



## Affordable Housing Needs Assessment for Peaks Island

Sarah Curran, Researcher  
Planning Decisions, Inc.  
[www.planningdecisions.com](http://www.planningdecisions.com)



## Purpose of Presentation

- Present preliminary findings of needs assessment
- Obtain comments from the community
- Inform the community about Planning Decisions next steps



## What is an Affordable Housing Needs Assessment?

- A description and analysis of the numbers and types of households and individuals that face housing problems on Peak's Island



## Why is it being done?

- Concerns raised by community members about whether HOMESTART's current strategy was appropriate.
- HOMESTART applied for and received a grant from the Peak's Island Fund to undertake the analysis.



## Who is doing it?

- HOMESTART has engaged Planning Decisions, Inc., of South Portland and Hallowell, Maine, to carry out the study.



## How is it being done?

- Initial public meeting to get ideas
- Review of Census and city data
- Interviews with selected island residents
- Mail survey of all year-round island households
- Today's meeting to present findings and get community reactions



## Needs Assessment Results Presentation

- A. Initial Public Meeting
- B. Demographics and Housing Data
- C. Selected Community Member Interviews
- D. Survey of Island Residents
- E. Key Findings
- F. PDI Next Steps



### A. Initial Public Meeting

- Who is likely to be experiencing difficulty with affordable housing on Peaks
- What are the problems they face



## A. Initial Public Meeting

- Survey should be mailed to everyone on the island
- Ask about affordability
- What are the solutions people support

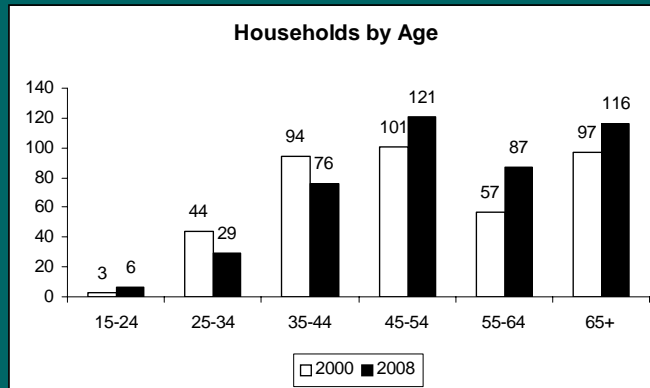


## B. Demographics and Housing Data

- Modest increase in population
- From 843 in 2000 to 896 in 2008 (+ 6%)
- Household size became smaller



## B. Demographics and Housing Data



## B. Demographics and Housing Data

- Increase in housing units
- From 871 in 2000 to 916 in 2008 (+ 5%)



## B. Demographics and Housing Data

- Same proportion of owner (76%) to renter (24%)
- Similar proportion of seasonal (53% in 2000 to 54% in 2008)



## B. Demographics and Housing Data

- Home values increased – now stable





## B. Demographics and Housing Data

- Median income has also risen
  - \$40,185 in 2000
  - \$58,936 in 2008



## C. Selected Community Member Interviews

- Purpose – to get in-depth perspectives about issues from a diversity of residents
- Community members suggested by island residents
- 24 completed by Mary Terry, Island Fellow



## C. Selected Community Member Interviews

- Concerns about affordability, loss of diversity – housing is one piece
- Increases in the cost of living forcing people to leave the island
- Fear of development, how to preserve rural feel
- Fear of becoming summer community



## C. Selected Community Member Interviews

- Affordable housing is an important issue: diversity, a year-round community
- Larger issue of affordability
- Concern about keeping existing residents



## D. Survey of Island Residents

- 461 owner/renter surveys mailed out
- 154 returned (35%)
- 133 year-round residents
- 5 commuter surveys handed out on boat; 0 returned

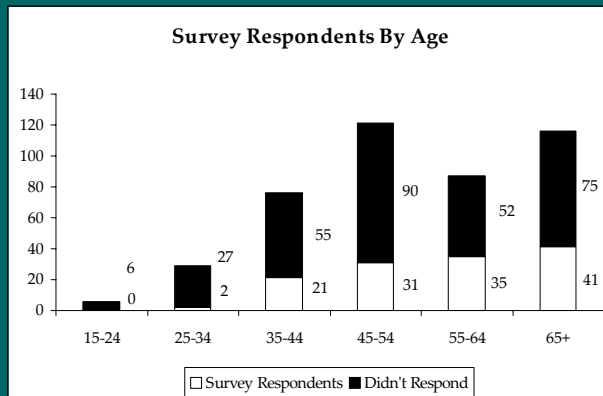


## D. Survey of Island Residents

- Fairly representative of island population with regard to income
- More older, fewer younger respondents than island population
- High proportion of owners



## D. Survey of Island Residents



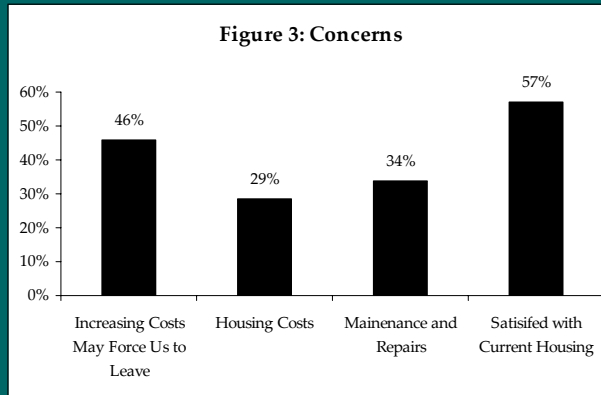
## D. Survey of Island Residents

### o Affordability

- 61/133 (46%) agree or strongly agree, "We are concerned that increasing costs may force us to leave the island."



## D. Survey of Island Residents



## D. Survey of Island Residents

### ○ Expenses: Property Taxes

- Average property tax expense is \$5,925/year, half as much as the average mortgage (\$11,826/year)



## D. Survey of Island Residents

### ○ Expenses: Owners

- Mortgage as proportion of income
- May exceed 30% among those earning between \$10,000-\$24,999 and \$25,000-\$49,999



## D. Survey of Island Residents

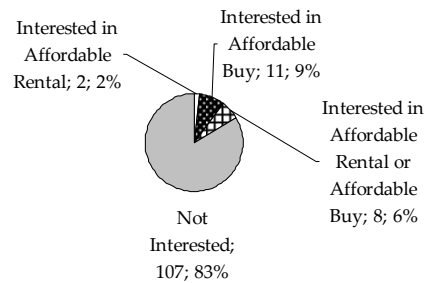
### Expenses: Renters

- Rent as a proportion of income
- May exceed 30% among those earning less than \$10,000, between \$10,000-\$24,999, and \$25,000-\$49,999.



## D. Survey of Island Residents

Figure 2: Peaks Island  
Affordable Housing Survey, 2008



## D. Survey of Island Residents

- o Those Interested in Buying an Affordable Home
  - 19 respondents said they are interested (14) or maybe interested (5)



## D. Survey of Island Residents

- Those Interested in Buying an Affordable Home
  - Median age is 50
  - Average 2 people in household
  - Looking for 2-3 bedrooms
  - 69% could pay less than \$1000/month (average \$822)



## D. Survey of Island Residents

- Those Interested in Buying an Affordable Home
  - Most are not typical first-time homebuyers: 12/19 currently own



## D. Survey of Island Residents

Among those who already own:

- 2/3 earn \$50,000 or more
- Have equity (values from \$200,000)
- 2/3 identified maintenance and repair as concern
- 2/3 said increasing costs may force them to leave



## D. Survey of Island Residents

○ Among those who currently rent:

- 6/7 earn less than \$50,000/year
- All are concerned that increasing costs may force them to leave the island



## D. Survey of Island Residents

- Those Interested in an Affordable Rental
  - 10 respondents said they are interested (5) or maybe interested (5)



## D. Survey of Island Residents

- Those Interested in an Affordable Rental
  - Median age is 54
  - Average 2 people in household
  - ½ looking for 1-2 bedrooms, ½ for 2-3 bedrooms
  - 8/10 could pay less than \$1000/month (average \$711/month)



## D. Survey of Island Residents

- Those Interested in an Affordable Rental
  - 6 currently rent; 4 currently own



## D. Survey of Island Residents

- Among those who currently rent
  - 5/6 are also interested in buying
  - 4/6 earn between \$10,000 - \$24,999/year; all earn less than \$50,000
  - All are concerned that increasing costs may force them to leave the island

## D. Survey of Island Residents

- Among those who currently own
  - 1/2 earn between \$10,000 - \$24,999/year; 3/4 earn less than \$50,000
  - 3/4 find it difficult to keep up with monthly housing costs
  - 3/4 find it difficult to keep up with maintenance and repairs
  - 3/4 are concerned that increasing costs may force them to leave the island

## D. Survey of Island Residents





## D. Survey of Island Residents

### o Comments

- *I very much favor the idea of providing affordable housing on Peaks. I would be disappointed to see this become a summer colony - relatively older, essentially gated community. I believe the diversity of residents is important for the vitality of a caring community. Young families in particular would keep the school open, use the library, volunteer and be part of the life force we so desperately want to preserve. Actually living on an island is very different from a short vacation. There is a life-long connection to "place" where differences are negotiated, creative ideas can be tried and where we can actually give people a hand once in a while. That's good for us all.*



## D. Survey of Island Residents

### o Comments

- *I think the affordable housing is a great idea in theory but I think it is too late...should have happened 10 years ago. More effort needs to occur in helping keep the community that already lives here now.*



## D. Survey of Island Residents

### o Comments

- *We would like option for accessory unit but not zoned for this although space is available to help with additional income*



## D. Survey of Island Residents

### o Comments

- *Those who can not afford living on Peaks - should not! That is simple! If I could not afford it I would have moved to another place! The houses on the island are affordable to people who can afford them! This is obvious, isn't it?*

## ● ● ● | E. Key Findings

- Affordability
  - 46% concerned that increasing costs may force them to leave the island
  - Average property taxes half as much as average mortgage

## ● ● ● | E. Key Findings

- More demand for owner than renter
- Many are not typical first-time homebuyers
- Preference for single-family homes and private yards

## E. Key Findings

- Translating survey findings into overall estimates

	Low	High	Midpoint
Would Buy	10	40	25
Would Rent	2	6	4
Would Buy or Rent	10	30	20

## F. Next Steps

- Planning Decisions to deliver final report to HOMESTART in early February.

