

WHAT MATTERS MOST:

Member Priorities for Housing,
Neighbourhood, and Investment
at the Range Co-operative



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May 2026

The Range Housing Co-operative was incorporated in 2022 to provide member-controlled, non-profit housing communities. Additional information on the Range can be found at www.therangehousing.coop. The research contained in this report follows a Community-Based Participatory Research approach, and the authors acknowledge and thank the Board of Directors at the Range, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, and Housing Alternatives for their participation in the survey and methodological design and in their partnership to action and disseminate the findings of this report.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Dr. Julia Woodhall-Melnik currently serves on the Range's Board of Directors. She suggested the class as an affordable avenue to produce high-quality research in line with the co-operative mandate of education. This conflict of interest was reported to the University of New Brunswick and its Research Ethics Board, and Dr. Woodhall-Melnik abstained from voting on any Board matters related to this study.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Brunswick is facing a housing affordability crisis, particularly for renters, who are disproportionately burdened by rising housing costs and declining access to affordable units. At the same time, public housing waitlists have grown substantially, leaving many low- to moderate-income households with limited options. Within this context, the Co-operative Housing Federation Canada and Housing Alternatives formed the Range Co-operative, which acquired the former Rifle Range's 180 units in Saint John through the Federal Lands Initiative. This was an important intervention to preserve affordability, prevent housing speculation, and maintain housing stability for existing and future tenants. This report presents findings from a survey of the resident-members of the Range Housing Co-operative. The objective of the survey is to better understand who lives at the Range, their experiences, priorities, and how best to engage them in co-operative governance.

Students from SOCI 4379 at the University of New Brunswick engaged a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) approach to work with the Range's Board of Directors, the Co-operative Housing Federation Canada, and the Range's Property Manager, Housing Alternatives. This approach included collaboration on the research motivation and question, survey design and execution, and the dissemination of findings. The Range Member Survey, developed through consultation and feedback from the aforementioned partners, was administered both virtually and in person by the students, their professor, and the course assistant in the Winter of 2026. The survey achieved a strong response rate of approximately 50% of households in the Range.

The survey results indicate that members benefit from stable and affordable tenancies at the Range. Many of the members have lived at the Range for years, with an average housing tenure of over 12 years. The survey also found that members overwhelmingly perceive the Range as affordable, and the majority viewed it as safe. This was important, as members indicated that affordability was their top priority, followed by safety, stability, and unit condition. A strong sense of community was also reported, alongside high levels of satisfaction with Board communication. Importantly, very few members expressed a desire to move, indicating that the Range provides housing stability for its membership.

At the same time, the findings highlighted key areas for improvement. Maintenance and repairs emerged as a central concern. This was not surprising, as all the members surveyed lived in units that were constructed as part of the original Rifle Range. These units have aged over time, and resources to maintain units were scarce following the federal government's devolution of responsibility for housing to its provinces and territories in the 1990s.

Approximately half of the members surveyed were satisfied with repair timelines and unit conditions. Members emphasized the need for continued investment in repairs and renovations, as well as clearer processes for maintenance requests and follow-up. Outdoor spaces, including landscaping, playgrounds, and communal areas, were also identified as important areas for investment. Members also noted concerns about pest control and infrastructure, such as fences and stairs, that they would like addressed.

The survey also provided important insights into member engagement. While awareness of the co-operative model's implementation was nearly universal, interest in deeper involvement was mixed. Approximately half of the members expressed interest in participating in decision-making or learning more about co-operative governance. Members were more open to participating in committees than serving on the Board, suggesting that committees may serve as an accessible entry point for engagement. Preferences for engagement indicated a strong demand for flexible and virtual formats, with timing cited as the primary barrier to participation; however, most members noted that weekday evenings were preferred for meetings, but some also noted that changes to work schedules and life events have hindered their engagement.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Range Housing Co-operative is delivering on its core objectives of affordability, safety, and stability, while also fostering a sense of community. However, sustaining and strengthening this success will require continued investment in housing quality, enhanced communication and maintenance systems, and deliberate strategies to support meaningful, flexible member engagement. The co-operative model presents a promising pathway for preserving affordable housing in New Brunswick, and the Range offers a valuable example of how community housing can be protected and strengthened through collective ownership and governance.

This report demonstrates that the Range Housing Co-operative is playing a critical role in addressing housing insecurity in Saint John by preserving affordability, enhancing stability, and fostering a sense of community among its members. In a broader housing landscape characterized by rising costs and limited access to subsidized housing, the Range stands out as an example of how non-market housing models can protect residents from displacement and housing precarity. Members' positive perceptions of affordability, safety, and community reflect the history of the community, the strength of the co-operative model, and the efforts of the Board and its partners in transitioning to a co-operative.

INTRODUCTION

New Brunswick is experiencing a critical shortage of affordable housing. This is particularly problematic for renters, who represent only 26% of all households yet comprise 57% of households that spend 30% or more on shelter costs (Haley et al., 2025). Problematically, New Brunswick's primary rental market has become less affordable, with approximately 8,600 units with shelter costs of \$750 or less per month lost between 2016 and 2021 (Leger, 2023). Simultaneously, access to public housing, one of the largest public mechanisms for the provision of affordable housing in New Brunswick, has worsened, with the waitlist growing from approximately 5,700 in 2021 to over 13,000 households in 2025 (Koch, 2025), resulting in long wait times for access to publicly subsidized, affordable housing. These conditions culminate in a rental market that is unable to affordably house renters with low-to-moderate incomes.

Housing affordability, although a hot topic in the 2020s, did not erode in New Brunswick overnight. Rather, a series of policy decisions at all levels of government (e.g., Municipal, Provincial, and Federal) shape access to affordable rental housing. For example, in the 1990s, the Federal government divested responsibility for public housing to its provinces and territories (Rauf & Frayne, 2023; Whitzman, 2024). In some more populous provinces, this responsibility was later devolved to the municipal level; however, in New Brunswick, housing remained a provincial responsibility (Haley et al., 2025). The province lacked the financial capacity and political will to sufficiently operate and build public housing units for almost 40 years, resulting in inadequate maintenance of the existing housing stock and no new additions to the public housing stock.

The Rifle Range, founded after World War II through a bilateral agreement between the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Province of New Brunswick, was established to provide affordable housing, initially for military families and veterans, in Saint John during a time of immense need (Simpson, 2025). However, the expiration of the bilateral agreement brought uncertainty about the future of the Rifle Range and the ability to maintain the units as affordable housing. This was quite concerning to tenants, who were aware of affordability constraints in the private market, the long waitlist for public housing, and the very real prospect of speculative market landlords purchasing their units and increasing rents (Simpson, 2025).

In 2022, Housing Alternatives, a local non-profit specializing in affordable housing management, partnered with the Co-operative Housing Federation Canada (CHF) to form the Range Co-operative. The Range Co-operative purchased all 180 existing affordable housing units, and the official grand opening of the Range was held in September, 2025. The Range now exists as a non-profit, rental co-operative with a mandate to continue providing affordable, stable housing for its membership (CHF, 2025). At the time of acquisition, an additional four housing units were already planned for development, with the support of federal seed funding and grants from HousingNB and the City of Saint John. In 2025, the Range Co-operative signed a Memorandum of Understanding with L'Arche to fill these four units upon their completion. These units now provide accessible housing for individuals with disabilities. The tenants of all 184 co-op housing units now form the membership of the Range. This represents a renewed investment in community housing in the province of New Brunswick and serves as an example of how housing co-ops can step in to acquire affordable housing and prevent housing speculation, which can lead to homelessness among low-to-moderate-income tenants.

Throughout 2025, the Range's Board of Directors met to develop annual and strategic plans for the Range. One of the Board's mandates for 2026 was to survey its membership on engagement and on their needs, preferences, and priorities. The Board was particularly interested in how best to engage with its membership and wanted to understand more about members' priorities for their housing and neighbourhood. Non-resident board member, Julia Woodhall-Melnik (JWM), suggested that the Range engage with students through her upper-year Sociology course on Community-Based Research. JWM noted her conflict of interest with the University of New Brunswick and with the Range, and it was concluded that she has no financial investment in the Range and that this course provided students with a unique, hands-on experience in learning the process of community-based research that would be well facilitated through the Range's survey of their membership. The Board voted in favour of the class conducting a membership survey (JWM abstained), and the Board, alongside staff from CHF and Housing Alternatives, collaborated with the class to develop the survey, which the class administered.

This report presents the findings of the Range's Membership Survey, conducted in February and March of 2026. Specifically, this report answers the following questions:

1. What are the demographics of the members living at the Range?
2. What are the members' views of their housing and neighbourhood?
3. What are members' needs, preferences, and priorities for their housing and neighbourhood?
4. How can the Range Board best engage with its membership?

This report begins by briefly defining co-operative housing, followed by a brief discussion of relevant literature on housing co-operatives. The specific methods used for the survey and data analysis are then discussed, and the findings from both closed- and open-ended questions are reported. The report concludes with a discussion of the key findings and their applicability to the housing co-op, along with a note on study limitations and directions for future research.

BACKGROUND

What is Co-operative Housing?

Housing insecurity is of particular concern for New Brunswickers (Reyes, et al., 2022; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2024). Non-market housing provides a viable avenue for creating more resilient communities and increasing affordable housing availability (Whitzman, 2024). Co-operatives stand out among non-market housing models as an option that can provide inclusive, affordable housing to their members (Reyes et al., 2022). What sets co-operative housing apart from other forms of non-market or community housing is that residents are not tenants in the traditional sense, but members who collectively and democratically make decisions about their housing. In other words, the co-operative housing model encourages members to be active participants in their communities, who contribute to decision-making processes and overall governance (CHF, 2026; CMHC, 2018). These organizations typically operate as non-profit co-operative corporations, in which each member pays a membership fee that covers their housing costs and funds community, neighbourhood, and co-operative initiatives (Cooperative Housing International [CHI], n.d.).

Housing co-operatives uphold seven internationally recognized principles and values. These principles are adapted from the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA, n.d.) as follows:

1. **Voluntary and Open Membership:** Co-operatives are open to all persons regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, race, or religion. Members can access any services available to them, and they accept the responsibilities of membership.
2. **Democratic Member Control:** Housing co-operatives are democratic entities governed by members who actively participate in decision-making and policy development. While representatives may be elected or choose to serve as board members, all members retain voting rights.

3. **Member Economic Participation:** Capital is equitably and democratically controlled. Members pay a membership fee to be a part of a co-operative, and any surplus is allocated towards co-operative-approved initiatives.
4. **Autonomy and Independence:** Co-operatives are autonomous bodies controlled by members. This means that no external sources, including government bodies, can control co-operative capital or take democratic control away from a co-operative's membership.
5. **Education, Training, and Information:** Co-operatives have a responsibility to educate members and the public on the nature and benefits of co-operative models.
6. **Cooperation among Co-operatives:** Co-operatives collaborate to effectively serve their members and strengthen the co-operative movement.
7. **Concern for Community:** Co-operatives are focused on sustainable community development within their own communities.

Together, commitment to these principles enables housing co-operatives to foster autonomy, resilience, and meaningful member engagement.

Co-operative housing is a practical solution for improving affordability and equity. Co-ops emphasize community, collaboration, and long-term affordability (CHI, n.d.). The most common types of co-ops include non-profit rental, equity, limited equity, and mutual aid co-operatives (CHI, n.d.). The Range Housing Co-operative functions as a non-profit housing co-op (CHF, 2026; The Range Housing Co-operative LTD, n.d.). As a non-profit, the Range's primary goal is to provide affordable housing within the community, rather than generating profit; therefore, there is no return on investment from membership fees, as seen in traditional equity-based co-operatives. Any additional funds generated from membership fees are redistributed to the community to create strong shared resources, fostering an environment where members own and manage their living environments (CHF, 2026; The Range Housing Co-operative LTD, n.d.).

The Benefits and Challenges of Housing Co-operatives

Housing co-operatives provide secure and affordable housing for community members worldwide (Guity-Zapata et al., 2026). They also produce social benefits for the communities in which they reside. This is particularly important for older adults who seek a sense of community and engagement (Bredenoord et al., 2020) and families with young children who often benefit from family-friendly spaces and community events (Guity-Zapata et al., 2026).

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Since housing co-ops are generally nonprofit, members' fees cover shelter costs (e.g. mortgages, taxes, loans, maintenance, snow removal, etc.) and ensure a small amount of savings to maintain good financial standing. Any remaining fees are reinvested in the community. Thus, they present a lower-cost, definancialized, and affordable housing option for low-to-moderate-income households (Rossini & D'Adda, 2025; Waldron & Wijburg, 2025). The practice of collecting member fees allows co-ops to share, or collectivize, the cost of large expenses and repairs among the membership, which distributes financial burden away from individual tenants or buildings (Ehlenz, 2018).

Housing affordability contributes to a plethora of positive outcomes, including improvements in physical (Dweik et al., 2024) and mental health (Dweik & Woodhall-Melnik, 2023).

Housing co-operatives often guarantee members lifelong tenure, provided they remain in good standing and pay their member fees (Lage, 2025). This contributes to housing stability, which is associated with better perceived quality of life (Baumstarck et al., 2015). Co-operatives also promote a strong sense of community (Alday et al., 2025; Lage, 2025), which improves mental and physical well-being. Improvements in mental health and well-being are attributed to increased social support and self-efficacy resulting from community engagement (Lubik & Kosatsky, 2019). Furthermore, housing co-ops provide a shared sense of ownership and a structure for collective community decision-making, which fosters a sense of belonging and responsibility in members (Lage et al., 2025).

Shared decision-making and community-oriented approaches toward housing co-op development promote environmental sustainability (Deshmukh et al., 2025). The collective action approach of co-operatives promotes sustainable energy solutions, shares resources among housing units, and allows for lifecycle planning within housing. In doing so, lower-cost, more sustainable housing can be provided (Deshmukh et al., 2025). Additionally, since housing cooperatives focus on affordable housing development, they often choose renovation-focused, circular housing development models with smaller carbon footprints (Deshmukh et al., 2025).

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Co-ops often struggle to find adequate funding to start new developments (Waldron & Wijburg, 2025; Holzl, 2025). They often rely on grants from governments or non-profits to acquire the capital needed for real-estate purchases and renovations (Waldron & Wijburg, 2025). The at-cost, social sustainability model of housing co-ops often conflicts with the predominantly financialized housing economy that is promoted by many countries that place a high value on homeownership (Holzl, 2025). Housing developers must put up initial capital acquisitions, which many housing co-operative organizations lack, particularly start-ups (Waldron & Wijburg, 2025).

Meaningful member engagement can be a challenge for housing co-operatives. While many co-operatives report excellent member engagement, especially during the initial phases of implementation, some studies report challenges with long-term member engagement (Alday et al., 2025; Ehlenz, 2018). Housing sites purchased by housing co-operatives, while more affordable, face additional challenges with social cohesion due to the rapid implementation of the co-op model. Furthermore, conversions often engage pre-existing tenants as members, who may not have opted to join the co-op themselves (Rossini & D'Adda, 2025). This requires co-ops to actively work to explore mechanisms to engage members with the principles and practicalities of membership in housing co-operatives. Continuing resident education is vital to ensure that co-operative members are aware of the importance of self-governance for long-term co-operative sustainability (Ehlenz, 2018). However, this can be challenging due to high human resource costs, a lack of member engagement in educational outreach initiatives (Ehlenz, 2018), and a lack of shared community spaces for member engagement and community event planning (Alday et al., 2025).

Strong relationships between co-operative members and boards are vital to co-op success. Alday et al. (2025) find that developing rapport, trust, and avenues for meaningful communication between members and their boards is critical to the longevity of housing co-ops, as perceptions and/or the existence of biased or unfair co-operative management practices can threaten the sustainability of housing co-operatives and create strain within members' communities (Alday et al., 2025). To improve members' experiences in housing co-ops, Guity-Zapata et al.'s (2026) systematic review of literature concludes that co-operatives with institutional support, sufficient resources, and meaningful connections to their broader communities provide better engagement experiences for their members.

Taken together, the literature on co-operative housing indicates that co-ops are uniquely placed to provide communities with affordable housing that meets social and environmental mandates. The co-op housing model is not without its challenges; however, strong governance, member engagement, support and resources, and assistance from broader communities surrounding co-ops can help create and sustain successful housing co-operatives that provide stable, affordable, and socially responsible housing options. The next section of this report shifts to describe the research methods used for the Range's membership survey.

RESEARCH METHODS

This project used Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) methods to design, construct, and administer a survey of Range membership's needs, opinions, engagement, and priorities. Community participation, research, and action are cornerstones of CBPR practice (Minkler, 2005). As the research was conducted over one course term, the idea for this research project emerged before the start of the course and was developed during strategic planning sessions with the Range's board of directors. Initial methodology and approaches were developed by JWM, in consultation with the other board members and representatives from CHF and Housing Alternatives. These methods were then submitted in an initial application to the University of New Brunswick's Research Ethics Board (REB 2025-245) for approval.

The class met with the Range's Board of Directors, representatives from Housing Alternatives, and representatives from CHF to discuss their survey aims and objectives. These aims and objectives were turned into a survey, which was sent to the Range's Board of Directors, Housing Alternatives, and CHF for feedback. The survey included both open and closed-ended questions to best capture members' perspectives. Once feedback on the survey was incorporated, the survey instrument was submitted as an amendment for Research Ethics approval.

Participants & Recruitment

All individuals who resided in the original 180 units of housing at the Range ("members") aged 19 years and older were invited to complete the survey. Each household was asked to select one member to participate on behalf of their household. A week before the survey opened, flyers were posted in public areas at the Range to raise awareness of the survey among members. On the day the survey opened, the research team sent an email with study information and a request to participate to the Range's membership via HA's email list. This email contained a link to an online version of the survey, hosted in LimeSurvey (LimeSurvey GmbH, n.d.), for participants to complete independently. The email also provided an option for households to opt out of the survey if they did not wish to participate.

The email also explained that students from SOCI 4379 would knock on doors to request participation from those who had not completed the survey online. When members completed an online survey, declined to participate online, or declined to participate in person, their household was marked as completed, so students would not return to knock on their doors. A reminder email with the survey link was sent two weeks into the data collection period and again three days before the survey closed.

The students from SOCI 4379, alongside JWM and/or the Graduate Teaching Assistant, met at the Range in eight two-hour blocks to knock on members' doors and request their participation in the survey. Four attempts were made at all units. When participants opened their doors, the students identified themselves, described the purpose of the survey, and outlined various options for participation (e.g., answering questions with the student on the spot, completing the survey with the students returning to collect it, or participating online). Members who requested online participation at their doors were provided with a flyer with a QR code to access the survey. Those who discussed concerns with their units were provided with business cards with HA's contact information.

Data Collection

The survey was open for one month from mid-February 2026 to mid-March 2026. Written or virtual consent was collected from all participants. The surveys took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Participants were provided with a \$10 Tim Hortons gift card as a thank-you for their time. They were also entered into a draw to win one of three \$250 Sobey's gift cards. The draw was held the week of March 20th.

The survey began with a series of demographic questions (e.g., length of residence at the Range, income, gender, ethnicity, number of household members and ages, and receipt of a rent subsidy). Participants were then asked a variety of questions about their housing status, co-operative participation and awareness, housing needs and priorities, their views of the Range, and member communication. Closed and open-ended questions were included in the survey. For example, participants were asked to select morning, afternoon, or evening to respond to the question about the best meeting time, whereas they were asked to write a response to the question about the types of committees they would like to see formed at the Range. The participants' identities were treated as confidential, and a separate file containing participants' contact information was created for the draw. This was deleted after the draw was held.

Any identifiable information was removed from the data file before analysis, and consent was tracked on a separate spreadsheet. Physical survey copies were locked in a lock bag and transported back to the Housing, Mobilization and Engagement Research Lab (HOME-RL) for storage in a locked filing cabinet. Consent forms were scanned and shredded, and all paper surveys were entered into the online survey platform. Physical copies of the survey were shredded. Participants are not referred to by name and are described as a "member" or "participant" throughout this report.

Data Analysis

A spreadsheet with all data was downloaded from LimeSurvey, cleaned, and uploaded into Stata for recoding and analysis (StataCorp, 2025). Preliminary analyses included screening for accuracy, missing values, and outliers. The data were largely descriptive, and frequencies, means, standard deviations, and medians were reported where applicable. For this report, the response of "I don't know" was treated as missing, as were skipped items within the survey.

The open-ended questions were placed in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet for thematic analysis. JWM reviewed these responses and identified 11 themes that were used to categorize the responses reported in the findings section of this report. General patterns and statements are reported in the findings section; however, direct quotes were not used in this report. Responses to the open-ended questions were provided along with relevant data from closed-ended questions in the findings section of this report.

Engagement for Education & Action

CBPR projects are not just partnerships for the duration of project design and data collection. Rather, they involve engagement in action and/or education, or serve as a mechanism for prompting social change (Minkler, 2005). The students in SOCI 4379 delivered a presentation to the Range Board, Housing Alternatives, and CHF representatives and prepared a series of infographics for their use. During this presentation, questions were encouraged and answered. Findings from this report were also discussed at the Range's board meeting in April 2026, with specific attention paid to action items for the board's consideration (e.g., event planning, investigations into fence ownership and responsibilities, etc.). JWM also presented these findings at the Range's general membership meeting in May 2026 and at the CHF annual conference in June 2026. This report, with support from JWM, will be used by the Board, Housing

Alternatives, and CHF to inform programming, member education, and communication initiatives. Further, this report provides information on the members' priorities at the Range, which will be important for the Board as they plan and engage in decision-making with the Range's membership. The students were also given the option to participate in preparing an academic paper presenting participants' views on co-op housing and housing stability. This paper will be shared with the Board for review before submission to a journal. A plain-language blog and an infographic reporting the main findings from the academic paper will also be shared with the Board for their use. The next section of this report focuses on the findings of the membership survey.

RESULTS

The Range has 180 units that are part of its original construction and engaged in the transition to a co-operative model. Of these units, three are presently vacant, and there were 90 survey responses. Of the 90, three were removed for having insufficient data, with 90% or more of the questions remaining unanswered. In total, 87 households were included in the data analysis (response rate of approximately 49%). 60 (69%) of the surveys were completed online, and 27 (31%) were completed on paper, either with members at their unit doors or self-administered on paper and later collected. There was substantial variation in the number of members who responded to each question, as they could skip questions that they did not want to answer. These variations are reflected below.

To maintain participant confidentiality, the research team cannot report total cell counts for any response with fewer than five responses. The asterisks included in the charts within this section represent places where responses were combined to increase cell counts to a minimum of five. This was done with thoughtful caution to limit the amount of nuance lost in the results while still maintaining confidentiality.

The following section provides a brief description of the surveyed members. This is followed by a presentation of the answers to both the closed- and open-ended questions. Responses are grouped by topic, beginning with co-operative participation and awareness, followed by members' priorities for housing, neighbourhood, and investments, members' views of the Range Cooperative, member communication and meetings, and thoughts on housing stability.

Participant Characteristics

85 of the members who responded to the survey provided the length of time that they lived at the Range. This was collected in years and months and was reported as years. There was a large variation in the length of time lived at the Range, with both more recent members and members who have lived at the Range for years participating. The average time lived in the range was 12.40 years. Members also reported the number of individuals who lived in their household. The average number of people per household was approximately three. 33 of the 87 respondents reported minors living in their households (defined as individuals under 19 in New Brunswick), and about a quarter (26.19%) had other family members living at the Range.

Other family members included siblings, adult children, family in-laws, nieces/nephews, grandchildren, and aunts/uncles. Most individuals who completed the survey on behalf of their household were women. The number of individuals who reported a gender that was not female or male was too low to report on, and a category of “women+” was created to include any gender minorities, as per Statistics Canada reporting practices.

The majority (79.41%) of members surveyed indicated that they were North American, Canadian, or White. The second most selected category was European. The six individuals who indicated that their ethnicity was not North American, Canadian, White, or European were combined into a “Global Majority Ethnicity,” which reflects the reality that, globally, most people are not White or of European descent. These categories were combined to prevent the potential identification of these participants. Too few individuals reported newcomer status or Indigenous identity to report.

Of the 87 members who responded to the survey, only 11 (13.10%) reported that their rent is subsidized. Members were also asked about household income. In consultation with the Range’s board, it was decided that the survey would include a very explicit option to not report income (“if you prefer not to answer this question, please leave the box blank”), as this question can be considered sensitive. 35 individuals reported their pre-tax household income. The average income for this group was \$63,067.51. Demographic information is presented in Table A.

Cooperative Participation & Awareness

Members were asked if they knew that the Range had transitioned to a housing co-operative. Almost all members were aware of the transition. Members were also asked if they would like to know more about being a member of a co-operative (see Table B). Approximately half (49.35%) did not want more information, and the other half of participants either wanted information (41.56%) or were unsure (9.09%).

Members’ willingness to engage in co-operative governance was assessed by asking about future board and committee participation (see Table C). Approximately 1/5th of the members (19.30%) surveyed agreed to the statement that they would consider joining the board in the future. Many members (43.86%) responded that they were neutral or would not consider joining the board in the future (36.84%). Members were more apt to consider joining a committee in the future, with 32.26% strongly agreeing or agreeing to the statement “I would consider joining a committee in the future.” Approximately 37% were neutral, and just over 30% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table A: Participant Demographics

Variable	Number of Participants (%)	Mean (Standard Deviation)	Median
Years lived at the Range	85	12.40 (11.17)	9
Number of People in Household	85	2.99 (1.44)	3
Number of Households with Minors	33 (41.25)		
Households with Other Family at the Range	22 (26.19)		
Subsidized Rent	11 (13.10)		
Women+	59 (69.41)		
Men	26 (30.59)		
Has Not Immigrated to Canada within the last 5 years	86 (100)		
Household Income	35	\$63,067.51 (\$34,382.44)	\$60,000
North American/Canadian/White	54 (79.41)		
European	8 (11.76)		
Global Majority Ethnicity	6 (8.82)		

Table B: Desire for More Information on Being a Cooperative Member

Would like to know more about being a cooperative member	Number of Participants	Percentage
Yes	32	41.56
No	38	49.35
Unsure	7	9.09

Table C: Member Willingness to Join the Board and Committees

Statement	Strongly Agree/Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree/Strongly Disagree n (%)
I would consider joining the Range's board in the future	11 (19.30)	25 (43.86)	21 (36.84)
I would consider joining a committee	20 (32.26)	23 (37.10)	19 (30.65)

The members had a wide variation of suggestions for types of committees. They were asked to provide their ideas in an open-ended comment box. The committee ideas can largely be grouped into two classifications: 1) standards and improvements; and 2) engagement and development. The committee ideas that spoke to issues of standards and improvements were maintenance (e.g. response times, follow-ups, etc.), safety/neighbourhood watch, compliance and property standards committee (e.g., determining mechanisms to enforce community rules such as no pools, etc.), a policy committee, and an accessibility committee. Ideas for committees that addressed engagement and development included an eco-development committee (e.g. outdoor spaces, community gardens, play areas for kids, solar panels, etc.), a social committee, a clean-up committee, and a multicultural committee. In addition to committees, social and activity-based groups such as a women's circle and dance classes were suggested.

Members' Priorities for Housing, Neighbourhood and Investments

Members were asked to choose their three most important things about their housing (see Table D). They were also provided with an "other" option to include their own concerns. They were asked to rank their top three concerns. The most frequently chosen categories were affordability (34.36% of responses), safety (20.70% of responses), stability (16.30% of responses), and unit condition (14.10% of responses). Affordability was by far the most pressing priority for members, with 64 choosing this as their most important housing concern. Safety, stability, and unit condition were common second and third choices, but these were secondary and tertiary to affordability.

Members were also asked to select and prioritize their top three most important considerations about their neighbourhood (see Table E). The most important concern for members was that their neighbourhood feels safe, with 30 members choosing safety as their first choice and 54 members choosing safety as one of their three choices.

The next most common selections were that their neighbourhood was near amenities, was in a good location, and offered a sense of community. A neighbourhood in a good location was most frequently chosen as a second choice, whereas proximity to amenities was most frequently chosen third.

Table D: Members' Housing Priorities

Most Important for Housing	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Total (% of total)
Affordability	64	12	2	78 (34.36)
Safety	5	19	23	47 (20.70)
Stability	5	15	17	37 (16.30)
Unit Condition	1	20	11	32 (14.10)
Unit Size	2	4	5	11 (4.85)
Good Location	0	3	8	11 (4.85)
Environmentally Friendly/Accessible*	0	2	4	6 (2.64)
Offers Self-Determination	1	1	3	5 (2.20)
Total Number of Respondents	78	76	73	227 (100)

Table E: Members' Neighbourhood Priorities

Most Important for Neighbourhood	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Total (% of total)
Feels Safe	30	12	12	54 (33.13)
Near Amenities	7	14	17	38 (23.31)
Good Location	10	23	7	30 (18.40)
Sense of Community /Has Events*	11	5	14	30 (18.40)
Offers Self-Determination	1	3	7	11 (6.75)
Total Number of Respondents	59	57	57	173 (100)

Finally, members were asked to select and rank their top three investment preferences for the Range (see Table F). They were informed that housing charges cover expenses and that the remaining charges are reinvested in the cooperative. They were provided with a selection of investment ideas, and they could also add their own ideas. Most members indicated that repairs and renovations were their first or second investment priorities, and landscaping was the most selected third choice. Investment in communal spaces and a community garden were the fourth and fifth most preferred investment priorities.

Table F: Members' Priorities for Cooperative Investment

Preferences for Coop Investments	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Total (% of the total)
Repairs	39	28	4	71 (32.57)
Renovations	29	23	7	59 (27.06)
Landscaping	2	8	27	37 (16.97)
Communal Spaces	3	8	14	25 (11.47)
Community Garden	2	2	7	11 (5.05)
Activities/Events	0	3	4	7 (3.21)
Other (e.g. incentives/gifts/ co-op education)*	1	1	6	8 (3.67)
Total Number of Responses	76	73	69	218 (100)

Members were also asked if they had additional comments to share with the board of directors at the Range. Their responses were indicative of some of their housing, community, and investment priorities, although only some of the members took the time to respond to this question. Some of those who did not respond noted that they had nothing to share. Some of the members who responded had very positive things to say about the board's work, and expressed their thanks and gratitude. Some members were happy about the renovations and were optimistic about future renovations and community events. Open-ended responses indicated that members liked the heat pumps that were added to the units after the Range transitioned to a co-operative.

The members wanted the board to focus more on maintenance issues and community

events at board meetings. Requests were made for an upgraded playground and for the City of Saint John to provide municipal trash collection. Some members wanted additional parking. Other responses focused on staff training for effective communication between departments that deal with members' concerns and requests, and on seasonal gifts given to Range members (e.g., support for chocolate bars as a nice holiday gift, alongside the view that the money could be better used to keep rents low).

Many of the things that the members wanted the board to know focused on maintenance. They noted a need for a strong pest control regime and more outdoor maintenance (e.g., stair repairs, power-washing units, repainting parking lines annually). Suggestions also included providing members with a list of a few contractors that can do fences, so they all look similar. The question of whether the fencing should be the responsibility of the Range or the members was raised, as were requests for new windows, and chimney and furnace repairs. There was recognition that larger requests, like new windows, would take time, as these are considerable investments. There were requests to tidy up the outside of the units, and notes about landscaping practices were raised (e.g., protecting large ash trees from beetles, switching to amber outdoor lights to improve gardening conditions, and concern that large trees may pose hazards during storms).

Members' Views and Wants at the Range Housing Cooperative

Members were asked to provide their agreement with a variety of statements about the Range, with the options of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree, and I don't know (see Table G). For the analysis, strongly agree and agree were combined and disagree and strongly disagree were combined. "I don't know" was treated as missing. When fewer than five individuals responded to any one category, these categories were combined to avoid participant identification. This impacted four of the categories, which were presented as strongly agree/agree and neutral/disagree/strongly disagree.

The members' responses indicated generally favourable views of the co-op. Most members felt that there were opportunities to be involved in the co-op (76.06%), that board communication was effective (79.75%), that the Range is a safe (79.76%) and affordable (90.48%) place to live, and that they have a good sense of community at the Range (67.67%). Furthermore, only 10.26% of members reported that they would move if they had the option to do so. Most participants felt that their opinions were heard at the Range (61.29%), with less than 10% of members indicating that they disagreed or strongly disagreed on this item. The data on knowing enough about being a co-op member indicated more variation in responses, with 23.08% stating that they do not know enough. A sizable percentage of members indicated a neutral response on this item (38.46%).

Members' feedback on repairs and unit condition indicated that over half of the members (52.94%) agreed or strongly agreed that their units are in good condition, whereas 27.06% disagreed with this statement. Just under half (47.50%) of members agreed or strongly agreed that repairs are done quickly when needed; however, 28.75% of members did not agree with this statement.

Members were also asked specific questions about their desires as members of the co-op. Almost half of the members (48.00%) wanted to participate in decision-making at the Range, whereas only 10.67% did not. Most members (81.82%) wanted to make decisions about their own housing. Over half of the members (52.05%) wanted to be more involved in their neighbourhood; however, a substantial proportion were neutral on increased neighbourhood involvement. The data on the desire to make more social connections in the neighbourhood followed a similar pattern, as did the data on the desire for more community events. Recommendations for the Range based on the data displayed in Table G are discussed later in this paper.

The members' responses to the open-ended questions largely mirrored what was observed in the answers to the closed-ended questions. For example, many of the members discussed the Range as a safe place to live. A few members noted perceptions of increased safety concerns in the neighbourhood over the past little while because of demographic changes in the broader area in which the Range is located. This is likely related to the presence of new tiny homes and transitional housing projects in the general vicinity of the Range. Some of the members specifically noted that the co-op is a "friendly place" to live with good neighbours, and opportunities for their kids to make friends. Some members noted a few annoyances in their neighbourhood, including the yard sales held in the summer, intrusive road noise, kids playing in parking lots, barking dogs, and noise from neighbours.

Thoughts on maintenance were diverse, with some members noting that the Range is clean and well-maintained. Positive sentiments were shared about the switch to heat pumps, and some members said they were optimistic about future repairs and renovations. Others reported specific concerns that they had in their own units (e.g., mold or dampness, need for additional bathrooms, drafty windows, and other general wear and tear concerns) or discussed issues of outdoor maintenance (e.g., pest control, fences and stair repairs, power washing the outdoors of the units, repainting parking lines, and neighbourhood clean-up). It was noted that it was challenging to get repairs done properly. The need for more outdoor green spaces and appropriate play spaces for kids was also noted.

Table G: Members' Views and Wants at the Range Housing Cooperative

Statement	Strongly Agree/Agree n (%)	Neutral n (%)	Disagree/Strongly Disagree n (%)
There are opportunities to get involved at the coop	54 (76.06)	12 (16.90)	5 (7.04)
Communication from the board is effective	63 (79.75)	11 (13.92)	5 (6.33)
There is a good sense of community at the Range	50 (67.57)	24 (32.43)*	
My opinions are heard at the Range	38 (61.29)	18 (29.03)	6 (9.68)
My unit is in good condition	45 (52.94)	17 (20.00)	23 (27.06)
I would move somewhere else if I could	8 (10.26)	8 (10.26)	62 (79.49)
When I need repairs done, they are done quickly	38 (47.50)	19 (23.75)	23 (28.75)
The Range is a safe place to live	67 (79.76)	17 (20.24)*	
I feel like the Range is an affordable place to live	76 (90.48%)	8 (9.52)*	
I feel like I don't know enough about being a member of a coop	18 (23.08)	30 (38.46)	30 (38.46)
I want to participate in decision making at the Range	36 (48.00)	31 (41.33)	8 (10.67)
I want to make decisions about my own housing	63 (81.82)	14 (18.18)*	
I want to receive more information about being a member of the Range	38 (52.05)	25 (34.25)	10 (13.70)
I want to be more involved in my neighbourhood	29 (37.18)	40 (51.28)	9 (11.54)
I want to make more social connections in my neighbourhood	29 (36.71)	38 (48.10)	12 (15.19)
I want more community events to participate in at the Range	23 (31.94)	31 (43.06)	18 (25.00)

*Reported as a combined category to avoid participant identification due to low cell counts

Member Communication & Meetings

The Range members were asked if they attended the cooperative's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held at the Nick Nicole Centre in November 2025. 78 participants responded to this question (see Table H). Of the 78, 13 (16.67%) attended the AGM and 65 (83.33%) did not.

The 65 participants who did not attend the AGM were asked to indicate why they did not attend. They were provided with standard options to select from and told to choose all that applied. They were also able to provide their own response if they selected “other,” however, all the individuals in the other categories fit nicely into and were collapsed into the existing categories.

Table H: Reasons for Not Attending the AGM

Reason	Number of Participants (n)	Percent of Participants who Did Not Attend
The time did not work for me	41	62.12
I had other things to do	10	15.15
I didn't feel comfortable attending/illness	6	9.09
Other (e.g. wasn't interested, no childcare, no transportation, didn't know about the AGM) *	9	13.34
Total number of respondents	66	100

There was not much open-ended response feedback on meetings; however, a challenge in finding meeting times was the variability in members' work times. Some of the members noted that they worked shift work and were available some evenings, but not others, and that their availability varied from week to week.

Members were asked to identify items that would make their attendance at meetings more feasible (see Table I). Participants were allowed to choose as many items as they felt applied to them. The most common facilitators for future meeting attendance were the option to attend virtually (36.78%), selecting a different time for the meeting (19.54%), and meetings held in a walkable location (12.64%). Some of the members (10.34%) indicated that they are not interested in attending the co-op meetings. Members were also asked about their preferred meeting formats (see Table L) and contact methods (see Table M). Most members (49.38%) preferred virtual or online meetings, and 24.69% of members preferred hybrid meetings. 20.99% of members wanted to have in-person meetings. Too few members chose the other option to report on; however, written responses included alongside the other option included any format, send information by email, unsure, and noted the need to communicate if meetings are accessible.

Table I: Facilitators for Future Meeting Attendance

Facilitator for Future Attendance	Number of Participants (n)	Percentage of Participants
Option to attend virtually	32	36.78
Different time for the meeting	17	19.54
A walkable location	11	12.64
I'm not interested in attending	9	10.34
Kids' Activities	7	8.1
Other (Food available/small incentive/translation/bus tokens/taxi vouchers)*	11	12.64
Total number of respondents	87	100

Table J: Members' Reported Best Times for Meetings

Best Time for Meetings	Number of participants	Percentage
Mornings (8am-noon)/Afternoons (noon-5pm) *	8	11.27
Evenings (5pm-8pm)	49	69.01
Unsure	14	19.72
Total	71	100

Table K: Members' Reported Best Days for Meetings

Best Day of Week for Meetings	Number of participants	Percentage
Weekdays	36	53.73
Weekends	17	25.37
Unsure	14	20.9
Total	67	100

Most members (84.52%) wanted communication via email. This should be interpreted with caution. Although this study had a high response rate of approximately 50%, many participants filled the survey out online which means, in most cases, that they accessed the survey through the recruitment emails. This indicated that they were checking their emails from HA and the Range. It is possible that the half of the Range that did not respond to the survey do not check emails.

Transition to Co-operative Housing

The Range has a very rich and interesting history within Saint John. The housing was built as affordable housing under a bilateral agreement, and it was noted that the Range can be perceived as a stigmatizing place to live because of the sign that marks the community’s presence and the perception that the Rifle Range has been viewed as “low-income housing” over the years. The residents reported feeling concerned, stressed, anxious, and very worried when they heard that the Rifle Range would be put up for sale.

Table L: Members’ Preferred Formats for Meetings

Preferred Meeting Type	Number of Participants	Percentage
Virtual/Online	40	49.38
Hybrid	20	24.69
In Person	17	20.99
Other	4	4.94

Table M: Members’ Preferred Contact Methods

Best Contact Method	Number of Participants	Percentage
Email or Email Newsletter	71	84.52
Text Message	7	8.24
Paper Filers or Newsletters/Other*	7	8.24
Total	85	100

A few noted the lack of affordable housing in Saint John, recent rent increases, and knowledge of speculative rental housing purchases as contributors to their concerns. They noted that they were very concerned about their ability to keep their housing and to do so with affordable rents. Members were nervous about who would purchase their housing and what that would mean to their long-term stability, affordability, and housing/neighbourhood conditions. The transition to the co-op remained under embargo for quite a while, and members felt that they were in limbo as they waited to hear about their housing futures. However, once the transition was announced, the members who provided open-ended feedback reported feeling positive about the change. They noted a sense of relief, decreased stress and worry, and were genuinely relieved that they did not have to worry about their long-term stability, permanency, and affordability. A few of the members specifically noted that they like the co-op model and that it is “fair,” and some wrote in that they thought the Board has done a good job with the Range since it transitioned to a co-op.

DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This report focuses on members' responses to the Range Membership Survey. The aims of this study were: 1) to understand more about who the Range members are; 2) to explore members' views of their housing and neighbourhood; 3) to understand members' priorities and preferences for their housing and neighbourhood; and 4) to determine mechanisms for best engaging the Range's membership. This section discusses the report's findings and presents practical recommendations that the Range Co-operative may consider implementing.

Participant Characteristics

Just under half of the Range's member households participated in the survey. Although the characteristics may differ significantly among members who did not respond, an approximate 50% response rate provides sufficient data to generate a relatively comprehensive understanding of the membership. The members' responses indicate a rich history of residence in the Range, with an average tenure of 12.40 years and a median tenure of 9.00 years. These long tenures for members indicate that the Range provides housing stability. Furthermore, research demonstrates that long rental tenures are associated with improved mental health and wellbeing (Li et al., 2022) and greater rental affordability (MacIsaac & Wavrock, 2025). This is particularly important as 41.25% of the households have minors. In a study of low-income renters in Australia, Baker et al. (2019) find that residential instability matters more for child wellbeing than affordability, indicating the importance of long rental tenures for households with children.

In addition to long rental tenures, the survey finds that over a quarter of Range members had other family members (e.g., grandparents, parents, in-laws, cousins, siblings, and children) living in other units at the Range. Depending on the strength of the relationships among family members, this could mean that these members have access to informal social supports in their own neighbourhoods. A study on the New Brunswick waitlist for subsidized housing finds that higher social support is associated with improved mental and physical health (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2024a). Members may benefit from access to increased social support related to family ties at the Range Co-op. This is something that could be explored in future studies.

Most members report their ethnicities as North American, Canadian, White, or European. This should be interpreted with caution, as the survey was only offered in English, and newcomers may not have been able to participate in an English survey. Future studies may benefit from partnerships with other local organizations that can provide translation services to assist with survey completion. Furthermore, the four new units filled in partnership with L'Arche were not captured in the survey. Future studies would benefit from understanding the experiences of these co-op members as well.

The median and mean household incomes in the Range are above the reported annual median household income for renters (approximately \$45,000) from the last census period (Statistics Canada, 2026); however, the last census period was five years ago, and the data may be dated. The next iteration of the census may be more comparable to the income at the Range. Also, income values in this survey should be interpreted with caution, as many participants chose not to report their incomes. Income was also not adjusted for household size. However, despite a lower response rate for the income question, it should be noted that the standard deviation for income is quite high, which indicates a variety of household income levels at the Range.

A surprisingly small percentage of households report receiving rent subsidies. This could be related to the higher level of income reported by approximately 50% of the members surveyed. More women completed the survey, on behalf of their households, than men. This is common when households are allowed to choose which member participates in a survey, as women often perform mental and administrative tasks for their households (Aviv et al., 2024; Dean et al., 2022). Further, more women may lead households than men at the Range.

Members' Views of Housing & Neighbourhood

Overall, the members felt that the Range is a safe and affordable place to live. This is very important as affordability and safety are the most important housing concerns among the members. This indicates that the Range is meeting the members' top priorities. Some members feel less safe due to demographic changes in the neighbourhood, and, indeed, the literature finds that the placement of homelessness response services can cause distress for neighbouring communities (Orr et al., 2025). Sibley et al. (2025) note that community rhetoric focused on public safety often leads to exclusionary housing policies that negatively impact unhoused persons. They recommend building resilient communities through the development of strong community ties and advocacy for inclusive and affordable housing. Further, Dej et al. (2021) recommend that communities build collective awareness of the underlying factors leading to homelessness, develop community goals to address problems facing communities over the long-term, mobilize to act using appropriate resources, and engage in ongoing feedback collection and adjust plans based on community feedback. The board may consider implementing some of these recommendations by establishing a community safety and/or education committee that mobilizes available resources to maintain community perceptions of safety, provide education on initiatives for unhoused individuals in the vicinity of the Range, and continually solicit feedback from members on the efficacy of safety approaches and their concerns. The open-ended feedback indicates that some members would like to start a neighbourhood watch and/or community safety committee. This is something that the board could explore further. Additionally, education on what to do when safety concerns arise in the neighbourhood could empower members, as they may feel better equipped to respond to safety concerns if and when they do arise.

Most Range members feel there is a strong sense of community in their neighbourhood, and many feel it is a friendly place to live. Furthermore, some participants with children note that their kids can make friends in their neighbourhood. Other members note annoyances with neighbours, children playing in parking lots, traffic, barking dogs, and community yard sales. Establishing a community set of rules or policies that address noise control may be useful for the Range.

Members' views on maintenance and repairs are varied. Some members note that they are pleased with the new heat pumps and renovations, and they have high hopes for future improvements to the Range. Although only about half of the membership agree or strongly agree that their housing is in good condition, less than 30% disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. The figures on the speed of repairs were slightly more concerning, with just under half agreeing or strongly agreeing that repairs are done promptly. This indicates a need to develop strong processes for filing repair and maintenance orders. The co-op may consider partnering with computer science students at the University of New Brunswick or New Brunswick Community College to develop a virtual tracking system for maintenance and repair requests. This would allow members to log into a portal and actively monitor the status of their requests. It could also provide them with additional information or explanations (e.g., looking for a service provider, waiting for materials to arrive, etc.) for delayed repairs. This may increase member satisfaction as they could track their requests independently.

Finally, many members' open-ended feedback on maintenance and repairs focuses on exterior and communal spaces at the Range. Items to address include fences and the responsibility for payment for fences, outdoor stairs, exterior power-washing, garbage clean-up, and line repainting in parking lots. Good-quality outdoor spaces can reduce health disparities and improve health equity (Rigolon et al., 2021), enhance mental health, reduce stress, restore attention, and increase feelings of safety (Groenewegen et al., 2006). The board may consider implementing voluntary community clean-up days during times of the year when outdoor areas need them most (e.g., early spring, fall, etc.). The members also suggest a committee that focuses on a variety of outdoor aspects of the Range (e.g. garbage collection, community cleaning, community gardens, etc.). This may be a good committee to establish, as its members can explore timelines, schedules, and priorities for outdoor maintenance and support the board with implementing clean-up initiatives.

Members' Priorities & Preferences for Housing & Neighbourhood

First and foremost, members note that they would like any surplus revenue from the Range to be directed toward repairs and renovations. This makes sense given the age of most of the townhouse units at the Range. Housing conditions are a vital component of core housing need

(Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2018), and residential and neighbourhood satisfaction are contributors to mental health and well-being (Taylor et al., 2026). The board should continue to focus on repairs and renovations at the Range. Furthermore, processes for tracking repairs and maintenance work, such as those mentioned above, may improve communication with the membership and member satisfaction.

Landscaping and communal spaces are also mentioned as investment priorities of the membership. The board should find ways to adopt good landscaping practices and clarify ownership of fences and outdoor communal spaces by defining responsibilities for outdoor maintenance and repairs. Furthermore, they may apply for community grants to procure indoor and outdoor spaces (e.g., community centre, gardens, etc.) for members' use. They may also benefit from their partnership with the YMCA, which is within close walking distance of the Range. Opportunities to use the YMCA's communal spaces for member meetings, committee meetings, and membership events could be sought. It should be noted that although most participants discuss mechanisms for investment, a few offer open-ended feedback indicating their desire to redirect any surplus to keep rents affordable.

Members prioritize neighbourhoods that feel safe, close to amenities, and are well-located. The Range is within close walking distance of the Regional YMCA, a grocery chain store, a smaller independent grocer, a large drug store, restaurants, and a variety of other amenities. The members note enjoying the proximity to these amenities in their surveys. In the open-ended responses, safety emerges as a growing concern for members, and the recommendations presented above may be considered by the Range to ensure that the Range remains perceived as a safe place to live.

Membership Engagement

The vast majority of the members surveyed are aware that the former Rifle Range is now the Range Housing Co-operative. This indicates an excellent knowledge of the transition among members. Unlike some other co-ops, the Range is unique in that its members did not elect to co-operative membership; their housing became co-operative housing to maintain affordability, stability, and to increase engagement and involvement in the community. The findings of this survey provide evidence that there are meaningful ways to engage and support the membership at the Range beyond providing housing affordability and stability, which most of the membership perceives they have achieved. For example, about half of the membership surveyed did not want more information on co-operative membership, whereas the other half were unsure or did want more information. This indicates an opportunity to engage members in education on co-operatives.

The survey finds that more members are willing to engage at the committee level than at the board level. At a cursory glance, this may seem disparaging; however, it indicates that there is

opportunity to engage members in committees, which can promote familiarity with co-operative governance, build community, and demystify the process and responsibilities of sitting on a co-operative board. Studies on co-ops and non-profit organizations suggest that individuals often avoid putting their names forward for Board positions due to concerns about time, commitment, and the skills needed (Miller-Stevens & Ward, 2019; Banerjee et al., 2024). The survey findings indicate a willingness and desire to participate in decision-making both within the community and on aspects that impact members' own housing units directly. Committees offer a way to engage members in activities that may be perceived as lower stakes. This engagement may facilitate future involvement on the Board. This report recommends that the Range start a variety of committees, and suggestions for types of committees are included in the findings section.

This study focuses on logistical information for successfully engaging members in general and annual membership meetings. Many members wanted online meetings; however, this should be interpreted with caution, as online survey completion was higher than in-person, suggesting that participants are familiar with technology and have it available to them. A considerable number of participants stated that hybrid meetings are preferred, and approximately 20% wanted in-person meetings. The findings indicate an opportunity for the board to host hybrid meetings. Hybrid meetings offer a virtual option for the majority of members who want to participate online, while also providing in-person options for those who want in-person or hybrid options. Hybrid meetings can often be difficult to facilitate. The Range may consider approaching local post-secondary institutions through partnerships to discuss best practices for hybrid meeting facilitation and to inquire about spaces that are well-designed to meet the needs of those engaging in hybrid meeting formats.

Most members who are not participating in meetings report challenges with timing. Although the Range currently holds membership meetings at the times reported as best in the survey (e.g., weekday evenings), shifting work and other life schedules can hinder attendance. This is challenging to accommodate, as schedules can change weekly. So long as the Range maintains quorum for meetings, they may consider recording membership meetings and placing them on a shared site or social media page for members. This would allow members to engage with critical information provided by the Range despite changes to their weekly and daily schedules.

CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates that the Range Housing Co-operative is playing a critical role in addressing housing insecurity in Saint John by preserving affordability and enhancing stability for its members. In a broader housing landscape characterized by rising costs and limited access to subsidized housing, the Range stands out as an example of how non-market housing models can protect residents from displacement and housing precarity. Members' positive perceptions of affordability, safety, and community reflect the strength of the co-operative model and the efforts of the board and its partners in transitioning to a co-operative from the former Rifle Range.

At the same time, the co-operative's sustainability and continued success will depend on its ability to respond to members' needs and priorities. Addressing concerns on maintenance, repairs, and outdoor spaces, and creating accessible and flexible opportunities for member engagement are essential. By investing in outdoor and indoor infrastructure, repairs, and renovations, strengthening communication systems, and fostering inclusive participation through committees and hybrid engagement strategies, the Range may deepen member involvement and overall satisfaction. As both a housing provider and a community, the Range is well-positioned to serve as a model for future co-operative housing initiatives in New Brunswick and beyond.

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