



## The fundamental right to housing

The Canadian Human Rights Commission says the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right for everyone in Canada. But the reality is a struggle for far too many.

The St. Margaret's Bay Housing Coalition (SMBHC) knows having inclusive, accessible and affordable housing matters to all of us – our family, friends, neighbours, local businesses and services—in fact, to

our whole community.

The little girl with the ruby slippers said it perfectly: There's no place like home.

And that's why we're working with community members and other organizations on plans to help address the lack of housing diversity in our area, with an emphasis on affordable, accessible, and sustainable housing solutions for all.

## We've been busy

Over the past year, SMBHC has been working on a number of activities:

- More than 80 housing committee meetings.
- Third semester completed for two members in Cape Breton University's microcredential course on affordable housing.
- Exploring and researching alternative financial frameworks for different housing solutions (e.g.,

co-op housing, community land trusts).

- Small pilot survey of seniors' housing needs circulated.
- Community-wide housing survey developed.
- Engaging with the community at Crossroads Development information sessions, SMBHC Annual General Meeting, and Bay Seniors Open House.

## Volunteer Opportunity

### Community Housing Engagement Officer

Are you an outgoing person who enjoys connecting with others? Are you passionate about our community and seeking to make a difference for generations to come?

Consider being the SMBHC Community Housing Engagement Officer. What you'll do:

- Serve as the friendly face and voice of the St. Margaret's Bay Housing Coalition to our members and the public.

- Keep our members informed and engaged through email updates, newsletters, and event notifications.
- Assist with volunteer recruitment.
- Manage and maintain our current website (Wordpress experience required).

Does this sound like you? Please reach out to [info@bayhousing.ca](mailto:info@bayhousing.ca).

### Board of Directors 2025-2026

Tamara Barker  
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## Get in touch

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Mail: 1-5229 St Margaret's Bay Road, Upper Tantallon, B3Z 4R5

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## Meet our Board Members

In each issue of *The Home Page*, we'll introduce you to some of our Board members.



### Nancy Gilbert

Nancy has been a Board member since 2018. She is Past President and current Chair of the Real Estate Acquisition team. Her job is to find the ideal piece of land to build affordable housing for our community.

Nancy lives in Ingramport with her husband, Stephen, and son, Stan, who works at Prescott Place and is a member of Special Olympics Halifax. Her older son, Jim, an actor, lives in Toronto with his wife, Samantha.

A long-time advocate for persons who are marginalized, Nancy is President of the St Margaret's Bay Association

for Community Living and helps provide support and programs with persons who have an intellectual disability. She also helped to build the first L'Arche house in Halifax, recognizing the importance of people of differing abilities finding a home where they belong.

In her spare time, Nancy enjoys reading, cheering on the Thunderbirds Lacrosse team, tapping her toes at numerous music events and "lunch with the girls."



### Becky Weickert

Originally from Ontario, Becky relocated to Nova Scotia in 1990.

She began her career with IBM in Toronto before transitioning into entrepreneurship, owning and operating several Canadian Tire dealerships over a 30-year span throughout Canada.

As a proud resident of St. Margaret's Bay, Becky dedicates much of her time to volunteering. Her volunteer work in this region began with the Seniors Association of St. Margaret's Bay (Bay Seniors). She joined that organization's Housing Committee with the goal of bringing dedicated seniors' housing to the area. As it became increasingly clear that affordable and accessible housing is a challenge affecting a wider demographic in St Margaret's Bay, the St. Margaret's Bay Housing Coalition was formed.

Becky continues to be a dedicated advocate for our community, serving as President and now Past President on the Bay Seniors Board of Directors, and as past Executive Secretary with the Bay Treasure Chest Board.

Becky and her husband, Carlo, have two married sons and are proud grandparents to three grandchildren, all of whom live in Nova Scotia.

## Surveying Seniors in St. Margaret's Bay

During the summer, Bay Seniors members were invited to participate in a small pilot survey about their housing needs. A total of 57 completed responses were submitted through a survey link promoted once only in July. Here are a few highlights:

- Respondents ranged in age from under 59 to over 80, with half aged 70-79.
- Half live in a two-person household, and just over one-third live alone.
- Nearly 40% of respondents are planning to move within 10 years, around 25% each within 5 years or not at all, and around 10% within a year or two.
- Of those considering a move, 60% are concerned about the physical challenges of managing a property, 40% want to realize the financial equity in their current home, and around 15% want to be closer to family (this question

allowed multiple responses).

- Of the prospective movers, 40% would choose a smaller detached house in the St. Margaret's Bay area and 15% want a nearby apartment.
- Just over half of respondents would consider providing a secondary suite on their property (as a separate dwelling, or in a basement or garage), but half of those would offer that housing to family or friends only.

Of the 57 respondents, 34 offered additional thoughts at the end of the survey. Of those:

- One-third (11) had questions and suggestions about secondary suites, including 8 who felt current suite size limits were needlessly restrictive for a rural area.
- Just under 30% (10) were personally interested in considering an apartment or dedicated seniors' housing in the area.