local housing needs, the Town of Gander is committed to creating a more responsive and resilient housing system.

Media Contact: Steph Armstrong, Communications Officer, sarmstrong@gandercanada.com