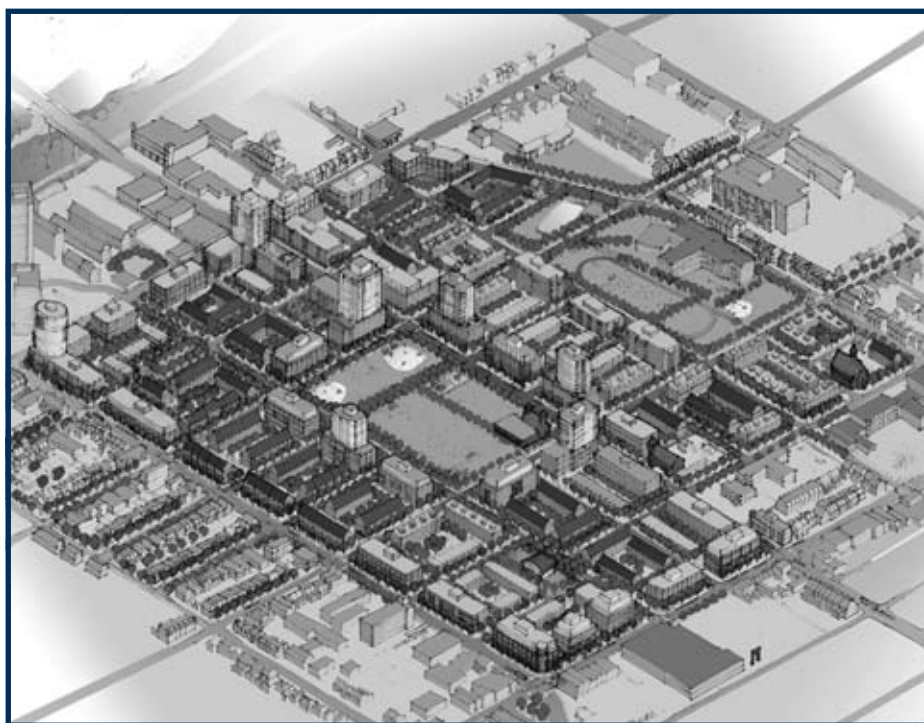


Regent Park: Planning for a Sustainable Community

Toronto's Regent Park is poised for a major overhaul



Bird's eye view showing proposed redevelopment of Regent Park in downtown Toronto, which will create a mixed-income community of over 12,000 people.

Beginning in late 2005, the transformation of Canada's largest social housing complex into a community shaped by social, economic and environmental sustainability will begin. The Regent Park vision has been driven by years of extensive planning and consultation with tenants, financial experts, developers and architects, as well as a thorough study of revitalization work in other jurisdictions.

The aging development will be demolished and redesigned in six phases over the next 12 years into a mixed-use, medium-density, mixed-income community with parks and community services, well served by public transport and close to a wide variety of amenities.

Originally built between 1948 and 1959, the buildings are now a deteriorating collection of nearly 2,100 social housing units with 7,500 residents. Through the revitalization, the 28-hectare site in

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About the National Housing Research Committee

The National Housing Research Committee (NHRC), established in 1986, is made up of federal, provincial and territorial, municipal, industry, social housing, academic community and consumer representatives.

Its objectives include:

- identifying priority areas for housing-related research or demonstration;
- fostering greater co-operation, developing partnerships and minimizing overlap in research activities;
- encouraging support for housing research; and
- promoting the dissemination, application and adoption of research results.

In addition to the Full Committee, the NHRC also operates through working groups to exchange information, discuss research gaps and undertake research projects. Currently, working groups meet on housing data, homelessness, sustainable community planning, seniors housing, and housing and population health. NHRC participants also contribute articles to the NHRC newsletter, which is produced twice a year, and network with their online community: www.nhrc-cnrl.ca

The NHRC co-chairs are Leigh Howell of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and Hélène Aubé of the Société d'habitation du Québec.

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call 1 800 668-2642
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downtown Toronto will be redeveloped into a community of 12,500 residents in 5,100 units (1,900 social housing units, 300 affordable ownership housing units and 2,900 market-priced units). Another 183 social housing units will be rebuilt in the surrounding community.

Over the past several decades, many unsuccessful efforts were made at redevelopment. In 2001, the newly formed Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) began the current initiative in response to concerns expressed by Regent Park residents. The next stage was a year-long consultation with residents of Regent Park and surrounding communities, community agencies, financial experts, developers, architects and the City of Toronto, and a thorough study of other redevelopment efforts in Canada, the United States and Australia. The result of the process was a redevelopment plan that was first approved by TCHC and then by the City of Toronto in 2003.

The objective of the redevelopment plan is to create a healthy community that is integrated with the surrounding city. At the time of its construction, Regent Park was intended as a garden city, set in park-like surroundings without streets and somewhat removed from the city. However, the lack of streets created a sense of isolation from the rest of the city, contributing to safety issues. The redevelopment plan recommended introducing streets, creating large new park spaces, aligning buildings along the streets and providing opportunities for employment, education, culture and community facilities.

With the redevelopment approvals in place, TCHC began the next stage of research to shape the neighbourhood. One goal was to make Regent Park a model environmental community—driven by sustainability targets and based on an interdisciplinary approach.

"The goal was to create a highly attractive development with the lowest impact possible on the environment," says Mary Neumann, project manager with TCHC. A team of consultants was hired to respond to this goal.



The main report that followed, *The Sustainable Community Design Report*, prepared by Dillon Consulting and several sub-consultants, proposed a fully integrated sustainable community with wide-ranging measures to protect and enhance the environment. The first proposals to be adopted were the energy-efficient buildings and centralized heating and cooling. These measures alone will mean a considerable reduction in the "ecological footprint" of the development. Compared with a typical housing development, carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced by at least 44,000 tonnes a year and the consumption of fossil fuels will be reduced by up to 80 per cent.

Neumann says that, although the sustainability measures were planned specifically for Regent Park, many of the concepts will be applicable to a wide range of situations.

"As a result of this project, new building specifications are being prepared," she says.

For example, the building energy efficiency proposals use up to 75 per cent less energy than buildings constructed to current national standards.

"The savings gained through the energy conservation measures will help make this development possible."

For more information, please contact Mary Neumann, Toronto Community Housing Corporation at (416) 968-1696, www.regentpark.ca.

National Consultations Provide a Better Understanding of Housing Issues

Minister Fontana leads National Housing Consultations and Aboriginal Housing Sectoral Session

Over the past few months, the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, has led a series of exciting sessions that have explored the housing issues that the country faces.

Aboriginal Housing Sectoral Session

On November 24-25, 2004 the Honourable Joe Fontana joined approximately 150 Aboriginal housing experts, representatives from Aboriginal organizations and the private sector, and federal, provincial and territorial government representatives in Ottawa, for a two-day national Aboriginal Housing Sectoral Session.

The Housing Sectoral Session, which CMHC had the lead role in organizing, is one of seven follow-up sessions to the Canada-Aboriginal Peoples Roundtable held on April 19, 2004. At that roundtable, the Prime Minister set out a vision that included a focus on closing the gap between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians in key quality of life indicators, including health, education, housing and economic opportunities.

The Housing Sectoral Session was designed to facilitate a technical discussion on Aboriginal housing issues. The resulting report will provide the basis for discussions at a Policy Retreat later this spring for members of the Cabinet Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal leaders and provincial and territorial representatives, and inform a First Minister's Meeting with Aboriginal leaders in the fall. As CMHC's President Karen Kinsley stated: "The Housing Sectoral Session laid the groundwork for a comprehensive plan that identifies real, workable solutions to these issues, and helps position housing as a true engine of success."

National Housing Consultations

Since January 2005, the Honourable Joe Fontana has held a series of national consultations with the provinces and territories, parliamentarians, housing experts and Canadians to gain a better understanding of homelessness issues and housing affordability challenges.

CMHC worked closely with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC) National Secretariat on Homelessness in organizing the consultation and roundtable sessions. The discussions were lively, wide-ranging and honest, and the feedback that was received from the thousands of Canadians who participated was extremely positive. From housing experts to homeowners, the participants were as generous in sharing their respective experiences, as they were creative in their proposed solutions. While the findings are still being reviewed, several key messages emerged in almost every community where the sessions were held, including that:

- The community-based approach is a success that should be considered for other programs, but the long-term sustainability of community-driven projects also needs to be addressed.
- All levels of government need to make greater financial commitments to affordable housing, and enhance their participation in community-based processes.
- There is a need for sustainable funding to address gaps in the housing continuum.
- For people facing life challenges, housing is only part of the solution, which must be integrated with support services to help people live independently.

- Delays in getting projects off the ground can occur when working with a number of partners.
- Finally, the majority of stakeholders pointed to the need for a varied and flexible set of tools that can meet local needs in a way that makes sense for local realities.

Now that the consultations are complete, Minister Fontana will be discussing these issues and messages with provincial/territorial Ministers of Housing. CMHC and HRSDC are working together on developing these next steps, which will lay the groundwork for the future of housing in this country.

Minister Fontana is committed to developing a Housing Framework with a goal of helping Canadians gain access to safe and affordable homes. These consultations will assist in the development of new approaches towards an effective and comprehensive housing continuum and build on the successes of proven programs. They will also contribute to the development of new initiatives and the leverage of funds with key partners in the private sector, non-governmental organizations, the provinces and territories.

Both of these national consultations have provided a better understanding of housing issues and will lead to the identification of research areas that need to be addressed. Watch for upcoming articles in this Newsletter as the results of the consultations and their impact on housing research become apparent.

For more information see:
http://www.aboriginalroundtable.com/index_e.html and http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/consultations/index_e.asp

Canada to Host UN-HABITAT'S World Urban Forum III June 19-23, 2006



The year 2006 will mark the 30th anniversary of the first United Nations (UN) Conference on Human Settlements, which took place in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in 1976. That conference spawned the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-HABITAT), the intergovernmental agency charged with promoting socially and environmentally sustainable cities and communities. Canada played a significant role in bringing that first conference to fruition and has remained in the vanguard in matters relating to adequate affordable housing. There will be an opportunity to reflect on those beginnings in June 2006, when Canada will host the prestigious World Urban Forum (WUF), a biennial event sponsored by UN-HABITAT and devoted to critical issues of urbanization, sustainability, human settlements and shelter.

Vancouver will once again be the host city, this time for a five-day summit to be held June 19–23, 2006. The WUF will afford the world a superb opportunity to share policies and programs on sustainable cities and to

showcase best practices, technologies, expertise and partnerships relating to urban sustainability. In the prelude to the conference, Canada will be looking to build upon relationships with international stakeholders and build synergies with intergovernmental organizations such as the UN Environment Program and the UN Commission on Sustainable Development.

The Prime Minister has asked the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing, to lead Canada's preparations for the event. He'll be supported by the WUF National Advisory Committee, co-chaired by former B.C. Premier Michael Harcourt and University of Ottawa Chancellor Huguette Labelle. With representation from the provinces and territories, municipalities, the private sector, professional associations, academe and stakeholder groups, the committee is offering the Minister advice on forum themes and program components. Committee members are also helping the Minister identify pertinent domestic and international projects and activities to showcase at the forum. The event is being structured with

an eye to fostering effective knowledge transfer, active engagement among participants and concrete results. The conference program will be finalized by the end of 2005.

Launched in 2002 by UN-HABITAT, the WUF is quickly becoming the premier international event devoted to the critical issues of cities and communities, shelter and sustainability. Issues such as affordable housing, sustainable infrastructure and clean air and water are likely to dominate the forum, as well as the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, with their emphasis on shelter, slum upgrading and water and sanitation improvements. Canada is no stranger to sustainable urban development. The federal government's commitment to a "New Deal for Cities and Communities" is predicated on the principles of sustainable development and addresses the issues to be discussed at the WUF.

To keep abreast of the program as it unfolds, visit www.cmhc.ca or www.unhabitat.org. Also, watch for an article in the Fall edition of this newsletter for an update on the latest WUF-related research.



Vancouver, Canada

Toward a “Greater” Golden Horseshoe

With the boom in the Golden Horseshoe region of southern Ontario expected to continue, the Ontario government has recently introduced two major initiatives to contain this area's urban growth and protect its greenbelt. Both policies are the result of exhaustive consultation and a thorough review of relevant research and data.

The *Greenbelt Act*, 2005 passed by the Ontario legislature in February, prohibits urban development on environmentally sensitive and agricultural land in the Golden Horseshoe, an area stretching from Peterborough to Niagara Falls. The new legislation more than doubled the area that is currently protected, for a total of nearly 2 million acres. The Act protects the greenbelt from shrinking, and gives the government authority to establish a greenbelt plan that will detail the types of land uses that will be permitted.

The legislation ensures transportation and other infrastructure projects are developed in an environmentally sensitive way. As well, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing created the Greenbelt Council, as required, to provide advice on the administration of the greenbelt plan.

The greenbelt initiative is the result of a lengthy, multi-faceted consultation and research process. A Greenbelt Task Force, including stakeholder representatives and various experts, consulted with the public and stakeholders and provided recommendations to the Minister. Then, a team representing seven different ministries used the work of the task force and up-to-date land information databases to draft a map, which was verified with municipalities, conservation authorities, agriculture and natural heritage staff most knowledgeable in these areas.

Just days before the greenbelt legislation was passed, the government released its draft growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which outlines strategies for how and where this region should expand over the next 30 years. Together, the greenbelt legislation and the growth plan will coordinate land use planning and support the anticipated development in the area.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is already home to 7.8 million people, and nearly 4 million more are expected to live there by 2031. According to the draft growth plan, without planning this rapid expansion will lead to a deteriorating quality of life.

The draft growth plan focuses on containing urban sprawl, protecting agricultural and recreational lands from development, and building the infrastructure that will be needed to support continued growth.

A team representing seven different ministries used the work of the task force and up-to-date land information databases to draft a map

To support both these initiatives in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area, three technical papers have been released, which are available on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Web site.

The reports are: *A Current Assessment of Gross Land Supply in the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, *The Growth Outlook for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, and *Application of a Land-Use Intensification Target for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*.

The Ontario government has also introduced other legislation to address the province's booming growth. The *Places to Grow Act*, now with a standing committee, would enable the government to designate any area of the province as a growth plan area, and to strategically plan for population growth, economic expansion, and the protection of the environment and agricultural lands.

For more information on the greenbelt initiatives, please contact Victor Doyle, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, (416) 585-6014, e-mail Victor.Doyle@mah.gov.on.ca, or see <http://www.greenbelt.ontario.ca>.

For more information on the draft growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, please contact Leslie Woo, Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, (416) 585-6247, e-mail Leslie.Woo@pir.gov.on.ca, or see <http://www.pir.gov.on.ca>. For the three technical papers supporting the initiatives, see http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/userfiles/HTML/nts_l_23043_1.html#6.



CMHC Revisits Barriers to Brownfield Redevelopment

Financial barriers and civil and regulatory liability continue to top the list of issues facing brownfield redevelopment for housing in Canada, according to a recent literature review and survey of brownfield experts from across Canada. Although reforms in some provinces have helped to limit regulatory liability exposure and improve certainty about who is responsible for cleanups, some of these enhancements have introduced new challenges, the study says.

The report examines recent progress in addressing traditional barriers to brownfield redevelopment for housing and highlights emerging issues. Entitled *Brownfield Redevelopment for Housing: Literature Review and Analysis*, the study was conducted by Luciano Piccioni of RCI Consulting and Richard DiFrancesco of Regional Analytics Inc. on behalf of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The authors conclude that the relationships between barriers must be better understood so that policy makers and planners can realistically assess how well current and proposed legislation, regulations, financial incentives, planning and other initiatives are addressing them.

Financial barriers

Although environmental insurance has made lenders less apprehensive about providing financing for brownfield redevelopment projects, barriers remain. Cleanups of less than \$1 million make up the lion's share of remediation projects and there is still no affordable insurance coverage for such initiatives. Nevertheless, municipal incentives such as tax-increment financing, grants, loans and development charge credits have been

helping to fuel brownfield redevelopment for housing in several municipalities.

Liability

Joint and several liability, a legal rule whereby successive owners and users of a property can all be held potentially liable for cleanup costs, remains one of the key barriers to brownfield redevelopment for housing. However, some provinces have recently begun allocating liability on a proportionate share basis and this practice holds promise as a means of addressing this issue. A more recent obstacle to brownfield redevelopment is the strict interpretation of the "polluter pays" principle in landmark court decisions. As well, the inability to transfer liability when land is sold has caused large corporate landowners to mothball their derelict properties, rather than sell them and risk a future cleanup order.

Regulations

Another issue affecting brownfield redevelopment is government regulation. Regulatory barriers include a lack of strong risk assessment tools, a lack of current best science in generic cleanup standards, and, in some jurisdictions, the reluctance of provincial regulators to accept risk assessment and risk management approaches. Some progress has been made in reducing the time required by provincial ministries to review remediation plans and risk assessment reports, however, this continues to be an issue. The study also noted progress in several provinces in such areas as the innovative use of a streamlined risk assessment process and a commitment to review the scientific criteria.

Technology

Alternative remediation technologies have begun to replace "dig and dump" practices as the preferred approach in certain situations—but one of the barriers to greater uptake of these technologies in Canada is the shortage of plain language information about them.

Planning

Municipal land use planning policies could be more supportive of brownfield redevelopment, the study finds. And approvals processes are complex and protracted. Suggestions for reform include the introduction of a clearer, more streamlined and facilitative planning approvals process and a regimen of incentives and disincentives designed to level the playing field between brownfield and greenfield development.

New case studies demonstrate that brownfield sites can and are being redeveloped for housing, despite issues that this type of redevelopment faces

Stigma, education and awareness

Despite attempts to better educate the industry, brownfield redevelopment continues to be misunderstood because of a general lack of easily accessible and understandable information. The literature and informants advocated publicizing successful brownfield redevelopment projects and making greater efforts to educate all stakeholders about the real risks and benefits of brownfield redevelopment.

*Former Bertran Foundry, Hamilton, Ontario
Source: Urban Horse Developments*



Healthy Indoors Partnership: Making Connections

Scientists, researchers, policy makers, businesses and consumer groups have banded together to share and propagate new information on indoor environments in Canada. The Healthy Indoors Partnership (HIP) is a not-for-profit organization that is leading the charge to improve Canada's indoor environments through multistakeholder collaboration. The organization brokers connections between people, ideas and resources from government, industry, academe, the research community and public interest groups to catalyze new collaborations on common indoor environmental health issues.

HIP's main areas of focus include research, industry guidelines and best practices, social marketing, education and outreach. Its work is guided by a national strategy developed from extensive cross-Canada consultations and overseen by four committees.

The Research and Development (R&D) Committee works to consolidate and integrate the activities of national research and technology organizations by providing a forum for its members and other contributors to exchange ideas and forge partnerships. The committee identifies gaps in the existing

science on indoor health issues in Canada and identifies and connects the players who are most likely to succeed in addressing these gaps. The committee is chiefly concerned with the relationship between the indoor environment and the physical and mental health of occupants. Areas of research therefore include:

- indoor air quality
- noise and room acoustics
- lighting
- thermal comfort
- ergonomics
- emerging issues such as radiation and electromagnetic fields

R&D committee membership currently includes participation from CMHC, the National Research Council, Health Canada, Institut national de santé publique du Québec and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

The R&D committee is currently developing a research agenda based on the results of a national workshop on the health effects, prevention, and control of moulds.

If you are a Canadian scientist, or represent a Canadian research organization involved in indoor environment research activities, HIP's R&D committee wants to hear from you. The committee has developed a Directory of Research Expertise to facilitate collaborations between Canadian scientists and organizations on strategic R&D projects.

HIP also maintains a Web-based clearinghouse of information and resources, including a calendar of conferences and other events, and publishes a free newsletter to keep stakeholders up to date on current indoor environmental issues in Canada.

For more information, or to download the proceedings from the National Science and Technology Workshop on Mould in the Indoor Environment, visit www.healthyindoors.com. For additional information, please contact Jay Kassirer, Executive Director, Healthy Indoors Partnership, (613) 224-3800; kassirer@healthyindoors.com.

CMHC Revisits Barriers to Brownfield Redevelopment (continued from page 6)

New case studies available

One contribution in this regard is a new collection of residential brownfield redevelopment case studies produced by CMHC. They share the good ideas and lessons learned from projects recently built or under construction and municipal and provincial initiatives that have been of assistance as well. These case studies can be used to encourage others to try these types of projects. They demonstrate that, despite the issues that this type of

development faces, brownfield sites can and are being redeveloped for housing and are contributing to the revitalization of Canadian communities.

The Research Highlight product number 63948, can be obtained on-line through CMHC's Order Desk www.cmhc.ca, or by calling 1-800-668-2642. The Case Studies can be obtained online as well. For further information, please contact Cynthia Rattle, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, (613) 748-3356; e-mail: crattle@cmhc-schl.gc.ca.

Health Canada and CMHC Developing a Searchable Database for Seniors' Supportive Housing

As Canada's population ages, there will be a growing demand for housing and health services that allow people to age comfortably at home. Public and private sector home health care and support services, home adaptation and modification services, supportive housing and assisted living all have an important role to play alongside facility-based long-term care.

Many seniors are opting for supportive housing, a form of independent living backed by a variety of services that may range from housekeeping, meals and laundry, to 24-hour security and personal care, to assistance with the activities of daily living. In some cases, supportive housing can be a viable substitute for long-term care facilities.

Aging seniors who wish to continue living independently will soon have better access to information about supportive housing. Indeed, anyone with a computer will soon be able to obtain information about the range and types of supportive housing projects available to seniors 65 years of age and older in Canada. In cooperation with CMHC, Health Canada is developing a database of supportive housing, including information on the location, size and types of supportive housing, as well as the on- and off-site health and support services affiliated with each project and information on costs, management type and project funding.

On behalf of Health Canada, Social Data Research and its partner Pollara Inc. are gathering information about projects built within the past 15 years, highlighting innovations in the field. Supportive housing providers have responded enthusiastically to the project.

The database, along with an up-to-date literature review and description of current public policies and guidelines on supportive housing, will be useful to consumers, researchers, policy makers, planners and housing providers. When completed, the database will be posted on the Health Canada and CMHC Web sites and expanded and updated as resources permit.

For additional information, please contact Catrina Hendrickx, Home and Continuing Care Unit, Health Policy Branch, Health Canada, (613) 954-8616; e-mail: catrina_hendrickx@hc-sc.gc.ca.

CMHC Study Measures the Effort Needed to Climb Access Ramps in a Manual Wheelchair

Ramps have become the most common means of making buildings wheelchair accessible but a variety of standards exist for their slopes. The most frequently-used standards are a slope of 1:10 (the ramp rises 1 unit for every 10 units in length), a less steep slope of 1 in 12; and an even gentler slope of 1 in 20. But, what evidence is there to favour one slope over another; that is, how much more physical effort is needed to climb a steeper slope?

A recent study funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation under its External Research Program and conducted by a group of researchers at the University of Montreal,

University of Laval and l'École Polytechnique de Montréal addressed this question. It compared the physical effort needed for manual wheelchair users in two age groups (18-39 and 40-64) to climb access ramps having the above-noted three slopes. The study tested 39 men and women who do not normally use wheelchairs. It did not consider climatic factors such as wind, ice, snow and rain.

The study found that a slope of 1 in 20 is significantly easier to climb than the steeper slopes. However, it also found that there is little difference between the effort needed

to climb a slope of 1 in 10 and a slope of 1 in 12. Furthermore, the study found that age did not appear to affect people's ability to climb any of the ramps, at least for the two age groups examined.

The complete report Évaluation de l'exigence physique à monter des rampes d'accès en fauteuil roulant manuel chez les adultes âgés de 18 à 64 ans includes an English executive summary and is available through CMHC's Order Desk at www.cmhc.ca or by calling 1-800-668-2642.

For additional information, please contact Luis Rodriguez, Policy and Research Division, CMHC, (613) 748-2339; e-mail: lrodrigu@cmhc-schl.gc.ca.

Statistics Show Steady Urbanization of Canada

Nearly one-third of Canada's urban land is located in Ontario, and in square kilometres, Ontario's urban land is nearly equal to the urban land of the four western provinces combined. These and other statistics on land use are contained in the January edition of *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin*, published by Statistics Canada.

According to the bulletin, half the country's population is concentrated in four major urban regions: Ontario's Golden Horseshoe, Montréal and its surrounding region, British Columbia's Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island, and the Edmonton–Calgary corridor.

Canada's total area of urban land nearly doubled between 1971 and 2001, and in Ontario it grew 80 per cent. Correspondingly, in the same period the number of Canadian urban dwellers jumped 50 per cent. This growth in urban land can be attributed to changes in the population and changes in housing preferences, according to the bulletin.

For example, the entrance of baby boomers into the housing market in the 1970s and 1980s significantly increased the demand for new homes. Not surprisingly, contemporary society's dependence on cars is behind this increase in urbanization.

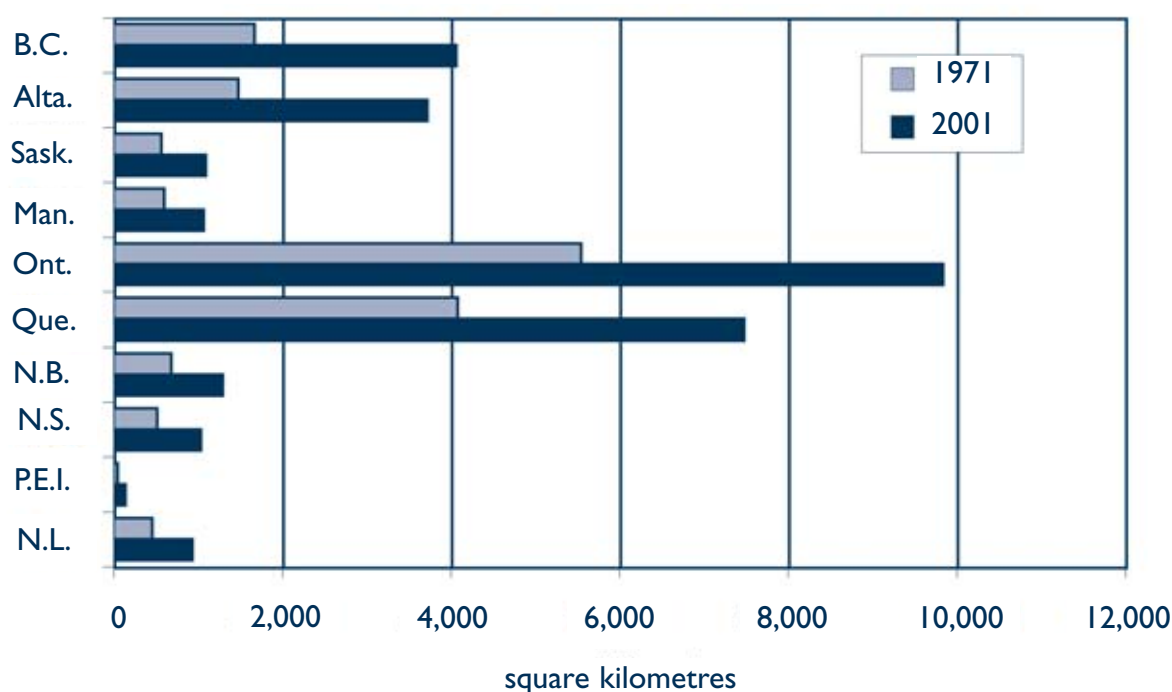
A disturbing trend noted is that more valuable agricultural land, a non-renewable resource, is increasingly being given over to urban uses. By 2001 almost half of Canada's urban land was situated on what was previously dependable agricultural land. "Once consumed, this land is, for all intents and purposes, permanently lost to agriculture," says the bulletin.

The provinces of Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba contain nearly all of Canada's best agricultural land, called Class 1 land because it has no significant constraints to crop production. More than half of Canada's Class 1 agricultural land is in the heavily urbanized southern part of Ontario, and in 2001 more than 11 per cent of Ontario's Class 1 agricultural land was being used for urban purposes.

This trend toward the urbanization of agricultural land has implications for two important issues. First, the growth of cities affects specialty crops, such as fruit, that flourish only in a few regions of Canada and can be important to local economies. Second, the growth of cities means a corresponding change in the way that land is used beyond the boundaries of cities. For example, golf courses, gravel pits and recreational areas are often located on agricultural land adjacent to urban areas. These activities, in effect, extend the boundaries of a city.

For more information, contact Nancy Hofmann, Statistics Canada, (613) 951-0297, e-mail environ@statcan.ca. *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin* Vol. 6, No. 1 (catalogue no. 21-006) is available without charge at <http://www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/downpub/freepub.cgi>.

Estimated Urban Land Area by Province, 1971 and 2001



Three New 2001 Census Housing Series Highlights Released by CMHC

CMHC recently released three more research highlights in its 2001 Census Housing Series, which comprehensively profile the challenges faced by Canada's newest immigrant households, households spending 50 per cent or more of income on shelter, and Canada's rapidly growing senior population.

Although housing conditions improved between 1996 and 2001, these highlights reveal the following trends for these three groups: recent immigrants have trouble renting accommodations and experience high levels of need in Canada's largest cities; the number of households experiencing severe affordability problems has declined but remains stubbornly high; and senior households are growing faster than any other household group, and tend to have lower incomes and experience housing need more often than non-seniors.

Issue 7: Immigrant households

In 2001 immigrant households accounted for more than one-fifth of Canada's households. Recent immigrant households (where the primary maintainer had immigrated in the previous five years) accounted for more than 2 per cent of all households.

More than 8 in 10 immigrant households were located in Canada's 27 Census Metropolitan Areas, or CMAs (urban areas with populations of at least 100,000); nearly 6 in 10 were located in Toronto, Montréal and Vancouver. In Toronto, more than half of all households were immigrant households.

In 2001 almost one in five immigrant households, and one in three recent immigrant households, was in core housing need. (See sidebar for a definition of core housing need.) Among non-immigrant households, the rate is only one in six households. In Toronto, almost half the recent immigrant households were in core housing need, compared with only one-third of non-immigrant households.

Issue 8: Households spending at least 50 per cent of income on shelter

The number of Canadian households experiencing severe housing affordability problems declined slightly between 1996 and 2001, from almost 7 per cent to almost 6 per cent. A household with a severe housing affordability problem is defined as a household in core housing need, spending more than 50 per cent of its income on shelter.

Renter households were almost four times as likely as owners to have severe housing affordability problems, and also four times as likely to be in core housing need. Most vulnerable to severe affordability problems are households where the maintainer is young, Aboriginal, unemployed or not in the labour force, and lone-parent or non-family households.

Households in CMAs are more likely to have severe affordability problems. Vancouver and Toronto, two of Canada's most expensive resale housing markets, have the highest numbers of households with severe housing affordability problems.

Issue 9: The housing conditions of Canada's seniors

In 2001, senior households accounted for more than one-fifth of all Canadian households, and in almost half of these households the primary maintainer was aged 75 years or older. Between 1996 and 2001 the number of senior households increased nearly twice as much as non-senior households, making seniors the fastest-growing age group. Six in ten senior households were located in CMAs.

Seniors households reported lower average incomes and lower shelter costs than non-senior households, and were more likely to experience core housing need. Senior household homeowners were more than twice as likely as non-seniors to live in

inadequate housing needing major repair. Nearly one in five seniors with disabilities lived in households in core housing need; that dropped to one in seven among seniors not reporting disabilities.

These Research Highlights can be downloaded free from CMHC's Order Desk www.cmhc.ca, with reference to the following product numbers: Issue 7 – 63810; Issue 8 – 63840; Issue 9 – 63820; or can be ordered by calling 1-800-668-2642.

For additional information, please contact David Metzack of CMHC, (613) 748-2425; e-mail: dmetzak@cmhc-schl.gc.ca.

In the Research Highlight series, the term "acceptable housing" refers to housing that is in adequate physical condition, of suitable size, and is affordable.

- Adequate dwellings are those reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.
- Suitable dwellings have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.
- Affordable dwellings cost less than 30 per cent of before-tax household income.

A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards, and it would have to spend 30 per cent or more of its before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three standards).

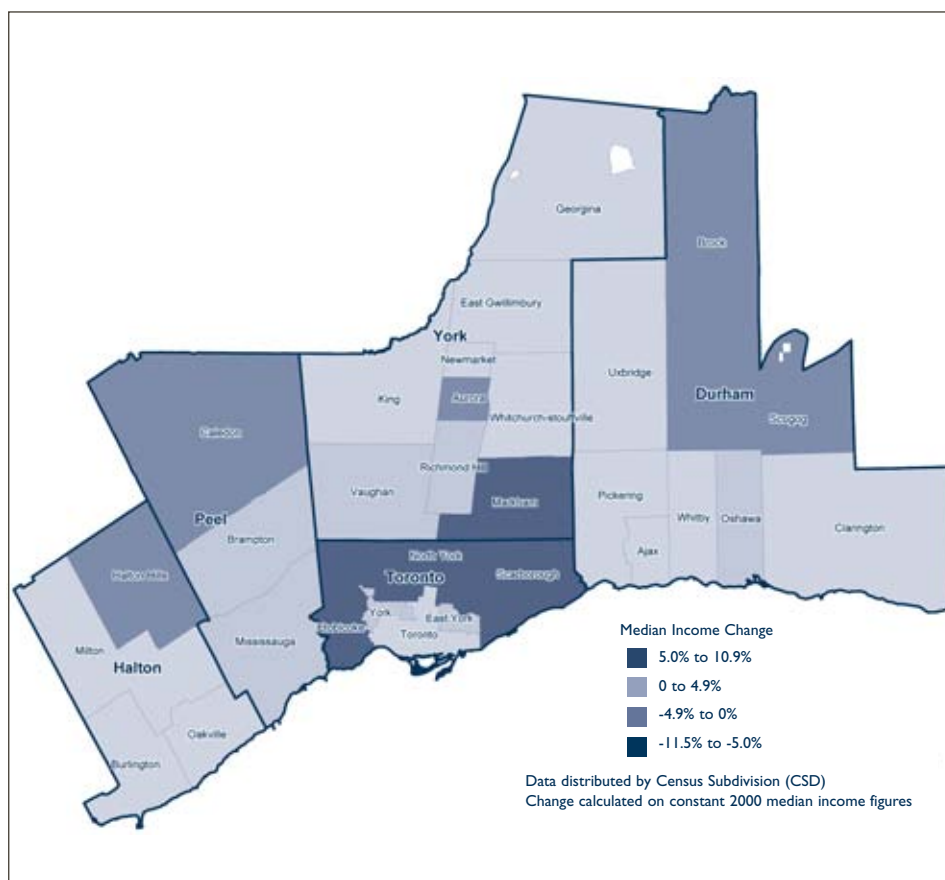
Census Data Shed New Light on Housing and Income Distribution in Toronto

Housing and household income data from the 2001 Census help support policy and planning initiatives in the City of Toronto by providing city planners with valuable information for managing the city's growth, preserving the characteristic diversity of Toronto neighbourhoods and improving the city's quality of life. A series of research bulletins under the "Profile Toronto" banner illustrates the changing social and economic milieu of the amalgamated city.

Researchers in the City Planning Division of the City of Toronto's Urban Development Services Department have found that more than three-quarters of the housing stock growth in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) between 1996 and 2001 occurred in outlying areas. Since most of that development was in single-family neighbourhoods, ground-related housing continued to predominate in the outer regions of the GTA.

Meanwhile, most of the 39,500 new dwelling units built in the City of Toronto during the same period were apartments, especially condominiums. By 2001, apartments accounted for half the city's residential units and that percentage was poised to increase as more than three-quarters of the residential units in Toronto's development pipeline by the end of 2002 were also apartments. Despite the increase in Toronto's urban density, however, few conventional rental units were constructed and the total stock of rental housing dropped significantly throughout the GTA.

These observations take on special significance in light of Census data showing a 6 per cent drop in Toronto's median household income between 1980 and 2000. In fact, Toronto's median household income in 2000 was only slightly higher, in real terms, than it was in 1970. In the City of Toronto, household income was much lower than in the four other GTA regions and income disparity (the gap between high- and low-income households) widened, both between the city and the fast-growing suburbs and among city neighborhoods. The poorest 10 per cent of Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) families saw their average household income drop by 4 per cent, while the average income of the wealthiest CMA households increased by 23 per cent.



In 2000, Toronto accounted for 71 per cent of GTA households with incomes under \$20,000, but only 41 per cent of households with incomes greater than \$100,000. Researchers attributed the shift to migration, especially immigration, with middle- and higher-income families moving into outlying GTA regions, and lower-income families—many of them recent immigrants—settling in the city.

Within the City of Toronto, the number of higher-income households increased strongly in the inner city (former Toronto/York/East York) while sharp increases in lower-income households occurred in the outer city (Scarborough/North York/Etobicoke).

These studies have provided Toronto city planners with an important social context to help evaluate development applications. For the first time since the mid-1990s, when federal and provincial social housing construction programs were cancelled, the completion of rental units increased in 2002.

Since then the city has refocused one of its incentive programs to stimulate the construction of several hundred affordable rental housing units. Toronto's new Official Plan, created to guide the newly amalgamated city's future, includes policies designed to preserve existing rental housing stock and encourage development of new rental housing and new affordable housing.

To obtain copies of City of Toronto research bulletins analyzing the results of the 2001 Census of Canada, visit www.toronto.ca/demographics/. For additional information please contact Tom Ostler, City Planning Division, City of Toronto, (416) 397-4629; e mail: tostler@toronto.ca.

A New Lens on Urban Infrastructure Investments

The housing research community can contribute to developing a practical new analytical tool to help decision makers consider how various kinds of urban infrastructure investments affect housing and vice versa. The “housing lens” is a proposed knowledge management tool that can help analyze how choices made over time by policy makers, private investors, developers and consumers affect housing choice, availability and affordability, as well as residential community design and costs. Since housing and housing finance are important economic and social drivers, society has much to gain from opting for decisions that promote positive housing and community outcomes.

The Canadian Home Builders' Association (CHBA), a chief proponent of the housing lens, sees the tool as a means of broadening the range of consumer choices and market opportunities, supporting innovative residential urban land use and encouraging creative residential community design. The proposed tool also has the potential to support more efficient use of existing infrastructure, rejuvenating inner cities, and fostering higher rates of urban productivity and economic competitiveness. It could give federal, provincial and municipal governments the information they need to make thoughtful infrastructure investments and public policy decisions.

Advances in geographic information systems (GIS) and computer modeling have made it possible to assess the costs and benefits of infrastructure investments using many different variables, including long-term trends in housing production, dwelling sizes, consumer preferences, housing density and street patterns. Applying this kind of analysis can make it possible for municipal governments to determine whether their official plans are actually supporting housing affordability and choice. For developers and other private sector players, information supplied by the housing lens might be used to build capacity for public-private cooperation based on defining new market opportunities.

Mapping the accumulated results of public and private sector decisions

Every neighbourhood is the result of numerous daily decisions by governments, businesses and private households compounded over time all occurring within the same space. GIS mapping is one of the few ways of seeing the results of all these decisions at a glance, especially as they relate to one another.

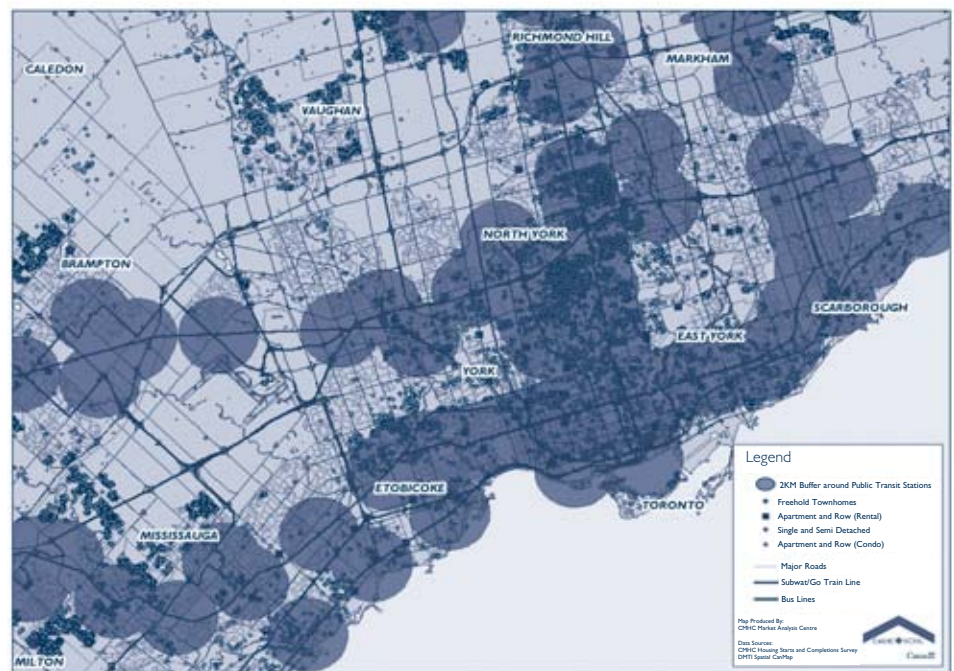
Applying a housing lens would allow stakeholders to consider options they might otherwise not have explored. Such a lens could also enable stakeholders to spot opportunities for public-private cooperation and help defuse conflicts through improved evidence gathering and knowledge development. GIS can often pick up emerging trends before they grow into urgent public

policy issues because successive maps can be used to track specific developments over time.

One challenge of sound public policy making is to get technical experts in different disciplines to pool their insights and work together to optimize economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits simultaneously. Computer-based decision-support tools make it feasible to integrate many perspectives to determine the best mix of approaches to decision making. Finally, the housing lens can help to identify research and public policy gaps that may be hindering desired types of housing development.

The CHBA is inviting all researchers who are currently conducting relevant projects to contact them. For additional information, please contact the project manager, David Crenna, Director, Urban Issues, CHBA, (613) 230-3060; e-mail: crenna@chba.ca.

Housing Construction (1996-2001) in Relation to Transit Corridors



Note: Using this information, it may be possible to determine the household propensity to utilize public transit.

Government of Saskatchewan Responds to Shortage of Quality Affordable Housing

In 2004, Saskatchewan introduced HomeFirst, a new housing policy framework that aligns with its social, economic and health policies and seeks to address the current shortage of quality affordable housing in the province. Based on extensive research, HomeFirst responds to Saskatchewan's housing-related challenges including recent demographic shifts, unmet housing need and a growing demand for housing support services for vulnerable populations.

Using data from numerous sources, the province created a snapshot of its current housing situation and predicted future trends. Policy analysts identified important demographic changes, such as a rise in the number of lone-parent families, a concentration of poverty in the North and inner cities, a young and growing Aboriginal population, a growing and aging senior population, and a trend toward urbanization. The result of these changes is a shift in housing needs, an increase in vacancies in government-assisted housing in some communities, rising costs to maintain the government-assisted housing portfolio, and a mismatch between housing designs and population needs.

Analysis of CMHC Census-based housing indicators and data found one in six Saskatchewan households (both tenants and homeowners) living in unaffordable or substandard housing or hovering on the margins of core housing need¹. Over-represented among these households are Aboriginal people, lone-parent families, persons with disabilities and people living alone.

Provincial research and consultation also uncovered a need for support services to help people continue to live independently in their homes. A Statistics Canada General Social Survey found increasing numbers of seniors avoiding institutionalization in favour of independence. What's more, a significant proportion of these older persons lived alone. Persons with disabilities, at-risk youth, persons at risk of homelessness and single-parent families were also found to be in need of housing support services.



Utility rate increases and rising maintenance costs associated with aging buildings are making it increasingly difficult for the province to maintain its assisted housing stock. And the aging private market supply of affordable housing is falling into disrepair. Moreover, developers are choosing condominium projects over rental units, making it increasingly difficult for low-and moderate-income households to find adequate and affordable housing in the private market. These factors, together

with the conversion of existing rental units into condominiums, reduced the number of private market rental units in Saskatchewan cities by nearly 10 percent between 1995 and 2003.

In Saskatchewan, housing costs are increasing faster than family income. In 2000 nearly one in five tenant households in Saskatchewan spent more than half their income on shelter. Finally, Statistics Canada research has demonstrated that homeownership in Canada is the key to household wealth acquisition, a critical factor in breaking the cycle of poverty.

The new policy therefore aims to make quality housing more affordable and government-assisted housing more sustainable. It seeks to create homeownership opportunities, improve housing supports and foster household asset accumulation. It provides support to inner-city neighborhoods and northern communities, emphasizes energy efficiency and encourages stakeholder partnerships.

For more information about Saskatchewan's new housing policy framework or the associated research, please contact Craig Marchinko, Province of Saskatchewan, www.dcre.gov.sk.ca, (306) 787-7288; e-mail: Cmarchinko@dcre.gov.sk.ca.

¹ Households occupying housing that falls below one or more of the dwelling standards (adequacy, suitability or affordability) are considered to be in core housing need if they are spending 30% or more of their pretax income on housing or if they would have to spend 30% or more of their pre-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local market housing that meets adequacy or suitability standards.

The High Cost of Homelessness

Societal Cost of Homelessness in Canada \$1.4 Billion

Homelessness imposes high costs on society, but government programs to address homelessness have been shown to produce significant tangible benefits, concludes a study conducted for the B.C. Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, Housing Policy Branch.

The report says that policy interventions to reduce homelessness, particularly in the form of supportive housing, can produce benefits for individuals, for the government and for the community at large.

Homelessness continues to increase despite a focus on various emergency services, such as shelters and soup kitchens. However, cost-effective government initiatives could dramatically reduce the need for these services.

The study summarized 14 recent quantitative studies of the costs of homelessness by researchers in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. It was conducted in the spring of 2004 by Margaret Eberle of Eberle Planning and Research. Some of the study's highlights:

Homelessness means enormous costs for governments

In Calgary, homelessness and the risk of homelessness costs an estimated \$67.5 million each year for combined government initiatives, according to a 2003 study. A pilot study in British Columbia concluded that providing health care, criminal justice, social services and shelter for one person cost between \$30,000 and \$40,000 a year.

Persons who are homeless are more likely to access costly health care and criminal justice services

According to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, homeless persons spent an average four days longer per hospital visit. In Hawaii, homeless persons require psychiatric services 100 times more than non-homeless persons. A U.K. study that examined six homeless scenarios estimated police and court costs to range from \$3,600 to \$36,000 per individual for up to two years.

Homelessness can cause lost tax revenue for governments

A study done in Dallas, Texas, estimated that depressed land values in the area where the homeless congregate cost the government \$4.1 million in lost tax revenue.

Providing stable housing provides cost savings in several areas

In British Columbia, providing supportive housing saved the government between \$8,000 and \$12,000 per person per year. In New York City, almost all of the cost of supportive housing for the homeless mentally ill is recovered through the reduced provision of other support services.

Housing the homeless reduces health care costs and criminal justice costs

In San Francisco, California, within a year of moving into supportive housing, formerly homeless persons visited the hospital half as often and stopped using mental health programs. In New York City, health care costs accounted for nearly three-quarters of the \$12,000 saved per person per year, and criminal justice costs made up another five per cent.

Early intervention with at-risk youth produces long-term benefits

According to an Australian study, placing social workers in schools to deal with homeless issues would produce a lifetime benefit of \$473 million for those youth who were homeless in 1994. (A lifetime benefit is a public good that may include cost savings.)

Employment services for the homeless produce benefits

In an American study, residents of supportive housing in a job development project earned 50 per cent more, meaning fewer welfare payments.

Addressing homelessness can produce benefits and cost savings for business and for local government. For example, the Dallas study concluded that if housing and support services were provided to the homeless, that part of the city where they now congregate could be used to create more than 5,000 jobs and generate more than \$26 million in annual property and sales tax revenue.

For more information, please contact Margaret Eberle of Eberle Planning and Research, (604) 254-0820; e-mail m_eberle@telus.net.

Homeless Applicants Face Daunting Barriers to Social Housing

The difficulties experienced by homeless applicants in accessing social housing have a significant impact on their path out of homelessness, according to a recent study carried out for CMHC.

The study was conducted to investigate how social housing providers currently accommodate homeless applicants, and to determine how housing access could be improved for homeless people.

The research, carried out between April 2004 and February 2005 by Oriole Research and Design Inc. in partnership with Connelly Consulting Services, included a literature review, interviews, surveys and focus groups. Interviews were conducted with housing providers in four provinces and staff from 10 agencies that work with homeless clientele. Two focus groups were held, involving 14 participants who were, or had been, homeless.

The study found that homeless people who attempt to secure social housing face barriers of three types: systemic, organizational and individual.

Systemic barriers

Housing providers and focus group participants mentioned the limited supply of subsidized units and long wait times for housing units.

Waiting lists that are managed through chronological and point-scoring systems disadvantage certain subsets of the homeless population. The report noted that "a wait time of six months to a year does not meet the need of someone who is homeless."

Organizational barriers

Participants in interviews and focus groups indicated that the application process can create hurdles for homeless applicants by requiring interviews, home visits, criminal record checks or regular updates from applicants. The findings noted that "decisions made during the processing of applications can result in barriers for some homeless applicants."

Individual barriers

The literature, interviews and focus groups all noted that impediments can be produced by a wide range of individual circumstances, including language differences, addictions, mental health issues and previous unsuccessful tenancies, or the lack of income, a phone or a social support system.

The interview and focus group participants made several suggestions on how to help homeless applicants access and retain social housing:

- offer a greater range of housing choices
- set up multiple access points in the community for homeless people to access "the system"
- relax waiting list requirements for updating information
- establish referral agreements between housing providers and agencies who work with homeless or at-risk individuals
- provide funding to those who house homeless applicants so they can provide on-site support
- provide help to vulnerable households in maintaining their tenancies

The researchers suggest that a policy debate on what part of the housing "system" is best suited to proactively house homeless people could help in two key areas: it could help produce more effective support for housing providers who are dedicated to housing the homeless, and could ensure that communities have a range of housing options available for homeless and at-risk households.

The Research Highlight, product number 63950, can be obtained on-line through CMHC's Order Desk www.cmhc.ca, or by calling 1 800 668-2642. For additional information, please contact Anna Lenk, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, (613) 748-2951.



Transitional Housing Crucial for Women Offenders

Women offenders leaving prison need safe, private, secure and stable transitional housing to help them re-enter the community, according to a recent study of transitional housing in Vancouver.

“Program-supported housing is a priority if re-offending is to be avoided,” concludes the report, entitled *Women Offenders: Characteristics, Needs and Impacts of Transitional Housing*. Without stable and safe housing, the report states, the tremendous issues that these women face would probably not be addressed. When they leave prison, women typically lack money, family support, life skills and identification papers, and suffer from addiction and chronic physical and mental health problems.

The study, conducted by Janet Currie of Focus Consultants under CMHC’s External Research Program, examined the personal characteristics, housing and housing-related needs of women offenders, and the importance of post-prison transitional housing in helping them reintegrate into the community.

Methodology

The research, conducted between June 2003 and June 2004, involved three phases: a literature review; a survey of 17 respondents working with women offenders in the Vancouver area; and a longitudinal study of women offenders at Pathways, a transitional housing program that provides support

and counselling for women leaving prison and parole facilities. A comparison group for the study came from Columbia House, a residential facility for women on parole that offers some support, counselling and assistance but is not considered transitional housing. Both facilities are staffed and managed by the Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver.

In the longitudinal study, eight women from Pathways and nine from Columbia House were interviewed after their release from prison. Those initial interviews collected baseline data on the women’s personal characteristics before and after incarceration. Follow-up interviews were conducted 6 to 12 months later with seven women from Pathways and seven from Columbia House.

Findings

The first interviews with the women revealed the serious personal issues they had faced before and after their incarceration: low education, little employment, housing instability, poor health, drug and alcohol abuse, and poor family and personal relationships.

Although the sample sizes of both groups were too small for the findings to be considered conclusive, the final interviews with the Pathways women showed a modest but measurable improvement in the women’s personal characteristics. The most significant improvements were:

- few subsequent criminal charges or returns to custody
- an increase in stable, non-transient, safe and secure housing
- improvements in health, nutrition and mental health
- lower levels of self-described alcohol and drug abuse
- slightly higher involvement in job training programs
- fewer problems finding a place to sleep at night

In some cases, positive changes were also seen in the comparison group, perhaps because they had received some counselling and program support at Columbia House.

All the women at Pathways made favourable comments about the value of Pathways in helping them successfully adjust and reintegrate into the community. The comments stressed the value of the program’s flexibility, acceptance and support from staff, the services provided, and the safe and secure environment.

The Research Highlight product number 63812, can be obtained on-line through CMHC’s Order Desk www.cmhc.ca, or by calling 1 800 668-2642. For further information, please contact Janet Currie, Focus Consultants, (250) 479-2962; e-mail: focusconsultants@telus.net.