

2023

Housing NOW Year in Review



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Southern Gulf Island Community

Resource Centre

Overview

An emerging HomeShare Housing Registry program built to connect like-minded housemates on the Islands of Galiano, Mayne, Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna. Housing NOW is focused on a gentle density approach to creating a workforce housing supply, all while fostering intergenerational relationships within our Island communities.

Achievements

2023 was a busy year of communications and relationship building, as well as research & development for the benefit of the HomeShare Registry program. A Housing NOW Homeshare Toolkit; to supply guidance to interested homesharers, and our systems of procedures - or the back end of the Registry's function, were designed. We cultivated our online presence through new website landing pages and social media marketing. We also began an ISO (In Search Of) Housing Online Bulletin Board which is being actively used by both homeowners (Hosts) and homeseekers (Guests) in the region.

Data storage and privacy policies, to ensure compliance with federally and provincially mandated requirements; for the collection and storage of personal information belonging to Registry participants, were designed, and implemented. This important primary action will carry HN into the deeper work of employer and landlord/character reference checks, allowing us to verify Registry participants in 2024.

Housing NOW is forging pathways of collaboration with both Homeshare International and HomeShare Canada to help guide us in building a homeshare program that best supports the needs of the Gulf Island region.

We are proud of what we have accomplished so far and will continue to thoughtfully build Registry components in support of the creation of a gentle density housing supply.

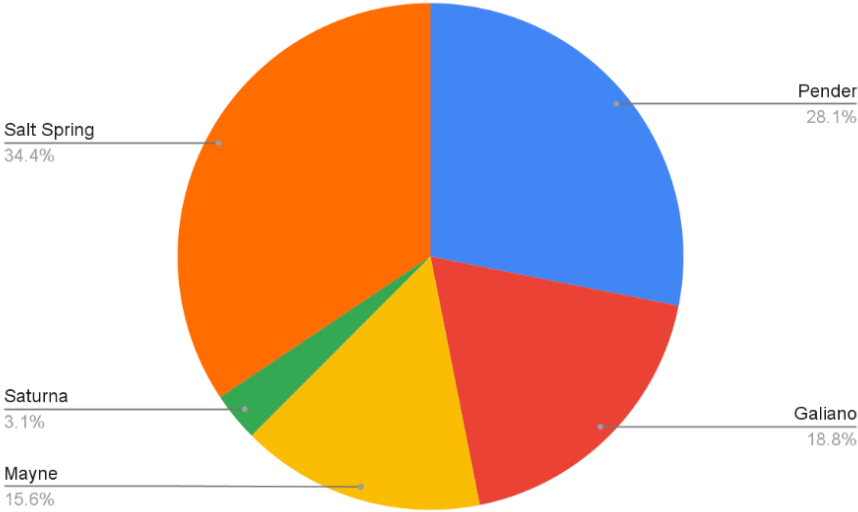
Registry Data

The SGIs recorded 22 homeowners and 32 homeseekers participating in the Registry program and several successful homesharer connections were made. The housing matches made were a combination of both short- and long-term tenancies.

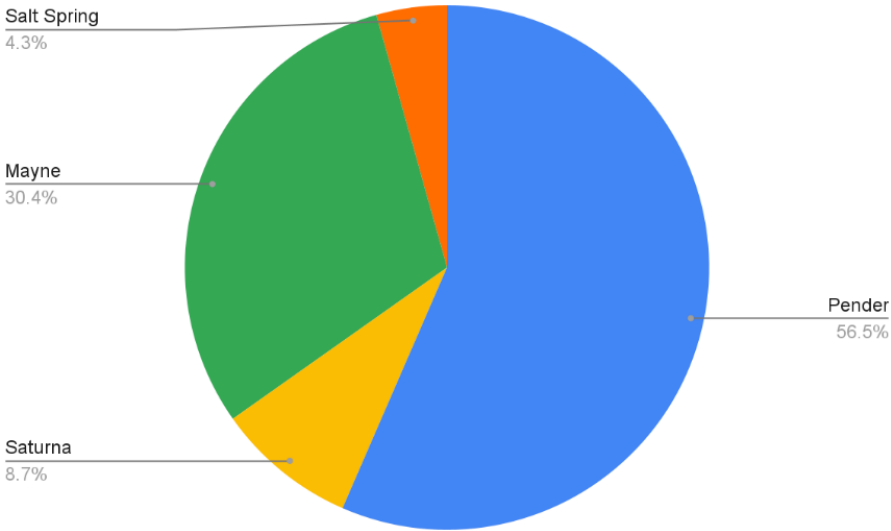
It should be noted that there were three primary obstacles recognized within the Registration data. That information will be discussed in greater detail in the **Limitations** section of this document.

The following charts illustrate Registrant data broken into both Island location and homeseeker and homeowner categories.

HOMESEEKER DATA



HOMEOWNER DATA



The numbers being seen are a positive indicator of the potential of the Registry program and the general community interest in the concept of Homeshare for the Southern Gulf and Salt Spring Islands. With continued community engagement and dedicated organizational outreach, the Registry program anticipates recognizable growth in 2024.

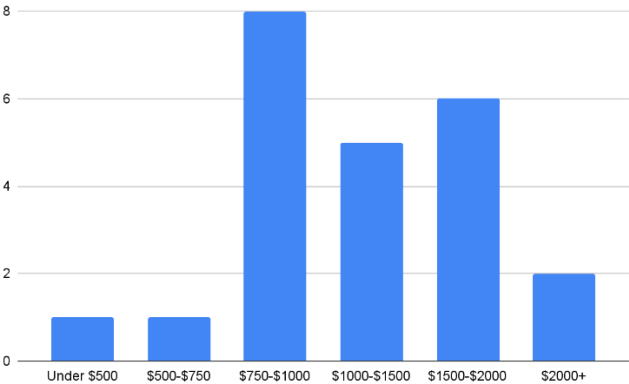
Limitations

Repeatedly seen in Registry data were three primary inhibitors in making successful housing matches. These included the following:

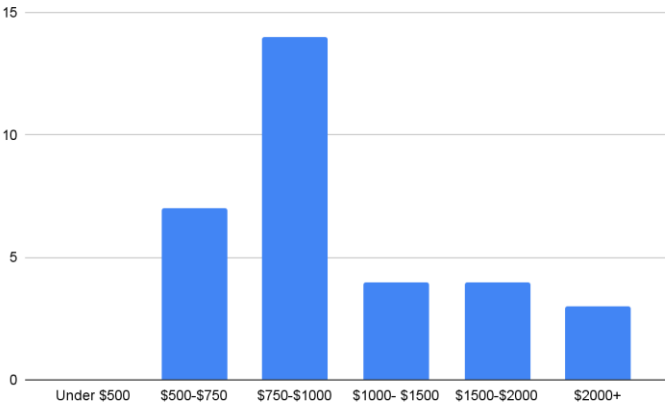
Rental Rates

As is illustrated in the following bar graphs, homeowner’s rental rate asks were far greater than the majority of what most homeseekers could bear as a rental budget. We saw over 43% of homeseekers choosing the \$750.00 - \$1,000.00 rental budget category while 11 of the 22 home/property share opportunities were registered as over \$1,000.00 - \$2,000.00 per month.

Homeowner Rental Rates



Homeseeker Rental Budget



These numbers may indicate:

- 1. Homeowners who have recently entered the property market have a much greater financial need to be met to participate in the creation of rental units
- 2. Our Islands’ much needed workforce are significantly under compensated to bear the costs of living in the Southern Gulf Islands

These numbers validate the regions’ need for increased resourcefulness in the creation of economically inclusive workforce housing options and seems to support the importance of sustainable and cost-effective building strategies or potentially, a regionally assisted financial subsidy program for either homeowners or renters.

🔗 Lengths of Tenancy & Location

The terms of residency (short, or long-term housing opportunity) were often not compatible. 72% of homeseekers were looking for year-round accommodation while only approximately 50% of homeowners were offering a long-term tenancy.

The decision to undertake a homesharer agreement remained solely up to the individuals involved, but Registry homeseekers were reticent to take on a short-term tenancy when they were hopeful to locate a long-term housing opportunity. The additional costs and stress associated with relocating so quickly, was not something that was considered easily undertaken by homeseekers.

There were many instances in which there could have been successful homesharer connections made but the housing opportunity was not in the community required by the homeseeker. Although the homesharer opportunities were presented to homeseekers, only a handful of Registrants indicated openness in leaving their preferred community to secure either short or long-term housing.

🔗 Pet Policies & Lifestyle

43% of homeseekers were searching for a pet friendly rental while almost 53% of homeowners were listing their opportunity as **not** pet friendly. This immediately decreased our homeshare housing pool and negatively impacted the Registry's number of successful homesharer matches.

As well as pets, number of household members and smoking have also been restrictive when introducing potential homesharers. These are not factors that can be overlooked by the Registry Coordinator, as they work to facilitate homesharer matches but the HN team will continue navigate finding solutions to this challenge.

Although homeshare, as a concept, typically provides a single or double occupancy at best; and the Registry has yet been unable to assist large groups, there were several families who signed-up in hopes of finding a single-family dwelling or shared property, living scenario.

Next Steps

The data collected in 2023 will aid us in increasing our Homeshare Registry program's capacity to address the needs of a broad range of community members, businesses, and organizations. As the HN team continues to identify barriers to achieving positive homesharer connections, we will design and implement concepts to tackle them.

An expanded community Homeshare Awareness campaign will bring with it greater homesharer registrant numbers and wider variations of housing opportunity. This improved homesharer database will increase the likelihood of successful housing matches on all five Islands.

This year the focus of our work will be placed on:

- 🔗 Finding active community partners on each Island
- 🔗 An expanded Homeshare Community Awareness campaign on each Island
- 🔗 The creation of HN Island Associates (part time/grant supported) positions on each Island.
- 🔗 Developing comprehensive systems of communication and extended supports for senior homesharers
- 🔗 Research & development of Conflict Resolution Processes under guidance of the SGI Neighbourhood House Community Justice Program (CJP)
- 🔗 The creation of a *Finding Resolutions* publication to help guide homesharers with mediation solutions and conflict resolution resources.

By continuing to build upon the resources available to us, our Southern Gulf Island Housing Registry will maintain its intention of becoming a gentle density housing supply initiative that makes sense for life and living in the Gulf Islands.

Interested in finding out more?

Please, visit the [Housing NOW Project page](#) or the [HN Homeshare Registry](#)

A huge thank you to our supporters!

