

## **NCRP Rental Housing Working Group Meeting #1**

**6 August 2014, 12pm EDT** via teleconference

(5pm UK; 1pm Halifax; 11am Winnipeg; 10am Calgary; 9am Vancouver)

Toll Free: **1-866-440-4486**, in Toronto area call: **416-343-4997**, Conference ID: **7494082**

**Participants:** Jill Grant, Xavier Leloup, Leanne Holt, Greg Suttor, Emily Paradis, Alan Walks, Larry Bourne, Bob Murdie, Michelynn Laflèche, Jino Distasio, Andrew Kaufman, Leslie Evans, Derek Cook, Ivan Townshend, David Ley.

### **1. An initial general overview discussion**

#### **1.1. How much of a priority might the rental housing research theme be for each CMA team?**

- Winnipeg of medium interest – poverty is concern.
- Medium interest in Halifax – some concern about declining quality, lack of concentration, rooming house disappearance & gentrification. Affordability is less of an issue. Very large stock of rental housing in large pockets – lends itself to stigmatization.
- Calgary – Medium priority - lack of rental and conversion to condominium as it ages. No condo conversion restrictions in Alberta. Low-income private market housing stock not spatially concentrated, so no specific neighbourhoods to target.
- Montreal: Medium to high priority. Have concentration of aging rental housing deteriorating. Huge interest in City and efforts to improve quality.
- Vancouver high priority. Key issues: availability, affordability, deterioration, gentrification. Policy issues.
- Toronto: high priority. Rental housing overlays here with other issues such as immigration.
- Interest in all cities but issues differ (p. 3 of agenda). 3 largest CMAs differ from others.
- FCM – increasing concern in member cities over condition & deterioration of rental housing stock. Calls to reinvest expiring operating agreements in capital repairs, reinvigorating and reinvesting in rental housing stock.
- Is this only about private stock or also concerns about social housing stock deteriorating? Is our focus on private rental too restrictive? But – lots of work and focus on social housing and less on private. Group agrees both are important and social housing is part of the big picture. Can't only look at private rental.

#### **1.2. Are there local partners with a strong interest to actively participate and focus on rental housing?**

- Halifax: both partners HRM and UWH both very interested. May be others as well.
  - Vancouver: SPARC very interested. Will need to expand team. Housing justice project between law and planning at UBC – potential to integrate personnel.
  - Calgary: medium priority, is timely – may need to engage Homeless Foundation, City's Affordable Housing Strategy. Housing is outside the work of FCC but educating communities on this issue is part of FCC mandate. United Way very interested and have
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- a lot of data to contribute. Vibrant Communities Calgary and Momentum possible partners.
- Montreal: City has agreed to participate in research efforts. Maybe organizations in health sector – lots of discussion on links between housing conditions and health issues. Also issue of improving affordability. Housing advocacy organizations would be interested in results.
  - Winnipeg: just finished case study with African community in downtown. Winnipeg Rental Network focused on addressing age of Winnipeg's unique housing stock, conditions, rooming houses and SROs.
  - Toronto: UWT is in a watch and learn position – focused on strategic planning.

**1.3. Who from each team will likely participate (academics; partners; students)?**

- Halifax: Jill Grant
- Montreal: Damaris Rose
- Vancouver: Not resolved. Have met with housing justice group. Need to know budget.
- Calgary: Derek as lead with Ivan involved.
- Winnipeg: Not specified.
- Toronto: Greg Suttor.

**2. Option: An initial overview report by each CMA**

**2.1. Richard can supply a matched set of maps and graphs for each CMA** from which each CMA writes a short overview of issues and trends. This is an initial overview at a fairly high level of generality — using what is available from the census and items such as our Rental Housing Disadvantage Index. The national working group will discuss (by email/phone) what data to use and how best to have roughly similar overview reports. Also: what data might we want to purchase.

- Greg Suttor has drafted a description of a possible data package for discussion at next meeting. This package would provide a baseline set of information: time series, drawing on census data and other resources, similar to the data provided for “3 cities” reports.
- The group agrees that this would be very useful for knowledge mobilization and for enabling comparative analysis. It was suggested that a rubric or outline be provided for the parallel reports.
- CMHC data should be included. Other data, such as social housing information, is not parallel across CMAs.
- The CMA reports would eventually be expanded into a chapter for an edited book.

**3. Themes for more detailed studies** (This item was not discussed)

**4. Community consultations: Initial CMA environmental scans as a method?**

**4.1. Example of the Social Planning Toronto initiative – a pilot project for other CMAs**

- The group agreed that this is a good model for learning more about current issues on the ground.
  - There was concern about the cost: a project of this cost would not be feasible to replicate in other cities.
  - The funding for the comparative rental housing studies comes out of the budget line for comparative work, not each CMA's \$100,000 budget.
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- The group noted a need to decide on a budget line for this theme area and a protocol for allocating it.

## **5. Next steps; Next meeting**

- A poll will be sent for a next meeting in late September. Topics:
  - Data packages and report outline
  - Budget for this theme area and funding CMA projects.