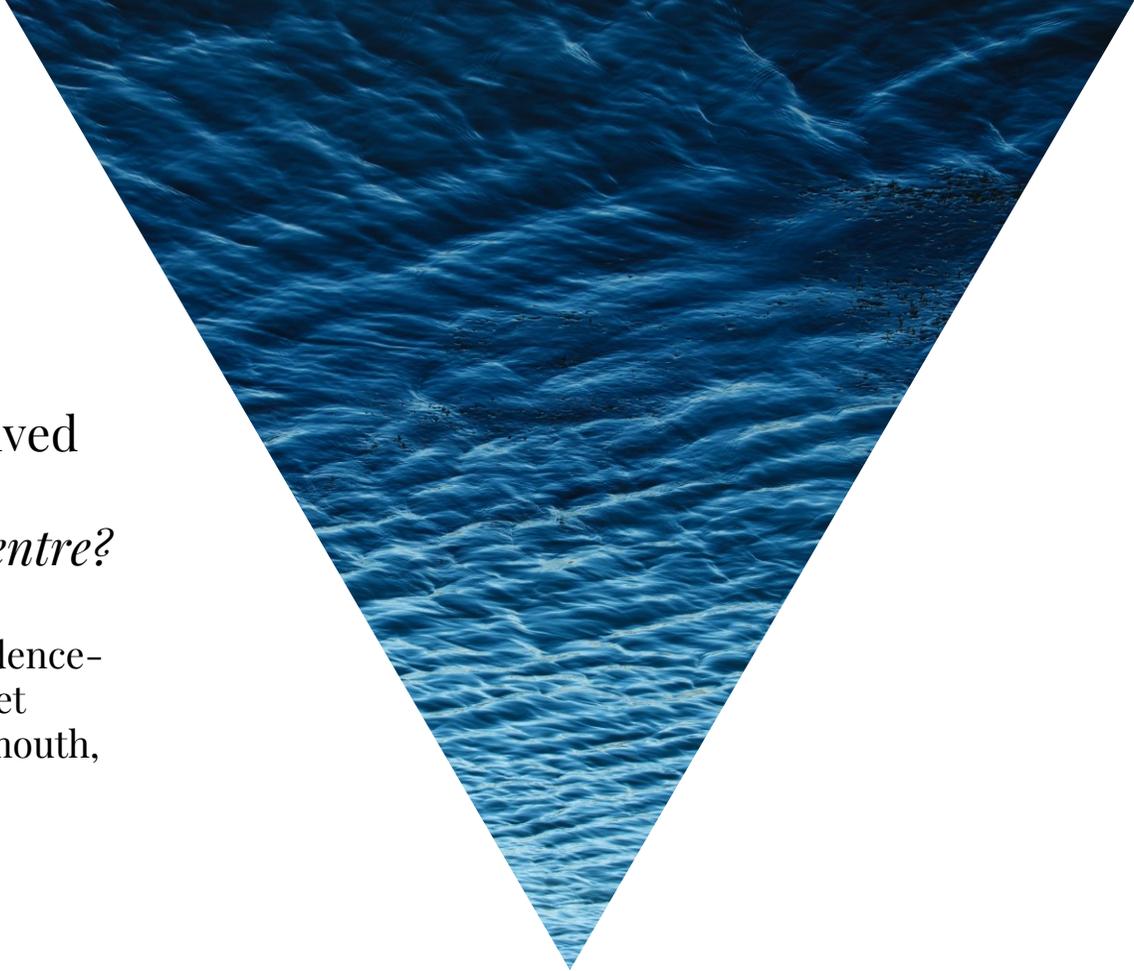


# Dartmouth

Assessment of street  
involved population using  
an evidence-based  
framework



October 2018



# Objective

What are the needs of the street involved population in Dartmouth?

*Does Dartmouth need a shelter/crisis centre?*

This research has been initiated to apply an evidence-based rationale for addressing the needs of street involved populations in the community of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

*Produced by:*

*Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia*

*Claudia Fahn- Program Director*

*David Harrison, MCIP-Researcher*

*Charlene Gagnon- Researcher*



# Methodology

*A framework for moving forward*

- Literature review
- Statistical Data Scan
- Stakeholder interviews
- Homeless Surveys

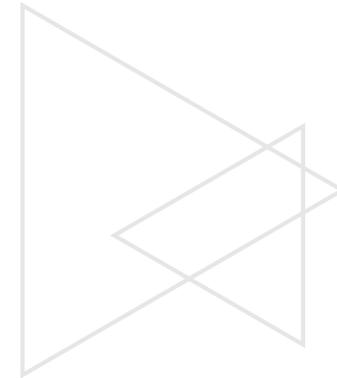
# Literature Review

*Harm Reduction in Dartmouth North:  
planning for addiction, April 2018*

[\*Housing Trilogy, Dartmouth North Report,  
November 2017\*](#)

*The Highfield/Pinecrest Neighbourhood  
Housing Initiative: A Working  
Proposal, September 2016*

[Click here to access analysis and report including tables.  
“Report #3: Summary of Dartmouth North Studies”](#)





# Statistics

## *Data review and analysis*

A review and analysis of available, relevant data was conducted.

Report #1 provides information on housing and income variables for the federal riding of Dartmouth-Cole Harbour. Statistics Canada 2016 census information was used to create a profile of housing and income factors for Dartmouth-Cole Harbour. Data sub-sets were generated to help highlight geographical areas and populations at-risk of homelessness; and other determinants, for example, housing and income factors that may have a bearing on affordable housing. Best efforts were made to compile data at the Provincial riding level.

[Click here to access analysis and report including tables.](#)  
[“Report #1: Housing and Income Indicators”](#)

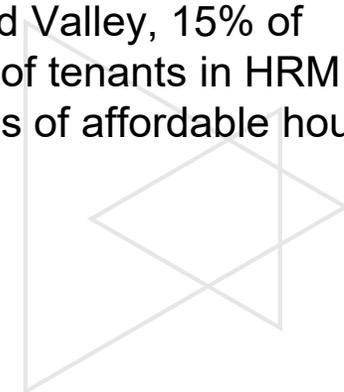
All three levels of government are increasingly involved in addressing affordable housing and homelessness. Whereas information on Dartmouth-Cole Harbour is generally lacking, this situation is even more disparate at the Provincial riding level. Best efforts have been made to align the Census Tracts with Provincial riding boundaries as below.



# Findings: Statistics



- Dartmouth North and Dartmouth South have the highest % of renters and Cole Harbour-Portland Valley has a much lower % compared to the HRM average.
- 1,160 properties in the 4 ridings are deemed to be 'not suitable'. 87% of these are located in Dartmouth North, Dartmouth South and Dartmouth East.
- In Dartmouth North, Dartmouth South and Dartmouth East have a higher % of dwellings needing major repairs compared to the HRM average.
- More households in Dartmouth North (36%) and Dartmouth South (29%) pay more than 30% of their income on housing than the HRM average (25%). Even in Cole Harbour-Portland Valley, 15% of households pay more than 30% of their income on housing. An average of 43% of tenants in HRM are paying more than 30% of their income on housing, demonstrating the seriousness of affordable housing needs in HRM.



# Stakeholder Interviews

15  
Stakeholders

## Questions

1. What areas of Dartmouth are you most familiar with/does your work occur?
2. Where and how often do you encounter street involved individuals in your capacity?
3. Do you think these street involved individuals are homeless? What indications are you basing your assessment of homelessness on?
4. What does the street involved population look like in Dartmouth? (Approximate age, gender, race)
5. If you think about your interactions with street involved people, what would you say are their main needs?
6. In your opinion, what would an appropriate intervention/solution for the street involved people in Dartmouth?
7. Is there anything else on your mind about the street involved population in Dartmouth that will help us in our analysis?

[Click here to access report.](#)  
[“Report #2: Stakeholder Interviews”](#)

# Findings: Stakeholder interviews

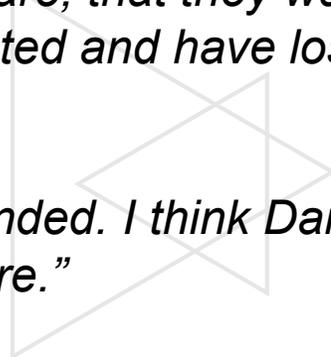


- There is significant disparity amongst service providers as to the number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Dartmouth-Cole Harbour. Some anecdotal information was substantiated by the street interviews.
- When it comes to identified need, service providers are generally in agreement that the greatest needs are improved access to food, quality housing, and health (including mental health) services.
- Redundancy exists amongst service providers.
- There is opportunity for greater cooperation amongst service providers – including referrals.



# Excerpts: Stakeholder interviews



- *“There is increasing demand. We used to serve 1800 meals per month, now we serve 3,000 meals per month. They mainly come from Dartmouth, but some come from Halifax.” (Service Provider)*
  - *“About 5-10% of those we serve food to are homeless, currently about 7, but could be more. Most live in rooming houses, but increasingly we see seniors living in subsidized housing.”*
  - *“Only certain that 1-2 are homeless, but 6-7 are waiting every morning for the library to open.”*
  - *“Based on my personal knowledge, some are homeless, some are not. We should never assume that people we see on the streets are homeless and that, if they are, that they want housing. Many have had negative experiences with being unwanted, evicted and have lost their possessions.”*
  - *“People need housing, not shelters. Shelters are expensive and under-funded. I think Dartmouth needs an innovative Housing First approach and address needs from there.”*
- 
- 

# Surveys: Street Count

*Data collection and analysis*

5 Days

August 14-18, 2018 in shifts  
between the hours of  
8am and 9pm

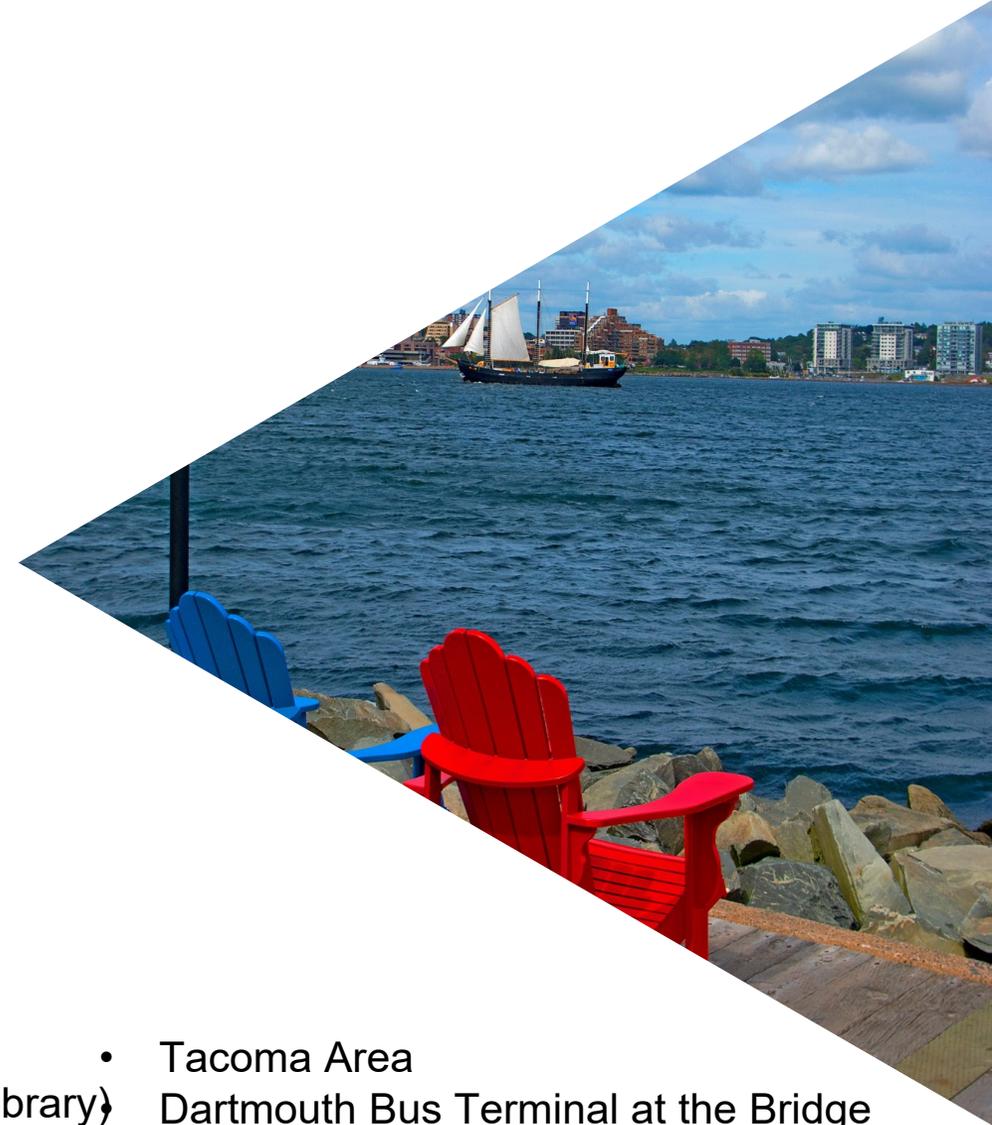
8 Locations

3 Volunteers

Surveys were conducted  
by 3 volunteers who are  
housing support workers  
with 3 different agencies

- Shubie Park
- Alderney Landing (Outside and Library)
- Dartmouth Food Centre
- Wyse and Windmill Areas
- Tacoma Area
- Dartmouth Bus Terminal at the Bridge
- Margaret House
- First Baptist Church Food Bank

[Click here to access the full survey.](#)



# Survey Results

152

People were approached and asked the survey screening question: "Do you have a permanent residence that you can return to tonight?" Panhandlers encountered were asked the survey question, as well as those accessing Dartmouth food services.

7

Individuals of the total 152 approached were identified as being homeless, and responded to the survey questions.

*Of the 7 interviewed:*

0

Were accessing the shelter system

5

Said they were sleeping rough (4 in tents, one in a car)

2

Were willing to give their name to be added to the by-name list to get help finding housing

3

Indicated that they were actively working on getting housing with MHRA.

[Click here to access the survey analysis and report.](#)



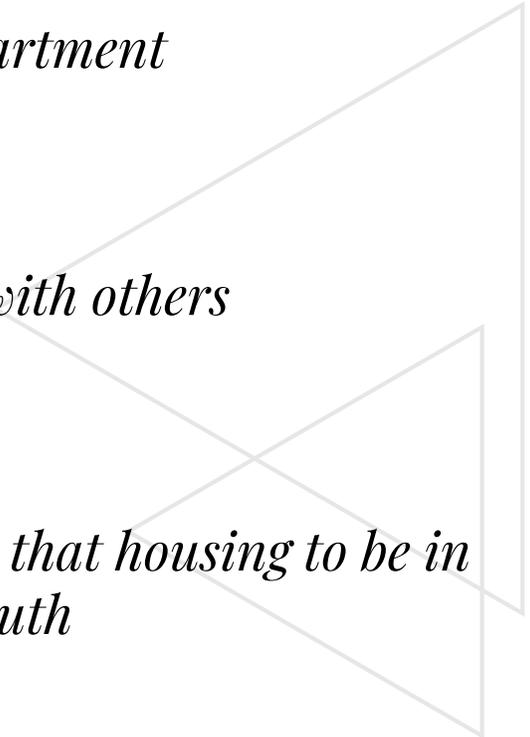
*Question 6a*

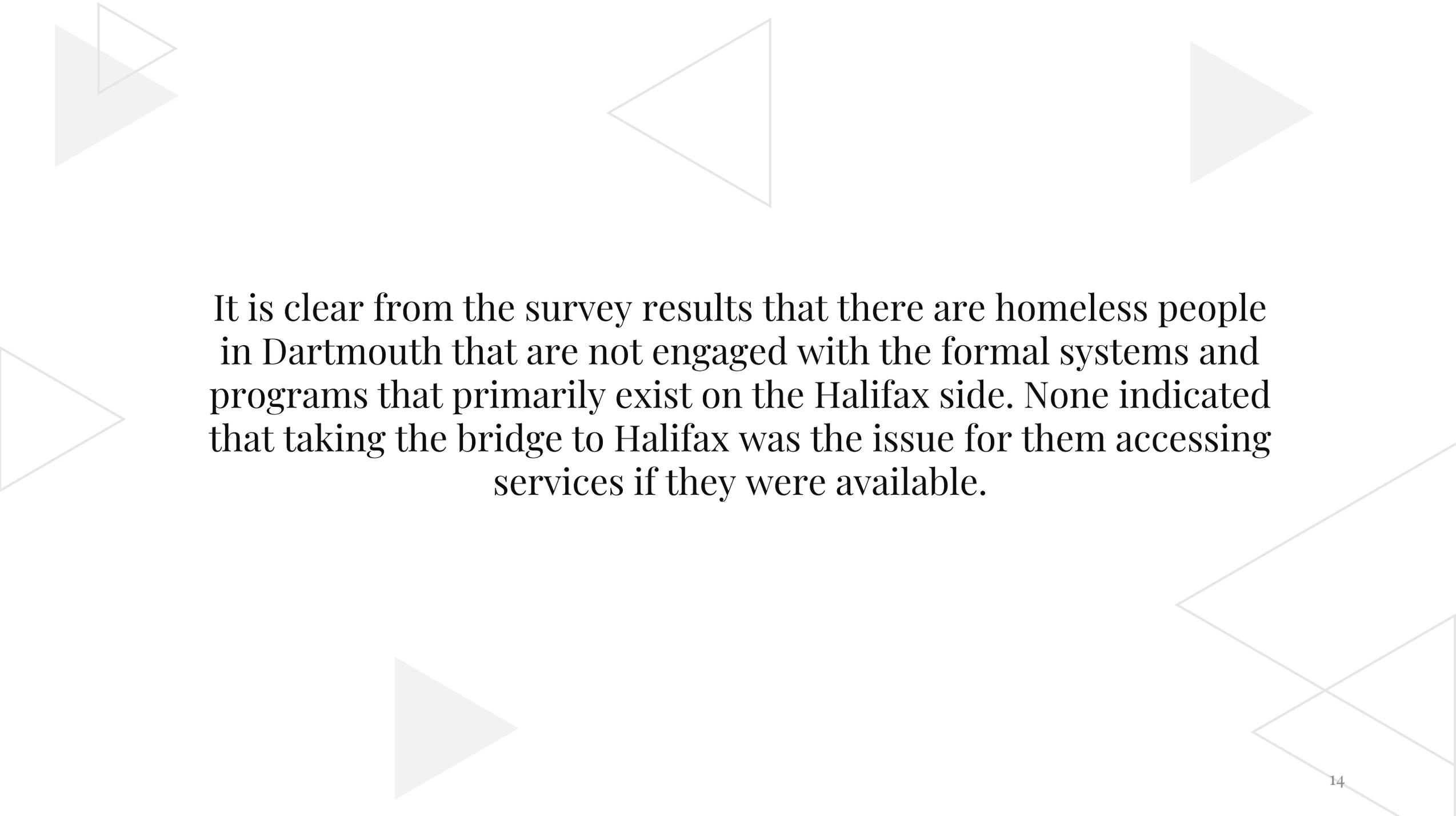
Ideally what  
type of place  
would you like  
to be living in?

5 *own apartment*

2 *Living with others*

7 *Wanted that housing to be in  
Dartmouth*





It is clear from the survey results that there are homeless people in Dartmouth that are not engaged with the formal systems and programs that primarily exist on the Halifax side. None indicated that taking the bridge to Halifax was the issue for them accessing services if they were available.



# Conclusions

*What we have learned...*

- The number of absolute homeless is significantly lower than public perception.
- If there are more than 7 homeless individuals, they are purposely hidden and unlikely to interact with programs, including shelters.
- Housing instability, food insecurity, mental health, and impacts of aging are all needs requiring an immediate response.
- No one WANTS to live in a shelter.

# Contact



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