**A CENTRAL HOUSING REGISTRY:
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WINNIPEG**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Improving access to affordable housing is often approached through efforts to increase the supply of such housing, as the need to make better use of existing resources and coordinating the efforts of housing providers is often overlooked. A central housing registry in Winnipeg would be one approach to improving coordination and better access for low-income households to affordable housing.

This study explores different examples of housing registries that exist in Canada and the United States. It provides insight into the benefits and challenges of housing registries through web searches and a survey. A focus group was also used to gain insight on the local context for developing a central housing registry.

This research will increase the awareness of the benefits of a central housing registry and provides recommendations on how to approach the development and implementation of a central housing registry.

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

Housing is a basic necessity of life. Accessing housing is an issue for many households, as is accessing housing that fits an individual's or a household's needs. This is often referred to as acceptable housing, which is defined by Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC) (2004A) as

> housing that is in adequate condition, of suitable size, and 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% of before-tax household income (1).

The proportion of households unable to access acceptable housing tends to fluctuate yearly. In Winnipeg this proportion increased from 14.6% in 1991 to 17.2% in 1996, and then decreased to 14.8% in 2001 (CMHC, 2004C). Despite the recent decrease it should be noted that the 2001 proportion is still larger than the 1991 figure demonstrating a lack of any significant improvement between 1991 and 2001.

While affordability, suitability, and adequacy all influence whether housing is acceptable, CMHC (2004B) has determined that being able to access and pay for affordable housing is often the greatest challenge, more so than the other two factors. "[M]ost households living in housing below the affordability standard did not have sufficient income to rent alternative acceptable housing, and consequently fell into core housing need" (CMHC, 2004C: 5).

Household income and dwelling tenure tend to be related. This is illustrated through the notion that households who rent generally make up lower

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income groups (CMHC, 2003A). Also "households with lower incomes were more likely to spend 30% or more of their incomes on shelter" (CMHC, 2003A: 8). From this information it is obvious that low-income households tend to rent their accommodations and have a greater likelihood of spending higher proportions of their income on housing accommodations, thereby creating affordability issues. "In 2001, renters had much more difficulty finding affordable housing than owners" (CMHC, 2004B: 3). Part of the difficulty of accessing affordable housing is that many low-income households simply cannot afford median-priced acceptable housing (CMHC, 2004B). Even though "renter incomes grew faster than shelter costs between 1996 and 2001, 788,600 renter households still fell into need in 2001, with an average household income (before-tax) of $17,431, almost half (48%) of which was devoted to shelter" (CMHC, 2004C: 5). In Winnipeg, renters who were unable to access acceptable housing had an average annual income of $14,258 and on average spent 45.6% of their income to cover shelter expenses (CMHC, 2004C). It is evident that affordability is a large issue for households, in particular low-income renters to find acceptable housing (CMHC, 2004B).

Renters experience a greater inability to secure acceptable housing. In 2001, only 53.7% of renters in Canada lived in acceptable housing, meaning that almost half of renters do not reside in acceptable housing (CMHC, 2004B). "While renters accounted for 37.1% of all CMA households in 2001, they comprised 67.5% of households in core housing need, a significantly disproportionate share" (CMHC, 2004C: 5).

Many low-income households see subsidized housing as a means to securing acceptable housing and escaping core housing need. These households often cannot afford private market rental rates, which creates an affordability issue, an issue that subsidized housing can address through rates based on rent-geared-to-income (Province of Manitoba, 2004). In Winnipeg low-income households may be able to find acceptable housing through a subsidized housing program. The Manitoba Housing Authority provides subsidized housing through sponsor organizations, private non-profit organizations, co-operative housing projects, and rent assistance (Province of Manitoba, 2004). Subsidized accommodations may provide acceptable housing for low-income households, but they often have waiting lists. This brings to light the issue of providing low-income households with better access to affordable housing accommodations. This study will explore housing registries as a means of providing improved access to affordable housing.

1.1 Research Problem

The issue of affordable housing can be approached from two directions, either from a supply side or demand side. A demand side approach would focus on addressing low-income households' ability to afford housing through such measures as rent supplements, shelter allowances, and a reform of social assistance shelter allowances (Pomeroy, 2004). From the supply side perspective there has been a decline in the supply of new affordable housing, in combination with an erosion in the supply of existing lower-priced housing, and limited or constrained access for low-income renters to appropriate housing

(Pomeroy, 2004). A supply side approach would focus on improving access to affordable housing so that households can secure housing within their financial means. This research project will address the issue from a supply side approach and look at improving affordability issues by helping low-income households better access affordable housing.

Low vacancy rates in both the private and public market makes accessing affordable housing more difficult. Lack of supply is a major factor to Winnipeg's low-income housing issues (Distasio, 2003). Low vacancy rates and lack of supply contribute to long waiting lists for subsidized housing units and difficulties in accessing affordable housing. Increasing the supply of affordable units is one solution, but in a time of reduced financial resources this option is not always feasible. Instead, an option may be to build partnerships and have housing providers work together to achieve their common goal. Generally housing providers in Winnipeg who provide subsidized housing have their own waiting lists for their units. There is very little, if any, connection between the providers, instead they often end up duplicating each others' efforts and competing for the same financial resources (Carter et al., 1993). Such a method of work can result in overlapping services in some areas and gaps in others.

Coordinating the efforts of housing providers can result in a better use of resources and the reduced likelihood of duplicating efforts. A central housing registry in Winnipeg is an approach to improving coordination and ensuring better access for low-income households to affordable housing. By collaborating with housing providers in the public and private housing market, through the use of a

central housing registry, access to affordable units could be further improved by drawing on units in the public and private market.

1.2 Purpose and Objectives

This research study will explore different examples of housing registries that exist in Canada and the United States. The examples will be applied to the Winnipeg context and used to develop recommendations for a suitable and appropriate housing registry that fits Winnipeg's needs. This research will provide insight into the benefits and challenges of housing registries, something that is not adequately covered in the literature. Information will be gathered through web searches, surveying, and a focus group. The web searches will provide basic information on housing registries that exist. Surveying a sample of the housing registries will impart more in-depth information including reasons why housing registries were established, their successes, and the challenges or limitations that were and still are being encountered. Conducting a focus group with local housing providers and housing registries in Winnipeg will provide the opportunity to relate the information to the Winnipeg context and gain local insight.

There are three objectives of this study. The first objective is to add to the body of academic literature on the topic of housing registries. The second objective is to explore housing registries as a means to improve access to affordable housing. The third objective is to illustrate the benefits of further coordination among housing providers in Winnipeg through the use of a central housing registry. Subsequently the following three key questions have been developed to guide this research project:

1. What examples of housing registries exist in Canada and the USA?

2. Why should Winnipeg consider implementing a centralized housing registry? How would it benefit low-income households and housing providers in Winnipeg?

3. How could examples from elsewhere be adapted to the Winnipeg context?

1.3 Significance of the Study

It is anticipated that the findings of this study will contribute to scholarly literature, the planning profession, and directly to the residents of Winnipeg. Little literature exists on the topic of housing registries, meaning that others are not being informed on the benefits of housing registries and their applicability to a range of circumstances. This research project will act as a source of information on the topic. It will be applicable for those investigating housing registries not only in Winnipeg, but also throughout Canada and the United States.

This research will contribute to planning research and practice. It will expand the documentation of the support for housing registries that exist in Winnipeg, and it will increase the awareness of the benefits of implementing a central housing registry. It will also provide suggestions on how to approach the development and implementation of a central housing registry, something that is relatively undocumented and typically done by trial and error. This research will also illustrate that housing registries can act as a source of information that can be used by decision makers to develop policy and programming around housing needs.

This research could potentially have a direct impact on Winnipeg residents. It will supply housing providers with information on housing needs and other registries that exist in Winnipeg. It could act as a springboard for collaboration among housing providers to reduce duplication among the providers and work together to address housing needs, in turn resulting in Winnipeg residents potentially having their housing needs addressed in more effective and efficient ways.

1.4   Research Methods

1.4.1 Selection of Study Area

This research project was divided into two study areas. The first consisted of Canada and the United States in relation to the scope of the literature review and the survey. Canada and the United States were chosen because housing registries that exist in either of these two areas would have application to the Winnipeg context and provide a source of background information on housing registries. The second, and more immediate study area was Winnipeg. All the information gained from the research results and analysis of housing registries across Canada and the United States was applied to Winnipeg in order to develop a set of recommendations for a central housing registry in Winnipeg. Winnipeg was selected as the immediate study area for a number of reasons. Numerous authors in the literature, including Distasio (2003), SPC (2001), and Carter et al. (1993), have stated that Winnipeg is in need of a housing registry. Also in 2001, 33.7% of households who rented their dwellings were experiencing a housing affordability problem (CMHC, 2003A). This meant that approximately 1

in 3 households who rent their housing accommodations were spending 30% or more of their income on shelter. This figure is at the same level as in 1991, which demonstrates that there has been little change in the affordability issue over the past decade. The references made to Winnipeg needing a housing registry and the high percentage of renters who are experiencing affordability issues were the two major considerations for choosing Winnipeg as the immediate study area.

1.4.2 Research Tools

The research began with a review of current literature on housing policy and housing registries. To gain further in-depth information on housing registries a survey was conducted via email with a sample of housing registries across Canada and the United States. The experiences of these housing registries were related to the Winnipeg context with the help of local housing providers and housing registries through a focus group. Based on the information gained from the overall research a set of recommendations was developed for a central housing registry in Winnipeg.

The literature review covered the evolution of housing policy in Canada over the past couple of decades. It also included information on the need for a central housing registry in Winnipeg, and a discussion of information on Canadian and American housing registries that were obtained from reports and websites.

Once the literature was completed a survey was developed and distributed to gain further information on housing registries. An invitation to participate in the survey was emailed to housing registries in Canada and the

United States that had been located through reports, web searches, and referrals, with the exception of university housing registries as their focus tends to be very narrow and does not easily fit with a central housing registry focusing on affordable housing. Those housing registries already in existence in Winnipeg were also invited to participate in the survey. The survey was used as a tool to answer specific questions, which were not discussed in the literature or on websites. It was also used to determine the challenges that can be anticipated in establishing a housing registry, as challenges typically are not publicized.

The information from the literature review and the survey were compiled and presented at the focus group. The focus group was comprised of local housing providers and housing registries in Winnipeg. The goal of the focus group was to provide an opportunity for those involved in the provision of housing in Winnipeg to offer their insight, and in some cases their experiences with housing registries. The feedback from the focus group, survey, and literature review contributed to a set of recommendations that were developed to guide any future development of a central housing registry in Winnipeg.

1.4.3   Instruments

1.4.3.1   Survey Instrument

The purpose of the survey was to gain further information from a sample of housing registries identified for this research project. The survey collected information that was not available through web searches or in reports and was meant to capture the experiences of a wide array of housing registries. Zeisel (1981) states that "[s]tandardized questionnaires are useful if you know what you

want to find out from people, if you want to discover regularities among groups of people with particular characteristics, and if you want to be able to quantify your data" (176). Based on this statement the survey instrument was chosen as the most appropriate research instrument for one phase of this project. The survey allowed for the analysis of the different experiences of housing registries to be used in the establishment of recommendations for a central housing registry in Winnipeg.

The survey was designed to include both open- and closed-ended questions. The open-ended questions allowed the respondents to give as much detail as they felt comfortable with, while closed-ended questions asked the respondents to select a response from a list. The survey began with background questions, allowing the respondents to become comfortable with answering questions, while the information being obtained was still rather general. The design of the survey moved from general questions to more in-depth, open-ended ones. Questions were also filtered, meaning that only relevant questions were asked of the respondents. The structure of the survey was based on groupings of similar type questions. The survey began with a background section, then moved on to the establishment of the registry, steps to accessing the registry, participation in the housing registry, financial components, staffing, and concluded with the experiences that have been gained by the housing registry.

Prior to administering the survey it was pre-tested. The pre-test can alert the researcher to any unforeseen problems (Zeisel, 1981) and it was completed

by an individual with extensive experience and past involvement in a housing registry in Winnipeg. The results of the pre-test provided the researcher with insight into the anticipated effectiveness of the survey. In the end, an additional question was added to the survey based on recommendations made from the pre-test. The survey instrument is included in Appendix D.

Housing registries were invited to participate in the survey through an email invitation that described the research being undertaken and included a Statement of Informed Consent form (Appendix B). Participants were asked to read the consent form and reply to the email stating "I agree to participate in the study as described in the consent form" if they agreed to. Housing registries that did not respond to the email invitation received a follow-up email, and lastly a telephone call was made to the registry as a final attempt to have housing registries participate in the survey. Once participants had agreed to participate they were emailed the survey form. Instructions were provided on how to complete and return the survey. If a completed survey had not been returned in approximately two weeks a follow-up email was sent to the housing registry as a reminder to complete and return the survey.

The sample of participants for the survey was developed through the reliance of available subjects (convenience sample) and also in part through snowball sampling (Baker, 1998). Housing registries are somewhat new therefore those housing registries that could be located were invited to participate. Also some participants suggested other housing registries that could be contacted to participate, which the researcher then contacted. In the end the

total sample consisted of 35 housing registries that were invited to participate and 21 housing registries that participated by completing the survey, resulting in a response rate of 60%. Email was seen as appropriate as the majority of housing registries were located through web searches. The survey targeted the person involved in the development and/or management of the housing registry. It is acknowledged that the targeted person may not always be the person who completed the survey; as a result the survey included a question at the beginning to determine who completed the survey and their position or involvement with the housing registry. Once the survey was completed and emailed back to the researcher the survey was then printed and prepared for its analysis.

1.4.3.2   Focus Group Instrument

The focus group method was chosen to gain insight from Winnipeg housing providers and existing housing registries on the local context for developing a central housing registry. It was acknowledged that a wealth of information exists among local housing organizations in Winnipeg and this knowledge should be included in recommendations for a central housing registry that would affect them. The focus group was used "not to generalize but to determine the range, and not to make-statements about the population but to provide insights about how people perceive a situation" (Kruger, 1988:96).

Only one focus group was conducted. The reasoning for this was that fewer groups are needed when "the topic of the focus group interview … relate[s] to a narrow category of people with similar backgrounds who have had the same level of exposure to the programs" (Kruger, 1988: 98). In this case the

participants were either housing registries or providers who have been exposed to local housing issues and possibly the concept of a housing registry, but were less familiar with the notion of a central housing registry.

The focus group began with a presentation on the information gained from the literature review and survey. This information was presented based on the experiences of other housing registries. The focus group instrument design consisted of 5 open-ended questions in order to obtain participants feedback (Appendix G). Open-ended questions are typically used as they "provide an opportunity for the respondent to answer from a variety of dimensions. … Individuals are encouraged to respond based on their specific situation. … [In addition] the major advantage of the open-ended question is that it reveals what is on the interviewee's mind as opposed to what the interviewer suspects is on the interviewee's mind" (Kruger, 1988: 60). The focus group began with introductions to familiarize the participants with the other members of the focus group and engaged all participants in some discussion (Kruger, 1988). The remaining questions covered areas consisting of benefits, strengths, challenges, and problems of a central housing registry, links that can be made with non-housing sectors, and potential participation in the central housing registry.

A pre-test of the focus group questions took place by the research project's Supervisory Committee. It is common to have experts review the focus group questions. "It is preferable that these experts have had experience with focus groups, but at a minimum they should be familiar with the purpose of the study and also be familiar with the type of participants involved in the study"

(Kruger, 1988: 67). Each of the Committee members fit the criteria suggested by Kruger. The Committee reviewed the questions and provided feedback on the questions. The questions were then re-evaluated after the survey was completed.

A purposive sample was used for the focus group, meaning that participants of the focus group consisted of those subjects that met the needs of the study (Baker, 1998). The subjects were contacted and invited to participate through a letter. At the same time they were provided with a description of the research being undertaken. Participants were notified of the date, time, and place of the focus group. A reminder email was sent out before the focus group, which included the details of the focus group and the description of the research topic once again.

Traditionally focus groups are comprised of seven to ten people, with a maximum of 12 people (Kruger, 1988). Due to the large amount of interest among local housing providers and registries to participate, the focus group consisted of 9 participants. See Appendix F for a listing of the participants.

At the focus group the participants were provided with the Statement of Informed Consent to sign prior to the focus group beginning (Appendix E). The researcher of the project acted as the facilitator of the focus group. The responses were recorded through a tape recorder and by two note takers, which is common practice (Kruger, 1988). The note takers also signed a confidentiality form (Appendix H).

1.4.4 Data Analysis

Data from the research project was analyzed based on an appropriate method for each research instrument. Firstly, information on particular housing registries posted on websites and available through promotional material and reports was discussed in the literature review. Secondly, the results from completed surveys were coded. Open-ended responses were grouped into similar responses and coded. The coded responses were entered into SPSS, frequencies were determined and then discussed based on the valid percentages. This depicted the similarities that exist between housing registries and the unique components of housing registries. Thirdly, the focus group responses were transcribed and a literal analysis of the text occurred (Mason, 2000) uncovering the insights of local housing providers and housing registries.

The analysis of the results from the survey and focus group are discussed in a later chapter of this thesis (Chapter 3). The analysis of the results was used to develop a set of recommendations for a central housing registry in Winnipeg based on the experiences of existing housing registries across Canada and the United States and also based on the feedback gained from local housing providers.

The results and discussion of the data analysis should be useful to all levels of government with a focus on housing issues, it should also be useful to local housing providers in Winnipeg, and housing providers in other cities that are experiencing the same situations as Winnipeg housing providers. Housing registries already in existence that are considering evolving into a central housing

registry may also find this document useful. It is hoped that this project would create more discussion and action around the potential implementation of a central housing registry in Winnipeg.

1.5   Limitations

This study experienced some limitations. A limitation of housing registries in general is that their usefulness is often dependent on vacancy rates. If vacancy rates are low housing registries will not have as great an impact on linking low-income households with housing that meet their needs as compared to when vacancy rates are high. This is not a fault of housing registries, it is the reality of the housing market. When vacancy rates are low there is a limited number of vacant units available for households to occupy, and housing registries cannot solve this issue. However, a central housing registry would mean that applicants' names would appear on one waiting list, eliminating duplication on many smaller waiting lists and providing a more accurate count of the actual number of people in search of affordable housing. The housing registries can also draw on affordable private market units.

Another limitation of this project is that housing registries were located through reports and referrals, but predominantly through web searches. This may bias the investigation of housing registries to those connected to the internet although many housing registries are moving towards becoming internet based, if they are not already. This bias was somewhat offset by including housing registries that are mentioned in reports or referred to by other housing registries, though fewer registries were located that way than through web searches.

An additional limitation is that participants in both the survey and focus group were based on a sample and not the entire population. The survey samples included different housing registries from across Canada and the United States. It is acknowledged that other housing registries must exist, but they were not mentioned in the reports examined, referred to by other housing registries, or located through web searches, so they were not included in the sample of housing registries. The focus group consisted of only a sample of Winnipeg housing providers and housing registries. However, participants of the focus group included representation from government organizations, non-profit organizations, and community groups, all of which had experience in housing issues in Winnipeg.

Additionally, the survey results were skewed to the Ontario experience. This province has a large number of housing registries, and they accounted for a significant number of the completed surveys. This may be due to the fact that Ontario has legislation in place that basically requires housing providers to be a member of a registry.

The survey design also had some limitations. A set of questions were designed to determine the number of public, co-op, and non-profit housing providers that exist in the service area of the housing registry, as well as the number of public, co-op, non-profit, and private housing providers that participate in the housing registry. These questions were not successful as they were unable to gain accurate information. It is believed that some respondents indicated the number of providers and some indicated the number of units, while a large

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number of respondents simply stated they were unsure. The survey also did not ask if any of the housing registries were a central housing registry. Therefore, some registries may be playing the role of a central housing registry, but this cannot be verified and thus remains unknown.

The results of the data collection were also limited based on the willingness of registries to participate in the survey and local housing providers' and registries' willingness to participate in the focus group. This limitation could further impact the set of recommendations developed for a Winnipeg central housing registry, since the recommendations are dependent on the ability of the research process to obtain complete and accurate information about participants' experiences and insights.

1.6   Chapter Outline

This thesis is laid out in five chapters. This first chapter acts as an introduction to the research project. The second chapter consists of a review of the current literature ranging from Canadian housing policy to an explanation and detailed information on housing registries. The third chapter outlines the research findings from the survey and focus group. Chapter four moves on to a summary and discussion of the experiences of existing housing registries. This includes similarities between housing registries, lessons learned, challenges faced, and the successes of existing housing registries. In the fifth chapter the concept of housing registries is related back to the Winnipeg context through a discussion of the potential challenges and successes of a central housing registry system in Winnipeg. Next a set of recommendations for a central housing registry in

Winnipeg is presented, and the thesis ends with a conclusion to the overall research project.

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW

In Winnipeg there is a growing need for affordable housing, as there is in many Canadian cities. However, the financial resources do not exist to construct the units needed. Therefore, alternative approaches are required and ways to improve access to existing low-income housing should be considered. In the present day and age of technology, more options become available. The creation of a housing registry could be one approach. A housing registry, similar to all other registries, is simply an index or inventory where records and documents are kept (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000; Merriam-Webster, 1996). From the Canadian and American experience a housing registry generally consists of an organized effort to link those in search of housing with housing providers. This can be done through such approaches as compiling and posting vacancies, developing customized housing lists for individual housing applicants, and/or screening applicants and referring them to landlords. These types of housing registries tend to work independent of one another.

This research project will focus on encouraging Winnipeg housing organizations to work together through a concept known as a central housing registry. A central registry consists of two components. Firstly, a database of applicants where people in search of affordable housing fill out one application form and have their names included in the database (i.e. central waiting list). Applicants can also search through vacant units that are posted by housing providers. Secondly, a database of housing providers where providers who become members of the registry have access to the applicant database to fill

their housing vacancies based on their only eligibility criteria. Providers can also post their vacant units in the central housing registry.

Figure 1: Central Housing Registry
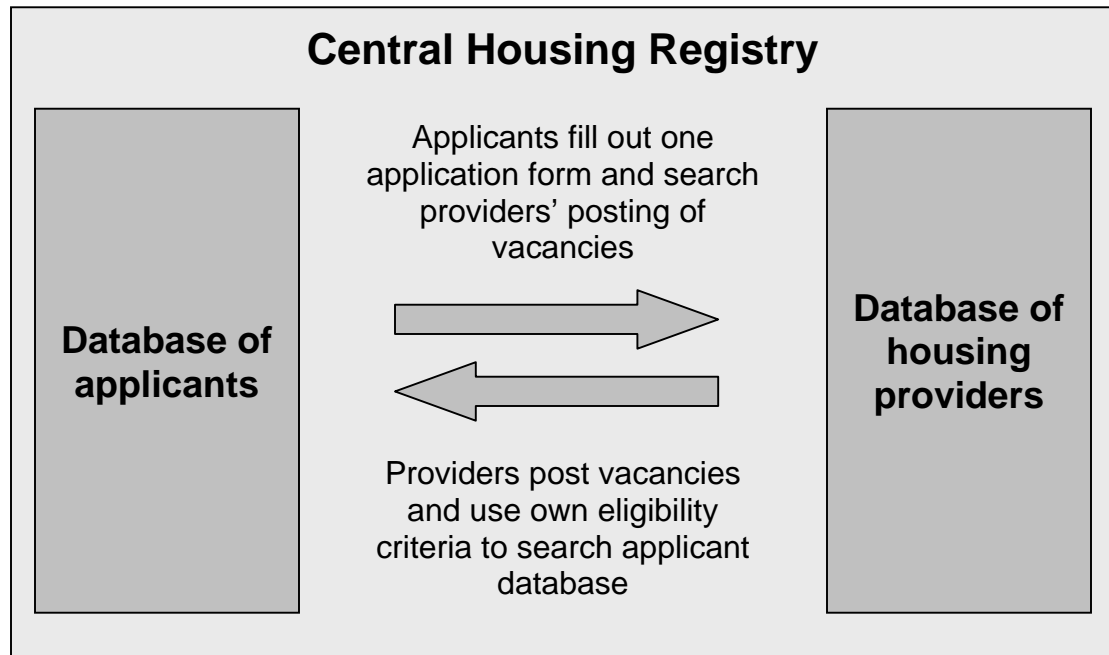
Such a central housing registry system would create a linkage between the supply and demand for low-income housing in Winnipeg. This could act to provide better access to housing, improve coordination among housing providers while reducing the duplication of each other's efforts, and create a source of up-to-date accurate housing information to assist decision makers (e.g. government) in creating policies and programs to further address the low-income housing problem in Winnipeg.

Housing policy in Canada has significantly changed over the past two decades. In current circumstances of devolution, tools must be developed in order for lower levels of government to be able to adequately take on new housing responsibilities. One of these tools could be a central housing registry. Many housing advocates are already stating the need for a central housing

registry in Winnipeg and the benefits that can arise from a registry. Some small, independent housing registries do exist in the city but they lack connection to other housing organizations. This research project argues that the efforts of housing providers and advocates could produce effective outcomes through focusing on coordination and collaboration among all those involved.

2.1   Housing Policy in Canada

Over the past few decades Canadian housing policy has experienced major changes. Originally the federal government had dominated in housing policy because of its larger fiscal capacity compared with other levels of government (Pomeroy, 1995). However changes have occurred. In an effort to reduce government spending the federal government discontinued its direct role in the delivery of subsidized housing, and "stopped supporting the construction of new social housing" (Wade, 1994: 3). As a result, no new public housing has been added to the stock since the 1980s (Distasio, 2003), and until recently no new social housing has been built in most provinces since the early 1990s (Wade, 1994).

Another change in housing policy was the federal government's desire to reduce its presence in housing markets, which resulted in a shift to providing cost-shared, small-scale projects until 1994 (Carroll and Jones, 2000). As a means of deficit control, they would no longer engage in new or long-term commitments that involved continuing subsidies, but the federal government continued subsidizing their existing units. Eventually the social housing portfolio was transferred to the provinces and territories (Skelton, 1998). "The rationale for

this move was to reduce overlap and duplication between the two levels of government" (Wolfe, 1998: 124). This gave provincial governments the opportunity to design and develop programs to address their own unique housing needs as they undertook the leadership role in housing policy (Pomeroy, 1995).

The federal government remained a relatively passive player in low-income housing through its cost-sharing agreements with the provinces (Wolfe, 1998). These agreements have further impacted housing policy, as they created the opportunity for provincial governments to reduce their expenditures on housing as the two are linked through the agreements. All provinces, with the exception of two (British Columbia and Ontario), took this opportunity to reduce their provincial budget for new housing construction (Pomeroy, 1995). This illustrates that housing policy in Canada has been "characterized by a strong reluctance on the part of federal (and provincial and territorial) governments to commit funds for low-cost housing" (Skelton, 2000: 182).

The new housing policy responsibility placed on the provinces and territories has added stress to the system and once again partnerships have been relied upon. "[A]ll of the provinces and territories, to varying degrees, have established partnerships with non-profit groups and cooperatives as a means of sharing housing costs and responsibilities" (Carroll and Jones, 2000: 283). Municipal governments are in a situation where they and their community organizations have the most contact with the communities in need, and realize the particular issues that many residents face in their efforts to find appropriate affordable housing. It is these open lines of communication between the

municipalities, community organizations, and neighbourhood residents that help to identify the housing needs and develop strategies that reflect the needs of the community (Russell, 1999). The municipal role has become more important as strategies to address low-income housing are being developed at the local level. Municipalities, like the provinces, are becoming providers of low-income housing, and municipalities are focusing on creating partnerships with the local communities to develop housing solutions (Russell, 1999).

As the federal government was reducing their role in low-income housing and responsibility was being transferred to the provinces and territories, a lot of the dependence for initiating affordable housing went to third sector organizations (Skelton, 1996; Skelton, 1998). Federal and provincial funding was used to back non-profit and co-operative programs in the development of low-income housing solutions (Skelton, 1998). Non-profit housing organizations also initiated a shift in thinking. Typically, housing providers worked individually, which resulted in restricted approaches to affordable housing. A shift in thinking occurred with the realization by the non-profit sector that linking the efforts of housing providers could in turn be a more effective use of resources, build partnerships, and develop into comprehensive strategies (Skelton, 1998). This concept of linking the work of housing providers can be extended beyond the realm of non-profit agencies to include governments at all levels. It could have very positive results, because currently providers "are often delivering the same service, to the same client group tripping over each other in the field while … being funded by public money" (Carter et al., 1993: 16).

Over the past five years the federal government has, to a limited extent, renewed their role in housing. There has been the introduction of the National Homelessness Initiative through the Supportive Communities Partnership Initiative and the Urban Aboriginal Homelessness Program. Funding for these programs have been directed towards either existing programs or housing support services, not new initiatives. The federal government has also continued the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (Carter and Polevychok, 2004: 4). These initiatives have provided some support, however "there is no comprehensive continuum of programs and many low-income households are finding the search for affordable accommodation more and more difficult as the level of production in no way meets the demand" (Carter and Polevychok, 2004: 4).

The federal government has recognized the shortfall and has been making efforts to "increase the supply of affordable housing across Canada" through the development of an affordable housing framework (in 2001) in partnership with Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers responsible for Housing (Manitoba FSH, 2004B). From this framework individual agreements will and have been established between the federal government and each province and territory thereby addressing the affordable housing priorities of that jurisdiction (Manitoba FSH, 2004B). Under this framework the design and delivery of housing programs are the responsibility of the individual provinces and territories, allowing for flexibility to meet their housing needs (Manitoba FSH, 2004C). The focus is on efforts to increase the supply of new affordable rental housing and

rehabilitate deteriorated properties for low- to moderate-income households. Also, to increase the supply of new homes and encourage home ownership in targeted neighbourhoods, while assisting renters become homebuyers, down payment assistance is provided (Manitoba FSH, 2004B).

Manitoba's agreement has led to the development of the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) to increase the supply of affordable housing. Phase I of AHI began as a five-year shared initiative between the federal government and the Province of Manitoba (Manitoba FSH, 2004A). The federal government allocated $25.39 million in funding through CMHC, which was matched by the Province (Manitoba FSH, 2004B). On April 25, 2005 Phase II of AHI was signed, which extended the agreement to 2008. The second phase will see both levels of government commit an additional $11.54 million for affordable housing targeted at households on or eligible for social housing waiting lists (Manitoba FSH, 2005).

Other efforts made by the federal government include developing a Canadian Housing Framework (CMHC, 2004D). Federal Minister of Labour and Housing Joe Fontana has initiated national consultations to "gain a better understanding of housing and homelessness issues, and at the same time offer Canadians an opportunity to provide input towards the development of a new Canadian Housing Framework" (CanEquity, 2004). The federal government is working with lower levels of government, community groups, and the private sector to develop new initiatives to strengthen existing programs (CanEquity,

2004). Such efforts include extending the National Homelessness Initiative for an additional three years (2003 to 2006) (Government of Canada, 2004).

The federal government has become more involved in housing, although "it has been difficult to determine which department is taking the lead on housing at the federal level. Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) spearheaded the homelessness initiative while CMHC funds the Affordable Housing Initiative and Residential Rehabilitation [Assistance] Program" (Carter and Polevychok, 2004: 33).

Not only does housing policy need to be seen by the federal government as a priority, it also needs to be seen as a sector of social policy. Other sectors of social policy recognize housing's impact as it relates to such areas as health and well-being, social development and networks, socio-economic status and life chances, income security, labour force participation, immigration and social inclusion, community development, and education (Carter and Polevychok, 2004; Jackson, 2004). By improving housing and access to housing, improvements will also be seen in other social policy areas (Carter and Polevychok, 2004).

A relatively new initiative undertaken in some provinces and cities has been the creation of housing registries. Housing providers are recognizing that their efforts are being duplicated within their city, due to a disconnection between housing providers. This research project questions the efficiency and effectiveness of housing providers' efforts when there is a lack of coordination, and focuses on the potential for greater success that may come through linking

their efforts via a central housing registry that connects all housing providers and possibly other areas of social policy (e.g. immigration and health).

The Government of Canada is recognizing this need for partnering and the potential positive outcomes of housing registries. Some registry programs have already been funded under national cost-shared housing programs. In Victoria, British Columbia the Pacific Housing Advisory Association received financial assistance from the National Homelessness Initiative to help in the development of a housing registry (Government of Canada, 2002A). Under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) Operation Go Home in Winnipeg, an organization which provides safe, quality housing for youth at-risk, received financial assistance to support their emergency services, prevention education, and a housing registry (Government of Canada, 2002B). The cost-sharing agreement between the federal government and the provinces provides a source of financial support. Provincial governments might wish to embrace this opportunity to design programs, such as housing registries that address the provinces' unique housing needs.

To best address the housing needs of lower-income individuals in Canada comprehensive strategies are required. Housing providers are all striving for the same outcome, but too often their work is done from a narrow focus. Collaboration and partnerships are required to start to comprehensively address low-income housing issues. In a time of reduced fiscal abilities on the part of many governments the need to make the best use of available resources is

fundamental; this calls for new approaches to address low-income housing issues.

2.2   Planning Issues Addressed by Housing Registries

The reduction of government programming in the area of low-cost housing is contributing to a number of planning issues. The fact that many housing groups are the product of housing programs creates a situation where the withdrawal of government initiatives and the lack of expansion to housing programs could lead to reduced housing interests. The provision infrastructure, which refers to "the assembly of organizations, individuals, policies, legislation and practices associated with social housing provision in Canada," focuses on drawing interest to housing issues (Skelton, 2000: 192). However with the reduction in programming this front seems to be relatively inactive in Winnipeg. Many housing organizations know very little about one another, if anything at all (Skelton, 2000). This illustrates much of the reasoning behind why planning issues are developing around housing. The increasing demand for low-income housing and the decreasing supply of such housing is a stressor for many households. Greater affordability problems and issues of homelessness are occurring. Accessing affordable housing is more difficult and introduces the greater potential for discrimination to occur. The lack of coordination between housing providers only adds to the problems. Greater coordination between the government, the non-profit sector, and the private housing market could help to alleviate some of the problems. Additionally greater collaboration could in turn allow for better planning and access to accurate, up-to-date information.

2.2.1 Affordability and Homelessness

In order for individuals to fully participate in society they must have access to basic needs. One of these basic needs is housing (Chisholm, 2003). Without housing people cannot build stable lives, and without stability it is hard to become employed and fully involved in society. In spite of this housing is becoming harder for many households to afford, as housing costs tend to be representing higher proportions of households' incomes (Edgar et al., 2002).

According to 2001 Census data, 33.7% of Winnipeg's renter households were spending 30% or more of their income on housing (CMHC, 2003A). This matches the 1991 level indicating that the affordability issue is largely unchanged, with little improvement over the past decade. Lower-income households are still more likely to have an affordability problem, with shelter costs consisting of a large proportion of their income. They generally seek housing in the rental market, which results in 6.5% of Canadian renter households relying on annual incomes of below $10,000 (CMHC, 2003A).

In Winnipeg there has been little affordable rental housing constructed in the past 10 years. Yet "producing affordable housing and preserving existing low cost housing are important elements to reducing and preventing homelessness" (SPC Winnipeg, 2001: 39). The reason that there has been no affordable private rental accommodation constructed is that it is not profitable. "[M]any low-income tenants are living on such modest means that they can never produce enough rental payment sufficient to cover the construction, mortgage and maintenance costs of newly built rental housing" (SPC Winnipeg, 2001: 39). Consequently,

many low-income households turn to the public sector for subsidized housing, although it has long waiting lists resulting from a lack of supply.

The housing affordability problem is also giving way to homelessness. "The availability of fewer, safe, good-quality affordable homes [is] a major trend contributing to family homelessness" (CMHC, 2003B: 3). Many of the families faced with homelessness feel insufficient income and a lack of affordable housing have contributed to their state of being. Both of these factors make it hard for families to access housing that they can afford, "unless it is subsidized" (CMHC, 2003B: 3).

Many of the affordability and homelessness issues that have arisen are due, at least in part, to a lack of affordable housing. One potential solution to this is to help families locate housing that is appropriate, adequate and affordable.

2.2.2 Access to Low-income Housing

In the past the process of filtering was understood to distribute housing. As higher-income households constructed new housing in an attempt to meet their demands for better quality housing, the units vacated by these higher-income households would become available for purchase by lower-income groups. This would initiate a chain of moves down to the lowest income groups of the population, and they would end up in extremely poor quality housing (Sayegh, 1987). It was finally recognized by governments that filtering was not a reliable method for low-income households to access appropriate housing. Low-income households needed access to quality, affordable housing. Therefore

many low-income households came to rely to a certain extent upon subsidized housing.

Access to low-income housing is influenced by the supply of low-income housing. Due to the limited supply of low-cost rentals, many households who are on the margins of being low-income and are in need of housing have chosen to become homeowners. Owner-occupation is becoming more feasible, through "increas[ing] access to owner occupation by increasing subsidies to potential marginal buyers" (Kemeny, 1995: 54). This strategy, through a process known as the ratchet effect, causes an increasing gap between the high levels of subsidies that owner-occupiers experience and the lower level of subsidies felt by renters. Increasing subsidies to marginal buyers reduces the amount of low-income renters, while those low-income households left in the rental market tend to be the poorest households. This creates an increase in the cost of bringing the poorest households into the ranks of the subsidized buyers, and can be seen as a tightening of the ratchet (Kemeny, 1995).

Inadequate supply of low-income rental housing is what pushes these economically marginal households into ownership. They would not do so if they could find appropriate housing in the rental market. Some believe the supply of low-income rental accommodations is being suppressed as a means "to force as many households as possible to choose between profit renting and owner occupation by denying them access to cost renting" (Kemeny, 1995: 54). Nonetheless, by increasing the amount of marginal buyers it creates instability in the ownership market because of their limited financial means (Kemeny, 1995).

The efforts to move economically marginal households into ownership is not an adequate means of addressing the issue of access to affordable housing. As long as poverty persists there will always be households in need of adequate low-income subsidized housing.

As the supply of affordable housing continues to decrease, access becomes all the harder. Generally the emphasis goes onto social housing to provide low-income households with access to affordable housing, as it is the most direct means to providing access (Edgar et al., 2002). But,

> [s]ince the mid 1980's, the provision of housing in Canada has been left to the private sector. Over the past 15 years (1983 to 1999) 2231 social housing units were started in Winnipeg, with the peak occurring in 1984 (453 units). Since 1995, no new social housing units have been built in Winnipeg. The absence of both new private rental and new social housing creates overall shortfalls in rental supply. Given the number and growing proportion of renters paying 30% or more for their shelter, the quantity of assisted (public housing) supply is not enough. (SPC Winnipeg, 2001: 48)

As the supply of affordable housing decreases, access becomes harder, and the potential for discrimination in accessing housing may also escalate. Therefore, "anti-discrimination safeguards are necessary to ensure fair access for these households" (Novac et al., 2002: 1). Discrimination can further complicate issues of access to housing, through creating inequitable access (Novac et al., 2002)

"Failure to reasonably accommodate a prospective or existing tenant when it was both possible and reasonable to do so is against the law" (MHRC, 1991: 4), though it still occurs. Discrimination frequently occurs with people experiencing social and economic disadvantages, such as poverty (Novac et al.,

2002). Income level may be the most common form of discrimination. The effects of discrimination can be overwhelming, especially for low-income households. It forces households to search for longer periods of time, or look for higher cost housing (Novac et al., 2002). Low-income people typically do not have the option of looking for higher cost housing, as their incomes will not allow them to.

In order to address the reality that discrimination further complicates low-income households' ability to access affordable housing, an examination of the method of screening applicants should occur. Income-based screening functions often act to exclude many segments of the population. This can exclude the homeless, the poor, single parents, young people, recent immigrants, and persons with disabilities. All of these segments of the population tend to have lower incomes (Novac et al., 2002). As a result, "[l]andlords and their advocates believe that more professional methods, such as the use of standardized application forms and more business-like or impersonal communications, will lessen the likelihood of landlords and their agents acting in ways that constitute legal discrimination" (Novac et al., 2002: Executive Summary). The use of housing registries could allow for standardized screening processes to ensure that applicants are all given a fair chance to access housing without the threat of discrimination.

Housing registries can be used, not only to avoid discrimination, but also to help low-income households access affordable housing in general. Persuading economically marginal households into ownership through increased subsidies is not an appropriate approach to reducing the need for, and improving access to

low-income housing. It is obvious that there is a need for an increase in the affordable housing stock. The reality is that new construction is a lengthy process and very expensive, especially since low-income households cannot pay high enough rents to make new construction financially attractive, without subsidies. Constructing new affordable housing to address the demands of today may not reflect the demands of tomorrow, in turn potentially creating a greater supply than future demands. Instead, an appropriate response may be to subsidize private market landlords as needed and tie them into the subsidized housing market through a centralized housing registry (Distasio, 2003). Social housing units in many communities have been experiencing growing waiting lists (CMHC, 2003B), which can be associated with low vacancy rates. In a time of low vacancies housing registries will have limited impacts, as units must become available for applicants to be able to fill them. Still, housing registries can help to ensure that when vacancies occur the units are filled quickly and in a well-organized manner. Also, incorporating affordable and subsidizing units provided by private landlords can help to create greater access to affordable housing, while creating flexibility to meet changes in demand for affordable housing.

2.2.3 Coordination

Numerous housing resources exist not only in Winnipeg, but in cities across Canada, however there tends to be a lack of local coordination between many of them. Often times housing providers within a city are unaware of what other housing providers are doing. Unknowingly services may be duplicated and competition for the same resources can occur, much of this is due to a lack of

coordination. In Winnipeg there seems to be "only an informal link between government housing and other housing organizations" (Distasio, 2003: 36). In order to create the most efficient and effective housing programs in Winnipeg and to improve access to subsidized housing, there needs to be an increase in the "coordination of housing resources between governments and the community" (SPC Winnipeg, 2001: 51).

A productive method of increasing coordination is through building partnerships. A housing partnership can be defined as "an arrangement between two or more parties who agree to work together to achieve shared or complementary housing objectives" (CMHC, no date: 1). Partnerships also may focus on solving problems and addressing issues potentially through policy and program development. Their duration can range from project-specific, short-term partnerships to ongoing arrangements. Some partnerships may be more formal than others, but they all can produce a number of advantages. They generally help those involved to achieve a common goal and maximize the limited resources, while also leveraging for other financial resources. Not only do partnerships help to increase the credibility of those involved, but they provide an opportunity for all those involved to learn from each other (CMHC, no date).

Housing partnerships that run across the public, private, and non-profit sectors will help to provide interlinked coordination among housing providers. Governments are starting to acknowledge this through initiating citizen-centred service delivery. It is "about making the interface between government and citizens more accessible and user-friendly by organizing government around the

citizen, rather than vice-versa" (Lenihan, 2004A: 1). Citizen-centred service delivery, also known as integrated service delivery, can encompass arrangements "within departments, across departments, across jurisdictions, and across the public, private and not-for-profit sectors" (Lenihan, 2004A: 1). By looking at the tasks that each group is undertaking, and then through coordinating each group's efforts "the whole enterprise can be redesigned to achieve key goals more efficiently, effectively and responsively" (Lenihan, 2004B: 2).

A central housing registry can act as an approach not only to citizen-centred service delivery, but also to developing partnerships. With all housing providers coming together to achieve a common goal, a coordinated approach could then evolve. Housing registries also make it easy for citizens to access the services they require.

2.2.4 Current Information

Accurate and up-to-date information is necessary to be able to best address housing issues. However, information on housing issues is often out-of-date. Census data tends to be a common source used to obtain housing information, though it is only updated once every five years, and by the time new data is released it is already a couple of years old. Information guides planning decisions, and without accurate information the planning decisions will not adequately reflect the needs of the community.

Housing registries can act as an additional source of housing information. The data collected on the registry clientele enables decision makers "to know

more about the housing requirements [and] related issues affecting the clientele"
(Alberta Seniors, 2002). It provides a direct source of information, which would
be more accurate than conclusions drawn from out-dated census data. Housing
registries also provide information that assists housing agencies by illustrating
current housing needs and accurate vacancy rates (Accessible Housing Society,
2003; Granite State Independent Living, no date). Centralized housing registries
provide a quick source of information on the number of people on waiting lists at
any point in time. The figures also are more accurate than those produced by
pooling individual waiting lists, because of duplication.

Housing registries can act as a source of information to guide planning
decisions. "[T]o not have accurate information about the … housing stock … is
unacceptable in this day and age. Decision makers must have accurate
information to enact public policy, allocate resources, target services, and protect
the public good" (Vermont Housing Task Force, 2000: 2). Information is power, in
this case, power to appropriately address housing needs, power to coordinate
similar efforts and reduce duplication, power to efficiently make use of limited
financial resources, and power to effectively help people access adequate and
affordable housing.

2.3   The Need for a Central Housing Registry in Winnipeg

Winnipeg, like many Canadian and American cities, is faced with an
affordable housing problem. Low-income people are having difficulties in
accessing housing within their financial means (Distasio, 2003). For the reasons
described above, this research project argues that the creation of a central

housing registry could help to alleviate some of the problems around the issue of accessing affordable housing.

The current affordable housing situation in Winnipeg is reaching a critical state. The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg has concluded that:

> Winnipeg is desperately in need of available, safe, appropriate and affordable housing. The implications of the severe housing shortage, and the rapidly deteriorating existing housing stock, is further impacted by the evidence of the increasingly difficult economic circumstances facing a significant number of Winnipeg's residents. In 1995, … almost one quarter of the individuals residing in Winnipeg lived in poverty (2001: ii).

Accessing housing is also becoming increasingly difficult. Winnipeg's low vacancy rate in the private housing market sector is also reflected in public housing. As demand for low-income housing increases many housing providers are having a more difficult time housing the growing proportion of those in need. Lack of supply is a major issue in Winnipeg's low-income housing problem (Distasio, 2003). The issue of access to services also compounds the housing problem. Often "people are not informed. They do [not] know how to access services" (Distasio, 2003: 33).

When it comes to accessing the services of housing providers, people are faced with the reality of long waiting lists, particularly for larger households, as there are fewer units that will accommodate their housing needs (Distasio, 2003). Manitoba Housing is commonly referred to as having long waiting lists, which its staff recognizes, but waiting lists are the reality of all subsidized housing programs, including Kinew Housing (an Aboriginal housing provider in Winnipeg)

which has waiting lists ranging from a six month to over a year wait (Distasio, 2003).

Further complicating the delivery of housing services in Winnipeg is the lack of coordination between providers. Agencies are often unaware of other programs in the community, contributing to fragmented service delivery (Carter et al., 1993). As well there is concern over the competitive nature of service agencies in Winnipeg.

> [I]n a two block area of inner city Winnipeg there were projects of five different housing agencies. They represent both public and non-profit agencies. They are providing housing to basically the same clientele, and they were competing for units from the same budget pool. In addition each of the projects was attempting to build in support services for their clientele. They also all maintain their own waiting list, many with duplicate names from other agencies (Carter et al., 1993: 17).

The Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (2001) has documented that:

> there is a lack of coordination between the housing resource organizations. While some organizations may attempt to work together, this is done on a limited basis and is not seen as being effective. Relationships with government were often seen as poor and … there was a lack of time to coordinate services with other organizations. A lack of resources and having to compete for resources was often identified as a reason for a lack of coordination between organizations (27-28).

The lack of coordination among housing provides has a long history in Winnipeg and steps need to be taken to address this issue (Carter et al., 1993). In order to develop greater coordination the three levels of government must establish a comprehensive coordinated plan to addressing housing issues in Winnipeg (SPC Winnipeg, 2001). Housing organizations must also be involved in the

coordination. Distasio (2003) emphasizes this, with "the need to strengthen the connection between programs, with an emphasis on creating the necessary policies to ensure a greater level of coordination among various levels of government and community based organizations" (iv). It is apparent too many "that there needs to be increased communication between the organizations" (SPC Winnipeg, 2001: 58). All the players in the provision of low-income housing must be on the same page and working together, especially in a time of limited funding opportunities.

The gaps in the provision of housing services must also be addressed. Some of the gaps commonly cited are "such issues as lack of referrals and outreach, the lack of a central registry[,] or more integrated approaches to delivery of services" (Distasio, 1995: 15). The creation of a centralized housing registry could address many of these gaps including: better access to service, referrals, and outreach; greater coordination among housing providers; a reduction in the duplication of names on different waiting lists; and increased knowledge on the part of the local population about available housing options (Mancer and Kosmuk, 1999). In addition, it could help stabilize the population through addressing the housing needs of people thereby allowing them to move on to access other services they require (Carter et al., 1993). Many of those concerned with housing for low-income households have communicated the need for a housing registry (Carter et al., 1993; Distasio, 2003; SPC Winnipeg, 2001) and the benefits are clearly evident.

> [P]roviders felt that if someone could register once for housing, this would alleviate the number of places a person would have to visit. An

example of this was if a single mother applied for housing at one location (and is told her name will be put on a wait[ing] list), she must then go across town to register yet again with another subsidized housing program. This example, although simple, becomes stressful and problematic if the single mother has her children with her and she has to take the bus to multiple locations. Furthermore, this situation is heightened during the winter months. (Distasio, 2003: 15-16)

Housing registries create the ability to increase an individual's ease of access to housing programs with a reduced effort. Applying to a central housing registry requires one application form, which then registers the individual for all housing programs in which they fit the criteria. It allows "people to apply to many different programs without having to visit many locations and agencies. It could link all agencies" (Distasio, 2003: 33). As explained by Distasio (2003), a representative from Kinew Housing also made the observation that Winnipeg has many good landlords with affordable rents, but they are not being tapped into. Including such people in a centralized housing registry would facilitate a link between the public and private housing markets and potentially alleviate some of the stress on the public sector.

Manitoba Housing also recognizes the potential benefits of a central housing registry. They cite the example of BC Housing, which has established a centralized housing registry. The registry consists of a large database of applicants who are drawn from to fill housing units from different housing programs (Distasio, 2003)[1]. The support for a centralized housing registry in Winnipeg is visible among housing providers and advocates. This support lays the important groundwork for potential action to come.

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[1] The example of the BC Housing is further discussed in the Appendix.

2.4   Types of Housing Registries

Housing registries, like all registries, come in many different forms. However, all housing registries seem to have the same outcome in mind, which is to help provide housing to those in need. Registries often vary with regard to their intended resident groups. For instance, there are generally three types of housing registries:

1. university housing registries,

2. housing registries for subsidized housing, and

3. housing registries for persons with disabilities.

The following descriptions will give some insight into each type of housing registry. The information is based on a web search of all types of housing registries. Grant (2004) set the precedent in using a web search when researching the relatively new concept of gated communities. As little information exists on housing registries, as was also the case with gated communities, it was felt that a web search would act as an appropriate tool to gain information on their experiences. The concept of housing registries is poorly covered in the academic literature, as was demonstrated through a search of journals, which resulted in no adequate journal articles on the topic of housing registries. Some published reports touched on the concept, but with very little detail. Consequently, the web searches must be relied upon as the dominant source of literature on housing registries to date.

Many housing registries exist in both Canada and the United States but the number of housing registries is unclear because no catalogue or index

currently exists. The most prevalent housing registries that appeared in web searches and reports were located in: Manitoba (University of Winnipeg, 2004; Acorn and Murdoch, 2003; Ten Ten Sinclair, 2004; Palmer, no date; Operation Go Home, 2004); Saskatchewan (University of Saskatchewan, 2004); Alberta (Accessible Housing Society, 2003; Alberta Seniors, 2002; Handicapped Housing Society, no date; University of Alberta, 2004); British Columbia (BC Housing, 2002; University of Victoria, 2004); Ontario (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2001; City of Kingston, no date; Information London, no date; Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004; Ryerson University, 2004); Quebec (Champlain St-Lambert CSGEP, 2003); Connecticut (Connecticut Accessible Housing Registry, 2004); Massachusetts (CHAPA, 1999; Southeast Center For Independent Living Inc, no date); New Hampshire (Granite State Independent Living, no date); Minnesota (HousingLink, 2004); Maryland (Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, 2003); and Hawaii (JAIMS, 2004).

2.4.1 University Housing Registries

Many housing registries across Canada and the United States are affiliated with universities. This commonly occurs when a university does not provide housing accommodations on campus, and for that reason off-campus housing registries have been established (JAIMS, 2004; Ryerson University, 2004; University of Victoria, 2004).

University housing registries are frequently set up as searchable databases, often times online. Some registries can only be searched on the basis of location (University of Saskatchewan, 2004), while others provide a number of

searchable options. These may include location, number of bedrooms, rent, type of accommodations, whether pets are permitted or not, smoking or non-smoking, type of transportation to campus, and whether the accommodations are for sublet or lease (University of Alberta, 2004). It is recognized that not all students have internet access, so a number of universities provide free access to the internet to search for housing (Ryerson University, 2004). Those registries that are not online are available on campus (University of Winnipeg, 2004). Various registries also include a place for announcements related to housing (e.g. roommate wanted) (Champlain St-Lambert, 2003).

Several university housing registries go beyond simply listing vacant accommodations and providing a search tool, for example, some screen the facilities and accommodations (Champlain St-Lambert, 2003; University of Winnipeg, 2004). An example of this is at the University of Winnipeg, where the registry only lists properties that have been inspected by the Housing Registry Coordinator, which provides an opportunity to ensure the safety of the accommodations (University of Winnipeg, 2004).

University housing registries tend to be run by different groups and departments within the university, typically the student organization or information services (Champlain St-Lambert, 2003; University of Alberta, 2004). Housing registries are frequently a free service provided to students and others who have access to the internet. Still some universities do monitor and restrict access strictly to students (JAIMS, 2004).

These registries also commonly provide students with tips on renting housing accommodations ranging from suggestions on apartment hunting to legal issues and the rights of tenants and landlords (JAIMS, 2004; Ryerson University, 2004; University of Victoria, 2004).

It is recognized that as students relocate to attend university they must find housing, which is not always an easy task. For this reason, universities are trying to assist students find a place to live. Housing registries have been discovered as an appropriate way of achieving this goal.

2.4.2 Housing Registries for Subsidized Accommodations

Finding affordable housing for people with lower incomes is the goal of housing registries that focus on subsidized units. Each housing registry tends to use a slightly different approach whether it is for public or private housing. The registry may be a centralized waiting list (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004) or it could be a combined waiting list of all applicants for rent-geared-to-income assistance, allowing applicants to apply to many housing providers through one application form, and building on the concept of a one-stop shop (City of Kingston, no date). It may be a "[n]on-profit housing service which assists people on a low or limited income find affordable private market rental accommodations" (Information London, no date). The focus may be on providing homeless people with affordable and adequate housing (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2001). The registry may be more of a referral service that matches renters and vacant affordable properties (HousingLink, 2004). It could be targeted at housing providers and consist of a central database of applicants' information (BC

Housing, 2002). These housing registries are very similar, but have slightly different styles.

Whichever the approach, they are dealing with the issue of accessing subsidized housing units. Subsidized housing can consist of a number of different types of accommodations. They have been documented as including apartments, townhouses, rooming houses, units for special needs, and/or shared arrangements (Information London, no date; Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004). The city and province the housing registry is located in may affect the type of accommodations that are eligible to receive a subsidy for housing low-income households. Some of the subsidized accommodation may be in the private market, as not all subsidized housing are in the social housing sector.

Many cities are faced with the reality of a high demand for subsidized housing units, for that reason many cities are also confronted with long waiting lists for these units. Some of these waiting lists can be over five years (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004). Generally, applicants fill out an application form and when housing providers have a vacant unit they fill the unit with the next person on the waiting list. The flexibility of the applicant can impact the length of time they must wait. Some housing providers allow the applicant to state where they want to live and/or in what housing providers' units they wish to live in. The more places and housing providers the applicant chooses the more opportunities there are to receive housing (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004; City of Kingston, no date).

These housing registries may be run by a number of different types of groups and organizations. Some are created and managed by private housing providers and others by community agencies (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004). Non-profit groups are also involved in housing registries (Information London, no date). Social housing agencies and provincial housing entities frequently run housing registries (City of Kingston, no date; BC Housing, 2002). The Canadian Mental Health Association is also involved in delivering housing registries (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2001).

The many different types of groups who are running housing registries illustrates that not only housing organizations are recognizing the need for registries. Other organizations, such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, are becoming more involved through the development of their own housing registries. Housing registries have been used as a successful strategy to addressing the housing needs of low-income households.

2.4.3 Housing Registries for Persons with Disabilities

Accommodations for persons with disabilities sometimes are included in the above-mentioned housing registries for subsidized units, but they are also at times in a separate housing registry. Housing registries which focus on the needs of persons with physical disabilities will try to match them with vacant accessible housing units (Connecticut Accessible Housing Registry, 2004; Granite State Independent Living, no date; Southeast Center, no date). Other registries strictly create a list of potential tenants (Handicapped Housing Society, no date). One registry in Maryland is being used to transition persons with disabilities from

nursing homes back into the community (Maryland, 2003). Some registries catalogue accessible and adaptable units and track their availability (Connecticut Accessible Housing Registry, 2004). In Alberta, in 1980 a housing registry was started when Accessible Housing Society and Alberta Municipal Affairs "recognized the need to document the number of rental units available to tenants with disabilities, the level of accessibility they offered[,] and the cost of monthly rental" (Accessible Housing Society, 2003).

These housing registries tend to include some combination of assisted housing and private market housing. The units accommodate people with a range of disabilities including physical, sensory, psychiatric, as well as others (Southeast Center, no date) and focus on barrier-free accommodations (Accessible Housing Society, 2003). Typically housing registries that focus on finding accommodations for persons with disabilities level the playing field, as "having a disability does not give you a preference or priority for housing" (CHAPA, 1999).

Access to these registries may be free to all participants, prospective tenants, and/or property owners (Connecticut Accessible Housing Registry, 2004). Some registries allow people to search based on their needs to identify housing opportunities. Applicants are usually provided with at least a contact name and telephone number of the housing provider. Some registries require that the applicant contact the provider directly, while others will have the provider contact the applicant when there is a vacancy (Granite State Independent Living, no date). In order to cut down waiting times some registries that provide

accessible and non-accessible units allows persons with disabilities to apply for non-accessible units if they believe they will be able to manage living in one (CHAPA, 1999).

Like all other registries, funding comes from a variety of sources. These sources can range from state departments to grants from nursing facilities (Connecticut Accessible Housing Registry, 2004; Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, 2003). The number and types of organizations involved in housing registries will continue to grow as registries are seen as an appropriate approach to addressing the housing needs of persons with disabilities.

2.5   Issues with Housing Registries

Housing registries are often seen as a beneficial way to provide access to housing. One application form often qualifies applicants for many different housing providers' units, making applying for housing much easier than conventional processes. Then again, some issues do arise.

One issue for some housing registries is that they do not include all the housing providers within the area. This was identified as an issue because part of the reasoning for the creation of a housing registry is to reduce the duplication of efforts and to provide an easy way for people to apply to multiple housing locations and developments. Without having all housing providers connected to the housing registry, what results is that applicants are encouraged to get on as many waiting lists as possible to increase their opportunities for housing (CHAPA, 1999; Granite State Independent Living, no date; BC Housing, 2002).

Due to the lack of a fully integrated system including all housing providers, applicants must still contact multiple housing providers and fill out multiple application forms. Consequently, the registry can only be as efficient as the proportion of housing providers who are members of the registry. For this reason a centralized housing registry, which includes all housing providers, is often seen as a positive approach to housing registries.

In New York State some supporters are calling for a mandatory accessible housing registry. Accessible housing units tend to be very scarce; therefore, people with disabilities need to be able to locate and access these units. There has been discussion in New York surrounding implementing legislation that requires vacancies in accessible units to be reported to a central registry. The apartment would have to be held for 15 days to give persons with a disability the opportunity to rent the apartment. If a person with a disability has not rented the apartment within 15 days then it can be rented to the general public (New York State Independent Living Council, 2004).

Another issue is the possible creation of confusion on the part of the applicant. Many housing registries provide special priority or preferences to certain applicants. Abuse victims, people with medical conditions, homeless people are all typically given priority over other applicants when applying for housing (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004; City of Kingston, no date; CHAPA, 1999). Many priority people receive housing before others who have been on the waiting list longer. The Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (1999) identified that this can create confusion among applicants as to why they

must wait longer than a person who is considered a priority. Additionally, different housing providers have different priority criteria and different orders of importance. This creates more confusion, not just for those who are not seen as a priority, but also confusion among those who are a priority. They may be a priority to one housing provider, but not to another (CHAPA, 1999). This confusion is not due to housing registries, it is due to the different criteria and procedures of housing providers, meaning with or without housing registries this confusion may still exist. But at least with housing registries there is potentially a way of streamlining the system.

The creation of an inefficient housing registry system can be another issue. The Vermont Housing Task Force (2000) identified that an inefficient system will create hardships for tenants and landlords and will detract from the use of the system. This can easily be avoided by providing technical assistance and educating people on the use of the system. The focus must be on creating a user-friendly system. Providing this assistance must be designed into the system if it is going to be valuable to housing providers and applicants. Also, the phase-in of the system should be done over time in conjunction with education and technical assistance to ensure the logistics of the registry works (Vermont Housing Task Force, 2000).

These issues that exist around housing registries and providing people with access to housing can all be addressed and their impacts mediated. They are not so overwhelming that they cannot be dealt with. They must be

acknowledged and addressed when developing a central housing registry system.

2.6   The Use of Housing Registries in Winnipeg

At this time housing registries are being used in Winnipeg, but only to a limited extent. Presently, in Winnipeg residents looking for affordable housing must travel from housing provider to housing provider in search of accommodations. There is no one site in which residents can apply for numerous housing programs.

An example is that individuals and households in search of low-income housing in Winnipeg must travel to many different locations. The Manitoba Housing Authority, Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation, and M.A.P.S. all provide subsidized housing to qualifying applicants. Kanata Housing, Kekinan Centre Inc, Kinew Housing Corporation, Aiyawin Corporation, and S.A.M. Management have subsidized housing units available for the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. Payuk Inter-Tribal Housing Co-op and Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council Housing Authority Inc. focus specifically on housing low-income Aboriginal families and seniors (Partners for Careers, 2004). The majority of these housing providers have their own location, administration, and application procedures, and most have waiting lists.

The current housing registries in Winnipeg tend to be narrowly focused with little coordination between them. The University of Winnipeg has implemented a student-housing registry to help students find housing accommodations in and around downtown Winnipeg. This registry can be

accessed on campus or online, and consists of a listing of affordable housing options that have been inspected by the University of Winnipeg Housing Registry Coordinator. The listings include such information as rental rates, amenities, and landlord contact information (University of Winnipeg, 2004).

Acorn and Murdoch, a development consulting and property management firm specializing in not-for-profit housing has developed a housing registry. Online the registry lists senior and family cooperatives, life lease projects, non-profit rentals, and special needs housing options in Winnipeg. Some of the listings include information consisting of unit details and location, rent information, amenities, a general description, and contact information (Acorn and Murdoch, 2003).

Following the BC Housing Registry model, a housing registry for wheelchair accessible housing has been established in Winnipeg. This registry matches Winnipeg and Manitoba residents with units suitable for wheelchair users through a computerized database listing both dwelling units and interested registrants. The registry lists subsidized, affordable, accessible private market housing for people of all ages (Ten Ten Sinclair, 2004).

The Winnipeg School Division has also developed a housing registry. This registry has progressed from a bulletin board of housing vacancy postings to a GIS based system. It was developed to combat the high migrancy levels of inner-city children and families. The housing registry lists available accommodations in the school's neighbourhood for parents to access. It also acts as a housing resource centre, providing information on tenant's rights and responsibilities. The

registry has been running in its different forms for approximately 19 years (Palmer, no date).

Operation Go Home in Winnipeg operates a housing registry that consists of housing listings. The listings are provided online and updated throughout the month. They also provide transportation for apartment viewing, if it is so required. Operation Go Home also does presentations to schools and agencies on finding appropriate housing accommodations (Operation Go Home, 2004).

The housing registries that do exist in Winnipeg are not interlinked, at the same time as housing providers who serve the residents of Winnipeg are often duplicating the efforts of each other. It is for this reason that Winnipeg should consider a central housing registry. It is an appropriate means of targeting all housing programs, many of whom are overlapping, and developing a coordinated approach for households to access appropriate housing.

2.7   Conclusion

Whether in a time of great prosperity or a time of great despair the focus should always be on comprehensive strategies and collaboration with others. As the responsibility for housing has been shifted to lower levels and less financially capable government, the need to work together has been highlighted. The need for partnerships may be more apparent in a time of greater fiscal restraint, but they can be ideal in any situation. Innovative approaches must be embraced and invoked. It is innovative approaches, such as housing registries, which may be able to help address the housing issues of today and tomorrow. Too often the focus is strictly on solving the problems of today with little thought about

tomorrow. Housing registries offer one approach, which has flexibility to address the needs of today and tomorrow. Housing affordability, homelessness, access to housing, coordination, and accurate information are all current day issues faced by housing providers and advocates, issues that will not go away by themselves, but which can be addressed through the use of housing registries.

3.0   RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of this research project are broken down into two sections: survey findings and focus group findings. The former section is based on the analysis of 21 surveys completed by participants from housing registries across Canada and the United States. The latter is based on a focus group conducted with 9 participants representing local housing providers and housing registries that currently exist in Winnipeg.

3.1   Survey Findings

Each housing registry that participated in the research had a representative complete the survey. These representatives held a wide range of positions, with the largest proportion being a Housing Coordinator or Worker (about 30%) or were either an Executive Director, Director, or Supervisor (about 25%). Other positions were Program Manager, Outreach Coordinator, Member of Council or the registry's Committee, Assistant, Caseworker, Implementation Worker, information provider, or volunteer.

The majority of the 21 housing registries were from the Province of Ontario (13 or about 62%). Manitoba had the second highest proportion at approximately 19%. The United States totalled close to 10% and the remainder were evenly distributed across British Columbia and Alberta (Table 1). A complete listing of the housing registries that participated in this research is available in Appendix C.

Table 1: Location of Housing Registries Who Participated in the Survey		
Location	Number of Respondents	Valid per cent (%)
Canada:		
Ontario	13	61.9
Manitoba	4	19.0
British Columbia	1	4.8
Alberta	1	4.8
United States:		
Minnesota	1	4.8
Massachusetts	1	4.8
Total	21	100.1

The sampling strategy was intended to gather experiences rather than to provide a representative sample. It is acknowledged that the results were skewed to the Ontario experience. This was because a high proportion of housing registries exist in the Province of Ontario. The reason for their prominence may be due to the existence of the Social Housing Reform Act of Ontario (SHRA). The SHRA was set up as a means of transferring the responsibility of rent-geared-to-income housing units from the Province and to the cities and municipalities in Ontario. This Act outlines how social housing is managed in Ontario, which incorporates the development of access centres (i.e. a one-stop-shop for housing). In 1995 when the Ontario government stopped building social housing there was an increase in the number of people on waiting lists to access low-income housing. Therefore part of the SHRA legislation incorporated strict rules regarding accessing and maintaining waiting lists. Housing registries have been used as a means to meet the legislative requirements around waiting lists. Any provincially funded social housing provider in Ontario must work in coordination with an access centre, and typically be on a

housing registry, as part of the legislative requirements of the Act (Solvason, 2005).

3.1.1 Size and Service Area of Housing Registries

The service areas of housing registries were unlimited. The majority (about 62%) served an entire region, which may be a state or province, a city and its surrounding counties or municipalities, or a combination of other areas. The remaining service areas were composed of a city at roughly 29%, while nearly 10% served only part of a city (e.g. a school division).

The service areas contained a range of population bases, however populations of less than 100,000 tended to be the most regularly occurring at 43% (Table 2).

Table 2: Population the Housing Registry Serves		
Population	**Number of Cases**	**Valid per cent (%)**
0 to 100,000	6	42.9
100,001 to 200,000	4	28.6
200,001 to 300,000	1	7.1
300,001 to 400,000	1	7.1
400,001 to 500,000	0	0.0
500,001 to 600,000	0	0.0
600,001 to 700,000	0	0.0
700,001 to 800,000	1	7.1
800,001 to 900,000	0	0.0
900,001 to 1,000,000	0	0.0
Over 1,000,000	1	7.1
Total	14	99.9
Unknown	7	
Total	21	

3.1.2 Types of Housing Included in Housing Registries

Housing registries were comprised of different types of housing, tenure arrangements, and also physical forms. A high proportion of housing registries

were made up of housing units for persons with disabilities and subsidized housing units. Housing for university students was also part of many housing registries. Such a wide range of housing types was commonplace as many housing registries included all types of housing (Table 3).

Table 3: Types of Housing Included in Housing Registries		
Types of Housing	**Number of Times Mentioned**	**Percent (%)**
Housing for persons with a disability	18	36.0
Subsidized housing	17	34.0
University student housing	12	24.0
Affordable housing	1	2.0
Housing for seniors	1	2.0
Shared accommodations	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

A number of different tenure arrangements existed. Some registries concentrated on one specific type of tenure (e.g. private market, non-subsidized units), as others were broader with an array of units such as subsidized and non-subsidized, public, non-profit, co-op, and private market. The results showed there was a rather even distribution of all types of tenure arrangements, even though all types may not have been in each housing registry (Table 4).

Table 4: Types of Tenure Arrangements Included in Housing Registries		
Types of Tenure Arrangements	**Number of Times Mentioned**	**Percent (%)**
Public, subsidized units	12	12.8
Non-profit, subsidized units	15	16.0
Non-profit, non-subsidized units	13	13.8
Co-op, subsidized units	14	14.9
Co-op, non-subsidized units	13	13.8
Private market, subsidized units	11	11.7
Private market, non-subsidized	16	17.1
Total	94	100.1

Housing registries included different physical forms of housing. Apartments were the most familiar form (close to 47%). Townhouses (24%) and single family dwellings (23%) also occurred on a rather regular basis. Other types of housing identified tended to cater to single individuals (e.g. rooming houses and roommate situations). Mobile homes were also part of a registry (Table 5).

Table 5: Physical Forms of Housing Included in Housing Registries		
Physical Forms of Housing	Number of Times Mentioned	Percent (%)
Apartments	41	47.1
(Low-rise apartments)	(21)	(24.1)
(High-rise apartments)	(20)	(23.0)
Townhouses	21	24.1
Single family dwellings	20	23.0
Single room occupancy	2	2.3
Shared housing	2	2.3
Mobile homes	1	1.2
Total	87	100.0

3.1.3 The Establishment of Housing Registries

In the past housing registries were started as a collection of paper listings from newspapers and classified advertisements. Over the years many developed into much more and became internet based. Some have also had a longer history than others. The oldest housing registry was approximately 25 years old, while the youngest was established 2 years ago (Table 6).

Table 6: How Long the Housing Registries Have Been in Existence		
Age	Number of Cases	Valid per cent (%)
Less than 5 years	5	23.8
6 to 10 years	6	28.6
11 to 15 years	3	14.3
16 to 20 years	5	23.8
21 to 25 years	2	9.5
Total	21	100.0

Housing registries were typically developed to address specific issues or achieve certain goals. Table 7 lists these goal, some of which were to assist people to find affordable housing (i.e. those who are low-income, homeless, moving to the area, or in need of accessible housing due to a disability); to create a one-stop-shop or a central access point, to develop an inventory of listings, and make data easy to search; to create a resource; to assist owners and encourage their participation in the registry, to reduce duplication, and to build relationships; and also to track units and vacancy rates.

Table 7: Goals of Housing Registries		
Goals	Number of Times Mentioned	Percent (%)
Assist tenants/applicants	17	37.8
Central access to inventory of listings	11	24.4
Creation of a resource	8	17.8
Assist housing providers, encourage their participation	5	11.1
Track units and vacancy rates	4	8.9
Total	45	100.0

Over the years some of the original goals may have changed, as was the case for 19% of registries. Yet, the majority (about 76%) indicated that their goals were still the same, while almost 5% had added to their original goals. Those that experienced a change in their goals listed the following as new goals they had adopted: collecting data to determine housing need, developing a resource tool, linking applicants and housing providers, creating programs to address gaps in accessing housing, assisting with all types of housing needs (more than just the affordability issue), and serving youth and adults.

Numerous types of organizations have taken the initiative to establish a housing registry. Table 8 lays out the types of organizations from information centres and housing service organizations to organizations that were formed specifically to develop a housing registry. Organizations serving youth, low-income people, people with mental health issues and/or disability issues, as well as housing providers were each involved in the development of housing registries. In addition, the establishment of the housing registries frequently occurred through a partnership of two or more organizations.

Table 8: Types of Organizations that have Established Housing Registries		
Type of Organization	**Number of Times Mentioned**	**Percent (%)**
Information centre	5	15.2
Housing services organization	4	12.1
Housing registry organization	3	9.1
Youth organization	3	9.1
Low income organization	3	9.1
Mental health organization	2	6.1
Organization that assist persons with a disability	2	6.1
Housing provider	2	6.1
Housing management organization	1	3.0
Co-op housing organization	1	3.0
School Division	1	3.0
Municipality	1	3.0
Community funding agency	1	3.0
Faith based organization	1	3.0
Non-profit association	1	3.0
Advocacy group	1	3.0
Advisory group	1	3.0
Total	33	99.9

Each of these organizations also had their own individual mandates, which some focused specifically on housing registries, some focused more broadly on housing in general, and some had a very wide focus that did not directly relate to

housing. Summary statements of these mandates can be seen in Table 9. This illustrates that many organizations, all working to achieve different goals, have used housing registries as an approach to achieve at least part of their individual mandates.

Table 9: Mandates of Organizations that have Established Housing Registries		
Mandate	Number of Times Mentioned	Percent (%)
Assist people (immigrants, homeless, youth, students, people with a disability or mental illness, or in crisis)	12	38.7
Improve quality of life	7	22.6
Provide information	6	19.4
Produce, preserve, manage, and partner for affordable housing	6	19.4
Total	31	100.1

To date many of the original organizations involved in the establishment of the housing registry, are still today, as was the case for 90% of the organizations. Of these, roughly 10% have become incorporated as a charitable organization and 5% had membership on the board of directors. Also, many registries were a program or service of the larger organization that established it.

Establishing, developing, and implementing a housing registry can be a long process (Table 10). For half of the housing registries the implementation process took less than a year to complete, but for others it took up to seven years, and some could only indicate that they were in a state of constant development.

Table 10: Length of Time to Develop and Implement the Housing Registry		
Length of Time	**Number of Cases**	**Valid per cent (%)**
1 year or less	10	50.0
2 years	4	20.0
3 years	0	0.0
4 years	0	0.0
5 years	2	10.0
6 years	1	5.0
7 years	1	5.0
Constantly developing	2	10.0
Total	20	100.0
Unknown	1	
Total	21	

The implementation process generally required a combination of steps, which varied by housing registry. The steps are laid out in Table 11.

Table 11: Steps of the Housing Registry Implementation Process	
Implementation Steps	**Details**
Conduct research	survey, focus group, needs assessment
Gather information	housing information, rental market information, construction data
Network/establish partnerships	establish a reputation, consultations, meetings, outreach
Establish a committee/council	chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, directors
Find initial funding	look to a wide variety of sources
Establish a plan	develop a work and/or business plan
Find a model	housing registry model – B.C. Housing Registry and Mass Access have been used as models
Develop/select computerized system	select an IT platform, select software, hire a consulting company
Develop application form	review housing providers' application forms, develop a form for the registry
Develop member agreement form	develop an agreement for providers to sign when they become a member
Advertise and attract landlords	contacted landlords, develop communication material, mail out information, educate the public
Search for longer term funding	sustainable funding, larger budget needed at this time
Hire staff	specifically for housing registry
Establish the database	enter information into the database
Implementation process completed	registry opens

3.1.4   Accessing Housing Registries

It is required that both housing providers and those persons in search of housing have access to the housing registry, and in some cases this occurs through specific steps. The list below shows how housing providers gained access to the registries:

- Phone, email, go in person or the registry would contact housing providers;
- Fill out membership form;
- Sign agreement;
- Provide information about their vacancies/transfer providers database to the housing registry;
- Pay fees (if not a free service);
- Registry staff would train housing providers on using the system.

In addition, 60% of the housing registries had specific criteria that housing providers had to meet, which were that units had to be affordable, acceptable, and have accessibility features (just over 13%). Other criteria (each comprising just about 7%) was that housing providers had to be a non-profit, community agency, municipality, or government agency; be willing to rent to the population served; sign an agreement; abide by legislation pertaining to landlord/tenant relations; pay a membership fee; and/or units had to meet health standards.

Similar to housing providers, applicants had to take a combination of steps to access housing registries. Examples of these steps were:

- Locate and contact housing registry;
- Register/fill out application form;
- Provide proof of residency;
- Complete a personal interview;
- Successful applicant would be entered into the database;
- Applicant would be custom-matched to units: applicant would be directed to housing providers or housing providers were contacted on applicants' behalf.

- Those housing registries that were not a central housing registry advised applicants to apply to as many housing providers as possible to get on numerous waiting lists.
- Central housing registries acted as a one-stop-shop as one application form was only required for an applicant to be eligible for numerous housing providers' units.

It should be noted that some housing registries acted more as a central location of housing listings, in which case applicants were not entered into a database but searched through a database of vacant units.

In the majority of cases (52%) those individuals in search of housing (applicants) had to meet criteria to become part of a housing registry. Applicant criteria were sometimes specific to the housing development. Other criteria was that applicants had to be a Canadian resident; households had to meet an income criteria; applicants had to be 16 years of age or older; they could not be owing arrears to housing providers or had to have established a repayment agreement. Additional applicant criteria was based on being in need of rent-geared-to-income housing; on social assistance; able to live independently; a youth; a family, a senior, or a person with a disability or mobility challenge; in the service area; and/or flexible on the location of housing.

3.1.5 Benefits of Housing Registries

Housing registries can be set up in such a way to focus on either the housing providers (10%) or the applicants (29%), or evenly on both (62%). They can also create a number of benefits for the applicants, which were being connected to housing providers and having access to housing lists and information that specifically relates to their needs. Also being informed on where

to go to receive support to address issues not related to housing. One housing
registry stated "almost 90% of the available housing in this community is listed in
our registry." This not only reinforces the matter of access to housing, but also
illustrates the effects of a centralized approach. A complete listing of the benefits
for applicants is available in Table 12.

Table 12: How Housing Registries Benefit the Applicants

Benefits for the Applicants	Number of Times Mentioned	Percent (%)
Customized housing lists	13	34.2
Housing information	8	21.1
Network of supports	5	13.2
Locate units	5	13.2
Referrals to other resources	4	10.5
Centralized approach	3	7.9
Total	38	100.1

Table 13: How Housing Registries Benefit Housing Providers

Benefits for Housing Providers	Number of Times Mentioned	Percent (%)
Free advertising	12	27.3
Support/information system	7	15.9
Connect interested parties/networking opportunities	5	11.4
Applicants are screened and informed	4	9.1
Customized lists (regularly updated)	3	6.8
Easy to fill vacancies	3	6.8
Eliminate providers' administration of waiting lists	3	6.8
Meet legislative requirements	2	4.5
Access a centralized database	1	2.3
Providers' maintain autonomy	1	2.3
Applicants are placed in units	1	2.3
Tabulate statistical data	1	2.3
Individuals are educated on independent living	1	2.3
Total	44	100.1

Housing providers also experienced the benefits of housing registries
(Table 13), which covered advertising, making connections to help fill vacancies

and reduce their administrative efforts, and accessing available support. Some providers had benefited from using registries to meet their legislative requirements that exist in both Ontario through the *Social Housing Reform Act* and in Massachusetts through the *Housing Bill of Rights for Persons with Disabilities* of 1989.

3.1.6 Participation in Housing Registries

As mentioned earlier there are many different types of housing providers that participate in housing registries, typically public, co-op, non-profit, and also private housing providers. With each of these providers posting and filling vacancies, registries can come to include a large number of housing units. Of those surveyed the number of units ranged from less than 100 to over 195,000 (Table 14). In some cases the legislative requirements surrounding specific housing units in some provinces may have caused the large number of units. In one instance it was discussed that all private landlords who had rent supplement agreements for rent-geared-to-income units had to participate in a registry.

Table 14: Number of Units Included in the Housing Registry		
Number of Units	**Number of Cases**	**Valid per cent (%)**
Less than 100	2	15.4
101 to 500	5	38.5
501 to 1,000	0	0.0
1,001 to 5,000	1	7.8
5,001 to 10,000	0	0.0
10,001 to 15,000	1	7.8
15,001 to 20,000	2	15.4
Over 20,000	2	15.4
Total	13	100.3
Unknown	8	
Total	21	

Although there are many positive benefits for housing providers who are part of a housing registry, many providers still chose not to participate. Their reasoning for this was relatively unknown to survey respondents, though respondents did provide some insights (Table 15). Some of these reasons were thought to be misconceptions, a lack of awareness, unwillingness, and uneasiness when it comes to providers dealing with housing registries.

Table 15: Reasons Some Housing Providers Do Not Participate in Housing Registries		
Reasons for non-participation	Number of Times Mentioned	Percent (%)
Misconceptions	11	36.7
Unaware of the housing registry	4	13.3
Unwilling to accept certain applicants	2	6.7
Uneasy providing private information	2	6.7
Time constraints	2	6.7
Discrimination	2	6.7
Fee charged	2	6.7
On a different housing registry	1	3.3
Lack of low-income units	1	3.3
Applicants are not screened	1	3.3
Control issues	1	3.3
Low profit margins	1	3.3
Total	30	100.0

It should also be acknowledged that one of the reasons given for housing providers not to participate was that they were already participating in a different housing registry. This demonstrates that some areas had competing registries. A possible way to address this competition and make better use of the existing resources would be to focus on a central housing registry. One housing registry would serve the whole region, which would eliminate the duplication of efforts that may be occurring.

Six registries indicated that there were other housing registries within their service area, though only 2 stated the actual number. On the other hand, 12 housing registries were the only one within the area they served. This could mean they acted as a central housing registry, but it remains unknown since the survey did not specifically ask the housing registries if they were a central housing registry. It can only be assumed that some proportion of the 12 may act as some form of a central housing registry.

3.1.7 Financials of Housing Registries

Funding is frequently an issue for housing registries, whether it is locating initial funding or obtaining sustainable funding sources. Housing registries indicated their sources of funding, with the most common being from their umbrella organization's larger budget; from a fee for service; or from federal, provincial, or municipally programs and agencies. A complete listing of the funding sources can be seen in Table 16. It should be noted that funding dollars may also support other areas of multi-dimensional housing registries, for example outreach, assisting youth, etc.

Budgets can vary in size, as some registries were smaller than others (Table 17). The majority (just over 57%) had an annual budget between $50,000 and $100,000. It must be recognized that many registries receive their budget from their larger umbrella organization and for that reason their exact budget is unknown.

Table 16: Sources of Funding for Housing Registries		
Source of Funding	**Number of Times Mentioned**	**Percent (%)**
Registry's umbrella organization	6	13.0
Fee for service	4	8.7
Provincial Homelessness Initiative Funding	4	8.7
City/Municipality	4	8.7
Supportive Community Partnership Initiative (SCPI)	3	6.5
United Way	3	6.5
National Child Benefit Fund	2	4.3
Provincial government housing department	2	4.3
Provincial government social services department	2	4.3
Fundraising activities	2	4.3
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)	1	2.2
Provincial Healthy Child	1	2.2
OW Enhancement Fund for Registries (Ontario)	1	2.2
Ontario Trillium Foundation	1	2.2
Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI)	1	2.2
Winnipeg Foundation	1	2.2
Government service contracts	1	2.2
Project-specific grants	1	2.2
Seniors grants and operational support	1	2.2
Federal government (general)	1	2.2
Regional body	1	2.2
Philanthropic support	1	2.2
Donations	1	2.2
Privately funded	1	2.2
Total	46	100.1

Table 17: Annual Budget for Housing Registries		
Budget	**Number of Cases**	**Valid per cent (%)**
Less than $50,000	4	28.6
$50,000 to $100,000	8	57.1
Over $100,000	2	14.3
Total	14	100.0
Unknown	7	
Total	21	

Budgets frequently cover a few different areas, such as administration, staffing, and advertising. Administration made up between 6% and 40% of the total budget, staffing accounted for 20% to 100% of the budget, and advertising ranged from 2% to 50% of the overall budget. The complete breakdown of each area of the budget is presented in Table 18.

Table 18: Break Down of Budget for Housing Registries		
Percentage of Total Budget	**Number of Cases**	**Valid per cent (%)**
Administration		
10% or less	2	25.0
11% to 20%	3	37.5
21% to 30%	0	0.0
31% to 40%	3	37.5
Total	8	100.0
Unknown	13	
Total	21	
Staffing		
20% or less	1	9.1
21% to 40%	0	0.0
41% to 60%	4	36.4
61% to 80%	3	27.3
81% to 100%	3	27.3
Total	11	100.1
Unknown	10	
Total	21	
Advertising		
10% or less	2	40.0
11% to 20%	1	20.0
21% to 30%	0	0.0
31% to 40%	1	20.0
41% to 50%	1	20.0
Total	5	100.0
Unknown	16	
Total	21	

3.1.8   Staffing of Housing Registries

The number and types of staff positions vary with each housing registry. Table 19 shows that the majority (63%) employed 1 to 5 full time staff members.

Of the registries that had part-time staff they typically consisted of 1 to 2 positions. As well one registry did not employ any part-time or full-time staff members, but instead relied upon volunteers.

Table 19: Housing Registry Staffing		
Number and Type of Staff	**Number of Cases**	**Valid per cent (%)**
Full-time positions		
0	5	26.3
1 to 5	12	63.2
6 to 10	0	0.0
11 to 15	1	5.3
16 to 20	0	0.0
21 to 25	1	5.3
Total	19	100.1
Unknown	2	
Total	21	
Part-time positions		
0	7	36.8
1 to 2	10	52.6
3 to 4	1	5.3
5 to 6	1	5.3
Total	19	100.0
Unknown	2	
Total	21	

Different housing registries have different types of staff positions. The most frequent of which were Housing Coordinator, Housing Worker/Councillor, Director/Executive Director, Operations Manager/Assistant, Administrative Support, and Technology Manager/IT. Table 20 provides an overview of the types of positions and their descriptions. The descriptions are based on a summary of a combination of similar staff positions.

Table 20: Housing Registry Positions and Descriptions			
Position	**Number of Times Mention-ed**	**Percent (%)**	**Description**
Housing Coordinator	8	17.4	Identify housing needs; primary resource person for private developers & housing industry; maintain/update registry; counselling & referral services; write funding proposals; attend community events; publish monthly newsletter; participate in fundraising events; knowledge of legislation; advocate & mediate; host housing workshops
Housing Worker/ Councillor	8	17.4	Work with households with complex housing needs; outreach; training; match volunteer mentors with families; provide emergency shelter to those in need; process applications; update files; intake procedures; advocate; mediate; attend community meetings
Director/ Executive Director	6	13.0	Head of the organization; public relations; oversee staff management
Operation Manager/ Assistant	5	10.9	Referral; update requests; coordination of new sites (training, follow-up); participate in performance evaluation; assist with landlord recruitment; daily operations; applications processes
Administrative Support	4	8.7	Reception; data entry; assist with fundraising; design promotional material
Technology Manager/ IT	3	6.5	Manage operations & projects associated with databases; maintain functionality; meet corporate goals & outcomes
Program Manager	2	4.3	Staff supervision; budget management; proposal writing; fundraising; work on increasing the housing stock; community committees; coordinate data collection; oversee program implementation; marketing materials; program evaluations; manage training; write funding reports
Outreach Manager/ Worker	2	4.3	Manage landlord recruitment; measures to increase service effectiveness, increase efficiency, & reduce costs; respond to stakeholder input; network with agencies; be well informed on Tenant Protection Act
Priority Worker	2	4.3	Reviews requests for special priority; interview applicants & assigns status
Applications Coordinator/ Worker	2	4.3	Deals with IT system; preparation of files; review problem files; ensure integrity of data on the system; deals with applications by phone & at front counter; assess basic eligibility; provide general information
Program Implementatio n Assistant	1	2.2	Execute daily operations; recommend strategies to increase efficiency & cost-effectiveness
Caseworker	1	2.2	Assess applications; referral to social agencies; maintain waiting list; liaising with housing providers
Education Assistant	1	2.2	Description not available
Data Assistant	1	2.2	Process landlord listings; data entry; maintain contact with participating housing providers
Total	46	99.9	

It should be recognized that of the staff positions described above, 70% had work responsibilities outside of the housing registry, with half of those responsibilities pertaining to the registry's larger organization.

3.1.9   Housing Registries' Experiences

These housing registries possess many strengths and have achieved many successes (Table 21), some of which dealt with creating a one-stop-shop to make the process of accessing appropriate housing easier for applicants, plus working together to create an efficient system for all who use it.

Table 21: Strengths and Successes of Housing Registries		
Strengths and Successes	**Number of Times Mentioned**	**Percent (%)**
Access to housing and landlords	12	29.3
Efficient centralized system	11	26.8
Relationship building	7	17.1
Resource/model	5	12.2
Information/referral	4	9.8
Innovative approach	2	4.9
Total	41	100.1

The experiences of housing registries also included challenges they encountered in establishing a housing registry. These were finding initial and sustainable funding, gaining involvement from landlords, in addition to the process of building the system, and steps involved with its administration (Table 22).

Housing registries also had to deal with challenges in running and managing the registry once it had been implemented (Table 23). Funding was a frequent challenge along with staffing. Other challenges related to expenses,

equipment, meeting the interests of stakeholders, advertising and promotions, and dealing with issues relating to the supply of housing.

Table 22: Challenges in Establishing a Housing Registry		
Challenges in Establishing	Number of Times Mentioned	Percent (%)
Funding	10	28.6
Gain credibility & interest from landlords	9	25.7
Gathering of information	7	20.0
Technology difficulties	4	11.4
Building a network of independent agencies	3	8.6
Locating quality housing	2	5.7
Total	35	100.0

Table 23: Challenges in Managing and Running a Housing Registry		
Challenges in Managing & Running	Number of Times Mentioned	Percent (%)
Funding	9	25.0
Staffing components	4	11.1
Updating the database	4	11.1
Expensive	3	8.3
Adequate computer equipment	3	8.3
Addressing all parties interests	2	5.6
Lack of new housing stock	2	5.6
Time constraints	2	5.6
Long waiting lists	1	2.8
Landlord recruitment	1	2.8
Advertising	1	2.8
Meeting complex legislative requirements	1	2.8
Quantifying results	1	2.8
Implementing changes	1	2.8
Discrimination	1	2.8
Total	36	100.2

The housing registries also stated what they would do differently next time based on their experiences thus far (Table 24). These comments consisted of long term funding from multiple sources, greater collaboration, housing registry staff, and a membership system.

Table 24: Things Housing Registries Would Do Differently Next Time		
Things to be done differently	**Number of Times Mentioned**	**Percent (%)**
Long term/multiple funders	4	21.1
Collaborate with stakeholders	3	15.8
Staff dedicated to the registry	2	10.5
Membership based with a fee	2	10.5
Regionally based	1	5.3
Registry as a stand-alone entity	1	5.3
Screen accommodations	1	5.3
Exclude bad landlords/tenants	1	5.3
Thorough outreach to landlords	1	5.3
Create and maintain website	1	5.3
Develop system prior to recruiting members	1	5.3
Sell advertising space	1	5.3
Total	19	100.3

Lastly, housing registries indicated the future directions they intended to take. Table 25 provides a summary of this, with common statements concentrating on expansions in regards to funding, involvement of housing providers, service areas, and website functions.

Table 25: Future Directions of Housing Registries		
Future Direction	**Number of Times Mentioned**	**Percent (%)**
Search/advocate for funding resources	4	17.4
Recruit more landlords/housing providers	3	13.0
Expand service area	3	13.0
Expand website functions	3	13.0
Create efficiencies/reduce limitations	2	8.7
Constant development	2	8.7
Certify applicants through workshops	1	4.3
Build more partnerships	1	4.3
Advocate for more housing stock	1	4.3
Create opportunities for safe, affordable, barrier free housing	1	4.3
Advocate housing's impact on other areas	1	4.3
New options to access data	1	4.3
Total	23	99.6

3.1.10 Conclusion of Survey Findings

The survey results illustrate the past and present experiences of housing registries in Canada and the United States. The majority of housing registries focused on either subsidized housing or housing for persons with disabilities. They also showed that all types of housing and units can be included in housing registries. There is no limitation on population size or service area as housing registries can work at a number of different scales. They may serve a province or state, a city, or a specific area of a city. They were used by many different organizations to meet a number of different goals. The implementation process and the steps to access the registries varied, but generally had some consistencies. Many registries established a committee or council to provide direction. With regard to benefits, the one-stop-shop approach to housing was often efficient and effective for both applicants and providers. On the other hand, funding was a frequent challenge. Then again, the future allows for adjustments as housing registries continue to develop.

3.2 Focus Group Findings

Participants of the focus group provided their insights on the topic of a central housing registry for Winnipeg. The focus group was broken down into five areas comprised of: strengths, challenges, the benefits to low-income households, potential links with non-housing sectors, and potential participation in Winnipeg's central housing registry. Comments and suggestions were provided on each of these areas. It should be acknowledged that the comments presented below are not based on a consensus of all participants (see Appendix

F for listing of participants). They were merely individual comments that were mentioned through the course of the focus group, but in some instances more than one participant made the same comment.

3.2.1 Strengths of a Central Housing Registry in Winnipeg

Participants appreciated a central housing registry as having a variety of different strengths. These strengths were that applicants would be more likely to find accommodations and there would be a reduction in the number of application forms that applicants had to fill out (i.e. decreasing from multiple application forms, to only one form). It could also improve the "fit" of applicants with appropriate and affordable units; list units' features (e.g. amenities, accessibility, utilities, etc.); and allow applicants to search based on their own criteria (e.g. location, close to amenities, etc.). It would also provide for public access to the registry and provide housing information to applicants and landlords/housing providers. Another strength was it might inspire landlords to improve their properties so that they can become a member of the registry and have an easier time renting their unit(s). The central housing registry was also seen as a way to reduce pressure on housing coordinators and break down barriers to get people working together. A final strength presented was that it could be used as a planning tool.

3.2.2 Challenges of a Central Housing Registry in Winnipeg

A central housing registry in Winnipeg would encounter a number of challenges. Potential challenges were the task of gathering information and

keeping it current and updated; screening and whether it should occur and how; getting landlords/housing providers to "buy in"; as well as advertising to small landlords and gaining their participation. There may also be an issue with providing personal information, as some people may not be comfortable releasing their contact information. The next challenge would be who would develop and run the registry, and how would it be funded. Other challenges were the issue of keeping track of problem tenants, as providers who had previous bad experiences with specific tenants would not want to be responsible for housing those tenants again. It was also thought that computer problems may be encountered based on the significant demand on technology. Some felt that a citywide registry may be too large to be effective and that it should be divided into divisions. Providers might also want to retain their own waiting list. The need for urgent housing (e.g. discharge from a hospital) was also discussed as a challenge that the central housing registry may have to deal with. Another challenge or problem revealed was that the registry might take away from existing jobs (e.g. housing coordinators, etc.).

3.2.3 Benefits of a Central Housing Registry to Low-income Households in Winnipeg

It was felt that a central housing registry would benefit low-income households. Discussion occurred around the point that it could allow applicants to search for housing units based on their own personal criteria. It could also provide a listing of landlords and their contact information, while old listings could be used to provide contact information for cold calls. Low-income households could truly benefit from having the registry linked with other services they require.

It was also felt that the registry would not stop applicants from applying to a number of different waiting lists. They could be part of the registry's applicant database and also be part of providers' waiting lists that are not connected to the registry, if that were the case.

It should be noted that some participants suggested that the central housing registry may be setting up people for disappointment due to long waits. It was thought that the registry would be more beneficial when there were more housing units available. The suggestion was made that a landlord database may be a good place to start the process of developing a central housing registry.

3.2.4 Potential Links to Non-housing Sectors through a Central Housing Registry

The registry was seen as having a far greater reach than just to deal with housing. The central housing registry could provide landlords with a formal method for obtaining support (e.g. for mental health issues, social work, etc.). There could also be a link made with advocacy groups. The registry could be a resource for a number of different organizations that deal with clients in need of housing such as immigration/settlement workers to help new immigrants find a place to live, or find out the process for obtaining housing in Winnipeg. A link could also be made with the different community resources and services that exist. Services in close proximity could be listed or displayed on a map. Examples of services and resources consisted of, but were not limited to youth organizations, mental health organizations, transit routes, daycares, etc.

3.2.5 Potential Participation in a Central Housing Registry for Winnipeg

An effort was made to determine if the participants felt that housing providers and landlords would be willing to participate in a central housing registry. The participants indicated that they were, for the most part, unsure. This was an acceptable response, as they could not speak for individual providers and landlords that were not part of the focus group. In spite of this some very insightful comments were made. It was thought that at the current time, based on Winnipeg's rental market, good landlords would not need to participate, but the bad landlords might. Also due to the number of providers with large waiting lists it was suggested that these providers might not want any more applicants.

On the other hand, a free service that provided quick results may be appealing to landlords and providers. Landlords currently pay to advertise their units and a source of free advertising may be a good approach to entice their participation. Additionally, some large organizations had already bought into a registry that serves part of Winnipeg, which could illustrate a willingness by some organizations in Winnipeg to participate in a central housing registry. In terms of applicants it was believed that they would "buy in" because of the free service and it would require applicants to travel to only one location to search for housing.

3.2.6 Conclusion of Focus Group Findings

The focus group results provided local insight into the possible realities behind a central housing registry in Winnipeg. The strengths of the registry would come from assisting people find housing through a minimized effort. Challenges

would be encountered regarding keeping data updated and issues pertaining to screening. Low-income households could search for units based on their criteria and then make contact with landlords. Ensuring participation in the central housing registry may be a challenge, but "buy in" should occur with appropriate incentives. The registry could also go beyond housing and link with a wide spectrum of services to address other needs and also help stabilize other aspects of people's lives.

3.3 Conclusion

The research findings gained from both the survey and focus group provide valuable insight into housing registries and a central housing registry for Winnipeg. Interesting observations can be made from these findings, which will be further discussed in following chapters. Also these research findings can be developed into recommendations to help inform the process of developing and implementing a central housing registry in Winnipeg.

4.0 SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF HOUSING REGISTRIES

This chapter discusses information pertaining to the experiences of housing registries. It is based on research gained from the literature review and the surveys, as they both provide insights on existing housing registries. The information is divided into four sections: similarities, lessons learned, challenges, and the successes of housing registries.

4.1 Similarities Among Housing Registries

Housing registries from across Canada and the United States have some common components. These similarities may exist because housing registries are striving to achieve the same outcomes. For example, registries are an organized effort to connect those people who are in search of housing with units available through housing providers.

The clientele of housing registries is another similarity. The majority of housing registries focus on affordable housing and/or housing for persons with disabilities. These two forms of housing work well together in a registry as they both typically focus on households who tend to have lower incomes. Registries are unlimited in the types and forms of housing that can be included in the system. They are simply trying to help as many people as possible access housing. Registries have also been known to focus on housing specifically for students and seniors.

Many housing registries began as a simple posting of housing vacancies. As they have developed over the years they have become a registry, nonetheless it is common for these housing registries to work independently of

one another. In some instances there is more than one housing registry in the same service area. This may not be the most effective approach.

Others have taken a different approach, which has been to develop into a central housing registry. The similarities among central housing registries are that they create a one-stop-shop for housing. Applicants fill out a single application form and are registered for numerous housing units under different housing providers who are members of the central housing registry. They can also search a listing of providers' vacancies.

The commonalities that exist among housing registries provide a great deal of insight into some best practices. These similarities exist because they have proven to work for a number of registries.

4.2   Lessons Learned from Existing Housing Registries

The experiences and knowledge base of others can inform those with less experience. The lessons that housing registries have learned over the years will help other organizations who choose to take on the task of developing and implementing a housing registry.

Organizations need to be aware that the processes involved in the development of a housing registry can be slow. For example, housing providers must be recruited and become a member of the registry. Then the providers' applicant database/waiting list must be transferred over to the registry. The transferring of information tends to be very time consuming and can limit the number of new members that can be taken on at one time (Smandych, 2004).

Each step in the development of the registry is time intensive and must be planned and prepared for.

Housing registries can be used to address many issues and achieve many goals. But without a sense of direction the usefulness of the registry can be lost. Many registries have established a council or committee to provide direction and support to the registry (Smandych, 2004; Palmer and Blewett, 2005). This has been an appropriate way to also incorporate unbiased input into the workings of the registry. The committee or council looks out for the overall best interest of the registry.

Generally it has been assumed that only housing organizations have taken on the initiative of developing a housing registry. This assumption is partially true, as housing organizations have been involved in such efforts, but the reality is that many different types of organizations have developed housing registries. The number and types of organizations involved in housing registries could continue to grow as registries are seen more and more as an appropriate approach to addressing the issue of access to housing.

Another lesson learned is that housing registries can be immense sources of information and data. They can provide information on the characteristics and housing needs of the applicants participating in the registry. This provides data on the demand for housing. The characteristics of the housing vacancies in the registry can provide understanding into the supply side of housing. This information can also be used to identify any gaps relating to the supply of housing. By tracking information relating to supply and demand trends may

appear. Additionally, this information and data could help to explain the relationship between economic conditions and the supply of affordable housing (Cox, 2005).

Each of the lessons mentioned above provides direction and guidance to organizations that take on the work of developing a housing registry.

4.3   Challenges Faced by Existing Housing Registries

The path that a housing registry follows is never completely smooth. However, by being able to anticipate the challenges that lie ahead the process may prove to be somewhat easier.

For housing registries, and especially for a central housing registry to work most effectively, it is necessary for housing providers within the service area of the registry to be a member of the registry. The success of a housing registry requires the participation of many housing providers, or applicants will have to apply to the registry and then also apply to housing providers that are not part of the registry (CHAPA, 1999; Granite State Independent Living, no date; BC Housing, 2002). That creates inefficiencies which can only be reduced through ample participation by providers.

In order to have such ample participation the registry must gain credibility among housing providers and also gain their interest. This can be a major challenge, but without it a registry will not succeed to its full potential. Beyond gaining credibility and interest, the registry must then build a network of independent agencies. This can be difficult because prior to involvement in a housing registry it is typical for each housing provider to work independently, yet

a registry is based on collaboration. When providers see and experience the benefits of a collaborative effort, this will help the providers realize the benefits of a registry. But it is the initial "buy in" to the registry that is often a challenge.

Some areas have called for mandatory participation in a housing registry. In Ontario legislation (Social Housing Reform Act) exists that outlines how social housing is to be managed and includes strict rules on the maintenance of waiting lists. Many housing registries have been set up in Ontario as a way of dealing with their complex legislative requirements. Nevertheless this legislation has created numerous headaches for those involved in housing (Solvason, 2005).

Another challenge is the reality of long waiting lists. This challenge can be lessened when applicants are flexible in their desired location and type of housing. The more flexible applicants are the more options they provide themselves, which can reduce the length of time they must wait (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004; City of Kingston, no date).

Hardships can also be encountered for applicants and housing providers when a housing registry is inefficient, such as in the case of technological difficulties, as well as inadequate computer equipment. Inefficient systems will cause a reduction in the use of the registry. A new housing registry system will encounter small glitches, as no system will run perfectly the first time. Therefore, many organizations have developed a trial system or a test website to run the system and determine what glitches exist and how to correct them. Some registries start off by taking on only a few housing providers and their waiting lists as a test run. This helps to determine any imperfections while running the system

within a realistic environment. Once the glitches have been corrected the registry can be fully released for use by all housing providers and applicants. Another way to further improve their efficiency is to provide housing providers with training on the use of the system. This will help to promote the ease of use and could attract more housing providers to become members of the registry.

A major challenge for not only housing registries, but the housing sector in general, is funding. Housing registries typically must secure initial funding to cover the development phase of the registry, and then require long-term funding. The reality of funding in general is that it can be hard to obtain. Housing registries have stated that a good approach is to try to gain funding from a number of sources. Also, many registries provide services such as outreach and have clientele such as youth, homeless people or people with disabilities, all of which may have specific streams of funding that the registry could tap into.

On the other hand, the more funders and parties involved, the more interests that must be addressed. Applicants, housing providers, funders, and the committee/council will all have their own set of interests that they will want the registry to address, some of which will be similar among applicants or housing providers, or different between each individual funder. This will make it difficult to manage the growing number of assorted interests.

Staffing can also be a challenge. Many housing registries have staff that also have responsibilities in other segments of the organization. This can mean having to schedule and divide hours between two or more areas and possibly reducing the ability to compete tasks. Staff dedicated to the registry only can

make for a more effective use of staff hours by allowing them to focus their efforts in one particular area.

Staff are also responsible for the application input process and for keeping the registry updated. This challenge can be even greater when there is a spike in the number of applications to be entered into the system. This typically occurs when a new provider becomes a member and their database must be transferred to the registry. Also when staff have responsibilities in other areas it reduces the amount of time available for entering and updating information.

Many of these challenges can be alleviated or reduced with some planning. The best way to address the challenges is to recognize them and prepare a plan to deal with them.

4.4   Successes Experienced by Existing Housing Registries

Over the course of their existence many housing registries have experienced successes. One of these has been improved service. Applicants only have to contact one agency to apply for and locate multiple affordable housing units, which eases the housing search burden. Also, when a housing provider has a vacancy they can search the registry's applicant database and select the household at the top of the list that meets the provider's eligibility criteria. This reduces the potential for the duplication of efforts among housing providers. As a result, this type of centralized system can create improved service for both the applicants and the providers.

A success that has proven to be valuable for housing providers is that membership in a housing registry can allow housing providers to reduce the

resources they require. Since some registries take on the waiting list of the housing provider, the provider no longer requires the resources to maintain and update a waiting list. Providers maintain their autonomy, but can redirect their resources to other areas of priority (BC Housing, 2002).

Housing registries can also encourage private market participation in the registry (Cox, 2005). The lack of supply of affordable housing is a difficult issue to address without the construction of new units. However, the participation of private market landlords in housing registries can help to create access to more vacant affordable housing units. It also can provide free advertising, which some small housing providers may not otherwise be able to afford.

Another success has been in building partnerships. Registries work in consultation with housing providers (Smandych, 2004); they can collaborate with other service agencies across their service area; and become locations to obtain housing registry application forms (HousingLink, 2005A). By working with others and building partnerships registries can have a greater reach into the area of increasing access to affordable housing.

The registry is also capable of handling differing amounts of applicants and housing providers. Whether there are a few, as may be the case when a registry is first implemented, or there are a large number of applicants and providers on the system, which would be the ideal case with a central housing registry, the flexible design of the system allows it to serve any number of applicants and providers.

Many types of housing registries are already in existence and some of them act as models. This creates sources of information and insight for those registries starting out. Models can provide organizations, which may not know much about housing registries, a place to contact for information and guidance during their own periods of development and implementation. The model registries can act as mentors and/or sounding boards for ideas and help to address challenges that are encountered. Housing registries are typically developed through trial and error, but with models to follow some of the trial and error can be eliminated.

Probably the most important success of housing registries has been the recognition that registries are an appropriate long-term approach to dealing with the issue of access to affordable housing. Increasing the supply of affordable housing through new construction is one approach, but that is not the only one. As previously mentioned, housing registries can be used to promote public and private market units in the supply of affordable housing. Registries provide a centralized approach, which applicants and housing providers can both benefit from.

5.0   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WINNIPEG

The information presented thus far has been intended to develop a comprehensive background on the topic of housing registries. The next component is to link the information on housing registries to the Winnipeg context through the use of information obtained by the literature review, the survey, and the focus group. This will help to identify the potential successes and challenges that may be encountered if a central housing registry were to be implemented in the City of Winnipeg. Housing registries do exist in Winnipeg, however they tend to work independently which presents the possibility of the duplication of efforts. This reinforces the need for a central housing registry in Winnipeg.

5.1   A Central Housing Registry

A central housing registry can take on a number of different forms. For the purpose of this research project a central housing registry is described as the incorporation of an applicant database and a housing provider database into one internet based system. Households in search of housing can apply to the applicant database and search the provider database for vacant units. Housing providers who are members of the registry can list their vacancies and search the applicant database using their own eligibility criteria to fill their vacancies.

5.1.1 Anticipated Challenges for Winnipeg

The development and implementation of a central housing registry in Winnipeg would not come without challenges, ranging from communication issues and issues regarding participation, to challenges with screening users, updating information, and providing personal information. Trying not to set people

up for disappointment could be a challenge along with including marginalized people and dealing with issues of mobility and literacy, as well as the location of vacancies and the need for urgent housing. Lastly, the size of the registry, technological difficulties, and impacting existing housing related jobs are other potential challenges for a central housing registry in Winnipeg.

It has been noted that a communication issue exists in Winnipeg. The Social Planning Council (SPC) of Winnipeg stated "there needs to be increased communication between organizations" (2001: 58). Therefore, organizations' ability to communicate would determine the success of a central housing registry in Winnipeg. Housing providers must work together to achieve the positive results that could come from a central housing registry.

Part of housing providers working together is their participation in the central housing registry. It may be difficult for the registry to gain a high participation rate, but it is essential. The greater the number of independent waiting lists, the greater the effort required by applicants to access affordable housing in Winnipeg. Soliciting participation may be a challenge because currently public and non-profit units do not need to advertise due to the tight rental market in Winnipeg. Waiting lists are already long and do not require more applicants, but the registry could alleviate the pressure that waiting lists put on housing providers by transferring this responsibility to the registry. It will also be a challenge to get small landlords to participate, as they will be hard to reach without targeted advertising.

In spite of this, providers may participate in the central housing registry if it were free. Many private landlords currently pay to advertise their units in Winnipeg newspapers. If quick results of the registry could be demonstrated, then they may be more apt to participate. The Winnipeg School Division housing registry that is currently in place has received support from the Winnipeg School Division, the City of Winnipeg, Child and Family Services, and Family Services and Housing. This illustrates that some local organizations see the overall benefits of registries. Therefore, they may also see the benefits of a central housing registry for all of Winnipeg.

Since the extent of housing providers' participation in a central housing registry in Winnipeg cannot be predicted it may be appropriate to start off small and then enlarge the system as the demonstrated usefulness of the system makes participation look more attractive. The feedback from the focus group illustrated that a landlord database that lists vacancies may be a good place to start. It would help people search for housing units in an effective way, which is currently needed in Winnipeg. And it would demonstrate how many landlords and providers are interested in participating in this type of a system, based on the participation rate in the landlord database, prior to undertaking the time and effort to establish and implement a whole central housing registry. Once the landlord database proves to be successful then efforts could be made to develop the rest of the central housing registry.

Ideally, the central housing registry would have a large number of housing providers as members of the system. Each of the providers would likely have

their own screening procedures. The focus group research showed that developing a process that incorporates the screening processes of each housing provider would be a large and possibly unnecessary challenge. In addition, screening providers could diminish the supply of affordable units, with poor quality units not qualifying. And the more screening that is done, on both providers and applicants, the more the registry could be a target for lawsuits. An appropriate approach may be not to screen to any large extent. Providers could list their units, and if they wish to screen tenants based on their own criteria, then that would be their responsibility. Allowing providers to do their owning screening would also provide them with a tool to screen out any tenants that they have had negative experiences with.

Gathering information and keeping it updated may be another challenge of a central housing registry in Winnipeg. The initial gathering of information will be time and labour intensive, as well as the constant updating of the information, which is currently the case for housing registries that already exist in Winnipeg. Therefore it was suggested that housing providers could be encouraged to update their information by having the registry de-register units after a certain length of time or simply the fact that providers may not want to deal with the large amount of inquiry calls could be enough of an incentive to update the system once units are no longer vacant. Each of these strategies may be an appropriate way of addressing the issue of updating data.

Providing personal information could develop as another issue. Challenges may arise around the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and

the *Manitoba Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, which would have to be dealt with in an appropriate manner. Applicants unsure of the confidentiality of their information may believe that the police or creditors would be able to locate them. Focus group participants thought that this issue could be addressed by providing all applicants with a reference number, and only the Winnipeg central housing registry staff would have the authority to access the names associated with each reference number for the purpose of housing the applicants.

Another difficulty with a central housing registry in Winnipeg is that people in need of housing may be getting set up for disappointment. Many of the public and non-profit units in Winnipeg already have long waiting lists and new applicants would typically be added to the bottom of the list. This could be somewhat alleviated by including private market units in the registry as they may be less likely to have waiting lists.

A challenge identified by Anonymous (2005) was that marginalized people might be missed. Large systems have a greater chance of leaving behind some members of society who prefer a more community driven, grassroots approach. This challenge may be somewhat alleviated in Winnipeg by incorporating community access points to the central housing registry so that people can access the registry through organizations in their community that they are already comfortable with.

Mobility issues and lack of literacy pose additional challenges (Anonymous, 2005). However, community access points could make it easier for

persons with mobility issues to access the registry, as they would not have to travel outside their community. Also people who are illiterate may feel more comfortable filling out an application form or searching vacancies with the help of staff they already know at a community organization.

Since the central housing registry would serve all of Winnipeg and vacancies could occur in any part of the city the registry may cause a situation where people move outside of the community they are currently living in. Many Winnipeg residents have strong attachments to a particular community and would not want to move elsewhere, even though that is where the vacant housing unit is located (Anonymous, 2005). This challenge could be mediated by allowing applicants to indicate on their application form where they wish to live or only search for housing in a particular community.

The issue of the need for urgent housing is another challenge. The research has highlighted that this may occur when a patient without a home is discharged from a local hospital. Efforts would have to be made to address this issue. One possible approach could be to have the registry retain an inventory of transitional housing, and by encouraging hospital discharge staff to use the registry to locate housing for their patients prior to their release.

Another challenge could be that a central housing registry for the entire City of Winnipeg may be too large to be effective. One solution presented was to include divisions within the registry. These divisions could consist of a subsidized housing division, a single family home division, and a private market division.

This will allow for more targeted searches that better address the needs of the applicants.

Technological difficulties and computer problems could also arise. This may be from the registry's high demand on technology. Yet it was revealed that the equipment does not have to be sophisticated, it only must be of a high quality, which should eliminate some computer problems.

Another challenge expressed was that the registry could take away from the local jobs of housing co-ordinators and support workers, though it was also mentioned that these jobs would still be required as the need for support would remain, as well as to educate tenants and landlords.

The challenges that have been presented could be a reality in Winnipeg if a central housing registry were developed, but they can all be addressed through adjustments to the registry's design and implementation. Challenges are not so great that they completely out weigh the benefits that a central housing registry would bring to Winnipeg.

5.1.2 Potential Successes for Winnipeg

The research indicates that Winnipeg could experience a number of benefits and successes through a central housing registry. These would include the benefits of a centralized approach, which could act as a means to create linkages and coordinate efforts. Housing units could also be better matched with applicants. Private market units could be included, thereby creating an incentive for landlords to invest in their properties. Success would also be visible with reduced duplication of housing providers' efforts and increased communication.

Referrals to social services, supports for landlords, a source of information, and links to community services will all benefit housing providers and applicants in Winnipeg. In addition, a central housing registry would act as a planning tool to illustrate the need for better access to affordable housing in Winnipeg.

The use of a central housing registry could improve access to affordable and accessible housing through a centralized approach. Currently in Winnipeg, households in search of affordable housing must travel across the city applying to different housing providers in order to get on their waiting lists, or they must search through newspaper advertisements. This is not an efficient approach, but it is the reality of present day.

A central housing registry would benefit low-income households and persons with a disability by allowing them to register only once, thereby greatly reducing the places a person must visit (Distasio, 2003). This increases the ease of access to housing with a reduced effort.

A central housing registry could also be successful in creating linkages. The registry could improve access to services (Mancer and Kosmuk, 1999). It would be a one-stop-shop for accessing housing services. This would help to increase the public's knowledge on available housing options (Mancer and Kosmuk, 1999), as all housing options would be located in one centralized place in Winnipeg with public access.

In addition, the Province of Manitoba is moving towards integrated service delivery through the development of Community ACCESS Centres that will provide health and social services in one location. Housing services will also be

accessible at these centres (Manitoba FSH, 2004D). This may provide the opportunity to coordinate the efforts of the central housing registry in Winnipeg with the integrated service delivery efforts of the Province of Manitoba.

The registry could also improve the "fit" of housing in Winnipeg with applicants. Features of units could be listed, such as amenities, accessibility, etc., as well as a picture of the unit to allow applicants to view the unit before travelling to it. Each of these factors could help to increase the applicants' length of stay in a unit and reduce turnover.

As indicated, the registry would not focus strictly on public or social housing units, but it could focus more broadly on affordable and accessible units helping to improve access through this centralized approach. Distasio (2003) stated, "there are many good landlords with affordable rents" in Winnipeg's private market (35). Linking with these landlords could help to alleviate some of the demand on the public housing market. The registry could also help to inspire private landlords to improve their properties, making it easier for landlords to fill their vacancies.

A central housing registry in Winnipeg would benefit housing providers as greater coordination among housing providers would mean a reduction in the duplication of each other's efforts (Mancer and Kosmuk, 1999). The registry would create one centralized waiting list (i.e. applicant database) including the applicants of all housing providers instead of many smaller waiting lists that are each connected to a different provider. Also housing providers would require

fewer resources as the registry would take over the maintenance and administration of the providers' waiting lists.

The registry could also be an approach to increasing communication between all the players involved in affordable housing in Winnipeg. As specified during the focus group, it could break down barriers and reduce turf protection by having everyone working together. It was thought that in Winnipeg this would encourage community agencies to work together because they are striving for the same goal.

The registry could also provide referrals to social services that are required by applicants (Mancer and Kosmuk, 1999). This would help address not only their housing needs, but also other needs that they may have. It could include such referrals as directing people for income assistance, for employment programs, or even for educational services. This could help to stabilize Winnipeg's low-income population through addressing households' housing needs and then allowing them to move on to access other services they require in order to stabilize other aspects of their lives (Carter et al., 1993). The registry could also provide outreach to housing providers and the applicants (Mancer and Kosmuk, 1999).

The registry could act as a formal method for landlords to obtain supports as needed. In Winnipeg landlords often play the informal role of a social worker or must deal with tenants who have mental health issues, however landlords have limited or no supports to assist them. The focus group mentioned that landlords could use the central housing registry as a way of accessing these

supports and in turn such support could help tenants stay in their units longer as landlords would know how to deal with them.

Those who have the task of being a housing coordinator in Winnipeg tend to be overwhelmed with the number of people contacting them in search of affordable housing. The research has suggested that the registry could help to alleviate some of the pressure on coordinators by providing a source of information as well as a place to refer people to.

The registry could also link to services in the community including youth organizations, daycares, bus routes, recreation facilities, etc. This would provide applicants with information and contact numbers of the resources in close proximity.

Lastly the central housing registry in Winnipeg could be used as a planning tool. The registry would provide a picture of the local housing situation and what is available for rent. The information gained from the registry could be shown to all three levels of government, as suggested by the focus group, as evidence of the lack of affordable housing in Winnipeg and illustrate the need for more affordable housing through the length of the central housing registry's waiting list. Such evidence could be used to develop strategies to deal with the lack of affordable housing.

The benefits of a central housing registry serving Winnipeg could be numerous. They could impact housing applicants, housing providers and landlords, and could ultimately impact the housing situation in Winnipeg.

Winnipeg is in need of a strategy to improve access to affordable and accessible housing and a central housing registry could be an appropriate approach.

5.2   Recommendations for a Central Housing Registry in Winnipeg

The following is a set of recommendations based on all the research undertaken for this project. It is suggested that these recommendations be considered if a central housing registry were developed in Winnipeg. By no means is this list exhaustive. The recommendations are intended to provide a starting off point for the development and implementation of a central housing registry in Winnipeg.

1. The central housing registry act as a centralized approach for accessing affordable and accessible housing by providing a one-stop-shop to apply for housing units under numerous housing providers through one applications form.

2. A landlord/housing provider database should be developed as the first phase of the central housing registry system in order to assess the benefits to applicants and the participation rates among landlords and housing providers. Once this database is successful then the remaining components of the central housing registry should be implemented.

3. The central housing registry should focus evenly on both the providers and applicants. The applicants would apply to the registry and the providers would become members. Applicants could search providers' vacancies and providers could search the applicant database to fill their vacant units.

4. The central housing registry should have a service area of the City of Winnipeg. To increase the effectiveness of the registry it should be broken down into divisions consisting of subsidized housing, single family homes, private market, and transitional or temporary accommodations. In the future the service area of the registry could be expanded to the entire Province of Manitoba.

5. The central housing registry should include units provided by both affordable housing providers and housing providers who have accessible units that are appropriate for persons with a disability.

6. The central housing registry should include public, subsidized units; non-profit, subsidized units; non-profit, non-subsidized units; co-op, subsidized units; co-op, non-subsidized units; private market, subsidized units; private market, non-subsidized units. Affordable private market units should be included in the registry to further help access affordable and/or accessible housing.

7. The central housing registry should include a variety of forms of housing, such as apartments (low- and high-rise), townhouses, single family dwellings, and single room occupancy units.

8. The features of units (e.g. amenities, accessibility, etc.) should be included in the registry and applicants should be able to search providers' vacancies based on their own criteria (e.g. location, close to amenities, etc.) and obtain the landlords contact information. Contact

information from old vacancies could remain in the system for applicants to make cold calls.

9. The central housing registry should be based on housing providers obtaining membership in the registry.

10. Membership criteria for housing providers should be developed.

11. Membership should be free for all housing providers. However, if a fee was charged it should be based on a sliding scale. For example, the more affordable a unit is the lower the fee charged.

12. Membership by housing providers in the registry should be voluntary, not enforced through legislation.

13. Advertising should be used to promote the registry and encourage housing providers to obtain membership. The free service and free advertising could entice providers to obtain a membership since many of them currently pay for advertising. It should be promoted that membership in the registry will reduce the amount of resources that are currently required by housing providers.

14. Housing providers should have their waiting list transferred over to the central housing registry and included in the registry's applicant database. Providers would remain responsible for their own tenant selection procedures and criteria, along with determining the cost of their units.

15. The central housing registry should have one office centrally located in the city, and work through existing service agencies (e.g. the offices of housing providers, community organizations that deal with housing, etc.)

to offer community access points throughout the entire city to reduce the distance that people must travel to access the registry.

16. The registry should be available through computers connected to the internet and/or through housing registry kiosks for applicants. Access through the internet also allows providers to easily connect to the registry. Providers who do not have access to the internet could use the registry access points to connect to the system thereby allowing all providers, whether big or small, to become members and have access to the registry.

17. Staff at the access points must be familiar with the central housing registry system and able to help people with the registry (i.e. help people fill out the application form or search the registry).

18. Access points would collect completed applications and send them to the central housing registry office where registry staff would then input them into the system.

19. A general application form for applicants to apply to the central housing registry should be developed. It could be developed to include the housing providers' eligibility criteria and provide applicants with the option to select various criteria, such as location, type of housing, housing provider, and housing development or project, as well as whether the units is accessible.

20. The registry should limit the amount of screening it undertakes. Providers could be screened to become members and then they could

screen applicants based on their own criteria. If more extensive screening were to occur the central housing registry could be used as a mechanism to develop a standardized screening process for the entire city, thereby removing any discriminatory screening processes.

21. Applicants should be given a reference number and only registry staff should have access to the contact information pertaining to each reference number. Housing providers should only be able to obtain the contact information of applicants who fit their eligibility criteria (e.g. only providers who offer housing for persons with a mental illness would be able to obtain those persons' contact information).

22. The central housing registry should be developed and implemented as a stand-alone entity that no organization "owns". Instead an independent organization should be established that would be responsible for the registry, along with a council or committee to direct the central housing registry, and work in partnership with the housing providers. The council/committee should have representation from a number of the organizations that are members of the registry.

23. Staff positions should be dedicated solely to the central housing registry.

24. The central housing registry should be modelled after an existing registry (e.g. the BC Housing Registry) to gain insight and ease the development and implementation processes.

25. Prior to developing and implementing a central housing registry background research should be conducted on Winnipeg's housing market and a needs assessment should also be undertaken.

26. The registry computer system does not need to be sophisticated, but should consist of high quality equipment. It should be put through a test or trial period to determine if any system problems exist.

27. The registry system should be designed in such a way that it is user-friendly. However, technical assistance should also be available to those using the registry. Also, as housing providers become members they should receive training on the use of the registry.

28. The central housing registry must be able to handle fluctuating amounts of applicants and housing providers.

29. The registry would have to be constantly updated. This could occur by having the registry de-register a unit after a specific length of time or landlords could be responsible for updating their own information and vacancies to limit the number of telephone calls they receive on units that are no longer vacant. The registry should also require applicants to remove their name from the database once they have obtained a unit.

30. The central housing registry should be used as a planning tool. It should act as a quick source for accurate information pertaining to such areas as the characteristics and housing needs of applicants, vacancies, the waiting list, etc. The registry could also be used to develop housing fact sheets for the City of Winnipeg.

31. The central housing registry should provide referrals to other social services within Winnipeg, and do outreach through presentations and seminars on the central housing registry, as well as link to advocacy groups.

32. The registry should be a source of information and support for both the applicants and housing providers. Information could be obtained on housing issues, as well as support to deal with "hard to handle" tenants, and tenant/landlord rights.

33. The registry should connect with other areas that relate to housing, such as immigration, health, etc. This would promote an inter-sectoral approach to social services. Creating registry access points at Community ACCESS Centres across the city could make the link to health. The registry should also act as a resource for immigrant/settlement workers and be connected with the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program for immigrants.

34. The registry could link to community services and resources by providing a listing of the services in close proximity (such as daycares, recreation facilities, bus routes, etc.).

35. The registry should try to obtain long-term, sustainable funding from a variety of sources.

Each of the recommendations presented works towards creating an efficient and effective system for accessing affordable and accessible housing in

Winnipeg. The recommendations are intended to act as a source of guidance for the development of a central housing registry.

5.3   Conclusion

This project has promoted the central housing registry as an appropriate tool to address Winnipeg's current housing situation based on the research undertaken. Housing is a basic necessity of life, and accessing appropriate housing remains a challenge for many households, renters in particular. Subsidized housing is seen as a source of appropriate housing although it typically has long waiting lists. Affordable housing also does exist in the private market as mentioned throughout the research. However, both sources of housing are faced with a lack of supply and low vacancy rates, which makes it difficult to access such housing. Therefore, solutions are needed that help households in accessing affordable housing.

This research project has used the central housing registry as a supply side approach to look at improving access to affordable housing in Winnipeg. It has become evident that a central housing registry would create a linkage between the supply and demand for affordable and accessible housing; by being able to see the demand first hand through applicants' use of the system, and by being able to help those in search of housing access the supply that exists, not only focusing on social housing, but by also including affordable private market units.

Housing resources exist in Winnipeg, but there is a lack of coordination between them. Unknowingly services may be duplicated while competition for the

same resources occurs. Distasio (2003) has also indicated that there is a need for referrals, outreach, and an integrated approach to services delivery. This research project has shown that the central housing registry could address these needs, as well as improve access to affordable housing.

Affordability problems and homelessness issues are arising due to a lack of affordable housing. Therefore the solution presented through this research is to help households locate housing through a central housing registry and address some of the affordability and homelessness problems.

The registry could act to provide better access to housing by focusing on this centralized approach, which makes searching and applying for affordable housing more efficient and reduces the potential for income discrimination by focusing on housing low-income households in affordable units. The one-stop-shop increases the ease of access to housing and numerous housing programs with a reduced effort. Also by drawing on and promoting both public and private market affordable housing it could help households to access affordable housing. The registry could also act as a source of information and increase the local populations' knowledge of the housing options available to them.

Greater coordination between the government, the non-profit sector, and the private housing market could help to alleviate some of the housing problems by allowing for better planning and action. Having housing providers come together and use the central housing registry to achieve the common goal of improving access to affordable housing in Winnipeg would also make it easy for citizens to access the housing services they require by making use of the registry

and then being referred to other services they require to create stability in their lives. Improved coordination among housing providers would result with a reduction in the duplication of efforts that tends to exist with many small individual waiting lists. The registry would also ensure that vacancies are filled in an efficient and well-organized manner.

The registry creates a direct source of current and accurate housing information. This information can range from a more accurate count of the number of people waiting for affordable and/or accessible housing to information on vacancy rates, providing evidence of the situation being faced in Winnipeg. This could assist decision makers in their efforts to create policies and programs to address the affordable housing problem in ways that reflect the needs of Winnipeg's communities.

The recommendations presented in the research project were to assist in the development of a suitable and appropriate central housing registry to fit the needs of Winnipeg's households in search of affordable and accessible housing. It is evident that Winnipeg is in need of such a registry as advocates such as Carter et al. (1993), the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (2001), and Distasio (2003) have been stating for a number of years. In addition, this strategy to improve access to affordable housing has been successful in a many other cities, which is clearly demonstrated through the research.

This central housing registry would use an integrated approach to the housing situation recognizing the changing needs, and that the demands of today may not be the same as tomorrow. However the flexibility of this system allows it

to adapt to the situation and focus on a comprehensive strategy that brings together all players and both the supply and demand side of the issue.

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APPENDIX A

DETAILED EXAMPLES OF HOUSING REGISTRIES

Key examples of housing registries currently exist in Canada and the United States. These include the BC Housing Registry, the Ottawa Social Housing Registry, and the Winnipeg School Division Housing Registry in Canada and the Housing Referral Service (HousingLink) and the Mass Access in the United States. Descriptions of these examples can provide insight into the reasoning for, and use and applicability of housing registries.

BC Housing Registry

The BC Housing Registry is available throughout the Province as a housing information service that targets providers of affordable rental housing and also acts as a central database of applicants' information to be accessed by housing providers. Membership in the registry is open to non-profit and co-op organizations that provide rent-geared-to-income housing within the province (BC Housing, 2002).

This registry provides numerous benefits to its members. Housing providers require less resources than they did previous to their membership in the registry, as the registry takes on some of the past tasks of the housing providers. Housing providers no longer maintain or update their applicant list, as the registry takes over this responsibility. The Office transfers the applicant list to the registry, inputs and processes applications, and ensures all information remains up-to-date. This gives housing providers the opportunity to redirect their resources to other priorities (BC Housing, 2002).

The shifting of some responsibilities to the registry does not cause housing providers to lose any of their autonomy. Housing providers still use their own procedures for tenant selection (e.g. first-come, first served; a point score system to determine greatest need; or applicants' willingness to participate in a co-op). They also determine the price of units based on either market-value or rent-geared-to-income (BC Housing, 2002).

The main focus of the BC Housing Registry is to improve service, reduce the duplication of efforts, and to provide an opportunity to obtain accurate information on the affordable housing situation in British Columbia. Service is improved when applicants only have to contact one agency and fill out one application form to apply for multiple affordable housing developments. Duplication of efforts among housing providers is eliminated as different housing providers may have processed many of the same applications. The registry also provides a source of accurate information that is up-to-date (BC Housing, 2002), compared to other data that is already out-of-date at the time of its release.

The BC Housing Registry works in partnership with a number of organizations including BC Housing, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, non-profit housing providers, housing co-ops, Lower Mainland municipalities, information and referral service groups, and other community-based organizations (BC Housing, 2002). In addition to these organizations the registry works in consultation with the housing providers. This is done through the development of the BC Housing Registry Council, which

helps ease any apprehension that housing providers have in regard to working with a government organization (Smandych, 2004).

The registry is constantly in a state of development. The process of implementing the registry began in 1998. A trial system came online in 2001, which two housing groups tested for two years. The recruitment of members to the registry began in 2002 and continues as housing providers see the registry as a beneficial tool. As of the summer of 2004, 30 housing groups were members of the registry, which is the equivalent of 10% of British Columbia's housing groups. It is a slow process as members must be recruited and their applicant lists then transferred to the housing registry database, which can limit the amount of members who can join each year (Smandych, 2004).

The BC Housing Registry works as a central housing registry system to help house those households in need of affordable accommodations. In doing so it works with housing providers to help facilitate the process, while ensuring housing providers keep their autonomy. This acts to benefit both housing applicants and providers.

Social Housing Registry of Ottawa

The Social Housing Registry of Ottawa is a centralized waiting list for affordable housing. It was created through a partnership of community housing organizations and housing providers as they recognized the need to make applying for subsidized housing easier for low-income households. The registry includes many forms of subsidized units, these include: townhouses, apartments,

rooming houses, wheelchair accessible units, and units for persons with special needs (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004).

Once households have applied to the registry they receive a list of participating housing providers and are placed on the central waiting list. As a housing provider has a vacancy they contact the applicant who has been waiting the longest with housing specifications that fit the criteria of the vacant unit. Most housing providers rent units at a rate of 30% of the household's gross monthly income. Those households who wish to apply for housing with a housing provider that is not part of the registry must apply directly to the housing provider. Some providers offer housing other than subsidized units, however in order to obtain a market rent unit the household must demonstrate their willingness and ability to pay market rents (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004).

Since the registry consists of a centralized waiting list, having to wait for an available unit is a reality. The length of waiting times varies, and can be as long as five years. In order to reduce waiting times households can choose to be more flexible in their housing specifications. Households can be flexible about where they want to live and the type of housing they choose (Ottawa Social Housing Network, 2004).

The Ottawa Social Housing Registry focuses on providing low-income households with subsidized housing accommodations through a centralized waiting list. The registry tries to ensure that households are given the opportunity to choose housing that best fits their needs.

Winnipeg School Division Housing Registry

Winnipeg's inner-city school division, known as the Winnipeg School Division, started a housing registry in 1986 due to the high levels of student turn over within its schools. The registry started with a focus on one elementary school in an attempt to raise awareness among parents of the benefits of a child remaining in the same school for an entire school year. This approach was very unique, as no other school division had ever attempted a housing registry as an approach to reducing student turn over and the educational difficulties that go along with high levels of mobility (Palmer and Blewett, 2005).

This registry started as a manual system with newspaper housing listings for the school's catchment area posted on a bulletin board. The registry has progressed into an online system. A test website for the entire Winnipeg School Division was developed that could be accessed through school computers, which listed vacancies (Palmer and Blewett, 2005). The registry has since developed into a GIS based system (Winnipeg School Division, 2005). The GIS system allows for numerous operations, including ability of the landlords to directly enter their vacancy and unit information into the system (Palmer and Blewett, 2005).

Over the past 19 years this registry has evolved from a one person administration, one school based system to a school division wide (80 schools) GIS system registry that is guided by a committee. A Migrancy Committee provides direction and support to the system through representatives from the school division, the provincial government department of Manitoba Family

Services and Housing, as well as from Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation (Palmer and Blewett, 2005).

This registry developed out of the realization that students who have appropriate, stable housing are more likely to succeed in school. Through advocacy on the part of the housing registry staff, families began to realize this and made use of the registry to limit their mobility. As a result, stable housing has led to stability in the lives of students and their families (Palmer and Blewett, 2005).

HousingLink's Housing Referral Service

HousingLink is an organization at work in the Twin Cities metropolitan area of the United States. It began as a housing referral service to match households seeking affordable housing with vacancies in the rental market and waiting list openings that were advertised by property managers and owners (HousingLink, 2005A; HousingLink, 2005B). The service is now internet based. Testing on the service occurred between 2000 and 2004, resulting in the referral service potentially becoming one of HousingLink's core services (HousingLink, 2003).

The service consists of a number of elements. Firstly, households in search of housing are enrolled in the service. This is done through the household identifying their housing needs, which can include the size, location, and eligibility for a subsidized unit (HousingLink, 2003). Secondly, a listing of affordable vacancies is gathered through property owners, managers, and landlords listing their vacancies with HousingLink. Thirdly, the housing needs of a household are

then matched with vacant units and waiting lists. Lastly, a notice is generated for each housing match and mailed to the household, who will then contact the landlord (HousingLink, 2005A; HousingLink, 2005B).

The Referral Service works in partnership with a number of organizations. It collaborates with existing service agencies across the metropolitan area to provide a common source of rental housing information. It also works with agencies that participate in the service, they can become locations to obtain applications (HousingLink, 2005A). Most uniquely it works with property owners through outreach to collect current rental vacancy information (HousingLink, 2003).

This system focuses mainly on referral services, which is another example of a registry. It refers those in need of housing with housing providers to facilitate locating housing units and the filling of vacancies.

The Accessible Housing Registry (Mass Access)

The Accessible Housing Registry, also known as Mass Access, is a housing registry that focuses on housing persons with a disability in accessible housing accommodations. The registry began in 1995 and consists of an inventory of all accessible and adaptable units in Massachusetts, including tracking their availability. Information is also available on subsidized housing (both state and federally assisted), public housing, and market-rate housing. The service is a program of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and based at the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) (CHAPA, No date

A), which works with housing managers to obtain accurate housing information (CHAPA, 1999).

Mass Access was created for a number of reasons. Part of the reasoning for the registry is based on a requirement of the law. The Housing Bill of Rights for People with Disabilities (1989) requires accessible/adaptable housing owners to list their vacancies with a registry (CHAPA, No date B). Additionally, prior to the registry's creation accessible and adaptable units would remain vacant as housing managers could not locate people to fill the units, despite the fact that many persons with a disability were having difficulty locating such units. Mass Access is a mechanism to connect housing providers with accessible units to persons in need of accessible housing (CHAPA, No date A). Over the years Mass Access has gone from being accessed through Independent Living Centers (ILC) to being available on the internet (CHAPA, 1999). The service is provided to any person with a disability, their family, and those who advocate for persons with a disability (CHAPA, No date A; Southeast Center, no date).

Through computer technology Mass Access catalogues and distributes vacancy information on accessible/adaptable housing units to different disability agencies and organizations across the state. The catalogued information generally includes: location of housing, price of rent, type of housing (including adaptable and accessible features), number of bedrooms, and vacancy status (CHAPA, No date A; Southeast Center, no date). In addition to the detailed housing search, the registry also provides state-wide vacancy information and housing alerts that consists of postings of new accessible/adaptable housing

listings. Managers of housing units can also benefit through increased access to marketing for their units and through easy compliance with state law (CHAPA, 2003). The benefits of Mass Access are being expanded as the system can be customized for each particular state or agency (Mass Access, No date).

The Accessible Housing Registry is prime example of the use of housing registries meet legislative requirements, ensure units do not remain vacant for extended periods of time, and to distribute information to agencies across large geographical area. The success of Mass Access has made it an example for many other organizations to follow as they work towards developing their own accessible housing registry.

Conclusion

Each of these examples of housing registries are unique in their own way. However, they are also similar in their goals to help households access housing that fits their needs.

APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT – SURVEY

Statement of Informed Consent
Survey Participants

Research Project Title: A Central Housing Registry: Recommendations for Winnipeg

Researcher: Christa Jacobucci

This consent form, a copy of which you may retain for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask via an email. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This research is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Masters of City Planning program at the University of Manitoba. This research is being conducted among individuals involved in housing registries across Canada and the United States and local housing providers in Winnipeg. The purpose of the research is to gain information on how housing registries in other cities work and the challenges they have faced. This information will provide a background to develop recommendations for a central housing registry in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. A central housing registry in Winnipeg could help to coordinate the efforts of housing providers resulting in a better use of resources and the reduced likelihood of duplicating efforts. A housing registry could also improve access by low-income households to affordable housing.

The survey is a one-time endeavour that will take approximately 1.5 hours to complete. The survey is divided into seven sections, including: background, establishment of the registry, steps to accessing the registry, participation in the housing registry, financial components, staffing, and experiences gained from the housing registry.

Responses to the survey will be confidential with only the Researcher having access to this information. The final document produced for this research project will state the organizations involved in the survey; however the responses to survey questions will not be linked to the organizations. Participants in the survey

will have the opportunity to obtain a summary report of the research once it is completed.

An email response to the Researcher (Christa Jacobucci, christajacobucci@hotmail.com) stating "I agree to participate in the study as described in the consent form" will indicate that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Researcher: Christa Jacobucci   1-204- --- - ----
Supervisor: Ian Skelton   1-204- --- - ----

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board of The University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact either of the above-mentioned persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122, or email Margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

APPENDIX C

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The following is a listing of the 21 housing registries that participated in the survey.

- The Housing Registry (British Columbia)

- Accessible Housing Registry (Calgary, Alberta)

- Life Lease (Manitoba)

- Resource Assistance for Youth (RAY) (Winnipeg, Manitoba)

- Wheelchair Accessible Housing Registry (Manitoba)

- Winnipeg School Division No. 1 Housing Registry (Winnipeg, Manitoba)

- Cambridge Housing Registry (Cambridge, Ontario)

- Chatham-Kent Social Housing Division Housing Registry (Ontario)

- Canadian Mental Health Association Cochrane-Timiskaming Housing Registry (Ontario)

- Canadian Mental Health Association Housing Registry and Outreach (Thunder Bay, Ontario)

- Community Resource Centre (Arthur, Ontario)

- COSTI-North York Housing (North York, Ontario)

- Georgian Triangle Housing Resource Centre (Collingwood, Ontario)

- Haldimand-Norfolk Landlord Registry (Dunnville, Ontario)

- Hastings Housing Resource Centre (Belleville, Ontario)

- Housing Services Depot (LIPI – Low Income People Involvement) (North Bay, Ontario)

- London Housing Registry (London, Ontario)

- New Tecumseth Housing Resource Centre (Alliston, Ontario)

- Social Housing Registry of Ottawa (Ottawa, Ontario)

- Housing Referral Services (HousingLink) (Minneapolis, Minnesota)

- Mass Access Housing Registry (Massachusetts)

SURVEY TEMPLATE

Survey
Housing Registries: The Experience of Others

Christa Jacobucci
Masters of City Planning, University of Manitoba
Canada

Introduction: The following survey will be used to gain insight from other housing registries to help develop a set of recommendations that would be applicable to Winnipeg if a central housing registry were to be established. Please save a copy of this survey, complete the form, and then email the completed copy to christajacobucci@hotmail.com. Your input will be very valuable and is very much appreciated. Thank you once again for your participation.

Please answer each question in the space provided. The responses to multiple-choice questions can be either highlighted or the selected letter(s) can be written following the question mark on the line provided.

Background

1.   What is the name of this housing registry? _____

2.   What is your position in or involvement with this housing registry? _____

3.   How would you describe the geographic area serviced by this registry? ___
        a. the whole region
        b. the city
        c. part of the city (please specify which part)

4.   What types of housing are listed in this registry? _____
        a. University student housing
        b. Subsidized housing units
        c. Housing for persons with disabilities
        d. All types
        e. Other (please explain)

5. What types of units are included in this housing registry? (Choose all that apply) _____
   a. Public, subsidized units
   b. Non-profit, subsidized units
   c. Non-profit, non-subsidized units
   d. Coop, subsidized units
   e. Coop, non-subsidized units
   f. Private market, subsidized units
   g. Private market, non-subsidized units
   h. Other (please explain)

6. What types of housing accommodations are included in this housing registry? (Choose all that apply) _____
   a. Low-rise apartments
   b. High-rise apartments
   c. Townhouses
   d. Single family dwellings

7. What is the size of the population that this housing registry serves?

Establishment of the Housing Registry

8. When was this housing registry established?

9. What were the goals of this registry when it was developed?

10. Are these still the goals today? _____
    a. Yes (go to #12)
    b. No (go to #11)

11. (If you answered no to #10) What goals have changed and why have they changed?

12. What is the name of the organization that started the housing registry?

13. What is the mandate of this organization?

14. Is the same organization still involved in this housing registry? (Please explain)

15. How long did it take to develop and implement this housing registry?

16. What steps were involved to implement this housing registry?

Accessing the Housing Registry

17. What are the steps that housing providers undertake to become a member of this housing registry?

18. Are there any criteria that housing providers must meet? _____
    a. Yes (go to #19)
    b. No (go to #20)

19. (If you answered yes to #18) What are the criteria that housing providers must meet?

20. What are the steps that individuals in search of housing must undertake to be able to apply for and access units in this housing registry?

21. Are there any criteria that applicants for housing units must meet? _____
    a. Yes (go to #22)
    b. No (go to #23)

22. (If you answered yes to #21) What are the criteria that applicants must meet?

23. Does this housing registry focus: _____
     a. More on the applicants
     b. More on the housing providers
     c. On the applicants and housing providers equally

24. How does this housing registry benefit those individuals in need of housing?

25. How does this housing registry benefit housing providers?

26. How many public housing providers exist in the service area of this housing registry? (Please indicate if you do not know)

27. How many coop housing providers exist in the service area of this housing registry? (Please indicate if you do not know)

28. How many non-profit housing providers exist in the service area of this housing registry? (Please indicate if you do not know)

29. How many public housing providers participate in this housing registry?

30. How many coop housing providers participate in this housing registry?

31. How many non-profit housing providers participate in this housing registry?

32. How many private housing providers participate in this housing registry?

33. How many housing units are included in this housing registry?

34.   What do you feel would be the reasoning of housing providers who do not participate in this housing registry?

35.   Are there other housing registries in the service area of this housing registry? _____
       a. Yes (go to #36)
       b. No (go to #37)

36.   (If you answered yes to #35) How many other housing registries exist in the service area of this housing registry?

Financials

37.   Where does this housing registry get its funding from? (Please explain the funding break down)

38. What is the annual budget of this housing registry?

39. What is the breakdown of the budget? (See table below e.g. how much of the budget is allocated to administrating it, advertising, staff salaries, etc.)

Budget Breakdown		
Area of the budget	**Dollar amount allocated to this area**	**Percentage of total budget**
(e.g.) Administration		
(e.g.) Staffing		
(e.g.) Advertising		

Staffing

40. How many staff members are involved with this housing registry?
    a. The number of full-time staff? _____
    b. The number of part-time staff? _____

41. What are the staff members' positions and responsibilities?

42. Do any staff members have responsibilities within the organization but outside of this housing registry? (If yes, please explain)

43.   What have been the strengths or successes of this housing registry?

44.   What have been the challenges faced in establishing this housing registry?

45.   What have been the challenges faced in running and managing this housing registry?

46. What would be done differently if another housing registry project was undertaken?

47. What is the future direction of this housing registry?

48. Upon completion of this research project a summary report will be available to all participants. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the summary report (via email) please fill in the information below.

Name of respondent:

Name of organization:

Email address:

Thank you for your participation.

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT – FOCUS GROUP

Statement of Informed Consent
Focus Group Participants

Research Project Title: A Central Housing Registry: Recommendations for
                                Winnipeg

Researcher: Christa Jacobucci

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

This research is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Masters of City Planning program at the University of Manitoba. This research is being conducted among housing registries across Canada and the United States and local housing providers in Winnipeg. The purpose of the research is to gain information on how housing registries in other cities work and the challenges they have faced. This information will provide a background to develop recommendations for a central housing registry in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. A central housing registry in Winnipeg could help to coordinate the efforts of housing providers resulting in a better use of resources and the reduced likelihood of duplicating efforts. A housing registry could also improve access by low-income households to affordable housing.

The focus group is a one-time endeavour that will take approximately two hours. The focus group will consist of only five questions, and the responses will be recorded via a tape recorder and through a note taker(s). If there is any objection to the use of a tape recorder then the focus group responses will only be recorded through the use of note taker(s).

Responses to the focus group will be confidential with only the Researcher having access to this information. The final document produced for this research project will state the organizations involved in the focus group; however the responses to focus group questions will not be linked to the organizations.

Participants of the focus group will have the opportunity to obtain a summary report of the research once it is completed.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Researcher: Christa Jacobucci   (204) --- - ----
Supervisor: Ian Skelton   (204) --- - ----

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact either of the above-mentioned persons or the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122, or email Margaret_bowman@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

_____
Participant's Name (please print)

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researcher's Signature   Date

APPENDIX F

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

The following is a listing of the 9 housing providers and housing registries in

Winnipeg that participated in the focus group.

- Kinew Housing Inc.

- West Broadway Development Corporation

- Spence Neighbourhood Association

- New Directions

- Manitoba Family Services and Housing

- Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation

- Winnipeg School Division

- Ten Ten Sinclair Housing Inc.

- Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY Inc.)

APPENDIX G

FOCUS GROUP TEMPLATE

1. What do you see as the strengths of a central housing registry?

2. What challenges or problems do you foresee with a central housing registry?

3. Do you believe a central housing registry would be beneficial for households seeking low-income housing in Winnipeg? If yes, how would it be beneficial? If no, why would it not be beneficial?

4. Could non-housing sectors be linked to housing through the use of a central housing registry? (e.g. a link could be made with health, immigration, etc.) How?

5. Do you believe organizations would be willing to participate in a central housing registry in Winnipeg?

APPENDIX H

NOTE TAKER CONFIDENTIALITY FORM

<u>**Confidentiality Form for Note Takers**</u>

Thesis title: *A Central Housing Registry: Recommendations for Winnipeg*
Researcher: Christa Jacobucci

As a note taker for the focus group research pertaining to this thesis I understand that the information obtained during the focus group is confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone.

I will also provide the Researcher (Christa Jacobucci) with the notes at the end of the focus group session.

_____
Note taker's Name (please print)

_____   _____
Note taker's Signature   Date

_____   _____
Researcher's Signature   Date