Under Pressure?
Canada’s Rental Housing Neighbourhoods & their Residents

DRAFT framing of the issue for discussion
Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership
David Hulchanski, PI
Last revised: 30-March-2014
Research Questions: What do we want to know?

1. What are the key problems in Canada's existing stock of rental housing, market and non-market rental?
2. How do we best define these problems? Housing condition, such as adequacy, suitability, affordability?
3. Where are rental housing problems most concentrated and why?
4. How did these problems evolve? What are the trends?
5. What socio-economic and ethno-cultural groups are most affected?
6. How do the residents of inadequate rental housing experience their housing and neighbourhood?
7. What policies have been enacted to try and alleviate these problems and how successful have they been?
8. What other policies might be tried? What can we learn from other jurisdictions?
Macro Context for Rental Housing Problems

1. **Globalization & Neo-liberal policies**: Our globalized, post-industrial era with neo-liberal policies since the late 1980s

2. **Housing Policies**: Declining support for public/non-profit rental housing; limited support for private rental and for rental housing rehabilitation

3. **Housing Market Dynamics**: more private rental at-risk from deterioration, redevelopment, condo conversion, gentrification

4. **Labour Market**: more low-income and part-time jobs; greater income inequality & income polarization

5. **Immigration/Demographic Diversity**: greater ethno-cultural mix; some concentrations of disadvantaged groups in market & non-market rental

6. **Housing Discrimination**: based on income, source of income, ethno-cultural status, skin-colour, family composition and size
Macro Context has different regional & CMA impacts

The salience of macro contextual issues will vary from CMA to CMA, and from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. Their relevance and impact must be determined locally.

A few examples:

1. Some CMAs will have a substantial subsidized rental housing stock inherited from the welfare state era of the 1960s-1980s.

2. Immigration is more significant in the three largest CMAs (was 75% of all immigrant arrivals a decade ago; is still 60% for the three largest CMAs).

3. Housing affordability varies among the CMAs.
Given the general research questions and with an understanding of the macro context we want to study certain neighbourhoods /areas that have concentrations of rental housing.

But, how do we select areas to study?
Selecting Neighbourhoods with a Concentration of Rental Housing Problems

FIRST:
For a CMA or group of CMAs select
(a) rental housing stock with certain recognized problems,
(b) to focus further, select occupants with certain characteristics,
(c) an option to further focus, select a disadvantaged group(s) among the residents,
(d) an option to further focus, select a type of geography within the CMA that has (a)

Also: know the Macro Context affecting the CMA’s stock, population, etc.

OUTPUT: Having made decisions about a, b, c, & d, this will result in a list of CTs / DAs to study (with yet further decisions about how many of them to study)
(a) Rental Housing Stock

1) Housing condition (adequacy, suitability, affordability)
2) Age
3) Structure type
4) Density
5) Purpose built rental, secondary (informal) rental
6) Private, Public (non-market social housing by type)
7) 
8)
(b) Residents of the Rental Housing identified in (a)

1) Socio-economic status (income, education, ...)
2) Ethno-cultural
3) Visible minority, skin-colour
4) Immigrants, recent immigrants
5) Household size / family composition
6)
7)
8)
(c) Disadvantaged Group(s)

Option: NCRP researchers may choose to focus on

- one or more disadvantaged groups in areas with rental housing problems,
- in one or more CMAs
- based on the selected characteristics of
  - the rental housing stock
  - the demographic characteristics of the residents of the rental housing
  - option: the location/geography type of that housing stock
(d) Geography Type

1) Inner-city
2) Older districts of the city/CMA
3) Inner-suburbs
4) Outer suburbs
5)
6)
7)
Our Focus
The dynamics of Rental Housing

Our focus is on particular geographies within CMAs that have concentrations of rental housing with certain characteristics, so as to learn more about the dynamics relating to this rental housing stock and its problems, in order to answer questions about trends, processes, consequences and potential policy interventions.