NCRP Rental Housing Working Group

Detailed research questions to help set priorities
for the analysis of census & other data on rental housing

DRAFT for Discussion

Greg Suttor & David Hulchanski, 24 September 2014

We started with a list of very general questions.

What Problems & Where

1. What are the key problems in Canada's existing stock of market rental housing in major metropolitan areas?
2. How do we define these problems? Physical condition, locational attributes, adequacy, suitability, affordability?
3. Where are rental housing problems most concentrated?

Who are the Residents?

4. What socio-economic and ethno-cultural groups are most affected?
5. How do the residents of inadequate rental housing experience their housing and neighbourhood?

Explaining How & Why

6. How and why did these problems evolve and why in their locations?

Interventions

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?

In order to move further we need to decide priorities so as to identify exactly what aspects of the rental housing issue we want to pay most attention to which will help define what data we will seek to obtain (purchase if necessary). We cannot do everything.

This "long list" of questions/topics is an attempt to help us further specify priorities -- to be clearer about what we primarily want to focus on and what is of lower priority.

1. Basic demographics

1.1. **Household type**. What was the evolving mix of household types among low-income renter households in these areas? How different from CMA trends and from CMA low-income renter trends?

1.2. **Age**. What was the evolving population age and age-of-head (maintainer) profile among low-income renter households and in the places of interest? How different from CMA?

1.3. **Differences by social group**. Among low-income renter households in these areas, how did household type or age profiles vary between disadvantaged ethno-racial groups?

2. Stock change

2.1. Net change and production
- What net amounts of rental housing were added (by period) in main stock types such as high-rise apartments, low-rise apartments, houses?
- Do age and structural profiles (or local data) indicate net gain/loss of rental as new production or conversion? Was there rental-to-owner conversion of houses? apartments?
- Was ownership stock also added in high-RHDI areas? More or less than rental?

2.2. Implications for low-income renters
- Did the increment or decrease in low-income renters occur in newly built rental housing, older rental housing (i.e. income shifts), or houses (i.e. tenure conversion / income shifts)?
- Do high-RHDI areas have higher rates of change in these structural and tenure categories than across the CMA, or account for large share of CMA increment in these categories?
- Did different stock types have different renter income profiles and trends?

2.3. Broad spatial pattern
- Were the neighbourhoods with many low-income renters contiguous /nearby /scattered?
- Did increase in low-income renters occur disproportionately in places with many low-income renters at the outset?
- Are such trends different in older vs. newer high-RHDI areas (e.g. pre-war vs. postwar vs. recent areas), or by period?

2.4. Social and private rental *(not from census data)*
- What share of high-RHDI low-income renters, and of increment, was in social housing versus private rental? Were these in the same or different areas?

3. Ethno-racial

1.1. Profile. Which ethno-racial groups (or Aboriginals) were overrepresented among low-income renters in these areas? How did this change and evolve? Was this different from CMA?

3.1. Context and comparison
- Did low-income renters in disadvantaged ethno-racial groups (or Aboriginals) have different spatial patterns from all low-income renters? From owners or middle-class renters of the same group?
- Within disadvantaged ethno-racial groups, how different is the recent immigrant profile?

4. Labour market and income

4.1. Income sources and labour force status
- What changes occurred in primary income source (or shares of total income) from earnings, transfer income among seniors, and transfer income among others?
- What changes occurred in labour force status (esp. age 25-65), i.e. employed full-time, part-time, unemployed, not in the labour force? Differences by gender?

4.2. Income profiles and trends
- How did renter income levels and trends (and those of apartment renters) in these areas compare to CMA trends, over time?
- Were renter income trends in these areas due to fewer middle-income households, more low-income households, etc. – i.e. what different shares of change by income range?

4.3. Ownership context and displacement
- How much income shift in high-RHDI areas is due to owner versus renter trends? Were owner trends parallel to or different from renter income trends in these areas?
- In high-RHDI areas, how did renter vs. owners income trends differ between aging postwar neighbourhoods, gentrifying areas, disadvantaged "inner city" areas, etc.?
- Was there net displacement of low-income renters by middle/upper-income owners? Of middle-income renters by lower-income renters? Other?

4.4. Income by ethno-racial group
- Among low-income renters, did those in disadvantaged ethno-racial groups (or Aboriginals) have different labour force status and income profiles from others?

4.5. Occupation
- What proportions of workers in rental housing in these areas were in managerial-professional occupations, blue collar occupations, low-end service occupations, other?

4.6. Concentrated trends or distinct trends
- Did low-income renters in these areas have different income levels, occupations, and labour force status or trends than low-income renters in the CMA overall?
- Did recent immigrant (and Aboriginal migrant) renters in these areas have different incomes, occupations, or labour force status than others there of that ethno-racial group?
- Did recent immigrant (+Aboriginal migrant) renters in these areas have different incomes, occupations, or labour force status than their ethno-racial counterparts across the CMA?

5. Prices, affordability, and housing stress

5.1. **Rents.** What were the rent levels, ranges, and trends in the places of interest, compared to CMA?

5.2. Affordability
- What change occurred in incidence of rental affordability problems (& severe problems)?
- How much did relative change in rent levels versus income levels contribute to changes in rent/income ratios in these areas? Was this different for houses, low-rise, high-rise?

5.3. Housing quality and potential crowding
- Does housing quality in these areas show negative patterns or trends beyond those explicable by the strong normal correlates of tenure and age-of-stock?
- How has persons per room (potential crowding) changed for renter households, and for what household types? How do these areas compare to CMA renters and to homeowners?

5.4. Real estate context
- Were low rents in the same areas as lower home values for homeowners?
- To what extent were lower-income renters in lower-rent stock, or increasingly so?

6. Migration

6.1. Movers and turnover
- Was population turnover relatively high or low in these areas – among renters and among low-income renters?
- What were the occupation, labour force status, and income differences between adult movers to these areas and non-movers in them?

6.2. Immigration
- Over time, how many people and household heads in these areas, and how many low-income renters among them, were recent immigrants?

6.3. Aboriginal migration
- Over time, how many people and household heads in these areas, and how many low-income renters among them, were Aboriginals who had recently migrated to the city?