

Preserving Low-Income Housing in Winnipeg:

The Case of SROs in the West Broadway Community

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Abstract

As Canadian cities face change and growth, low-income housing is becoming increasingly difficult to create and to preserve. Research and observation have demonstrated the affordability of living in many inner-city areas is rapidly diminishing, and formerly low-cost forms of tenure commonly found throughout core neighbourhoods are being replaced by more modern, higher-priced units. The academic research on this topic revealed a gap in the importance of preserving SROs in Winnipeg for preventing displacement and preserving affordability of low-income housing in cities. This practicum investigates the effectiveness of preserving SROs, primarily rooming houses, in the inner-city area of West Broadway, Winnipeg through planning and policy. The research explores the implications of current City of Winnipeg and West Broadway policies and plans alongside the experiences of practitioners. The findings present the strengths and barriers of the selected plans and policies, followed by recommendations for improving efforts to preserve low-income housing in Winnipeg. Further, the practicum identifies areas of inquiry for future research, including potentially useful precedents from other cities.

Key Words: *rooming houses, SRO, low-income housing, preservation, community organizations*

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Acronyms

SRO: Single Room Occupancy	DMSMCA: Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews Community Association
CMHC: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation	CNC: Central Neighbourhoods Corporation
CED: Community Economic Development	HRIR: Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve
WBCO: West Broadway Community Organization	HPS: Homelessness Partnering Strategy
WBDC: West Broadway Development Corporation	RGi: Rent-Geared-to-Income
RHOP: Rooming House Outreach Program	WHRC: Winnipeg Housing and Renewal Corporation
CAI: Core Area Initiative	NHI: National Homelessness Initiative
WPA: Winnipeg Partnership Agreement	WRHA: Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
WHHI: Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative	EIA: Employment and Income Assistance
NRC: Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation	HIZ: Housing Improvement Zones
MIA: Major Improvement Area	MHRP: Minimum Home Repair Program
SNA: Spence Neighbourhood Association	CBO: Community Based Organization
NECRC: North End Community Renewal Corporation	BIZ: Business Improvement Zone
TIF: Tax-Increment Financing	NHS: National Housing Strategy

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement

Across Canada, many low-income residents are facing a crisis in securing affordable housing. Winnipeg “typifies” the problems resulting from this housing crisis, such as high social costs of poor housing and complex poverty (Silver and Brandon 2015, p. 3). The lack of affordable housing in Winnipeg has been described as a chronic problem over several decades (Silver 2016).

The city’s affordable housing crisis persists despite the recent increases in vacancy rates of apartment units, increasing from 2.4 percent in October of 2014 to 2.9 percent in October of 2015. Vacancy rate increases have happened concurrently with increases in the number of apartments available and rises in average costs of rental units, albeit very slight (CMHC 2015). For example, between October 2014 and October 2015, 1,401 apartments were added to the rental market in Winnipeg (an increase of 2.6%) with the average rental rate for a 2-bedroom unit rising by 3.3% from \$1,016 to \$1,045 (CMHC 2015). Although the data from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) states more rental housing is available in Winnipeg, their reports provide very little information about the “affordable” rental market.

The “affordable” term is commonly defined as being less than 30% of total household income going towards the cost of rent (City of Winnipeg 2013; CMHC 2015). The Canadian CED Network reports a different side of the housing story in Winnipeg, however, highlighting that many households are still paying 50% or more of their income for rent. The existing affordable housing stock is also aging without being adequately replaced (Canadian CED

Network 2015a). From 2009 and 2013, the average conversion rate from rentals to condominiums was 300 units per year (CMHC 2014). Apartment to condominium conversion decreased to 66 units between 2013 and 2014 and 78 units between 2014 and 2015; but there are still not enough apartment units entering the market to make up for recent rental unit losses (CMHC 2014; 2015). The shortage of affordable units in Winnipeg is perpetuated by condominium conversions and increases in costs of recently renovated rental units (Skerritt 2012). Current housing trends show there is a widening gap in housing affordability in Winnipeg (Maes and Ring 2015), making it an increasingly important concern.

1.2 Statement of Purpose

The research explores the effectiveness of housing plans, policies and programs within West Broadway in their efforts to preserve low-income housing. The research focuses on the West Broadway area as a case study, and particularly examines the West Broadway Community Organization's (WBCO) Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP) as a primary low-income housing program. The practicum will provide a case study of the West Broadway area and the roles of the WBCO in the preservation of low-income housing. The West Broadway area is identified here as an “extreme case” within Winnipeg. Further explanation of what makes West Broadway an extreme case can be found in Section 1.3.1. With the shifting responsibility of housing provision in recent decades, the role of community organizations and neighbourhood associations has become increasingly important and this role will likely continue to increase alongside housing development. This practicum aims to identify the ways in which the City of Winnipeg may enable or inhibit the WBCOs efforts to preserve affordable, or more specifically, low-income housing. Another goal of this practicum was to examine the effectiveness of current programs in the area, particularly the Rooming House Outreach Program.

1.3 Research Questions and Methods

To achieve the goals of this practicum, the research aims to answer the following primary research questions:

- 1) In what ways do existing housing plans and policies affecting the West Broadway area address the preservation of low income housing in West Broadway, particularly SROs?
- 2) What programs and tools exist to preserve rooming houses and SROs in Winnipeg, particularly in the West Broadway area?
 - a. What are the primary barriers to implementing these programs and tools?
- 3) What roles, strategies and programs can a neighbourhood association undertake to advance the preservation of affordable housing, with particular attention to SRO housing?

Regarding research question one, plans and policies were determined to be important to examine because they define the future development goals of the communities they apply to.

Plans are also supposed to be representative of the people within the communities they serve.

Question two focuses on programs and tools because of their ability to encourage certain kinds of development over others and demonstrate the priorities a City or neighbourhood has beyond what is stated in their plans. The intention of identifying the barriers to implementing programs and tools is to help determine how to work past them or how to work towards community priorities within those barriers. The final question intends to find realistic and actionable strategies for community organizations to advance their objectives of preserving affordable housing through planning and policy.

1.3.1 Overall Research Design

To answer the key research questions, the research followed the design of a qualitative case study. A case study involves “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries

between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 2014, p.16). The case in point is the West Broadway area of Winnipeg, Manitoba. The case study is "exploratory" because the inquiry sought to explore one piece of the relationship between the West Broadway Community Organization and the City of Winnipeg and "to ask questions about it" (Gray 2004, p. 30).

The research involved only a single case study. Yin (2009) explains one rationale for a single case study is the case in question "represents an extreme or unique case" (p. 47). Extreme cases "demonstrate the most obvious differences from the majority of the sample, in terms of their available background data, that is relevant to the study questions" (Jahnukainen 2010, p. 379). West Broadway represents an extreme case because 91% of residents in the area are renters (West Broadway Community Organization 2016a). This is extreme compared to the Winnipeg average of 34% renters. The West Broadway area also has more than five and a half times the population density of the average neighbourhood in Winnipeg, and residents have lower incomes than the Winnipeg average (West Broadway Community Organization 2016a).

1.3.2 Document Review

The first step in data collection for this research was to read and select current planning and policy documents directly affecting housing in the West Broadway area of Winnipeg. This method was used to answer the first research question and to inform the interview questions for the next phase of research. In order to do this, throughout my review of the relevant documents, I identified key words and phrases to focus on for my review of the selected documents. During the analysis of the documents I identified excerpts that contained or related to selected words. These excerpts were then categorized into two common themes: Affordability and Housing Type, and Change, Revitalization and Renewal. I selected the following plans and policies as specifically affecting West Broadway:

- *OurWinnipeg*
- *Complete Communities*
- *The City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013*
- *The City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan*
- *West Broadway Community Plan 2011 – 2016*
- *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021*
- *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 - 2019*

A brief overview of the information contained within each document can be found in Section 4.1 of this document.

1.3.3 Key Informant Interviews

The next stage of data collection was key informant interviews. Interviews are considered a favoured approach where highly personalized data is important to attain (Gray 2004), which is what the project intended to draw out. According to Arksey and Knight, making implicit knowledge explicit entails articulation of interviewee feelings, perceptions, and understandings (1999). The interviews were semi-structured allowing for the opportunity to probe for further detail in the interviewee responses where it was desired (Gray 2004). Probing was essential in the research in order to pull out the true feelings, perceptions, and understandings of the interviewees, rather than the answers they may have felt obligated to give based on their professional background or alliances. Interviews are also a favoured approach when the opportunity to probe is required (Gray 2004). Semi-structured interviews were used to allow for adaptation of questions as well as probing. Each interview contained the same 11 questions, modified slightly depending on the interviewees' expertise and the technique of probing was used to further explore questions specific to each interviewee.

Prior to the interviews, each interviewee was asked to sign a Statement of Consent (Appendix B) and was provided with a document summarizing the intention of the project and provided essential background information. Two out of eight interviewees chose to remain

anonymous but allowed for their professional categorization to be included in the research write up. In order to better protect anonymity across all interviewees however, the decision was made to refer to all interviewees by only the professional designations given to them for the purpose of this research. Included in the summarizing document provided in advance to each interviewee was the contact information for myself and my research supervisor to accommodate for any questions or concerns interviewees may have had. Four out of eight interviewees asked in advance for a copy of the Interview Schedule (Appendix A) while the other four did not. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 1.5 hours in length and were face-to-face with the exception of one interviewee who responded through email correspondence. Interviews were from a variety of related professional backgrounds to provide varying perspectives. Interviewees included:

- Two employees of the West Broadway Community Organization: WBCO 1 / WBCO 2
- Two employees of the City of Winnipeg (or former employees): City of Winnipeg Planner and Former City of Winnipeg Planner; and
- Four inner-city housing experts: Housing Expert 1, Housing Expert 2, Housing Expert 3 and Housing Expert 4

Note: The approved research proposal also included a follow-up questionnaire that was intended to be distributed to key informants after the analysis of the interviews. The intention of this stage of research was to ensure the strengths and barriers of preserving SRO housing in Winnipeg were generally agreed upon by the key informants. The questionnaire was deemed unnecessary however due to the document review and key informant interviews being found to clearly present identifiable strengths and barriers without requiring confirmation from outside sources.

1.4 Significance of Project

This study identifies and considers the strengths and weaknesses of current efforts to preserve low-income housing in the West Broadway neighbourhood and the City of Winnipeg. The primary unit of investigation was Single Room Occupancy units (SROs) in the form of rooming houses, which are a very important housing option for many West Broadway residents. With housing costs continually increasing, it will be essential for the less affluent populations of Winnipeg to have housing affordability preserved. The West Broadway area is particularly vulnerable to rising rental prices and conversions from rental to ownership resulting from efforts to revitalize Winnipeg's downtown region. Evidence for this probable change are housing costs having increased in West Broadway by 280% between 2001 and 2011 (West Broadway Community Organization 2016a). This trend could very easily continue. Through my own experiences living in and observing the West Broadway area, many of the dwellings are in poor physical condition, with crumbling foundations or seemingly unstable structural integrity. I fear this area could be subject to a similar condominium boom that other areas of Downtown Winnipeg have been undergoing in recent years and that renovations will lead to substantial increases in rent. This research aims to inform and inspire more effective preservation of SRO residences by examining current policy, planning and initiatives. While the selected case is an extreme case within the Winnipeg context, the research will be useful for other inner-city areas of Winnipeg with a similar mix of housing types. The findings and recommendations can be used to inform the future of low-income housing preservation in the city of Winnipeg through planning.

1.5 Organization of the Document

The document begins by providing a summary of the relevant literature in Chapter 2. The topics of the literature review are housing rights, a brief history of housing within Canada, an introduction of the history of Single Room Occupancy housing in Canada and how it came to be what it is today. This is followed by Chapter 3 which addresses the background context for the low-income housing situation in Winnipeg and the involvement of Community Organizations in housing preservation. The background discussions conclude with an introduction to the West Broadway area which is the focus of the research to follow through Chapters 4 and 5.

The background context leads directly into the research for this practicum completed in two stages. The first, Chapter 4, is a document review and analysis of relevant plans and policies impacting the West Broadway area including 4 City of Winnipeg planning and policy documents and 3 documents created specifically for the West Broadway area. The document review highlights 2 main themes within these documents that enhance the readers understanding of the activities being undertaken by the City of Winnipeg and by Community Organizations. The themes are Affordability and Housing Type and Change, Revitalization and Renewal. Through the analysis, the section also highlights the differences in development and housing priorities of each organizational body.

Chapter 5 reports on the second stage of research, involving interviews with planners, representatives of the West Broadway Community Organization and experts in the field of housing preservation and/or policy. This chapter builds on the findings from Chapter 4 and demonstrates how the planning documents and priorities within them are interpreted and what their practical implications are for low-income, specifically rooming house preservation in

Winnipeg. The interview analysis in this chapter followed the same themes as Chapter 4, but the themes are further divided into sub-themes of The City's Role, Rooming Houses/SROs, Community Organizations, and Moving Forward. These themes help to clarify the current and potential impacts of policy and planning on the preservation of low-income housing in Winnipeg as well as the localized impacts of these policies and plans in the inner-city neighbourhood of West Broadway.

The findings from the Document Review and Analysis and the Interview Analysis follow in Chapter 6 which summarizes the findings from each stage of research and applies these findings to answer the research questions. The document is then concluded in Chapter 7 through a presentation of the implications of the findings. Implications include those for other community organizations, recommendations for the City of Winnipeg for future policies and plans, and recommendations for further research to improve efforts to preserve low-income housing in Winnipeg. Following Chapter 7 is also a brief Epilogue addressing upcoming opportunities for advancing the preservation of low-income housing.

Chapter 2 Housing Rights, SROs and Historical Context

This chapter provides an overview of relevant literature on the topic of preserving low-income housing. The main topics of this review are: definitions of housing rights including consideration of the issues of marginalization and adequacy in housing, affordable housing history in Canada and the city of Winnipeg, SRO housing and the role of community organizations regarding responsibility for housing.

2.1 Housing Rights

What is housing? Is it a thing you can see, and touch? Is it a concept? Or is it a right? The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 identifies housing as a right, stating “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services” (The United Nations 1948). In addition to the UN, eighty-nine countries around the world reference housing rights in their own constitutions (Patillo 2013). Although housing has been identified as a right by the UN and eighty-nine nations, the human right to housing requires further examination to be better understood. There is no definition for the right to housing, rather there are a number of arguments for what should be included in the conceptualization of housing as a right. Two of the most recurrent arguments will be addressed throughout this literature review.

2.1.1 Adequacy

“The very act of placing indecent housing on the market is a tortious affront to the dignity of tenant.” (Michelmann, 1970, p. 214).

When one talks about housing as a human right, it does not mean the government must “unequivocally” provide free houses for everyone (Fosarinis, 2006, p. 457). Instead, the call for a human right to housing is a call for everyone’s right to have more than just four walls and a roof over their head (Leckie, 1989). In order to better communicate what is meant by the right to housing, much of the literature on the subject refers to the “right to adequate housing” (Leckie 1989; Porter 2003; Thiele 2002; UN Habitat 2009). Michelmann states the notion of a right to housing might mean assurance of “access to minimally adequate housing” (1970, p. 207). Much like housing, “adequate” is a challenging term to define. The UN Commission on Human Settlements defines adequate shelter to mean “adequate privacy, adequate space, adequate security, adequate lighting and ventilation, adequate basic infrastructure and adequate location with regard to work and basic facilities – all at a reasonable cost” (Leckie, 1989, p. 539). The lack of adequacy in housing has been, at least in part, attributed to commodification and the inability of the market to provide adequate housing that is also affordable (Rolnik 2013). Rolnik also argues people are frequently kept in inadequate living situations by the demolition of public apartments. Inadequacy, in the form of overcrowding and poor housing conditions, then leads to negative effects on other aspects of human life like food, clothing, and health (Rolnik 2013).

To demonstrate the link between health and adequate housing, Thiele points to the issues of habitability, including “adequate space, protection from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, structural hazards and disease vectors” (2002, p. 713). He also highlights six major principles governing this link: protection against communicable disease; protection against injuries, poisonings, and chronic diseases; reducing psychological and social stresses to a

minimum; improving the housing environment; making informed use of housing; and protecting populations at risk (Thiele 2002). Adequacy in housing, according to the UN Habitat, also means the prevention of homelessness and forced evictions, addressing discrimination, and focussing on the most marginalized groups of people, to ensure everyone has access to adequate housing (2009).

2.1.2 Marginalization

“Denial of the right to adequate housing to marginalized, disadvantaged groups in Canada clearly assaults fundamental rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms” (Porter 2003, p. 3).

Despite the right to housing being so closely tied to living standards, there has been a severe lack of investment from society and from individual governments to ensure the right to housing becomes tangible. The need to formally accept housing as a right is emphasized by the status of the more than 1 billion people in the world without adequate shelter (Leckie 1989). Several causes for this crisis have been identified in the literature surrounding housing rights. One cause is that housing rights are not given enough attention by governments, because housing issues often only affect a minority of the population (King 2003). From a worldwide perspective, housing does not necessarily affect only a minority of the population, however. Sub-Saharan Africa offers one of the most prominent examples of widespread, poor housing conditions, with seventy-two percent of urban populations living in slums (UN Habitat 2009). Even in Canada, although the term “minority” may be accurate to describe the percentage of the population affected by a lack of sufficient housing, it does not accurately represent the array of people affected. Canada’s homeless and inadequately housed populations include women, people with disabilities, new immigrants, persons from racialized communities, youth, and Indigenous people (Dirks 2014).

Any individual minority group can experience marginalization for different reasons, all of which are highly unjust. For a historical example of outright marginalization in housing, or settlement in general, we can refer to the complete displacement of Indigenous people upon the first arrival of European's in North America. Unfortunately, this kind of mass displacement is not only a historical phenomenon, as it still occurs today "through destruction of habitat and resources, massive flooding for hydro-electric projects, or deliberately engineered 'relocations' for administrative or development purposes" (Porter 2003, p. 112). In addition to the disregard for the right to housing in mass displacement events, Indigenous people are 90 times more likely to be in living situations without adequate water supply, 14 percent are living without plumbing inside their homes, and Indigenous women experience poverty at twice the rate non-aboriginal women do (Porter 2003). Bearing in mind such statistics, it is not surprising that race has been long recognized as a pervasive barrier for equal treatment in Canada's housing system (Hulchanski 2002).

Another group of people systemically marginalized in housing markets are women. Women generally tend to be disproportionately impacted by forced evictions compared to men and during evictions can sometimes be subject to verbal abuse, beatings, and even rape (UN Habitat 2009). Shortages in affordable housing supply can lead women and children who are fleeing abuse to end up in shelters or on the streets (Foscarinis 2006). Then there is the fear of homelessness, which could be fueled by the same lack of affordable housing, and places pressure on women stay in abusive relationships (UN Habitat 2009). Women experience discrimination when affordable housing is available as well because landlords will often refuse to rent to single mothers (Hulchanski 2002).

Landlords may also opt to not rent to tenants who would be putting thirty percent or more of their income towards rent (Porter 2003), which could be considered financially based marginalization. Housing markets can even be regulated by such mechanisms as minimum cost zoning (Michelmann 1970; Porter 2003), which automatically reduce the opportunity for low-income people to afford housing in the implementation areas. Zoning is one of the many mechanisms controlling housing prices and generally regulates monetary value through commodification (Paterno 2013). Paterno draws attention to some theorists believing commodification to be the core problem with housing (2013). She also makes the point that there is no shortage of housing in a more general sense, but the market fails at providing housing supply that is affordable, especially to people with low incomes (Paterno 2013). The housing market in Winnipeg has had a long history of exemplifying marginalization through discrimination against single mothers, Indigenous peoples, and people on welfare (Silver 2016).

2.2 Canadian Housing History

Housing policy in Canada is a very complex issue with a long history of shifting responsibility and declining investment. This brief background begins after WWII and the Great Depression when housing quality in Canada was in a poor state. During that period there were efforts to revive the housing market through mortgage systems, social housing, and subsidized private-sector rental housing (Woolley 2015). In 1964 the National Housing Amendments Act established supports for the expansion of the public housing programme, leading to supported investments in social housing by provincial governments for urban centers (Dalton 2009). Having adequate housing for Canadians was even considered Canada's primary concern by Prime Minister Lester Pearson in a speech he made in 1965 (Woolley 2015). The 1970's also saw a senior government focus on housing and there was a Ministry of Urban Affairs that

focussed directly on housing in Canada. Some of this focus was on social housing with amendments to the National Housing Act ensuring there would be 20,000 units of social housing built each year. In addition to this, social services such as universal healthcare, old age pensions, and unemployment insurance were also created (Woolley 2015). The 1980's however played host to changing government strategies. There were cuts to many programs including social housing which was completely de-funded by 1993 (Woolley 2015). Cuts to both housing and social supports led to a decrease of affordable housing and a concurrent increase in homelessness. This trend continued throughout the 1990's with the federal government eventually handing over responsibility for social housing supply to the provinces (Hulchanski 2009). These changes led to decreased housing supply for low-income people (Gaetz et al 2014). This, along with minimum wage not keeping up with inflation, and inadequate housing and supports for people with mental or physical health challenges put more stress on a limited market and more Canadians at risk of becoming homeless (Gaetz et al 2014).

In more recent years there has been a slight shift in policy priorities due to the recognition of the “widening gap between the limited supply of affordable housing and the growing need across Canadian cities” (Tsenkova and Witwer 2011, p. 53). This realisation has led to commitments for affordable housing delivery from the federal government of \$680 million in 2001, \$320 million in 2002, \$1.6 billion in 2005, and \$2 billion in 2009 (Tsenkova and Witwer 2011). These financial commitments demonstrate a renewed concern for affordable housing, which the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines as housing that does not exceed 30% of all household income (CMHC 2014). However, the promise of increased funding still leaves room for improvement in protecting housing affordability in Canada. Financial commitments are not enough on their own. Forchuck goes so far as to say “even if all levels of

government were showering communities with funds, it would still be important to think about how decisions are made, how accountability is ensured, and how policy innovations are promoted” (Forchuk et al 2007). Federal government funding has increased, but the development of social housing policy remains a provincial responsibility. Municipalities however, can play a large role through control of zoning, standards of maintenance and occupancy laws (Skelton et al 2006).

2.3 Single Room Occupancy (SRO) Housing

Many definitions exist for Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) residences, but for the purpose of this study, the following definition will be used: “a living unit for (usually) one individual, containing as little as 70 square feet, up to 200 square feet, with little or no kitchen facilities and a shared bath” (Butzen 1996, p. 75). In this regard, rooming house units and SROs will be used synonymously.

Throughout recent history there have been many shifts in the housing composition of neighbourhoods. These shifts as they apply to SROs and rooming houses include a change in the demographic the buildings serve and an overall decrease in availability over the past few decades. Rooming houses are often large, old houses that have been converted from their original, single-family use by middle-class residents, to include extra bedrooms that are then rented out to low-income tenants (Burley and Maunder 2008; Mifflin and Wilton 2005).

Throughout the latter part of the 19th Century, the numbers of rooming houses grew rapidly to accommodate middle and working-class people who were flocking to urban centres where the majority of jobs were located. In many places, as in Winnipeg, the early 20th century was a time when rooming houses were very popular for working-class people and were a

respected form of housing (Distasio et al 2002). Rooming houses continued to be an accepted form of housing until several years after the Second World War when an increasing trend emerged for middle-class people to move to the suburbs after modifying their homes to accommodate more tenants. Poor, working-class people then took their places as the primary tenants of these homes (Mifflin and Wilton 2005; Distasio et al 2002). This influx of the poor, working-class coincided with a growing perception of rooming houses as “urban blight” (Mifflin and Wilton 2005, p. 404). Many of the available houses were demolished, redeveloped or sold throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Between 1971 and 1981 in Ontario, approximately 26 rooming houses were lost every day. These losses eventually lead to recognition in the 1980s that this essential form of affordable housing was a cause for concern (Mifflin and Wilton 2005).

The 1980s was a time in which Canada’s first formal organization was formed to protect the rights of rooming house tenants, the Ontario Task Force on Roomers, Boarders and Lodgers. The task force found a number of issues in Ontario’s legislation, most importantly that rooming house tenants were not included under the *Landlord and Tenant Act* (Distasio et al 2002). They recommended several changes to Ontario legislation to protect both landlords and tenants and advised the payment structures for rooming house tenants be restructured to make it more accessible for those in need. One of the specific recommendations was for rooming houses to incorporate a “non-profit community management scheme [that] assumes responsibility for a reasonable fee” (Distasio et al 2002, p. 68).

The impact of divestment in SRO housing has greatly impacted the inner-city of Winnipeg, leading to areas with large concentrations of inadequate housing, primarily with marginalized populations living in them. The next chapter provides an overview of the context of Winnipeg and the particularly SRO dense area of West Broadway, the case study site.

Chapter 3 The Winnipeg Context

This chapter begins with an overview of the historical and current low-income housing scenario in the city of Winnipeg. Next, is a brief introduction to the historical and current role community organizations play in Winnipeg and then an introduction to the site of the case study, West Broadway.

3.1 Low-Income Housing in Winnipeg

After World War II, poverty in Winnipeg proliferated beyond the North End and into other parts of the inner-city. By the late 1970s, the previously economically stable areas of Spence and West Broadway became areas having some of the highest rates of poverty. Along with poverty came deteriorating housing, decreasing populations, and higher proportions of rentals instead of home ownership. According to Silver, there has been little change in availability or development of low-income housing even since the early 1900s. He attributes the lack of investment in low-income housing in Winnipeg to unfavourable political decision making and opposition to the subsidies required for low-income housing to be built (Silver 2016). To add to this lack of political will, there is continuing racial and economic segregation in Winnipeg which further contributes to a lack of awareness from the wealthier citizens about the severity of the city's housing crisis (Silver and Brandon 2015). The limited availability of affordable housing, especially for low-income residents, in Winnipeg is compounded by the fact that market rate housing is expensive and there are now even fewer options for subsidized public housing (Brandon 2014).

Historically, the governments of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Canada have worked together in a “tripartite” model to support housing provision and rehabilitation in Winnipeg through three major programs, the Core Area Initiative (CAI), Winnipeg Partnership Agreement (WPA), and

most recently, the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI) (Distasio 2015). Over time, these funding models became more and more involved with NRCs. The five inner-city Winnipeg Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs) all operate in neighbourhoods designated by the City of Winnipeg as Major Improvement Areas (MIAs), of which there are currently twelve (Distasio 2015; Canadian CED Network 2015b). This designation allows them to access funding from both the Province and the City through the Neighbourhoods Alive! program. The Neighbourhoods Alive! program encourages community-driven revitalization in the areas of employment, education, recreation, safety, and housing and physical improvements (Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations 2016). The WHHI had a similar approach acting as a “one-stop shop” for NRCs to acquire funding. The NRCs were then responsible for using the funding for housing rehabilitation, creation of rental housing, and increased resources for support of homeless individuals (Distasio, 2015, p. 79). With the WHHI and Neighbourhoods Alive! programs, the NRCs in designated areas have become the most important channels for housing funding to flow through. While the Neighbourhoods Alive! program is still in operation, the tripartite WHHI model was restructured in 2012, putting an end to 30 years of commitment from all three levels of government directly supporting housing and other neighbourhood projects (Distasio 2015).

3.2 Community Organizations in Winnipeg

In attempting to combat issues of neighbourhood deterioration, in the mid-1990s residents from each neighbourhood banded together to establish the early versions of today’s neighbourhood associations (Silver et al 2009). In Winnipeg, these community organizations, neighbourhood associations, and community development corporations all fall under the same umbrella of Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs). Five of these have been established

within the inner-city. They are the Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA), North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC), Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews Community Association (DMSMCA), Central Neighbourhoods Corporation (CNC), and the West Broadway Community Organization (Silver et al 2009). As with NRCs elsewhere in North America, they focus on physical, social, and economic revitalization in the specific geographic area they operate in (Dilay 2003). In their respective areas, NRCs have become a main source of efforts to renew the neighbourhood (Silver et al 2009). Much of the work they do is consistent with typical Community Economic Development (CED) strategies, which have been increasing in popularity across Canada since the 1980s (Dilay 2003). For example, community gardens within both Spence and West Broadway have been tied to positive improvements in housing and safety in these neighbourhoods (Silver et al 2009). NRCs manage to contribute greatly to the improvement of neighbourhoods without having a consistent, independent revenue source. They rely on both public (municipal, provincial, and federal) and private funders and often only receive funding on a “project to project” basis (Silver et al 2009, p. 9). Having such a broad array of funders makes it challenging for NRCs to create their own space politically without becoming an entity of the funders (Silver et al 2009).

Despite the efforts from NRCs, the Province of Manitoba, and the city of Winnipeg many people still live in inadequate and dilapidated housing, which is often still too expensive for their incomes. Even the recent provincial commitment to create 2,000 units of social housing between 2009 and 2017 is minimal, considering how, at that rate, it would take a generation or more to meet current demand for low-income rental housing. This implies that NRCs must continue to place even more pressure on all three levels of government to increase their funding and allow them to create the necessary amounts of affordable housing (Silver 2016). The City of Winnipeg,

unlike the federal government and in some cases, the provincial government, may not have the fiscal capability to directly fund the creation of affordable housing, but can facilitate the development of affordable housing in other ways (Maes and Ring 2015). As identified by Maes and Ring, there are a number of fiscal, regulatory and planning tools that could be used to better support housing development in general (2015). One of the gaps identified in this literature review is the need to further explore *how* these tools could benefit the affordable housing efforts of NRCs.

3.3 West Broadway Case Context

West Broadway was selected as the case study area for this practicum. West Broadway is an inner-city area hosting one of the oldest community organizations in Winnipeg, the West Broadway Community Organization (WBCO), formerly titled as the West Broadway Development Corporation (WBDC). West Broadway, once a middle and upper-middle class area of Winnipeg, was the site of many large single-family homes. In the period between the First and Second World War many of these homes were converted to multi-unit suites and rented out to relatively well-off tenants (Burley and Maunder 2008). As time went on and the city began to grow outward, there was significant disinvestment in maintaining inner-city homes such as those in West Broadway. Wealthier residents moved out to the suburbs, while working class residents took their places in the more affordable suites in the older homes of the inner-city (Burley and Maunder 2008). Disinvestment inevitably led to a decline in the quality of these aging converted homes, or rooming houses as they were now known.

The effects of disinvestment in West Broadway have echoed into the present day. Many of the old homes built at the beginning of the 20th Century but have not been maintained as they should have because the owners of the homes did not have the financial capability to maintain

them as they degraded. The degradation of the buildings in the neighbourhood led to a phenomenon of abandonment in the area, leaving units vacant. Vacant units then had to be rented out for less money to accommodate the changing demographic of the area. Residents of West Broadway were largely low-income, with over two-thirds of households spending over 30% of their income on shelter costs (Silver 2016).

Today, West Broadway is a neighbourhood with a higher than average proportion of low-income residents as compared to the City of Winnipeg average (West Broadway Community Organization 2016a). The area is home to an estimated 72 rooming houses, both legal and illegal, now likely the only affordable options for the approximately 732 tenants living in them. These rooming houses are disappearing however, with a 63% decrease in confirmed rooming houses between 1995 and 2014 in West Broadway (Kaufman and Distasio 2014). Despite rooming houses sometimes being very unsafe, operated by slum landlords, overcrowded and filled with bedbugs (Durning 2013), they are an important part of the housing spectrum, especially for low-income residents. With the constant threats of rooming house conversions back to single-family homes, rising house prices, increasing rental rates and gentrification, rooming house tenants are at risk for displacement and potentially even homelessness. With the absence of high quality low-income housing alternatives, preserving existing low-income houses and rooming house units is an important piece of limiting the loss of low-income units throughout the inner-city.



Figure 1: One of many rooming houses in West Broadway (27 units).
Image source: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/west-broadway-rooming-house-1.4550684>



Figure 2: Fire alarm system next to entry of unit inside a rooming house on Furby St.
Image source: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/The-fall-and-rise-of-rooming-houses-216206551.html>

Chapter 4 Document Review Findings and Analysis

Chapter 4 is a review of relevant policy and planning documents to explore their impact on the preservation of low-income housing in Winnipeg and West Broadway. The Document Review highlights sections of the selected documents pertaining specifically to low-income housing as well as sections having an impact on low-income housing preservation. The Document Review was also used to inform the interview questions used as the basis for the next stage of research presented in Chapter 5.

4.1 Overview of Planning and Policy Document Review

In order to answer the research questions, it is important to consider plans and policies directly connected to the West Broadway neighbourhood as well as those impacting the city as a whole. The city-wide documents must be adhered to when communities form their own policy documents and planning strategies. This approach helps to unify development in the city and ensure the appropriateness of specific actions in specific areas. In relation to housing this is of particular importance because certain kinds of housing developments can lead to displacement of populations that cannot afford to live in new housing units. Displacement and gentrification are issues that have historically and currently been of concern in inner-city neighbourhoods, including West Broadway. This section will present a document review of the city-wide plans and those created specifically for the West Broadway area, by the West Broadway Community Organization (WBCO) to determine how they impact the preservation of low-income housing, specifically rooming houses.

Each of the plans selected for review are listed, accompanied by a brief description of the primary role of the plan:

- *OurWinnipeg* is Winnipeg’s primary planning document. *OurWinnipeg* outlines goals and strategies for the entire city over the next 25 years including those related to housing. All other area and secondary plans must adhere to this framework. The document categorizes West Broadway as an “Area of Stability” which is “primarily understood as the residential areas where the majority of Winnipeggers currently live” (2011a, p. 39).
- *Complete Communities* is a secondary plan affiliated with *OurWinnipeg*, delving more specifically into development and land use. The document defines key development and land use goals relating to specific community categories. West Broadway is not referred to specifically within the document but is identified as a “mature community” and as such is included in the “mature communities” map.
- *The City of Winnipeg Housing Policy (2013)* is the most recent housing policy from the City of Winnipeg. This policy is guided by *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities*, but focuses solely on housing in key areas.
- *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan (2014 – 2019)* is a complementary implementation plan for the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy* highlighting planning and policy priorities. This document presents the same information as the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy* but expands on this information by describing the activities that will be undertaken to achieve the policy item goals. Priorities and goals relevant to West Broadway are highlighted.
- *West Broadway Community Plan 2011 – 2016* is a local, community plan created by the West Broadway Community Organization (WBCO) in 2011, which at the time, was

called the West Broadway Development Corporation (WBDC). The plan was created with funding from the Province of Manitoba as well as collaboration with several other non-profit community organizations. The plan provides demographic information for the area, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and goals over a five-year time frame. This plan is important to describe the earlier context when identifying changes in West Broadway and changes in development priorities from 2011 until 2016, when the next five-year plan was created.

- *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021* is the current community plan for the West Broadway area that was also created by WBCO in collaboration with community partners and with the help of funding from the Province of Manitoba. The plan aims to guide development and activity in the area by identifying seven different priority areas, one of which is “housing and accommodation” (LAHRK Consulting 2016, p. 41).
- *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* is a document dedicated entirely to housing in the West Broadway area. It provides detailed information about the demographic and housing features in the neighbourhood, and identifies available supports for housing provision. The plan sets out priorities and goals identified using information gathered through several community consultation sessions, as well as strategies and actions that will help achieve those goals.

The Document Review uses the same approach as the literature review to draw out the important and relevant information from the selected documents. Information from the documents has been categorized into two main themes: i) Housing Affordability and ii) Type, and Change, Revitalization and Renewal

4.2 OurWinnipeg

OurWinnipeg begins with a clear emphasis on housing affordability by questioning in the initial pages how the city will stay “liveable, affordable and desirable” while capitalizing on growth (2011a). The word “housing” appears 76 times throughout *OurWinnipeg* and is among the three areas of focus *OurWinnipeg* deems essential to the future of the city. Housing is noted as a “cornerstone of healthy communities and of a strong city” and a basic need central to a high quality of life (2011a, p.54). Within the topic of housing, there is emphasis on quality, affordability, safety, appropriateness and variety (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 54).

4.2.1 Affordability and Housing Type

There is an expected rise in the immigrant population in Winnipeg while “maintaining and enriching” an “inclusive future with greater choice”. *OurWinnipeg* goes on to state on page 24 that “there needs to be a variety of housing styles for residents to choose from” and the City will “support the creation of an attractive variety and mix of housing that appeals to various affordability ranges” (2011a, p. 24). These statements set a tone of inclusiveness that is repeated throughout many other parts of the document. The document makes it clear that affordability is something they are working towards by saying “The City of Winnipeg has an important role to play in planning for diversity of housing types, tenures and costs in each neighbourhood” (2011a, p.54). This statement is soon followed by Direction 1 of the plan for housing which says the City will “support diverse housing options in each neighbourhood or neighbourhood cluster throughout the City” (p. 54). Each Direction within *OurWinnipeg* is supported by enabling strategies. The enabling strategies of particular importance for affordable housing under this Direction are: “With guidance from *Complete Communities*, encourage the development of safe and affordable housing throughout the city” and “support the creation of a range of sizes, forms

and tenures of housing. Tools include applying zoning by-laws and processes for approval. Standards should be flexible enough to reflect the unique identity and character of each neighbourhood” (2011a, p.54). For areas such as West Broadway, with a wide variety of housing forms and tenures including rooming houses, this statement could be interpreted to be supportive of preserving the affordable options that currently exist. The notion that standards should recognize an area-dependent level of flexibility implies zoning by-laws and processes for approval will not be the same throughout the city. There should be specific regulations for areas depending on the needs of residents.

The area of West Broadway, though never specifically mentioned, is categorized in *OurWinnipeg* as being an Area of Stability. In reference to housing, these areas are intended to accommodate low or moderate density infill and enhance both affordability and housing choice (2011a, p. 39). The implied expansion of housing options fits within the aim of accommodating the population growth anticipated over the next 25 years (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 54). Preservation of existing affordable units is never stated as a priority in Areas of Stability, but if enhancing affordability is a goal, then it would be surprising if existing affordable units were not protected to some degree.

Although the document does not name areas, *OurWinnipeg* does highlight the importance of collaboration with other levels of government, private developers, non-profit developers and the community at large (2011a, p. 54). The document also highlights that the city will work with the broader community to “develop long-term funding strategies related to affordable housing” (2011a, p. 56). This implies that areas like West Broadway, with numerous non-profit groups who work to provide housing and a long-standing Neighbourhood Organization (WBCO) operating on residents’ behalf, will be a primary source for collaboration in the realm of housing.

Preservation of low-income housing is not a priority within *OurWinnipeg* but is a priority of some non-profit groups and housing developers in the West Broadway area such as WBCO. However, if the City does collaborate with and support the goals of WBCO and other low-income housing advocacy organizations on the area, then preservation of low-income housing could become a priority in West Broadway specifically.

4.2.2 Change, Revitalization and Renewal

OurWinnipeg notes that Winnipeg is expected to grow significantly over the next 20 years, increasing by over 180,000 people and 83,000 housing units (City of Winnipeg 2011a). One of the first “Key Directions” addressing this growth in *OurWinnipeg* is the city will try to “enhance the quality, diversity, completeness and sustainability of stable neighbourhoods and expand housing options for Winnipeg’s changing population” in Areas of Stability (City of Winnipeg 2011a p. 39). West Broadway already contains a variety of housing options but the quality of the housing is lacking in some areas. The challenge for housing in West Broadway given this direction and a potential changing population will be to maintain affordability while also enhancing quality to not lead to displacement of current low-income residents who may not be able to afford to live in new or refurbished housing units.

A supporting direction for Areas of Stability is to “develop and apply indicators to identify reinvestment areas, which will be targeted for new investment, including public investment in areas like housing and recreation” (City of Winnipeg 2011a p. 39). The document does not identify which areas the city deems reinvestment areas, but does use this supporting direction to state they will develop that criteria. Developing the criteria for designating reinvestment areas is expected to be a major determinant for what types of housing development

occur in those areas and for the level of investment going into those areas. However, seven years after the publication of *OurWinnipeg*, no such criteria has been created.

The housing specific section of *OurWinnipeg* begins with the City identifying their role in planning for cost efficiency and diversity of housing type and tenure in each neighbourhood. Regarding renewal, the City identifies that it has “an important role to play in supporting housing renewal and enforcing building codes and property by-laws and educating relevant parties about them” (City of Winnipeg 2011a). The issue of being up to code is especially pertinent for rooming houses because rooming houses have a very particular set of guidelines and building codes they must adhere to. West Broadway is an area with a lot of rooming houses which are generally the most affordable housing type. If these units were lost to building code enforcement the residents of them may not be able to find alternative housing. Rooming houses therefore are very important to keep up to code.

The second direction of the housing section (Section 1-4) is to “collaborate with other levels of government and other partners to renew and regenerate Winnipeg’s housing stock” (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 55). West Broadway would benefit from renewal of many of its older homes and apartment buildings, but again a major concern becomes the preservation of the affordability of units for the low-income population. This issue of preserving affordability in the midst of regeneration and renewal is not explicitly addressed within *OurWinnipeg*, but the idea of maintaining community character is addressed through the enabling strategies and the commitment to “support contextually-sensitive infill development that builds complete and inclusive communities in areas of stability” (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 55). Ideally, for West Broadway this would mean to be sensitive about the demographics of local residents.

Within Direction 2 a relevant enabling strategy is to “continue to use initiatives to facilitate housing rehabilitation in reinvestment neighbourhoods and infill housing in mature neighbourhoods” (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 55). The hope with this strategy for the preservation of existing affordability would be to rehabilitate without increasing costs. The housing most in need of repair is often the least expensive but still provides essential housing units for people with lower incomes. Rooming houses, often falling into the category of housing that could be considered in need of repair, will probably be among the housing units invested in within the West Broadway area. Presumably this could mean being converted from a rooming house to another form of housing. As a mature area, West Broadway should also see some infill development although space for this is limited by the density of the neighbourhood and the competing neighbourhood goal of maintaining green spaces. In line with Direction 2, new infill builds have been developed in West Broadway since 2011, including an 18-unit Rent Geared to Income (RGI) build on Sherbrook Street (West Broadway Community Organization 2016b). There have also been some apartment building renovations in the area that have added value to units, but have not added density or affordability to the neighbourhood.

The theme of revitalization is addressed in the “Vitality” section of *OurWinnipeg* (Section 3-2) where the issue of aging building stock is predominant. Aging building stock is referred to as “one of the most significant factors contributing to the need for revitalization and reinvestment” (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 79). Intertwined with that statement is the first direction of the Vitality section which is to “strive to eliminate derelict buildings” (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 80). The enabling strategies for this direction include partnering with “not-for-profit housing organizations to support the acquisition and redevelopment of vacant and/or derelict houses” (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 80). Inner-city areas generally tend to have more

derelict buildings than other neighbourhoods, and West Broadway is no exception. It is evident when walking through West Broadway there are many buildings that could benefit from reinvestment.

The strategy of facilitating rehabilitation and renewal could either help or hinder efforts to preserve low-income housing. The *OurWinnipeg* document lacks clarity around controlling affordability of rehabilitated housing units which could lead to rehabilitated units becoming unaffordable. If rehabilitation is done sensitively though and not for the purposes of profiting, low-income units will benefit from being upgraded while preserving their affordability. Revitalization in collaboration with non-profit housing organizations, identified as a goal in the Vitality section, will also likely help to maintain affordability of rehabilitated low-income units.

4.3 Complete Communities

Complete Communities is a supplementary document to *OurWinnipeg* and as such, reiterates many of the same statements, but delves further into the development goals for each of the following categories: Transformative Areas, Areas of Stability, Other, Special Districts and Urban Structure Supports (City of Winnipeg 2011b, p. F). According to Figure 3, West Broadway is a “Mature Communities” zone under the Area of Stability category (2011b, p. F). The “Key Direction” for Areas of Stability is to “enhance the quality, diversity, completeness and sustainability of stable neighbourhoods and expand housing options for Winnipeg’s changing population” (2011b, p. 78). *Complete Communities* repeats the statement that Areas of Stability will accommodate low to moderate infill development in order to contribute to efficient use of land, infrastructure and services in addition to enhancing affordability and housing choice (2011b).

URBAN STRUCTURE

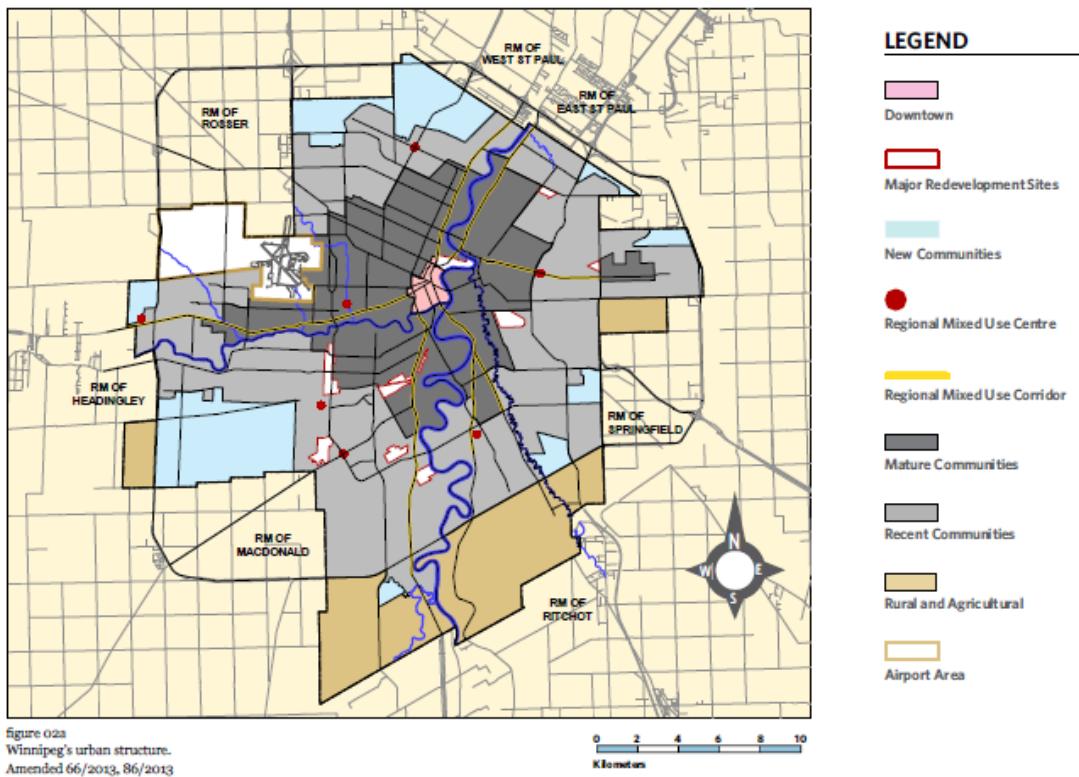


Figure 3: Map of Zones Identified in Complete Communities
Image Source: City of Winnipeg 2011b

4.3.1 Affordability and Housing Type

The first “Direction” for development within Areas of Stability in *Complete Communities* is to “support the completion of areas of stability” (2011b, p. 80). The Direction is coupled with enabling strategies touching on both built form and policy. Within the enabling strategies, the City says it will “support Complete Communities by ensuring diverse and high-quality housing stock” (2011b, p.80). Although affordability is not explicitly mentioned in this statement, there is often a correlation between quality and affordability. This strategy would benefit from more clarity around what the City defines as high-quality housing and how they intend to balance quality and cost. The diversity piece of this strategy could be interpreted to support affordability

to an extent and is echoed in the next strategy as well which is to “promote a mix of housing type and tenure, such as duplexes, low rise apartments, secondary suites, semi-detached homes, townhouses” (2011b, p. 80). Most often, these types of housing are more affordable than conventional single-family homes which demonstrates a clear intention to ensure there is a range of affordability and types of units available.

Areas of Stability have two classifications: Mature Communities and Recent Communities (City of Winnipeg 2011b, p. 82, 86). Mature Communities “consist of Winnipeg’s earliest neighbourhoods and first suburbs which were mostly developed prior to the 1950s” (2011b, p. 82). The “Direction 1” for Mature Communities is to “encourage conservation and upgrading of existing housing in mature areas and expand housing opportunities through infill development” (2011b, p. 85). The enabling strategies in support of Direction 1 are as follows:

- “Support the rehabilitation of existing housing stock where required” through planning and incentivization;
- “Upgrade and maintain infrastructure in aging residential areas to encourage maintenance of housing” through the use of capital budget and infrastructure;
- “Supports a mix of uses within buildings located on commercial streets” through planning;
- “Facilitate land assembly for infill developments” through planning and leadership/partnership; and
- “Build upon the local heritage of mature neighbourhood, including the sustainable reuse of existing building stock and other historic elements” through planning and leadership/partnership (2011b, p. 85)

The enabling strategies are supportive of preservation of housing stock in mature neighbourhoods by emphasizing the importance of building maintenance and rehabilitation. Ideally, the existing forms of affordable housing like rooming houses will be preserved and upgraded by means that do not impact their affordability.

One important characteristic of Mature Communities is that they host “a variety of housing types”. According to *Complete Communities* they also “present some of the best opportunities to accommodate infill development, to increase housing choice and to maximize the use of existing infrastructure” (2011b, p. 82). The document notes that the challenges for these areas include “increasing housing choice while maintaining existing neighbourhood character” and “conserving the ageing building stock” (2011b, p. 82). Many of the homes within West Broadway, including rooming houses, could be classified as aging building stock. Once again, reserving the building stock hopefully implies the preservation of the use and affordability of the buildings, but this is never stated as a specific intention of the City in *Complete Communities*.

Another classification possibly encompassing West Broadway is a subset of Mature Communities identified as “Reinvestment Areas” (2011b, p. 84). Reinvestment Areas “normally have a desirable character but would benefit from reinvestment through infill and redevelopment, and/or major projects in small areas” (2011b, p. 84). Reinvestment Areas are not identified on a map within *Complete Communities* so it is hard to know exactly which areas of the city they are, but some parts of West Broadway could fit the characteristics of Reinvestment Areas. The characteristics are:

- “Deteriorating building stock,
- Inappropriate mix of land uses,
- Inadequate buffering between uses,
- Lack of services such as grocery stores, banks and parks,
- Lack of quality housing” (2011b, p. 84)

The strategy in Reinvestment Areas seems to be around rejuvenation and additional investment which could mean investing in existing elements of neighbourhoods. Conversely, this could also mean incentivizing investment from outside the neighbourhoods. The lack of definition around

which neighbourhoods would qualify as Reinvestment Areas is explained in *Complete Communities* by saying “neighbourhoods are not static and their characteristics may change dramatically over the life of the plan. In the future, indicators will be developed which will provide criteria for identifying reinvestment areas” (2011b, p. 84). This statement suggests future plans and policies will provide more clarity as to where reinvestment efforts will be focussed. Hopefully there will also be better clarity around protecting and preserving the low-income housing units in reinvestment areas rather than simply replacing them under the guise of “reinvestment”.

4.3.2 Change, Revitalization and Renewal

Change is noted throughout *Complete Communities* in reference to the management of population growth and the term “redevelop(ment)” is repeated a total of 96 times. Much of this focus on redevelopment is within the section about the Downtown, designated “Major Redevelopment Sites” as identified in *OurWinnipeg* (City of Winnipeg 2011a, p. 29). Major Redevelopment Sites can be found within some of the “mature communities”, but not within West Broadway. However, with redevelopment areas being a clear City priority for change, revitalization and renewal efforts, the classification could have encompassed some of the streets and corridors in West Broadway.

Complete Communities identifies a series of “Transformative Areas” providing the best opportunities to accommodate growth and change in “an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable way” (City of Winnipeg 2011b, p. 10). These include Downtown, mixed use centres, mixed use corridors, major redevelopment sites and new communities. The document provides examples of each of these transformative areas and general criteria for which other streets or areas would fit into each classification.

West Broadway is classified as a mature community under the definitions provided in both *Complete Communities* and *OurWinnipeg*, but some streets within the neighbourhood could also fall into select categories of transformative areas. Broadway Avenue, Maryland Street and Sherbrook Street for example may be considered “Community Mixed Use Corridors” being a:

“main street for one or more neighbourhoods, providing a strong social function. They often have strong historical connections to their communities, have assumed significant transportation functions over time, are served by frequent and direct transit and typically support a mix of uses within a pedestrian-friendly environment” (City of Winnipeg 2011b, p. 55)

Community mixed use corridors are stated as places that will serve local needs and become areas where mixed-use is focussed. The document outlines the idea of maintaining existing character which implies efforts will be taken to preserve what is already present along the corridors (City of Winnipeg 2011b). In West Broadway this could include preserving the many apartment buildings located along the main streets in the area, some of which are low-income and/or affordable units

4.4 The City of Winnipeg Housing Policy (2013)

The *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* exists to support the “implementation of *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities* to achieve a sustainable and healthy housing environment that meets the needs of the Winnipeg population” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 1). The policy centers on the housing components of *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities* and reinforces the strategies within those two guiding documents.

4.4.1 Affordability and Housing Type

The first portion of the policy is the objectives section “to encourage new housing development” that, most applicably to affordability: “creates diverse housing options throughout

the city that include a range of sizes, forms and tenures of housing to accommodate a range of incomes and household types”; and “establishes a sufficient supply of affordable, adequate and suitable housing throughout the city that meets the needs of the population of Winnipeg” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 1).

The document then includes a section for definitions of terms used. The *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* also includes the most extensive definition of “affordable housing” encountered among the City documents:

“housing is generally considered affordable if all costs related to shelter, including rent or mortgage payment (principle and interest), taxes, and utilities require 30% or less of gross household income. For purposes of this policy, home ownership shall be considered affordable if the total shelter cost is 30% or less than the top of the second quintile household income bracket, as defined by Statistics Canada for the city of Winnipeg. Median Market Rate as published by CMHC and the Province of Manitoba will be used for rental purposes. While Affordable Housing may be built with the assistance of capital grants, it would not require ongoing operating subsidies” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 2).

Based on this definition, housing costs deemed affordable will rise with the rising median market rate of rental units. This definition is logical if the rising rate of rents is the same as the rate that income rises, but otherwise leads to an ever-increasing gap between what is deemed “affordable” and what might actually be affordable for a household whose income has remained relatively stable. Additionally, the rate is based on a city-wide data rather than area-specific data which could skew the data since incomes in some areas may rise at higher rates than incomes in other areas. This standard for affordable housing shows a lack of consideration for low-income dwellings and negates the fact that affordable housing is not actually affordable for many of Winnipeg’s residents and families. Preservation of low-income housing is not a primary concern within the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* if the standard of affordability identified in it does not even encompass something true affordability for low-income residents.

Following the definitions is the policy section, divided into A, B, C and D segments, each having their own set of provisions. The first general provision under segment A of the policy is:

“The City will target incentives and facilitate developments that support the objectives of this policy based on the degree to which the project addresses a priority need in the City. Encouraging residential development Downtown is a key priority of the City. Other priorities include those identified in OurWinnipeg, Complete Communities and other strategies as may be approved by the City from time to time” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 4).

The key priorities are noted as the same as those outlined in *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities*, and re-state that Downtown residential development is a key priority of the City. This policy is supported by an outline of tools that might be used by the City to achieve their objectives such as “density bonuses, up-zoning, expedited approval processes, cost offset programs, tax-increment financing, grants, or sale of assets at or below market value” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 4). The document also states the City might offer financing to facilitate development (City of Winnipeg 2013). The tools listed could easily be associated with incentivizing and preserving low-income or affordable housing within the Downtown, or even outside of it, expanding to the rest of the inner-city. The City document is once again vague in stating “Downtown residential development” will be supported while there is no mention of whether affordability will be prioritized or even considered in residential developments. This is likely because City Council lacks the will to stand up to developers and put firm policies in place forcing developers to consider the needs of residents over their own profits.

The fourth provision in segment A of the Housing Policy is that the City will enable and encourage neighbourhoods to develop housing plans that are comprehensive and in alignment with *Complete Communities and OurWinnipeg*. The provision also sets out a number of features the neighbourhood plans should include such as, housing assessments, vision statements and

implementation plans (City of Winnipeg 2013). As long as the plans are consistent with the City's guiding documents, this provision appears to allow for some autonomy for neighbourhoods to decide how to achieve the overall development goals the City has determined. One of the features that should be included in neighbourhood housing plans is "specific action plans" (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 5). This is essentially saying that where the guiding documents are quite vague, the neighbourhood plans should be specific and say how objectives will be achieved rather than generally saying they should be achieved. Although neighbourhood plans are not adopted formally as policy, they do provide area-specific, resident informed guidance for the City to consider. Neighbourhood Housing Plans also provide City Councillors with a framework for what their riding wants in the area and hopefully leads to justification for political support of certain types of development identified as desired in the plan over developments that are not.

Segment B of the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* outlines other provisions that directly "support targeted development, including affordable housing" (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 5). The first of the provisions is that new communities "shall include a variety of housing options to support complete communities" and "must include Affordable Housing to qualify for housing incentives" (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 5). The first two provisions of this segment relate to increasing the stock of affordable housing throughout the City in targeted areas such as Downtown, Major Redevelopment Sites, Centres and Corridors and areas with access to transportation options. The third provision within segment B is the most relevant to preservation stating:

"Developments that reduce the supply of rental units will not be eligible for incentives under this policy unless the development:

a. Creates a smaller number of adequate, affordable rental units in place of inadequate units; or

b. Otherwise achieves the objectives of this policy, where the benefits clearly outweigh the negative impact on rental supply” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 6).

This provision demonstrates that the City holds a strong position of not incentivizing developments reducing the supply of rental units. They provide two examples of cases that will be treated as exceptions, those that replace inadequate units with a lesser number of affordable units and those in which the negative impacts on the rental supply are outweighed by the benefits of the development (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 6). Preserving existing housing affordability is implied here because rental units are often more affordable than non-rental units.

Importantly, in segment D, the City recognizes housing as being a “basic need” that is “central to our quality of life” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 7). This statement is used to preface the City pointing to partnerships as a means of addressing issues deemed to be beyond their purview, which includes low-income, social or specialty housing for which the responsibility “rests with the federal and provincial governments” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 1). The document then goes on to say they can help to ensure that affordable housing is part of the mix of options serving the city’s diverse population and that they will “support the integration of specialty housing within residential neighbourhoods” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 7). Partnership is a mechanism the City stresses they will utilize to achieve the objectives in this policy in several ways including their previously noted support of neighbourhood housing plan creation. The document names their primary partners as non-profit and private developers, other levels of government and the community (City of Winnipeg 2013). The option for the City to work with community organizations is also identified as a pathway towards addressing the housing needs of Winnipeg. In areas like West Broadway that have established community organizations already

doing housing working, this seems like a natural partnership. Community organizations often also encompass much of the community as they work in the area and tend to engage in frequent community consultation activities.

4.4.2 Change, Revitalization and Renewal

Segment C of the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* is fully dedicated to “Provisions to Support Revitalization” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 3). The *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* focuses on revitalization primarily through goals targeted at “reinvestment areas” (City of Winnipeg 2013). Since the criteria for reinvestment areas has still not established in 2018, segment C lacks any sort of real enforceability. The City of Winnipeg needs to clearly define the criteria for reinvestment areas in order to achieve any of the provisions in this portion of the policy.

Earlier, in segment A, “General Provisions”, five key issues are identified relating to housing. Two of the key issues relate to revitalization: to support neighbourhood revitalization and to support revitalization specifically in areas most in need (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 4).

The housing reinvestment that will take place in those areas may be directed at “addressing deteriorating building stock, or a lack of quality housing” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 4). Reinvestment areas will also be “given priority for incentives and assistance to support revitalization based on need” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 6). The document also outlines the main considerations for funding which include housing supply, access to affordable housing, variety of housing type and tenure and quality of existing housing stock. Funding will also be application based which means communities and community organizations have a major role to play in the future development of neighbourhoods (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 6).

One of the provisions under segment A of the housing policy is “the City will continue the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve and may revisit the name and mandate governing its use” with the money for it being allocated from the following sources:

- General tax revenues;
- Incremental taxes or revenue from development activities, including revenue from development fees;
- Net proceeds from the sale of surplus properties identified as suitable for housing development or revitalization; and
- Other levels of government to support shared objectives. (City of Winnipeg 2013, p.4).

Theoretically this means the money made off housing in the city will be put back in to the development or rehabilitation of housing in the city. The next provision further discusses what the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve (HRIR) fund may be used for, which is to “fund housing programs and activities such as investing in our housing stock” (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 5). Included in this provision are also the eligibility requirements of programs that can access the Reserve. Eligible programs must include:

- Defined program objectives;
- Defined measures to evaluate program successes; and
- Specific eligibility requirements for program funding (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 5)

These eligibility requirements are not stringent, which means application calls should be open to a wide variety of organizations or agencies. The HRIR is among the only funding sources identified in the City documents for preserving and rehabilitating Winnipeg’s housing stock. The HRIR will be an essential platform for the City of Winnipeg to demonstrate that they care about the preservation of low-income housing and will continue to be an essential fund for neighbourhood organizations to utilize for their own preservation efforts.

4.5 City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan

The implementation plan begins by reiterating the four priority areas that the Housing Plan is aligned around, which are targeted development, neighbourhood revitalization, building community capacity and building, levering and establishing partnerships (City of Winnipeg, 2014). The implementation plan lays out the ways by which the City will work towards these priorities and then moves on to discuss the key goals of the implementation plan. The key goals are summarized here:

- Healthy rental vacancy rate: the city has established that a healthy vacancy rate is 3%. If the vacancy rate goes below 3% they will bring forward options to council such as facilitating purpose built rental development to create 750 new units and facilitating mixed income home ownership development of 500 new units with a minimum of 10% affordable units in those developments;
- Neighbourhood revitalization: revitalization of neighbourhoods through strategic investments of the Housing Reserve Fund. Revitalization will be further discussed in the next section of this document review; and
- Reducing homelessness: determining and reducing the number of chronically homeless people in Winnipeg as a partner of the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (City of Winnipeg 2014, p.2).

4.5.1 Affordability and Housing Type

The remainder of the document lays out both “key issues” and policy provisions (from *The City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013*) aligning with those key issues, all of which fit into one of the four priority areas noted earlier. Only the key issues and aligning policy provisions that address or have significant implications for affordable housing will be summarized in this section.

In alignment with Key Issue 1 is policy item C1 which states the “City will encourage neighbourhood and individual activity that maintains or improves the quality of housing stock,

and increases housing choice and visibility in *Mature Communities*" (City of Winnipeg 2014, p.7). Especially pertinent to housing affordability and type are the following activities:

- support/encourage secondary suites in alignment with zoning by-laws
- coordinate with the Province to identify additional supports for secondary suites
- continue to enhance community and neighbourhood organization partnerships
- ensure that the number of vacant buildings in the city remains below 390, plus or minus 15% (City of Winnipeg 2014, p.7).

Secondary suites are typically an affordable housing option so the efforts to encourage them would likely result in higher numbers of affordable units across the city. Neighbourhood organization partnerships could also lead to higher numbers of affordable, and adequate, units because they tend to have a well-established platform to advocate on the behalf of neighbourhood residents. These partnerships could also lead to better preservation efforts for existing low-income and affordable housing.

Likely the most pertinent issue to preservation of affordable housing is Key Issue 2 of the *Implementation Plan* which is to "encourage development or retention of more affordable housing" (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 8). The policy items supporting this key issue and relating to housing affordability and type in West Broadway are:

- Policy Item C1 which states that the City will encourage neighbourhood and individual activity that maintains or improves housing quality and choice within Mature Communities; and
- Policy Item D1 and D2 which essentially identify that housing is a basic need for all and that the City will explore opportunities to work with community organizations and leverage funding from higher levels of government to address housing needs in Winnipeg, respectively (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 8-10)

Items C1 and D2 speak to West Broadway because it is a mature community with a broad array of housing choice and has an established community organization for the City to work

with. Both preservation of and an increase in affordable housing options are encouraged under this key issue.

Key Issue 3 is more issue-focused in that it simply identifies there is a “growing segment of the population in core housing need” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p.12) and then sets out policy items to help work towards a solution. The policy items supporting Key Issue 3 are items D1 and D2 which are somewhat generic. Policy Item D1 is highly collaboration oriented, noting the City will work with other levels of government, private and non-profit developers within communities. It also identifies support for the “integration of specialty housing within residential neighbourhoods throughout the city” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 12). Specialty housing is wide-ranging but could encompass various types of affordable housing. The issue of affordability also aligns with the activities identified to address this key issue, which are for the City to renew and continue delivering Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding, work with a task force to develop a plan to end homelessness, and work with community to capacity build (City of Winnipeg 2014). If ending homelessness is a priority of the City of Winnipeg, then preserving low-income housing is inevitably a part of that. The City of Winnipeg should support low-income housing in policy as opposed to simply saying they will support efforts to end homelessness. Low-income housing bridges the gap for many people between being housed and being homeless. Ignoring it in policy while saying the City will support efforts to end homelessness is neglectful. If the City committed to preserving the low-income housing and rooming houses that existed already through policy and planning, then they would be playing an important role in preventing those residents from becoming homeless.

Policy item D2 delves further into the potential to address core housing need through the relationship between the City and community organizations and other non-profit housing providers. It states:

“The City of Winnipeg will explore and consider opportunities to work with community organizations, and participate in or lever existing and future federal and provincial programs to address Winnipeg housing needs. This may include:

- a) Administering federal and provincial programs supporting housing development, rehabilitation, or which address core housing needs;
- b) Helping build the capacity of not-for-profit housing organizations in the design, development and maintenance of housing;
- c) Advocating with those levels of government and agencies whose primary role is to support basic needs for shelter and safety for increased investment in areas of priority need (e.g., Affordable Housing, Social Housing, Specialty Housing, or income or other supports for marginalized individuals to enable access to adequate and suitable housing.);
- d) Providing input to other levels of government about policies that impact housing (e.g., tax reforms, alternative building codes for existing buildings, changes to restrictive policies);
- e) Participating in planning and development projects involving investment of federal or provincial funds in housing, or related community programs;
- f) Applying for provincial or federal funding to support specific programs or initiatives;
- g) Assist in the development of specific multi-level strategies with federal, provincial, community and industry partners.” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 13).

Notably, this policy item identifies the City’s role in the delivery of housing types such as affordable housing, social housing and specialty housing (Section d). In alignment with the City’s divestment from delivery, their role primarily remains to advocate with other levels of government to support such types of housing rather than to take on the responsibility of delivery. While not being a firm promise to increase the supply of various affordable housing types, it does hold the City accountable for acquiring, or at the very least trying to acquire funds to deliver housing from higher levels of government with more financial assets.

Policy item D2 also notes the City will advocate to create change in provincially owned policy such as building codes for existing buildings, tax reform and generally restrictive policies. This could be an important factor for rooming houses and SROs because they do not always adhere to building codes, but if they are safe, they are still a necessary and adequate form of affordable housing for many people. Exceptions in building codes could therefore help to encourage the maintenance of the adequate rooming house and SRO units that do not fully meet the code.

4.5.2 Change, Revitalization and Renewal

The first of the Key Issues within the *City of Winnipeg Policy Implementation Plan* directly addressesing change, revitalization and renewal is Key Issue 4 which is to “enable infill development, revitalization, community capacity” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 3). The first revitalization-focused policy item aligning with Key Issue 4 is “the City will encourage neighbourhood and individual activity that maintains or improves the quality of housing stock, and increases housing choice and visibility in Mature Communities” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 14). West Broadway is a mature community with a large portion of housing stock in need of repair so this policy item could benefit the safety and longevity of housing in the area. The risk of this policy item is that by increasing housing choice and improving quality, some infill developments may be outside the price range of the demographic currently residing in West Broadway. The activities coinciding with this policy item however do include supporting and encouraging secondary suites which are typically an affordable housing option, even for low-income populations. Additionally, the document identifies key partners, one of whom are not-for-profit developers who tend to be in good positions to advocate for lower income residents.

The next relevant policy item is “reinvestment areas will be given priority for incentives and assistance to support revitalization based on need” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 15). Although designated “reinvestment areas” have not been determined yet, the first activity associated with this policy item is to develop the criteria for determining these reinvestment areas (City of Winnipeg 2014). This will be an important indicator of the level of support areas like West Broadway will receive for revitalization activities.

Within reinvestment areas, the next related policy item in this Key Issue is “where current lot configurations are not consistent with current zoning standards and/or best practices for effective development, the City may purchase and assemble lands in Reinvestment Areas to enable housing development” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 17). This policy item will likely apply to very few lots within West Broadway, if any, but it does point toward the effort of the City to enable infill development. It is possible that some rooming houses may be negatively affected by such a policy item however because they are sometimes not consistent with zoning regulations. It remains to be seen if the land to be purchased by the City for enabling housing development will be empty land or will be land with pre-existing uses inconsistent with zoning regulations.

Another relevant policy item under key issue 5 is “reinvestment areas will be given priority for incentives and assistance to support revitalization based on need” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 18). As previously mentioned, the criteria for characterizing reinvestment areas has not yet been fully determined but could encompass some parts of West Broadway and other inner-city neighbourhoods through the inclusion of features like deteriorating building stock and lack of quality housing (City of Winnipeg 2014).

Lastly, key issue 6 aims to address the need for generating additional funds for supporting housing activity holds importance for change, revitalization and renewal through its

second supporting policy item. This policy item says “the City will continue the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve and may revisit the name and mandate governing its use” and goes on to present how moneys may be made available for the fund (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 20). The next policy item again refers to the Housing Rehabilitation Investment and Reserve fund stating it will be “used to fund housing programs and activities, such as investing in our housing stock” (City of Winnipeg 2014, p. 20). The HRIR fund and the guidelines for its use within the housing implementation plan are one of the most important policy items for preserving rooming houses and low-income housing that the City has.

4.6 West Broadway 5-Year Community Plan 2011 – 2016

The *West Broadway 5-Year Community Plan 2011 – 2016* is an overarching community plan, which provides an in-depth overview of the demographics of the community and categorizes goals into 5 areas: community social development, housing and accommodation, increasing income and power for well-being, community spaces and the environment and safety. Each goal area lists goals gathered from extensive community consultations and analyzed by the West Broadway Development Corporation, which has since been renamed as the West Broadway Community Organization (West Broadway Development Corporation 2011). Only the update concerning the most relevant goal area, housing and accommodation, was reviewed for this practicum.

Within the goal area of housing and accommodation there are three main priorities:

- Continue to implement WBDC Housing Plan including local planning and networking capacity, development of innovative and diverse housing options and implementing initiatives that seek to minimize vacant, abandoned or poor-quality housing in the neighbourhood.

- Support resources, education, advocacy and funding for renters and landlords.
- Advocate for increased funding to address affordable housing issues.

4.6.1 Affordability and Housing Type

The first priority demonstrates the importance of referring to the community's guiding housing document to continue to achieve the goals established in the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2008-2012*. There is added emphasis however on developing housing options that are diverse and prevent "ghettoization and gentrification" (West Broadway Development Corporation 2011, p. 16). As noted in the second priority, there is also an emphasis on supporting both landlords and renters which is echoed through the results of the community forum. Suggestions on how to do this include "providing tenant support workers" and "supporting agencies that help [community members] find housing". From the community forum, there is also the more policy-based suggestion of helping to "change the tenant imbalance of power in dealing with bureaucracies like the Residential Tenancies Branch" (West Broadway Development Corporation 2011, p. 16).

The final objective is that most explicitly tied to affordability which is to advocate for more funding to address affordable housing issues. Paired with the other two objectives, it is evident the community of West Broadway views affordable housing as a necessity along with the protection of the residents who require or currently live in affordable housing. With these objectives as the only "housing and accommodation" objectives noted in the plan, West Broadway clearly acknowledged affordability and maintenance of housing as the most important housing issues in the community. Comparatively, *Our Winnipeg* and *Complete Communities* seem to have a wider array of differently weighted issues. In summary, affordability and

preservation are included in the City's priorities, but are not as heavily prioritized as in the *West Broadway 5 Year Plan 2011 – 2016*. Preserving affordability is a pillar of the plan as well.

4.6.2 Change, Revitalization and Renewal

The *West Broadway Community Plan 2011 – 2016* identifies change as a factor in their neighbourhood planning through a series of questions used by West Broadway Development Corporation to inform the plan. These questions were posed to community members and agencies and asked the following:

- “In order to make West Broadway a safe, healthy and vibrant place to live, what are the most important changes that need to take place in the next five years?
- What specific change initiatives would you (or your organization) be most likely to participate in?
- What actions could WBDC undertake to contribute to positive changes? And
- Who could partner with WBDC to bring about change and what would each partner contribute?” (West Broadway Development Corporation 2011, p. 5)

The above line of questioning implies the plan was based on the anticipation of significant change in the area in the future and that the community played a role in deciding how that change should best be managed.

In the “Housing and Accommodation” section of the document, there are several initiatives targeting the issues of change and revitalization, primarily within the goal of continuing to implement the WBDC Housing Plan. Among these are the targets to continue the Property Improvement Program fix-up grant and to develop the Rooming House Improvement Program. Both of these targets have a focus on revitalizing existing housing within West Broadway in order to preserve the current stock rather than replacing with newer units (West Broadway Development Corporation 2011).

The issue of addressing rising rents in the area is also presented in the document which would once again help to preserve the affordability of existing units if it were a successful endeavour. The idea of change and revitalization within this document is heavily geared towards the maintenance of cost and seems to challenge the potential displacement that could come along with revitalization if it is not done in a way that respects the existing demographic in an area (West Broadway Development Corporation 2011). Preserving affordable housing and therefore presumably preserving rooming houses in the face of neighbourhood changes is clearly emphasized in the *West Broadway Community Plan 2011 – 2016*.

4.7 West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021

The *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021* begins with an introduction of the purpose and theory behind the creation of the plan. The plan then provides an extensive overview of the history and the demographic and geographic characteristics of the neighbourhood. Importantly, the plan also includes a caveat that the population data used to inform it was drawn from the voluntary National Household Survey which includes “extremely limited information about families, households and individuals who fall below the Low Income Cut Off measurement”. The lack of accurate data is cited as “an omission that is difficult to understand or justify” (LAHRK Consulting 2016, p. 11). Despite potential invalidity from the demographic data used, the plan was also informed through community engagement. Numerous methods of engagement including public community events, focus groups, community meetings, surveys and key person interviews were used to determine the objectives and goals of the *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021* (LAHRK Consulting 2016).

4.7.1 Affordability and Housing Type

Similarly to the *West Broadway 5 Year Community Plan 2011 – 2016* the *2016 – 2021* document establishes a set of goal areas including “Housing and Accommodation” (LAHRK Consulting 2016, p. 62). The primary objective within the housing and accommodation goal area is to “work towards every resident having housing that is appropriate to their needs, in good repair and affordable. Doing this in a way that builds better community relationships, more affordable housing and better quality of life” (LAHRK Consultation 2016, p. 62). Affordable housing is evidently the most prominent focus of the housing portion of the *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 -2021*, just as it was with the *2011 – 2016* plan.

The housing portion of the *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 -2021* was informed by the consultation process for the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* which will be reviewed in more depth in Section 4.8 of this practicum. The thematic issues that emerged from the consultation process are highlighted in the *2016 – 2021* plan and were determined to be affordability, specialization for specific populations, and landlord/tenant relationship building.

Affordability is noted as a “daunting issue across the city” but is especially daunting in core neighbourhoods due to comparatively rapid increases in housing prices in the inner-city versus the outer areas of the city (LAHRK Consulting 2016). Broad-based solutions are outlined to address affordability such as “subsidized rental units, new subsidized builds of various types of housing, support for co-op developments, subsidized mortgage program and rent to own programs, and across the board increases in assistance and wages”. The document also notes that “there is no one size fits all” solution to solve the issues of affordability facing West Broadway (LAHRK Consultation 2016, p. 54). The theme of needing more specialized housing also fits well with the idea that there is no one solution, but rather a need for a variety of solutions. The

West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021 then goes on to state there is a need for a variety of types of housing “including housing for young people, rooming houses, housing with mental illness supports, and a variety of types of transitional housing” and pet friendly housing (LAHRK Consulting 2016, p. 54). One excerpt pulled from the community forums cites a resident saying about rooming houses that units “used to cost \$236, then \$500 for a room, now it is \$900 and [I] had to move out after the upgrade” (LAHRK Consulting 2016, p. 54). Rising unit prices clearly present challenges for rooming house tenants who lack sufficient income to afford the cost of other forms of housing, but the document seems to suggest that preventing displacement from these units is a goal.

The third main issue discussed in the *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021* from the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* consultations is that of landlord/tenant relationship issues. Outlined as suggested solutions for this issue include preventative and intervention based strategies such as training on rights for both tenants and landlords and eviction prevention respectively (LAHRK Consulting 2016). Though the emphasis of this issue is not on affordability, tenant and landlord relationships are an important feature of rental units which are an essential part of the mix leading to affordability in a neighbourhood.

In regard to housing, the *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021* is focused primarily on affordable housing and ensuring there is a wide variety housing types for residents to choose from. Affordability is a main theme throughout city policy as well, but carries a much heavier weight throughout the West Broadway plan. Understandably however, the City is not only concerned with the inner-city which is where affordability issues are the most prominent. The City also has priorities applying to other areas where affordability appears to be considered less of a concern. The “variety of housing” aspect is also a major theme throughout the City

documents, showing a clear connection between some of the housing needs of West Broadway and those of the City on a broader scale. A noticeable difference within the theme of affordability and housing type, between the *West Broadway Community Plan 2016-2021* and all of the City of Winnipeg documents, is that rooming houses are actually identified as a necessary, even desired, type of housing unit.

4.7.2 Change, Revitalization and Renewal

The *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021* has a similar focus of managing change as the preceding 2011 – 2016 plan, but does not discuss at length, the issues of change. The type of development encouraged by the plan is the kind that “meets the needs of the neighbourhood and creates low income and affordable housing” (LAHRK Consulting 2016, p. 53). This idea was presented through the community forums informing the West Broadway Housing Plan along with the desire to “explore concerns about gentrification and losing neighbourhood affordability” and improving the living conditions for rooming house tenants (LAHRK Consulting 2016, p. 53). The concern most echoed through these ideas is that through change, the residents of West Broadway want to ensure affordability is not negatively impacted and the quality of life improves for all residents regardless of their housing situation. Preserving rooming houses is not explicitly stated as a goal, but it is implied by the idea of preventing gentrification and preventing the loss of affordability for all residents.

4.8 West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019

The *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* is an extensive document providing historical and political context for the neighbourhood, broad context for the city of Winnipeg, demographic and geographic information about the neighbourhood and surrounding area. The

document also provides an overview of the ways in which housing activities are supported through different political pathways and through private investment. Additionally, the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* acknowledges the crossovers between its' own priorities and the priorities of the City of Winnipeg and the priorities presented in the *West Broadway 5 Year Community Plan 2011 - 2016* through the following charts.

Table 1: Housing Plan and the City of Winnipeg	Direction	Housing Plan
Complete Communities (Section 04, Areas of Stability)	<i>Enhance the quality, diversity, completeness and sustainability of stable neighbourhoods and expand housing options for Winnipeg's changing population.</i>	✓
	<i>Support the completion of areas of stability.</i>	✓
(Section 04-1, Mature Communities)	<i>Encourage conservation and upgrading of existing housing in mature areas and expand housing opportunities through infill development.</i>	✓
OurWinnipeg (Section 01-4, Housing)	<i>Support diverse housing options in each neighbourhood or neighbourhood cluster throughout the city.</i>	✓
	<i>Collaborate with other levels of government and other partners to renew and regenerate Winnipeg's housing stock.</i>	✓
	<i>Establish partnerships with the private, not-for-profit and government sectors to provide affordable housing throughout the city, with a particular focus on locations near a variety of transportation options.</i>	✓
	<i>Provide leadership in encouraging and enforcing property related housing standards that create and promote safe living conditions for homeowners, tenants and for communities as a whole.</i>	✓
	<i>Support the integration of specialty housing within residential neighbourhoods, with a particular focus on locations near a variety of transportation options.</i>	✓
Housing Policy Implementation Plan	<i>Support objectives in OurWinnipeg and Complete Communities</i>	✓
	<i>Encourage development or retention of more affordable housing</i>	✓
	<i>Growing segment of the population in core housing need</i>	✓
	<i>Enable infill development, revitalization, community capacity</i>	✓
	<i>Support for revitalization in areas of most need</i>	✓
	<i>Increase options to fund / support desired housing activity</i>	✓

(Based on City of Winnipeg 2011a,b, City of Winnipeg 2013, 2014a)

Figure 4: Chart demonstrating common goals between City plans and West Broadway Housing Plan 2014-2019
Image Source: Aasland et al 2014, p. 6

Table 2: Neighbourhood Plan Goal Area	Housing Plan
6: Housing and Accommodation Continue to implement WBCO Housing Plan including local planning and networking capacity, development of innovative and diverse housing options and implementing initiatives that seek to minimize vacant, abandoned or poor quality housing in the neighbourhood.	✓
6.1 Infill Housing Plan implemented	✓
6.2 Property Improvement Program (PIP) exterior fix up grant	✓
6.3 Property Improvement Program for Efficiency (PIPE)	✓
6.4 Homeownership Initiative	✓
6.5 Housing Coordination and West Broadway Housing Stakeholders	✓
6.6 Rooming House Improvements Program	✓
7. Support resources, education, advocacy and funding for renters and landlords	✓
7.1 Development of a renter support program	✓
7.2 Tenants Associations support	✓
8. Advocate for increased funding to address affordable housing issues	✓
8.1 Address rising rents and increase affordable and rent-gearied-to-income housing	✓

Figure 5: Chart demonstrating common goals between *West Broadway Community Plan 2011 - 2016* and *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 - 2019*

Image Source: Aasland et al 2014, p. 6

The plan was developed through research and community engagement. Community engagement involved the following methods and tools: community steering committee, electronic and print media distribution, a neighbourhood survey, in-person conversations and meetings, focus groups, community visits, housing related meetings, community gatherings and events, a public forum and a draft plan review (Aasland et al 2014).

4.8.1 Affordability and Housing Type

Following the demographic overview of the neighbourhood, the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* discusses the variety and distribution of housing within the area. The document notes the type that comprises most units in the area is apartment buildings. There are 106 apartment buildings which host a total of 2650 housing units and there are “208 multi-family conversions” which have been converted from single-family homes to multiplexes (Aasland et al 2014, p. 34). Compared to the 178 detached single-family homes in the area, rental units make up a huge portion of the dwellings in the neighbourhood, which makes preserving them of utmost importance to residents. This comes across in the prioritization of the preservation of

affordability in the housing plan, which is presented as a major theme in the document on page 37 (Aasland et al 2014). Preservation of affordability is a natural theme considering that “a high proportion of households spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing” which is the standard the City uses to define affordability (Aasland et al 2014, p. 46).

Much of the onus for housing in West Broadway lies with the West Broadway Community Organization whether it be through their own activities or through leveraging the partnerships they have formed with governmental, non-profit, and private partners (Aasland et al 2014). The document presents a brief summary of how each level of government, City, Province and Federal, provide supports for housing activity in the area. Each of the supports relating to housing affordability and type are summarized here:

- The Province of Manitoba has also provided funding to the West Broadway Community Organization through the Neighbourhoods Alive! program to fund housing work and programs that support low-income households to do improvements and repairs
- The Province of Manitoba has also developed inclusionary zoning legislation to use as a tool to encourage that developers are including a certain percentage of affordable housing in their developments. The City of Winnipeg has yet to adopt this legislation however
- The Government of Canada provides the funding that is streamed through the City of Winnipeg as part of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and matches the funds of many of the low-income housing programs that the Province runs through a cost sharing agreement (Aasland et al 2014).

Other activities in the neighbourhood relating to housing affordability are done through private investors or other non-profit groups such as the Westminster Housing Society (Aasland et al 2014). In the more recent years that are reviewed by the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* there had been an increase in the overall number of units in the neighbourhood, but this does not necessarily equate to more affordable housing as many of the newer units are still not affordable for low-income residents. Housing price increases are a major concern in West

Broadway for the large low-income population which is evident throughout the rest of the document (Aasland et al 2014).

The document next offers an overview of the structure, including an introduction to the goals and strategies composing the rest of the plan. The goals of the plan relevant to housing affordability and type are to lower the cost of housing and improve the quality of housing. The applicable strategies are “Strategy A: encourage housing development that fits with the neighbourhood and meets community needs”, and “Strategy B: work to create new low income and affordable housing” (Aasland et al 2014, p. 92). Within each strategy there are also “actions” established to work towards the strategies and help achieve the overall goals of the plan. Each action is assigned a lead and a timeline, potential partners are listed, and the primary outputs and indicators are listed.

Strategy A is accompanied by four actions that directly relate to affordability and housing type which are:

- 1) “Encourage the development of multi-family buildings on residential streets and mixed use residential and commercial buildings on commercial sites”
- 2) “Establish a clear set of density bonusing incentives the community is prepared to support”
- 3) “Ask the City of Winnipeg to implement a minimum vacancy threshold for rental units in each neighbourhood before allowing rental unit conversions to condominiums”
- 4) “Advocate to the City of Winnipeg to create and use municipal based affordable housing tools such as inclusive zoning and density bonusing” (Aasland et al 2014, p. 94).

Each of these actions addresses affordability through either a lens of creation or preservation of affordable housing units.

Strategy B is accompanied by six actions that directly relate to affordability and housing type which are:

- 1) “Review regulation, zoning and bylaws to identify barriers to mixed use and multi-family development, attached secondary suites, detached secondary suites and densification, in partnership with other Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations”
- 2) “Ask for the City to change by-laws to make detached secondary suites, or “laneway housing” possible within existing zoning”
- 3) “Encourage the development of attached and detached secondary suites through educational sessions”
- 4) “Encourage the development of new rooming houses and bachelor suites in new apartment developments.”
- 5) “Develop a volunteer pool of good rooming house landlords who will mentor new rooming house landlords.”
- 6) “Develop explicit supports and expectations for good practices when working with rooming house landlords” (Aasland et al 2014, p. 94 – 96).

The actions for Strategy B are oriented towards developing new affordable housing and preserving existing affordable housing, but not in the same ways as are referred to in *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities*. The *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* is more directed towards innovative forms of housing, like laneway housing, secondary suites and rooming houses, rather than affordability within classical housing models such as subsidized apartments. The term “secondary suites” is mentioned twice throughout both *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities* and eight times in the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan* which shows that it is a viable housing form in accordance with the directions of the City of Winnipeg. Rooming houses on the other hand are not mentioned once between all four of the City of Winnipeg housing and planning documents reviewed, but they are a key focus of the West Broadway plans. Rooming houses are referred to eight times in the *West Broadway Community Plan 2011 – 2016*, six times in the *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021*, and 43 times in the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019*. The prevalence of the term “rooming house” by itself does not necessarily imply the level of priority of preserving and

creating them, but it does show that rooming houses are more of a priority for the West Broadway neighbourhood than for the city of Winnipeg from a planning perspective.

Following the explanation of the strategies, the plan lists the development priorities for West Broadway. Included in these priorities are several points that focus on affordability as well as the specific types of housing noted throughout. Rooming houses, social housing, low-income housing, subsidized housing, secondary suites and housing for people with disabilities are all featured in the development priorities (Aasland et al 2014).

The *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* emphasizes specific types of housing and affordable housing more than the City of Winnipeg, particularly rooming houses. The emphasis on affordability and affordable types of housing is probably due to the needs of the community which has a higher than average proportion of low-income residents than Winnipeg as a whole. The emphasis on preserving affordability also reflects of the fact that West Broadway is an inner-city neighbourhood with increasing property values and many opportunities for redevelopment, which places residents at risk for displacement. If the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* is strongly considered by developers and by the City of Winnipeg, then low-income housing forms (such as rooming houses) will be protected. On the other hand, if low-income and rooming houses are ignored in the coming years by the City and developers as being replaceable according to the City's version of “affordable housing”, then hundreds of residents stand to be displaced.

4.8.2 Change, Revitalization and Renewal

Because the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* is identified as a living document, it addresses change minimally, and instead, is itself subject to change, presumably determined by the ways the needs of the neighbourhood change. As previously mentioned, the

plan lists the ways in which each level of government supports the actions of the West Broadway Community Organization. In reference to change and managing change, the primary partner appears to be the City of Winnipeg. The way the City helps to manage change is largely through the creation of neighbourhood housing plans which, while not technically city policy, set a solid guideline for future development. The City of Winnipeg has provided funding to the West Broadway Community Organization to develop a housing plan and also funnels money through the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) to various housing initiatives including the Homeowner Renovation Assistance Program and Heritage Grants for older houses. Both grant programs could encompass rooming houses, making them potentially very important for contributing to rooming house preservation efforts.

The Province of Manitoba also supports neighbourhood revitalization generally throughout the city with funding streams such as the Rental Improvement Program and the Neighbourhood Housing Assistance program which “provides funding to community groups for homeownership and renovation projects” (Aasland et al 2014, p 47). More directly applicable to West Broadway, the Province has also funded the West Broadway Community Organization through the Neighbourhoods Alive! program (Aasland et al 2014). The Neighbourhoods Alive! funding was formerly used to support the Rooming House Outreach Program which sought, in part, to revitalize rooming houses in the area.

The *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* also highlights its alignment with City objectives outlined in *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan*. The shared objectives applying to change are to enable infill development, revitalization, and community capacity, and to provide supports for revitalization in areas of most need (Aasland et al 2014).

The alignment of objectives should make the available pools of funding accessible for supporting revitalization activities in many areas of West Broadway.

The primary strategy applying to change is “Strategy C: Coordinate resources to improve existing housing” (Aasland et al 2014, p. 97). Within this strategy are the actions to “offer grants to residents and landlords to improve their properties” and “carefully explore why renovations are not being done in places where they could or should be taking place” (Aasland et al 2014, p. 98). The first action focuses on revitalization through enabling people to make their own improvements to their homes rather than dictating improvements that must be made. The second delves into change from a different perspective of considering the lack thereof and the potential barriers to renewal. Determining those barriers is an important step in the process of revitalization because it could reveal the root causes of what leads to the lack of renovation rather than simply considering the bricks and mortar aspects of renovation.

While change, revitalization and renewal are not necessarily a main theme within the West Broadway Housing Plan, they are still considered in many of the strategies and actions outlined in the document. The strategies and actions surrounding revitalizing and renewal have a strong implication for rooming houses because many of them, legal or illegal, are either not up to code due to the high cost of meeting provincial building codes or are not well enough maintained to stay up to code.

Chapter 5 Key Informant Interview Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on and analyzes the findings from eight Key Informant interviews with four housing experts and researchers, one city planner, one former city planner and two employees of the West Broadway Community Organization. Each Key Informant was provided with an introduction to the research and a schedule after agreeing to take part in the research (see Appendix A). The interviews provided insight into how city planning and policy impacts the work being done at the ground level to preserve low-income housing, namely rooming houses and SROs. The interview schedule first addressed broad City policies and planning documents and then moved towards how housing in the West Broadway area is affected by these policies and planning guidelines.

The analysis of key informant interviews, as with the document review, is divided into two main categories: Affordability and Housing Type, and Change, Revitalization and Renewal. Throughout the analysis, several sub-themes emerged within each category. One of the primary objectives of the key informant research was to determine the impact of policy and planning on the preservation of rooming houses and SROs in the West Broadway area. In order to meet the objective of determining how policy impacts rooming houses and SROs the sub-themes were: the City's role in preservation, the role of community organizations, the roles of rooming houses and SROs, and the possibilities existing through policy and planning moving forward. The sub-themes were used to organize the interview reporting determined to be: The City's Role, Community Organizations, Rooming Houses/SROs, and Moving Forward.

5.2 Affordability and Housing Type

Affordability and housing type are broad topics encompassing more than strictly rooming houses and SROs. From a policy and planning perspective it is necessary to analyze all types of low-income housing under the umbrella of affordability because it is atypical as the City and Province rarely identify specific types of housing within policy or planning documents.

5.2.1 The City's Role

The City's role in the preservation of rooming houses and SROs is primarily defined within planning and policy documents as a support role. The policy documents reviewed in the previous chapter point to the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada as the main bodies responsible for financing low-income housing, while the City encourages the development of affordable housing. In this context, affordable housing does not refer to low-income housing types such as rooming houses and SROs, but rather aligns with the Province's definition of affordable being that the tenant or homeowner spends 30% or less of their annual income on their shelter costs.

"What I see our role as the City is that we want to increase the supply of affordable housing, meeting our definition of affordable because then they have a larger selection to choose units to buy down to RGI rates. And if we can increase the supply of Affordable Housing, then that increases [the Province of Manitoba's] selection and their ability to buy some of it down to the subsidized rate." City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

This statement reflects one of the ways through which the City supports the development of low-income or rent/geared-to-income (RGI) housing but the onus remains on the Province to invest in such housing forms. The City also plays a large role in preservation of low-income housing through partnering with non-profit housing organizations, many of which work to preserve and rehabilitate low-income housing in their neighbourhoods. Support for low-income

and affordable housing is provided financially through the funding of the Winnipeg Housing and Renewal Corporation (WHRC), which was highlighted in several interviews as an important entity for low-income housing preservation.

“Perhaps the biggest thing the City does is that they have a crown corporation – Winnipeg Housing and Renewal Corporation, WHRC. They provide some support to WHRC on an ongoing basis to maintain low-income and affordable housing. And the City still partners and provides some funding to several organizations... all the ones I’m aware of are non-profits... who are involved in affordable housing or low-income housing” Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017

The WHRC was also noted by one key informant as being a key component to the City’s role in supporting low-income housing because “WHRC is totally focussed on affordable housing and low-income households are their primary targets” (Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017). The WHRC, which is mandated to develop affordable rental and home ownership within older residential neighbourhoods has gone beyond the City and Province’s definition of affordable and has “partnered with other agencies to provide supportive housing” (Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017). One of these properties is The Bell Hotel, an SRO accommodating low-income residents and providing live-in supports for those residents. The Bell Hotel, which re-opened as supportive housing in 2011, was one of Winnipeg’s most appealing mid-sized hotels originally opening in 1907 (Peterson 2015). Over the century, the hotel began to deteriorate and as it did, shifted to hosting more long-term tenants rather than temporary hotel guests. In 2007, after many years of deterioration, the Bell Hotel was purchased by CentreVenture, the arms-length development corporation of the City of Winnipeg (Charette et al. 2016). The purchase of the Bell Hotel by CentreVenture occurred at the same time as the 2007 implementation of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS), a federal revamping of the program formerly known as the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI)

(Government of Canada 2008). Funding for the Bell Hotel was provided through a collaboration between CentreVenture, as the property owners, the Provincial Government's HOMEWorks! program and the Federal Government's HPS, which provided \$2.5 million and \$2.75 million respectively for capital construction. The operation of the Bell Hotel is conducted in partnership by the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) and the Main Street Project, a community-based organization. The landlord of the project is the WHRC (Bodie 2012). With two organizations representing the City of Winnipeg at the forefront of this project, CentreVenture and WHRC, the Bell Hotel is one case demonstrating the City of Winnipeg's ability to undertake initiatives to advance their role in the provision and maintenance of SRO housing. The drive to undertake the Bell Hotel project was likely due to the announcement of renewed federal funding through HPS. With the recent announcement of yet another rendition of NHI and HPS, now titled Reaching Home, there could be renewed incentive for the City of Winnipeg to take on a large, innovative supportive housing project. The opportunity for the City of Winnipeg and community organizations to take advantage of new funding from the Government of Canada is further explored in the Epilogue of this practicum following Chapter 7.

Another funding stream for Housing Improvement Zones operated by the City is the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve (HRIR). The HRIR is utilized to partially fund housing coordinator salaries at neighbourhood organizations (Housing Expert 2, September 20, 2017) and can be tapped into for "maintaining the exterior of existing rental properties" (WBCO 2, September 22, 2017). The financial support provided through the HRIR, while helpful for preservation of some low-income housing, is relatively small-scale and does not address issues such as licensing, zoning, or building codes that can impact the future existence of rooming houses and SROs.

Many of the interviewees highlighted the City's role in funding and partnering with low-income housing providers. However, one of the recurring themes within almost all the interviews was that the City is not active enough in their regulatory role.

"There are excellent staff working for the City, trying to make sure that affordable housing is prioritized. On the other hand, I believe the City should be doing much more around low-income housing preservation."

WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

"There's not a particular focus on ensuring that housing is available for low income people." Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017

"I think there's been a real lack of leadership on low income housing from the City." Housing Expert 4, October 11, 2017

The lack of leadership on low-income housing by the City of Winnipeg and City Council was reiterated by several of the interviewees. Despite the City not identifying low-income housing as a priority within their policies, they should still be active in preserving low-income housing. As identified in *OurWinnipeg* and repeated throughout *Complete Communities* and the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013*, the City will encourage new housing that "establishes a sufficient supply of affordable, adequate and suitable housing throughout the city that meets the needs of the populations of Winnipeg" (City of Winnipeg 2013, p.2). The lack of leadership from the City of Winnipeg in providing or preserving low-income housing does not align with this objective. The population of Winnipeg is diverse and includes low-income people whose needs include housing. Without addressing the needs of low-income residents in Winnipeg through the preservation and creation of low-income housing, the City can only meet the needs of certain portions of the populations of Winnipeg. Low-income housing in the City's planning and policy documentation is primarily identified as a responsibility of the Province, likely in an attempt to take the onus off the City to completely comply with the previously stated objective.

“Our policy dictates that not only will we support the development of Affordable Housing and the adequate supply of housing that meets the needs of the population, but also that we will work with communities to do so. So both in terms of capacity building and doing neighbourhood housing plans, which is also a great process... that’s where our policy seems to support, as much as we can, the development of Affordable Housing.” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

The above response implies that the objectives of the City for developing affordable and adequate housing are to provide a more support-based role than a leadership role. There are some major benefits to this approach, especially in regard to neighbourhood housing plans because communities get to determine their own goals and priorities as long as they align with the broader goals of *OurWinnipeg*. Often times the responsibility of establishing goals and priorities falls onto neighbourhood/community organizations, who partner with the City to provide both funding and leadership. in the creation of neighbourhood housing plans. Such was the case for the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019*. Although neighbourhood housing plans are not officially recognized as City policy, they act as guides for future development in the area they apply to. In essence, development aligning with the goals and priorities of neighbourhood housing plans will not face opposition from either the City or the neighbourhood. As addressed in the document review section of this practicum, much of the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019* focuses on the development and preservation of low-income housing, demonstrating that it is both a clear priority of the neighbourhood, and a supported goal of the City.

5.2.2 Rooming Houses/SROs

Rooming houses and SROs have not been a form of housing that has been proactively managed by the City of Winnipeg or the Planning, Property and Development Department. One

of the key informants made this evident by referencing the reactive and regulatory approach to management of SROs:

“Issues around housing for low-income people, rooming houses, homelessness, SROs... in almost all of those cases that I know of, the City has always been playing catch up and hasn’t been thinking ahead to what kind of neighbourhood do we want, what kind of city do we want, how do we put in place policies or strategies to build that or get us there. It has been oh... here is a problem, here is a regulatory solution we may come up with that may help.” Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017

As identified in the previous document review section, rooming houses and SROs are never directly named in City policy or planning documents. This omission alone poses potential problems for their preservation because there are clearly no policies in place to protect these forms of housing. Rooming houses and SROs were identified by many of the interviewees as being neglected through policy, or retroactively managed, instead of being proactively managed, as stated in the response from Housing Expert 1. Part of the reason for the retroactive nature of City policy around these forms of tenure is that they are often unsafe, inadequate places for people to live. Many of the rooming houses in West Broadway, or Fort Garry as of late, arose illegally, without the homeowners obtaining the proper zoning or coding in place to operate them. The same phenomenon of rooming houses appearing on housing markets illegally has occurred recently in other cities such as Toronto, Vancouver, St. John’s and Calgary.

“There has been such an underinvestment in housing in Canada over the past 30 years so that’s why SROs have developed is because there’s a need for that type of housing and so the private market has made that available.” Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017

The City needs to ensure safety standards are upheld when it comes to housing, but there is a disconnect between the safety of rooming houses versus the safety of living on the streets. Being homeless was noted several times in the interviews as the next option for many of the

people who live in rooming houses. There is an obvious need in Winnipeg for low-income people to be living in rooming houses and SROs, otherwise the market would never have developed so many of them. The key informant City planners position on rooming houses and SROs seemed to be willing to accept this form of tenure while also highlighting some of the primary issues surrounding the way they are established:

“As far as SROs or anything, it doesn’t say we want more of these or less of these. People have the right to make the choice about where they want to live. Our option, or our responsibility is to try and ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs of the population. So, if there’s a demand for rooming houses, we’re not going to build them but we are certainly not going to actively discourage them. It really for us is a zoning issue. Zoning and code. And those are the biggest restrictions. From a zoning perspective, you must be zoned for multi-family housing. It is not even conditionally allowed in R1 or R2, it must be something that would allow multi-family.” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

Zoning issues and being up to code are identified here as the two main issues impeding the development of rooming houses. The zoning allowances for rooming houses to exist legally are limited to being akin to multi-family designations, which are rare for residential areas including mostly single-family homes. Incidentally, the mature areas rooming houses exist in are residential areas generally also containing a large proportion of single-family homes. In order for rooming houses to legally be developed, or adopted as legal units, they must be licensed as “converted residential dwellings with shared facilities” (City of Winnipeg 2015, *Student Housing, Boarders, and Rooming Houses*). In order for this license to be granted in areas typically zoned for single-family dwellings (R1) or two family dwellings/duplexes (R2), the lot must be re-zoned to something allowing a multi-family dwelling. The issues with re-zoning are complicated because not only is re-zoning a long process due to lengthy regulatory approval processes, but in order for re-zoning to be granted, there must be a hearing process (City of

Winnipeg 2018, *Rezoning Application (DAZ)*). A hearing process can then evoke community opposition. Some areas, such as the core areas, namely West Broadway were identified as being more accepting of rooming houses.

“In West Broadway there’s a huge amount of support for the rooming house community... there’s not a lot of NIMBYism in West Broadway”
Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017

It was also noted by the City planner interviewed that there tends to be more acceptance for low-income housing generally in core communities. Despite this inclination to be more accepting of low-income housing, the planner also stated neighbours tend to be displeased when rooming houses are established in areas not zoned for such a use (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017). Not only do rooming houses face significant barriers in complying with zoning and community opposition, but according to By-law 4304/86, newly licensed rooming houses must meet the building code of the present day. Older rooming houses, established prior to 1986 however are expected to meet the building codes of the year they were established (Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017)

“From a code issue, a rooming house built new, or converted new, must meet current code for a multi-family. And that is onerous. You’ve got to have fire separations, exits, and the code is extremely onerous. And it is extremely expensive for the developer. So that is always our challenge.”
City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

For new rooming houses to be established or converted from single-family homes, the process of meeting the current Manitoba Building Codes is a difficult one. It is also an expensive process especially considering that there is not a lot of money to be made in operating rooming houses if the intention is to provide affordable housing, to recoup the costs of meeting building codes (Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017). It is therefore very challenging to establish new rooming house units regardless of the area they are in and even if re-zoning is granted. Changes

to the building code are possible, but doing so would be up to the Province rather than the City. The City has “actively encouraged the province to come up with specific code requirements applicable to rooming houses that would be a hybrid between single or two-family versus multi-family” (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017). The Province has not acted on this recommendation but changing the building code is one area the City has attempted to be proactive in with regard to rooming houses.

Without alterations to the building code and to zoning by-laws, it is very unlikely that new rooming houses will be established or that currently illegal ones will be able to acquire licenses. This is part of the reason why rooming houses have been rapidly disappearing.

“The policies governing rooming houses are falling short in my opinion and in some ways, encourage further conversion and a net loss of units.

Winnipeg’s inner-city has lost over 50% of its rooming house and SRO stock but we only see the application of sticks and very few, if any, carrots guiding the maintenance of this stock” WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

Preserving and maintaining existing rooming house units is an issue of concern for the whole city because without housing options like rooming house units, many low-income people would go from being housed, to being homeless. The connection between homelessness and rooming houses was re-iterated by several of the key informants. There is no doubt rooming houses do serve an important purpose for people when they are thought of as the last stop before homelessness within the continuum of housing options existing in the city. The Housing Coordinator at West Broadway Community Organization highlighted rooming houses are “one of the few viable options for people on EIA, especially single, childless individuals” (WBCO 2, September 22, 2017).

“If you look at the rooming houses housing the most vulnerable population in our city, and if you look at losing those rooming houses because of a fire inspection violation, you’re looking at hundreds of

people who are already almost homeless becoming homeless without any options of places to live.” Housing Expert 4, October 11, 2017

Preserving rooming houses can be done much more easily than establishing new ones, because they already exist and their value as a housing form can be easily demonstrated. The City does not necessarily discourage rooming houses, however their policies and planning priorities do not reflect the importance of preserving them. Throughout the interviews, there was agreement that rooming houses can be dangerous (see Section 3.3), which seems to be one of the major concerns the City has with this form of tenure. However, they can also be good places to live if the proper safety measures are in place. If the City were to address rooming houses through policy and planning more proactively, they could help to ensure the safety of these units was maintained.

“I think it’s a legitimate form of housing. I’m glad that the City has a rooming house licensing role, but I don’t know the extent to which they actually monitor and support keeping buildings up to snuff. They have a schedule and when you’re licensed, you are scheduled in for fire safety inspection. I think it’s every two years. So that’s one thing that is sort of proactive is their review of the safety of the unit from a fire safety perspective but for instance the City isn’t offering any grants for rooming house landlords to upgrade their properties” Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017

As Former City of Winnipeg Planner identifies, key things the City’s Planning, Property and Development Department can do include offering grants to rooming house landlords through the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve (HRIR) for upgrades after identifying which upgrades are necessary through their inspections. The City is limited in their financial capacity in many respects, so grants may not be available to all the landlords who need them, depending on the amount of work required to bring their properties up to code. However, other tools that do not put an added financial burden on the City could be utilized, according to some of the key informants, but so far, the City has only used the tools available to them in a reactive manner

(Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017). One example of this would be that if a City representative were to inspect a rooming house and find it was not up to code, the legal ramification of non-compliance would be to shut the rooming house down. The City is under an obligation to enforce by-laws, so they do not have many options aside from closing an unsafe property. Community organizations and non-profit groups on the other hand may be able to intervene to help property owners bring their property up to code before complaints are lodged and the City is forced to be involved in a reactionary way.

The City does however fund some of the more proactive activities of community organizations through the HRIR funding stream already. The HRIR is available to neighbourhoods considered Housing Improvement Zones (HIZ), which includes West Broadway. This funding and the support from the City for the community organization has allowed for several low-income and affordable housing developments to be established in West Broadway (WBCO 1, July 10, 2017).

5.2.3 Community Organizations

Community organizations were identified as being much more proactive than the City in advocating for low-income housing and the rights of the tenants who live in low-income housing.

“Certainly, those organizations have led the preservation of low income housing in a way that the City I don’t think could or would without them.” Housing Expert 3, August 31, 2017

Beyond partnering with the City, community organizations play an important role in preserving low-income housing, especially rooming houses which are neglected through recent city policy. Community organizations act as the eyes and ears of the community and liaise between residents and the City. Throughout the key informant interviews, it was acknowledged

that much of the low-income preservation work occurring in neighbourhoods is due to the activity of the community organizations operating in them. Community organizations operate at a ground level that the City does not have the resources or time to emulate. This sentiment was expressed by the City of Winnipeg planner interviewed:

“When you talk about low income housing, [community organizations] are going to be aware of low income housing, the conditions, rent-geared-to-income, and they can bring that up with us. So they can apply to us for funding for maintenance of low income housing.” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

Without community organizations as advocates for the needs of the community, or to identify the units and buildings in need of repair and maintenance, opportunities for financial assistance from the City would likely be under-utilized.

Community organizations are also able to do more in many ways to work with landlords and property owners of rooming houses because they work in the community every day and have the ability to develop relationships with people. Relationships are important to develop with rooming house landlords and owners because once a relationship is established, the fear of having their place shut down will no longer exist in most cases. This can lead to them being open to informal inspections that help identify the potential problem areas of their buildings that could lead to them being shut down if a similar inspection were to be done by the City. One example of this kind of community involvement in housing inspections can be seen currently in the William Whyte neighbourhood of Winnipeg. The community organization in the area has taken it upon themselves to perform inspections on rooming houses that are based on complaints from the community. The community organization, being aware of the need for this type of housing, “tend not to actively target rooming houses that are in poor conditions unless the community asks or

unless there is a complaint because then the house will be gone and there will be a loss of low-income housing" (Housing Expert 3, August 31, 2017).

Being knowledgeable about community context and actively building relationships with landlords are two of the many advantages to having active community organizations in a neighbourhood. Community organizations have been successful through these pathways in many ways planning and policy cannot be. The accomplishments of some of the activity of community organizations was captured by the former City of Winnipeg planner interviewed:

"They've succeeded I think through some of their small grants and conversations around why are you in the rooming house business, a better understanding of what the rooming houses do, and getting to know the tenants within those buildings helped them to transform some of the properties within the area. And that would never be done by the City"

Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017

The proximity of Community Organizations to the homeowners and residents in their community positions them well to be able to act as supports to them, but without steady funding, or specific direction in City planning and policy, this support is hard to maintain. The HRIR and the HIZ designations definitely aid with Community Organizations abilities to take action in their respective neighbourhoods, but some of the most effective intervention strategies funded by the City or Province have been short-lived due to funding constraints. One of these programs that operated in West Broadway was the Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP).

The RHOP was a program established initially to assist rooming house owners in refurbishing their buildings to improve their safety and appearance. As time went on, the program moved more towards assisting rooming house owners with the social aspects of operating rooming houses. The RHOP worker would spend time in the rooming houses in the

community in order to create a sense of community or to connect residents to community resources.

"Through RHOP, people began accessing services in their own community that they never knew existed. In fact, one participant hadn't accessed medical services for years, she met with a community health nurse in her own home through RHOP, and was diagnosed with cancer a few days later. She likely would have died if RHOP hadn't been there...now she's healthy and has made many positive changes in her life since that time. In the program's last house RHOP helped tenants create a social club where residents would get together once every week or two for a potluck and to play games. There are 26 units in this building, most of the people there are working but still poor, and they had no real opportunities to sit down together and get to know one another" WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

The effects of the RHOP were noted to be positive by all of the interviewees, especially considering the minimal cost associated with the program (Housing Expert 4, October 11, 2017). In the case referred to be WBCO 1, the program was able to help one woman in particular with her health issues, but also essentially established a stable community in another house. Said one key informant:

"That model seems to me to work. Because you are building relationships with people, you're helping build communities, you are working along with landlords and you are preserving one house at a time which is effective, if not a little bit resource intensive." Housing Expert 3, August 31, 2017

The model itself and the activities that took place during the program's tenure were effective in many ways, but the program did not continue because the funding for it did not continue, despite having well-known, positive outcomes. Funding was acknowledged by a current employee at West Broadway Community Organization as the primary barrier to programs like RHOP (September 22, 2017). The HRIR and the HIZs were the only City-driven mechanisms mentioned throughout the interviews that significantly, and positively impact the preservation of low-income housing. However, as identified in the document review section of

this practicum, the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan 2013* lists both neighbourhood revitalization and reducing homelessness as two of the three primary goals of the plan. Based on the fact that revitalization and addressing homelessness are priorities for them, the City should consider investing more in preserving the low-income housing that already exists, such as rooming houses. There was agreement among the informants interviewed that the City is limited financially in their capacity to directly provide funding, but it was also expressed that the City is not doing enough to leverage funds from elsewhere to make up for this lack of financial capacity.

“As a matter of finding funding for those programs, the City could find it because you could probably look at the economic impacts of preserving this kind of housing and housing low income people. Even the importance of preserving Rooming Houses was part of recognising the plan to end homelessness, and Rooming Houses were part of that plan because they are a part of the housing available for homeless people.”

Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017

This statement recognises the City could leverage or find money to fund the preservation of rooming houses and other forms of low-income housing because the economic implications and benefits of doing so would be easy to prove through a cost-benefit analysis approach. The low cost compared to the positive benefit of RHOP speaks to this as well, demonstrating a lack of drive from the City to find ways to fund successful programs despite being limited themselves. RHOP was recognized by the interviewees to have benefited a huge number of people considering the cost of running the program:

“If you look at the cost of the Rooming House Outreach Program, I think that it was not a lot of money. And so if you look at that and how many individuals plus rooming houses were supported by that program, I think that the evidence is there to say that there's a model here that, with investment and expansion and proper coordination, could be scaled to every rooming house in the city potentially and have a huge impact.”

Housing Expert 4, October 11, 2017

There are other ways that programs like RHOP can be supported by the City, which would be to support them through their inclusion in policy and planning. This has so far been minimal. If the City were to prioritize the preservation of low-income housing, such as rooming houses and SROs, funding from the Province, the Federal Government or even from private sources would be easier for community organizations to leverage. Inclusion of this priority in policy and planning would show to the Province and other funding bodies that programs such as RHOP not only benefit the community but are also in alignment with the goals of the City and will therefore help the City work towards their collective priorities. One interviewee did express that despite RHOP helping the people living in the community and “has a lot of positive aspects, it is not the only thing needed” (Housing Expert 3, August 31, 2017).

5.2.4 Moving Forward

The City of Winnipeg has been making strides in many ways to recognize “Affordable Housing” as a priority in *OurWinnipeg*, but their definition of affordable housing does not encompass people living in truly low-income housing because it is based on a median market rate standard. One key informant remarked that the issue of “affordable” being based on 30% of a person or family’s household income going towards market-based housing has been a source of complaint in a number of neighbourhoods. The reason for complaint, the key informant cited, was that people are acknowledging that the vacancy rates for high-end units are increasing to a healthy percentage, but the vacancy rates for low-end units are still essentially zero (Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017).

Rental housing and low-income units are not the emphasis for development in the city. Shifting emphasis from home ownership to low-income rental units would be one significant way that the City could help with the preservation of these units, especially in order to encourage

funders to support their preservation financially which the City has limited means to do (Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017). Although providing and leveraging funding are actions the City could, and in some cases does take to create and maintain low-income housing, they could also “do a lot more with zoning, policy and regulatory tools to foster more affordable and low-income units” (Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017). For example, the issue of having to rezone a rooming house could be eliminated by simply choosing to have a different categorization specifically for rooming houses within the other zoning for residential properties (Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017).

Formerly, the City has also utilized buy-back programs in the inner-city whereby they would purchase vacant lots, or take them on tax sales and then sell them to non-profit organizations to develop low-income housing on. This has not been happening lately in Winnipeg due to the rising cost of land in the inner-city, where a lot formerly costing \$5,000 might now have a price tag of approximately \$35,000 or more. Winnipeg’s current City Council is “very unwilling to give away assets with that much value attached to them and would rather sell” (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017). Despite the increasing economic difficulty of this type of buy-back program, a planning representative interviewed from the City of Winnipeg recognized that this is one of the things the City can contribute.

“We are working towards solutions to that though, because that is something we can contribute. The thing to remember is that when we take a property in tax sale, it’s not free. When we take [a property] in tax sale because they haven’t paid taxes in years, there’s a backlog of those taxes and if there’s a house to be demolished, we have to pay some of those expenses. So [the City] wants to recoup some of the costs when we do that. I would love to say just give them away.” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

Although a buy-back program for lots or houses is not sustainable on a large scale, it could be an effective program to increase the options for low-income housing in the inner-city. In some cases, it might also be feasible to apply this kind of program to rooming houses rather than having to shut them down if they are being poorly run, therefore preserving hard-to-replace low-income units. This would entail a great deal of coordination, trust and leadership between property owners, non-profit housing providers, and the City (Housing Expert 3, August 31, 2017). Even with partnerships in place, there is a lack of funding available for non-profit housing providers to fund the sustained operation of low-income units in the form of rooming houses.

“If say Winnipeg Housing and Renewal Corporation said oh, we’re going to buy this rooming house and run it as a rooming house, they would have to finance it through equity they’ve built up from running housing for a long time.” Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017

There is clearly a significant lack of funding and lack of emphasis on the necessity of rooming houses within the spectrum of housing available to address the needs of all the people in Winnipeg, regardless of their income. The WHRC was identified as an organization whose primary focus is “on affordable housing and low-income households” (Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017). The importance of maintaining City support for WHRC was highlighted as a key tool for preserving low-income housing in the future for these reasons. Even with City programs and regulatory mechanisms in place however, it would be challenging to leverage the funding to allow for the sustained management of units by the WHRC because of the capital they would need to have built up to commit to a long-term operating agreement.

Recognition of the important role rooming house units play on the housing spectrum, and as a legitimate form of housing in general, were noted as ways the City could help limit the loss

of these units (Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017; Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017).

“I think a recognition of the role of rooming houses in the spectrum of housing available with a recognition that the City has a role in ensuring houses for its entire populous and that low-income people are particularly vulnerable.” Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017

Recognition through policy and planning would help not only to justify the preservation of rooming house units, but as mentioned previously, could also help to leverage funding through alignment with overarching City policy priorities.

The City recently received approval from Council to undertake a “comprehensive housing needs assessment for the city” (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017), that will demonstrate housing types the City should be putting more, or less emphasis on. There was agreement among most of the interviewees that rooming houses are important to preserve moving forward, but that the City so far has not been showing enough leadership to do so. A needs assessment could be a platform for the City to begin to demonstrate a greater leadership role in the low-income housing realm. Based on the low vacancy rates among low-income housing units within Winnipeg, it is likely the assessment will identify a need to either encourage more development, or to preserve what exists already.

“Most [rooming houses] are already full with waiting lists to get in. So why are we putting our resources in all sorts of strange places when this great opportunity currently exists?” WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

“It's a legitimate housing form, so is it worth preserving it? Well I think yes, on the condition that they are of a standard that's liveable and safe and they are generally embraced by the community itself.” Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017

“There's a connection between homelessness and rooming houses in that if you don't preserve the rooming house stock then people are at risk of

becoming homeless and that is incredibly tragic.” Housing Expert 2,
September 22, 2017

Rooming houses play a role in preventing people from becoming homeless because they are essentially the cheapest form of housing on the market. They are not viewed by all the key informants as the greatest form of housing that exists, but rooming houses do bridge a gap on the housing spectrum between other, potentially safer forms of housing, and homelessness. One key informant identified rooming houses as an interim solution to the issue of the high cost associated with building new apartment units:

“I think we need to preserve them. I think we need to maintain them and we also need to develop a new model that is maybe a little more safe, or a little newer, with newer buildings... build something like dorm style housing because it is very clear that you’re not going to be able to manufacture apartments and provide them for what people are getting on EIA or whatever assistance they’re on so if that’s the case we need to come up with an alternative and right now that alternative is rooming houses.” Housing Expert 4, October 11, 2017

In the future, the City needs to be more proactive in addressing both the risks and benefits associated with rooming houses and determine a policy or planning pathway through which they can ensure the safety of units, while ensuring the lowest income residents of the city have housing options. Through preserving low-income units that already exist, and potentially finding tools to encourage the improvement of those that are unsafe, the City will be able to do a much better job of supporting an adequate supply of housing that meets the needs of all of the population, rather than only those who have the luxury to afford a broad array of housing types.

5.3 Change, Revitalization and Renewal

Change, revitalization and renewal can happen in many different ways in cities. For low-income housing such as rooming houses, change, revitalization and renewal sound as though they would have positive impacts on these often less than desirable units. However, with

improvements to housing forms and the physical condition of units or even the surrounding area, comes a higher unit cost. The challenge of improving the safety, appearance and overall adequacy of low-income housing units such as rooming houses, while maintaining their affordability is a challenge the City of Winnipeg will need to meet in order to prevent displacement in the wake of the constantly rising cost of living in many inner-city areas. West Broadway for example is an area with over 90% of residents living in rental units, and over 40% of area residents being low-income, yet between 2001 and 2013 rents increased from \$409 to \$768 (Aasland et al 2014). The remainder of Section 5.3 considers the challenge of preventing unsustainable continued rises in cost and loss of rooming house and SRO units in West Broadway.

5.3.1 The City's Role

The primary tools and guidance the City provides for managing change and revitalizing the housing stock are the overarching planning and policy documents reviewed in the document review section of this practicum. The main housing documents being the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* and the *Housing Policy Implementation Plan*. These plans provide guidelines, priorities, and actions that should manage change and revitalization in such a way that benefits all the residents of Winnipeg. The Housing Plan, while beneficial to have, has been stated to be paired with a weak implementation plan.

“The City has a housing policy but the implementation plan is very weak. And in fact, they’re still studying the demand and where to focus the housing.” Housing Expert 2, September 22, 2017

Much of the new development that has taken place recently in the city has been dictated by the will of developers rather than being completely guided by policy and planning, likely in part due to the plans not being very strong. Much of the recent development in the city has also

been on the fringes of the city rather than in the inner-city. Developing on the fringes is easier than developing in established inner-city neighbourhoods because there is basically a clean slate to develop on. There is also no real need to fit in with the existing character of the surrounding area because there are no current residents to object to development plans in many cases. For the inner-city, fitting in with existing character may mean requiring a greater variety of housing options that suite the needs of the population, which in many cases includes more lower income residents than the fringes of the city.

“The City has done a relatively poor job of managing that friction between change, and the existing residents. So it’s not surprising that lots of developers don’t want to build housing in existing neighbourhoods because it is way easier to go to green field at the fringes of the city.”

Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017

As long as the planned development falls in line with the objectives of *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities*, there is nothing really in place to state that development cannot occur or needs to contain a minimum percentage of affordable housing to be approved. There are no requirements through policy for developers to include a certain amount of low-income, or even affordable housing in new developments and there is no emphasis on or reward for developing in inner-city areas.

“And there are lots of tools that exist that the City could look at and implement and I believe they have the authority to do it. Some of the obvious ones are inclusionary zoning, density bonusing.”

Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017

Inclusionary zoning and density bonusing could be used by the City to ensure new developments are inclusive of all income levels, but to date, no such tools have been put in place. Inclusionary zoning and density bonusing would be planning tools that would enhance the cities role in managing change and managing the types of developments that go forward.

Although the City has not utilized these tools, or any regulatory tools for encouraging affordable housing, they do have policy supporting affordable housing development (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017). As was discussed in the document review portion of this practicum, the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* has several objectives listed within it focusing on affordable housing as well as revitalization. It is clear from these objectives the City is working to manage and encourage change to a degree. One particular policy item positively impacting the preservation of affordable housing is that if a development will cause for the loss of affordable housing, it must be replaced with the same amount or more affordable housing than what was removed.

“The other thing that we have in our housing policy that’s kind of interesting is that if we remove affordable housing it has to be replaced with equal or more. In general terms it is against our policy to demolish Affordable Housing in order to replace it with high end market housing just for the sake of demand.” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

The City is a proponent of preserving affordable housing as well as encouraging the development of affordable housing, regardless of which area of the city it is in. It is unclear what exactly the impacts of the above component of the housing policy would be on a housing form like rooming houses, which are not always legal or in compliance with zoning and code restrictions. Rooming houses are not formally recognized in any City planning and policy documents as being a legitimate form of housing, so they may very well not be protected by a policy advocating for the replacement of affordable housing lost to other development. Another potential issue with this policy item is the definition of affordable within the city including housing forms much more expensive than a typical rooming house unit. The term affordable could refer to any form of housing that fits within that affordability standard rather than housing is at the same price point.

Rooming houses, even when not completely compliant with all of the City's regulations, may fit better into the City's existing funding streams such as the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve which aims to "revitalize housing stock and increase property values" (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017). The HRIR seems to be one of the primary resources the City has to preserve and revitalize rooming houses. The availability of the HRIR fund is an improvement from several years ago when the City had no such money for renovating poorly maintained properties.

"We didn't have any funding to support housing renovation and repair so property owners were disinclined to continue to invest in their properties and sometimes they just boarded them up after they'd spent their efforts in trying to house people" Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017

The HRIR makes it possible for property owners to access assistance for investing in their properties so they will not reach a point where they need to be boarded up. Improvements in some areas of the City's efforts to maintain the housing stock come along with shortfalls in others though. The HRIR and the *City of Winnipeg Housing Plan 2013* are still very "bricks and mortar focused" (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017). Historically, the City played a much bigger role in providing social services to residents of Winnipeg.

"We used to provide social services to people in the city. Temporary assistance. And then once it was determined that they were long term unemployable, they would be transferred to the province. That was a change in the early 70s or somewhere in the mid 70s perhaps." Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017

The City having a hand in providing social services to residents brings the services closer to the people who use and need them. Because rooming house units comprise some of the lowest cost units available in the city, it is safe to say the City would have been providing assistance to many rooming house residents, if only for a short while until they were placed on provincial assistance.

In this historic example, the City being closer to the people utilizing their services may have led to them being able to gain a better understanding of the needs of the residents as well as the real number of people residing in rooming houses.

5.3.2 Rooming Houses/SROs

Rooming houses, while not addressed in policy, provide a very important service for housing people who have no other options due to cost limitations.

“In the longer term, as a form, rooming houses are not necessarily ideal but if that’s all that’s available, then losing what’s available is worse than keeping it.” Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017

Rooming house units are not the most glamourous form of housing that exists and can be unsafe in some cases, but the resounding viewpoint gathered from the key informant interviews is they should be preserved, at least for now. Revitalization and renewal will be necessary for much of the rooming house stock existing in Winnipeg in order for those units not to be lost. The City representative interviewed is also of the mind that units benefiting the community, as rooming house units often do, should be preserved given that they are legal and well-maintained.

“But to answer your question, yeah I think it’s important to preserve them, absolutely. As long as the community wants them. We want to preserve them if it’s a value to the community, or a housing type or style that’s in demand and they’re run legally and are clean and maintained.”

City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

The City has made efforts in the past through policy to try to preserve units not completely up to code, which included many rooming house units. This was done in 1986 when the City implemented the Residential Buildings Fire Safety Bylaw 4304/86 which enacted new fire safety codes for residential properties. While the fire safety codes may have been more strict than those existing previously, the City allowed a 10-year time frame for property owners to come into compliance (City of Winnipeg 2018b, *Rooming House Metrics*). Although the process of

implementing the Bylaw was successful, the City has expressed no desire to undertake this process again.

“We actually looked into that to see if we could maybe do it again and I think it was a resounding no on doing that. An advocate would say we need to increase density so adding rooming houses would increase the density, and I guess it would, but at the same time these are people who have actively broken all the rules without having to meet all the restrictions, while everybody else has to meet all of those rules, and basically now they’re being given a carrot to say oh it was a great idea, keep doing it. So I don’t honestly see that happening again any time in the near future.” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

Not providing concessions to property owners who have actively broken laws is a reasonable thing for the City to not want to do. Bylaw 4304 did however have the added benefit of being a proactive approach to bringing properties up to code, rather than a reactive one which is how the City of Winnipeg often operates in regard to rooming houses. For instance, rooming house inspections in Winnipeg currently are complaint based which means properties are only inspected on a reactive basis once a complaint has been filed. After a unit is brought into compliance, the City hands the responsibility for inspecting the property over to the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service who “conduct periodic inspections to ensure on-going compliance is maintained.” (City of Winnipeg 2018c, *Residential Buildings Fire Safety By-law 4304/86*).

“I think there’s a way to do things that is more positive and proactive and works with landlords to understand the type of housing they’re providing and that it doesn’t apply the same way to some homes as it would to an apartment block and there are some landlords in rooming houses but even the good landlords are struggling to keep them afloat because if the fire inspector comes in and says they have to upgrade this and that, they just close their house because it’s not worth it.” Housing Expert 4, October 11, 2017

The inspection process alluded to by Housing Expert 4 is not conducive to revitalization and renewal of properties that owners struggle to maintain because there are no incentives to

comply. Instead, there are only penalties for non-compliance. The City does not have the funds to support revitalization of all rooming house properties, but could aid property owners in other ways. One suggestion included to work to bring properties up to code gradually through the provision of specific directions of what needs to be improved and what resources exist to support those improvements (Housing Expert 4, October 11, 2017). Even property owners who do keep their properties in good repair are not supported through the policies surrounding rooming houses. Licensing, coding and zoning for rooming houses makes it difficult to meet the standards for maintaining a property and for bringing or keeping one in compliance. In West Broadway, as evidenced in the following quote, there are a large number of legal rooming houses that have been lost due to challenges with compliance.

“I’ve seen really good buildings shut down and multiple tenants evicted from excellent housing because licenses lapsed mistakenly, or it was practically impossible to meet the building code standards required by the province to convert a building zoned as triplex into a six-unit rooming house.” WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

The City is not solely responsible for the challenges associated with running a rooming house and maintaining compliance with bylaws or building codes. Much of this responsibility lies with the Province and as previously stated, the City is actively seeking changes to codes applying to rooming houses through the application of pressure on the Province to write a rooming house specific code. This sort of policy change would alleviate some of the financial pressure landlords face in meeting all the code requirements and would likely lead to less loss of rooming house units in the future. Zoning and regulatory tools, such as expedited zoning processes, being implemented that are specifically designed for rooming houses would also reduce the barriers owners face in complying with all of the current regulations. Bringing the cost of compliance down may also be conducive to a change in the management system of

rooming houses and SROs, perhaps allowing for more direct involvement of non-profit or community organizations who have very limited funds to be able to help fix up properties.

“It should be the City’s responsibility to ensure that their policies are as supportive of rooming houses as they are of other rental buildings. It should be neighbourhood organizations’ responsibility to help support the rooming house owners/tenants and to possibly help ownership of rooming houses move towards a non-profit model.” WBCO 2, September 22, 2017

5.3.3 Community Organizations

Community organizations have knowledge of community beyond that of any City Department. The limited financial capacity of community organizations however makes it difficult for them to use their knowledge and expertise to purchase or manage housing.

“Imagine if Sam Management or WHRC, some of the larger housing organizations, started to purchase rooming houses as they came up for sale and then worked maybe with an organization like ours, or maybe the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA), they could create a special department to support social and health outcomes in these buildings” WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

WBCO 1 of the West Broadway Community Organization suggested partnerships with large non-profit housing organizations as a potential pathway towards more success in rooming houses being a good form of housing. As described in the previous interview analysis sections, rooming houses are not necessarily a bad or inadequate form of housing, but they are frequently mismanaged or illegally established which has led the City to manage them reactively for safety reasons. The City is expressly concerned with the adequacy of housing options in Winnipeg and is not on board with supporting property owners who have established rooming houses incongruently with the policies currently in place. Community organizations on the other hand,

using WBCO as an example, may lean more towards optimizing this form of housing through innovative pathways, regardless of how the units were initially established.

The WBCO is limited financially, as are other community organizations, but could act as a ground-level intermediary between property owners, tenants, and large organizations such as, Sam Management or WHRC, with more capacity to fund housing projects or purchase their own buildings. The coordination and effort a partnership like this would take is immense, but community organizations are already doing a lot of the ground-level work that would be necessary to create successful coordination of services. The City of Winnipeg Planner interviewed identified the importance of community organizations for their ability to gain insight into their communities:

“They’re like a middle man but a lot more because they gather more information than we ever could. So there is a lot of stuff that they are aware of because they pass by every day and as an issue arises they can identify it right away.” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

Community organizations are able to act as partners for the City, while also not posing any sort of regulatory threat to property owners or tenants. In the same capacity, they can also identify buildings in need of revitalization and renewal and can approach property owners or building managers to determine what the issues are that need to be dealt with (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017).

“The Neighbourhood Association or whoever it is can play that role to advocate for them and work with them. Because they are in the community, they have a much more sensitive finger on the pulse of the community.” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

This City of Winnipeg Planner evidently supports the role community organizations play as a front-line body for encouraging the renewal of properties. The support for community organizations is not only demonstrated in the statement by the City of Winnipeg Planner, but is

also indicated in some of the City's policy and planning measures. For example, the City funds some of the activities of community organizations, namely those categorized as Housing Improvement Zones (HIZs). This funding has given a collective of organizations, including WBCO, access to "hundreds of thousands of dollars of programming money" which enabled them to "offer a neighbourhood-wide exterior fix-up program for over 15 years as well as piloting an interior fix-up program for rooming houses since 2015" (WBCO 1, July 10, 2017). HIZs are featured in the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan* as partners for consultation in two of the Key Issue areas (City of Winnipeg 2013, p. 16-19), which implies their continuing existence. HIZs are key partners for revitalization and renewal efforts in specific neighbourhoods and the City appears to recognize they play an important role in housing preservation.

Community organizations are not only able to implement programming supporting the broader goals of the City, but also play a significant role in more conventional planning through the design of community housing plans. This function of community organizations is also supported by the City through the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* which includes a target to "encourage and enable the development of comprehensive neighbourhood housing plans aligning with *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities*" (City of Winnipeg 2013, p.5).

"We want to give control to the community as best as possible. We do also support the development of neighbourhood housing plans, and that's where they look at what the needs in the community are. The housing plans have been a huge benefit to the community because they spend six months or so going out and talking to the community, speak to as many residents as possible, and then build a plan and then they have a roadmap for the next five years." City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

As mentioned in this quote, the City also provides funding and coordination for housing plans which are used to guide change based on community need. The neighbourhood housing plans are

not considered official policy, but the City does use them to inform their own actions around change.

Although the City has been proactive in supporting housing plans, the implementation and support for neighbourhood housing plans after they have been created was identified to be lacking in some respects. As previously mentioned, they are not adopted by the City as official policy and are therefore more likely to be viewed as loose guidelines than actual policy. Even if the City does support the plans, developers only have the legal obligations to align with the goals of *OurWinnipeg*, *Complete Communities* and municipal zoning bylaws. While neighbourhood housing plans also need to align with *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities*, the goals of those plans are much broader than those specifically designed by and for the community in question. Supporting the creation of neighbourhood plans is a strong point in Winnipeg's ability to acknowledge the role of community organizations in managing neighbourhood change, but support in implementing those plans should follow.

"I'm sure that the Executive Directors of the neighbourhood corporations say, oh goodness, we have to redo our housing plan in order to continue to receive City funding. And I'm just saying that because they're not getting the action they need from the City in order to make the difference they're trying to make. The commitment to support these neighbourhood's plans just isn't there anymore." Former City of Winnipeg Planner, October 21, 2017

Support for the housing efforts of community organizations exists from the City, but not to the extent the Former City of Winnipeg Planner believes it should or has in the past. Rooming houses for example, while not referenced in any City policy and planning documents, are a priority of the West Broadway Community Organization, evidenced from the emphasis on rooming houses within the *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 – 2019*. The plan was informed by community input and demonstrates rooming houses are important to community members.

Not every community would hold the same position on rooming houses, but as a form of tenure, the value they hold in the area of West Broadway and other core neighbourhoods is worthy of rooming houses being recognized as a housing type by the City in their policy documents.

Change is inevitable in cities, and revitalization and renewal are necessary to maintain the structural integrity of housing, character of neighbourhoods and safety of tenants. Change, revitalization and renewal should not however lead to displacement. The WBCO works to ensure that neighbourhood improvements do not cause displacement of low-income residents by helping address their housing needs while also providing social supports. Social supports are missing from the City's approach to housing because they play a more regulatory and enforcement-based role than community organizations do.

The WBCO focuses their housing and neighbourhood revitalization efforts on not only the bricks and mortar elements of housing, but also the social elements. WBCO has an intentional, multi-faceted approach to their revitalization efforts:

"We know that neighbourhood revitalization strategies aimed at property values that don't also address the needs of marginalized residents, lead to displacement and much higher costs for social, health, justice, and education services. The organization I work for advocates for a three-pronged approach: building new affordable units, improving the conditions of existing units, and ensuring local residents have access to social and economic resources. This simplifies the strategy that we believe is most effective but it is a good way to frame my criticism of what is missing from Winnipeg's current efforts" WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

The City may not have the staff resources available to be able to address the access issues with social and economic resources, however they have previously funded projects addressing some of these issues, such as the Bell Hotel which combines low-income housing with social supports.

The Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP) is an example of a West Broadway initiative

that was funded by the Province to help homeowners fix-up their properties, while also providing social supports to tenants (see Section 5.2.2). The City has funded similar efforts through the administration of their exterior fix-up grants and they were considered by one interviewee to be highly cost-effective.

“In a lot of these neighbourhoods we’ve actually had fix-up grants. Exterior fix-up grants. And that has been one of our most cost-effective programs of anything I’ve seen. We will give anywhere from \$30,000-\$55,000 to the renewal corporations and we have a funding agreement with them and then what they do is they advertise and they do applications for residents for exterior repairs and they will go and fix the paint, or the doors” City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017

The fix-up grants mentioned by this interviewee, and offered by the Planning, Property and Development Department through the Minimum Home Repair Program (MHRP), are currently only offered in four neighbourhoods: William Whyte, North Point Douglas, Spence and Centennial (City of Winnipeg 2017a, *Minimum Home Repair Program*). Similar to West Broadway, these core areas tend to have a high proportion of low-income residents and are likely to have a high proportion of rooming houses, although the true number of rooming houses in Winnipeg is unknown (Make Poverty History Manitoba 2018, p. 30). The MHRP is an example of the City enabling community organizations to help residents improve their standard of living, while not risking displacement. One of the potential caveats of this program however is that to qualify for the MHRP, an inspection by City personnel is required as well as a follow up inspection after the repairs are completed (City of Winnipeg 2017a, *Minimum Home Repair Program*). Having City inspectors in a home that may not be up to code, carries the risk of the home being shut down. The RHOP did not carry this risk because it did not include the requirement for a City inspector to go through the home to determine eligibility. More autonomy

for community organizations in administering and determining eligibility for MHRP might help to mitigate the perceived risk that comes with having a City inspector look through a home.

While the City of Winnipeg has multiple pathways through which they support community organizations, there are also times where community organization work is not supported in policy. The neighbourhood housing plans, while useful and informative for the City, are not adopted as official policy. The RHOP was not financially supported by the City despite clear alignment with MHRP and community organizations are not supported through political will either. As was stated by one key informant, the lack of political will from City Council and City leaders to take initiative in addressing low-income housing has been a barrier for neighbourhood associations in the work they do.

“Neighbourhood associations have been creative and thoughtful and strategic, but without the political will they haven’t gotten that far”
Housing Expert 3, August 31, 2017

Community organizations and the work they do are clearly valued by the City in many ways but despite their creativity and thoughtfulness, are not supported as much as they could be in others. Community organizations being active in their respective neighbourhoods can also advocate for the types of change, revitalization and renewal that will benefit everyone in the neighbourhood, including low-income residents. The City may not engage with low-income residents because they are not the residents who are attending open houses or who are emailing their Councillor to inform change or combat development proposals. The Property, Planning and Development Department of the City also does not have the time or opportunity to engage with residents or homeowners in the same way community organizations can to determine what kinds of things are required for preservation or why particular buildings are not being maintained. The value community organizations bring to their neighbourhoods, and the impact they have on managing

change is important, especially socially. Community organizations do not have the ability to create official policy but can and do have a big impact on managing neighbourhood change, housing revitalization and urban renewal.

One example of a community organization's ability to take the lead on housing revitalization and renewal efforts was demonstrated through West Broadway's Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP), discussed in Section 5.2.3. The RHOP project was established to improve "both the structural integrity of rooming houses and the well-being of tenants" (West Broadway Community Organization 2015). The program helped to "leverage renovations in houses that had not been upgraded for decades" (WBCO 1, July 10, 2017). For a relatively low overall cost, the RHOP improved the conditions of rooming houses that may otherwise have continued to decline structurally. The RHOP also focused on the social conditions in West Broadway rooming houses by assisting residents with various certifications, getting residents connected to health care and engaging with previously un-engaged landlords (West Broadway Community Organization 2015). Improvements to living conditions through programs like the RHOP can make the difference between having to shut down degrading rooming houses and maintaining them as adequate places for low-income people to live. By supporting initiatives like the RHOP, the City could branch out to help address both the structural issues with existing low-income housing and the social issues tenants face. The Property, Planning and Development Department of the City of Winnipeg alone would likely not be able to address social issues for low-income tenants because they have limited staff people and time to dedicate to social interactions with tenants and landlords.

5.3.4 Moving Forward

The following response highlights that a cultural shift is needed to address low-income housing more effectively in the future. For the time being, as the key informant states in the following quote, community based organizations are strongly positioned to help improve housing conditions in their areas.

“Until there is a cultural shift, in absence of strong government programming, the non-profit sector has a critical role to play. Community Based Organizations are perhaps the best-situated non-government mechanism available to improve housing conditions for Winnipeggers. As community organizations, we are well situated geographically, we have strong relationships with all local stakeholders, our work is mandated by community consultation, we have expertise in project delivery and asset management.” WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

As this quote highlights, community organizations are pivotal agencies for informing and managing change and revitalization in their respective neighbourhoods. In the absence of recognition in City policy and planning for rooming houses and SROs, community organizations have acted as leaders in managing change for tenants and for landlords. Community organizations have been especially active through their role in creating neighbourhood housing plans and their emphasis on supporting housing forms for low-income residents. The City of Winnipeg's housing policies do place an emphasis on creating more affordable housing, but the primary efforts to preserve existing low-income housing are primarily being led by community organizations. These community efforts are supported by the City of Winnipeg, though the existing support is not formalized through policy, or in the City's *OurWinnipeg* plan. As one respondent said, financial support for programs is also minimal.

“I would urge government to provide greater supports to local CBO’s working to achieve collective housing goals” WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

Financial support is available through sources like the HRIR but there are “limits on how that funding can be used and that is where [the City] needs to go back on a regular basis to review the operating parameters” (City of Winnipeg Planner, July 4, 2017). This statement demonstrates how even the financial support available for rehabilitation efforts is limited by parameters that are not updated on a regular basis. Other pathways were suggested by interviewees through which the City could financially support renewal and revitalization efforts without adding extra pressure on the limited financial reserves available.

“We could take a page from the BIZ where there is a levy on all business properties that the City handles, but hands over to the BIZs and they have accountability requirements to fulfill their mandates. There’s no reason that couldn’t be applied to residents.” Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017

An approach such as this would generate income that could then be reinvested directly back into the community. This approach however would require residents and possibly developers to pay higher annual or monthly fees which could be negatively received.

While the *OurWinnipeg* plan was informed by extensive consultation efforts, the City of Winnipeg has yet to complete a housing needs assessment to help identify which forms of tenure are most important to maintain or develop in specific neighbourhoods. The specification of housing needs is one of the gaps in current City planning and policy documents. There is no specification of which neighbourhoods require certain types of housing and no specificity as to which areas qualify as “Reinvestment Areas”. Reinvestment Areas were supposed to have been identified shortly after the publication of *OurWinnipeg* and would be useful tools for community organizations to know if incentives and assistance will be prioritized in their areas (see Section 4.4.2). There is also no identification of which forms of tenure are required in particular areas to accommodate the needs of the populations living in them. The housing needs assessment the

City has been approved to undertake (see Section 5.2.4), will be an important indicator in the future for which types of housing should be encouraged over others and in which areas.

“It is my hope that the ongoing City of Winnipeg housing inventory will clearly illuminate the need for more availability of low-income housing and the City can focus on a development plan, working with other levels of government, with a mandate for building more units that are within reach for those on EIA or the working poor.” Housing Expert 1, June 26, 2017

Creation of low-income housing in Winnipeg is mainly a Provincial responsibility according to *OurWinnipeg*, but as Housing Expert 1 points out, there is potential for stronger governmental partnerships to ensure low-income units are a priority. Some modest preservation of low-income housing in Winnipeg on the other hand, is currently being done through City of Winnipeg initiatives including the WHRC and HRIR. Community organizations take more of an active approach in preserving housing through internal and external improvement programs. There is however a greater focus from the Property, Planning and Development Department at the City of Winnipeg and City Council on the development of new housing than there is on the preservation of existing forms of low-income housing. There are many reasons for this including that rooming houses, especially unlicensed rooming houses, are often unsafe and were established with disregard for City policy, zoning by-laws and building codes. While there is an obvious need to abide by City policy when establishing housing, there is also a great need for more low-income housing to be made available and for existing low-income housing to remain intact. For both licensed and unlicensed rooming houses to remain intact, several interviewees discussed the private management structure of rooming houses as needing to change towards a public or non-profit management structure. Once again, the lack of effort to preserve rooming houses was also attributed to a lack of political will:

“I think if we could get the funding or financing, we would love to buy all the rooming houses in the neighbourhood, start fixing them up, get grants to do this and that, but the funding piece isn’t there and I don’t think the willingness to do that is there.” Housing Expert 4, October 11, 2017

The idea of non-profit organizations managing rooming houses was also advocated by the West Broadway Community Organization representative:

“The private market is not maintaining these buildings well or adequately addressing core housing need, we would like Winnipeg to follow the lead of other jurisdictions by protecting rooming houses, purchasing them if they are on the market or assuming ownership when operators chronically violate bylaws. Ideally, these City-owned buildings could be managed by non-profit housing providers, renovated through government programs, with training offered locally to area residents. Presently, there are no policies or programs at the City level that come anywhere close to what I’ve described.” WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

The City of Winnipeg may not have the funds available, or willingness to make the funds available to be able to purchase rooming houses outright. The City of Winnipeg however would not need to do so if there were policies in place allowing enforcement of penalties on rooming house operators who were consistently violating bylaws. One such penalty, as suggested by WBCO 1, could be to assume ownership after continual non-compliance by the rooming house operator. The City could then partner with a non-profit organization that could help to manage and revitalize the home. Currently, the City has a process by which they can purchase homes from people who are behind on their taxes or have outstanding penalties. This process, referred to earlier in Section 5.2.4, is called a Tax Sale.

“A Tax Sale is conducted annually and includes properties with three years of unpaid taxes and penalties (i.e., current year plus the two preceding years). In the City of Winnipeg, the Tax Sale is not a public auction as the City exercises its right, under legislation, to be the sole purchaser of properties listed in Tax Sale. The Tax Sale is the start of a process that may, or may not, lead to the City acquiring Title to the property. What happens, in effect, is that the City purchases the Tax Sale Certificate which, after the passage of one full year from the date of the

Sale, will entitle the City to apply for ownership of the property if it has not been redeemed. Should this happen, the City acquires the property for the amount of outstanding taxes.” (City of Winnipeg 2018c)

In Section 5.2.4 the City of Winnipeg planner interviewee identified there are still significant expenses attached to tax sales the City incurs, and there is hesitancy to give away the properties purchased through tax sales when the City could instead sell them. The interviewee also identified, however, that the City is working on finding solutions to this issue, because homes from tax sales can contribute towards the creation of more low-income housing in the future. Preservation of rooming houses could also be impacted by a program or policy like a tax sale partnership between non-profit organizations and the City. Rather than being shut down when a rooming house is not complying with building codes, zoning bylaws, or incurring penalties, the rooming house could be purchased in a similar manner to what occurs in a tax sale. The property could then be improved, brought up to code, rezoned and managed through partnerships between the City and non-profits such as community organizations. The process for legalizing a rooming house is a tedious one, but there are tools that could be used to expedite or ease the process.

“You can't build a rooming house now. It doesn't fit into the zoning criteria and you can't significantly change a rooming house because again, it doesn't fit. You can re-zone, but that is expensive and many rooming house landlords, I have been told, are not willing to go through that process. The City has not put in place any tools that would support that. It could waive fees, it could expedite processes, those are things that cities can do, but it hasn't” Housing Expert 3, August 31, 2017

This excerpt highlights just a couple of the many tools and programs the City of Winnipeg could utilize moving forward to advance their low-income housing preservation efforts, especially with active support from community organizations. Examples exist elsewhere in Canada where similar losses of low-income housing have occurred. One example is the City

of Toronto's support for the Parkdale Pilot Project which sought to revitalize rooming houses and bring them up to code to be preserved and ensure the safety of tenants.

The Parkdale Pilot Project was a responsive program to increasing conflict surrounding the prevalence and safety of rooming houses in the Parkdale area of Toronto. The project took place within a ten-year time frame from 1999 – 2009 and despite some challenges with staff and government turnover, legalized 80 rooming houses, providing approximately 800 units. The Parkdale Pilot Project "helped landlords legalize and license their buildings while improving tenant safety" (Campsie 2018, p. 28). Legalization of the units was made possible through the formation of site-specific bylaws for each property. The project also offered the opportunity for participating property owners to be subject to a lower tax rate on their properties. Once the properties had been brought up to code and legalized, they were inspected annually by the City to ensure continued compliance with codes (Campsie 2018). This type of initiative was attempted in Winnipeg through the implementation of the Residential Buildings Fire Safety Bylaw 4304/86, which gave property owners 10 years to comply with the new codes enacted through this bylaw. What this program lacked in comparison to the Parkdale Pilot Project was direct support from the City, both financially through incentivization and through policy, for property owners to bring their buildings to compliance. The Parkdale Pilot Project was not without its own flaws. The project took more time than expected to complete, lasting ten-years rather than the originally planned two years and was not well-documented by the City, due to turnover in the staff people involved in and overseeing the project (Campsie 2018). Figure 6 summarizes both the successes and the failures of this project:

Components	Evaluation
Site-specific by-laws	Succeeded at developing site-specific by-laws for each participating property
Licensing	Succeeded at licensing the majority of properties that have participated in the project although there are still several landlords that need to apply for a license
Taxation	Failed to monitor rental reductions due to a reduction in property taxes
Enforcement	Failed to enforce any noncompliant landlords or develop an enforcement strategy
De-housing	Succeeded at limiting the impact of tenant disruption and resettlement even though the project failed to develop a tenant relocation strategy
Affordability	Succeeded in maintaining affordable rents in bachelorette apartments in Parkdale

Figure 6: Successes and Failures of Parkdale Pilot Project

Image Source: Simon 2009, p. 25

The Parkdale Pilot Project is one example where a Canadian city not only made an effort to preserve truly affordable housing, but also explicitly recognized the value of rooming house units along the spectrum of housing options in the City. An earlier interview comment by the current City of Winnipeg Planner (see Section 5.2.2) stated the City of Winnipeg does not have interest in attempting to implement a program like the Parkdale Pilot Project or re-implementing the process attempted alongside Bylaw 4304. Despite the stated unwillingness on the City of Winnipeg's part to forgive rooming house landlords for operating illegally, there is a lesson to be learned about the City of Toronto's recognition through policy and planning that rooming house units are valuable and can exist as an adequate housing option for low-income residents. Rather than just giving time for landlords of rooming houses to bring the homes into compliance with fire codes and zoning bylaws, the Parkdale Pilot Project offered City of Toronto staff time and resources to help landlords do so. In doing this, the City of Toronto was able to directly monitor the quality of the Parkdale rooming house units. The opinion of most interviewees regarding the possibility of implementing a similar project again in Winnipeg was favourable, but the project would have to be adapted to better suit the Winnipeg context:

“The Toronto idea is a good one, what I really like about it, what is possible here, is looking at rooming houses as part of a continuum, a vital part of the solution. Their model looks at long term costs and encourages innovation, it sees rooming houses as an existing resource

and respects associated units as irreplaceable. That's an attitude that we should definitely adopt here. What it would look like here would be a little different because of our building code but we'd need to push the province and shift that, perhaps to designate rooming houses as something separate and unique." WBCO 1, July 10, 2017

Another example of a City adopting the perspective of low-income units being irreplaceable and taking proactive action to ensure no further loss of low-income housing units is occurring in Vancouver. The City of Vancouver has implemented a “bylaw aimed at preventing tenant displacement and the losing of [Single Room Accommodation] housing stock by regulating building alteration, conversion, and demolition” (Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust 2017, p.11). According to the City of Vancouver, Single Room Accommodations (SRAs) include SROs, rooming houses and non-market housing that have rooms with under 320 square feet of space (City of Vancouver 2018). The bylaw, Single Room Accommodation Bylaw No. 8733, states that a room that has been designated as an SRA may not be converted or demolished without replacement, or relocation of the tenant to a unit of equal or lesser rent unless the owner is willing to pay a fee of \$125,000 per unit lost (City of Vancouver 2003).

Conversion of low-income housing in Vancouver into market-rate housing was more common than it is in Winnipeg due to a faster growth rate and less open space on which to develop. The city of Winnipeg however is expecting significant growth in the coming years (City of Winnipeg 2011a) and could benefit from a proactive bylaw prohibiting development that displaces low-income tenants. The City of Winnipeg does also have a condition within the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* that developments will not be supported if they lead to the loss of rental units unless those units are replaced. Unlike in the city of Vancouver, the policy item referenced here (City of Winnipeg 2013, p.6) does not include any condition stating the tenants of lost units must not be displaced, nor are there any tenant-focused elements to the policy at all.

The Key Informants highlighted there is a lot of work to be done in Winnipeg if protecting or improving low-income housing, especially rooming houses are to be prioritized within our plans and policies. There have also been policies identified through the document review that could both encourage and discourage the preservation of low-income housing. The next chapter will summarize the findings of the interviews and the document reviews to determine the impact current policies and plans have on preservation.

Chapter 6 Findings

This Chapter presents the findings of the document research and key informant interviews through a summary of the key points of the analysis in Chapter 5. The summaries of each research method are followed by the responses to the key research questions presented in Section 1.3.

6.1 Document Research Summary

The City of Winnipeg documents reviewed for this study outline broad, long-term development goals with a wide range of priorities, of which housing is a major one. A prominent focus within the City of Winnipeg policy and planning documents is the idea that areas should be “complete”, diverse and should accommodate a broad range of the population. Affordability is mentioned throughout the documents as being an important element in housing development and the City identifies many strategies to work towards creating more affordable options and types of housing throughout the city. The documents also note a clear intention to partner with other levels of government, developers and non-profit organizations to achieve the outlined policy and planning perspectives. In agreement with the City of Winnipeg, the West Broadway documents reviewed highlight the importance of affordable housing and housing variety as well.

The notion that housing should be affordable for all residents, including low-income ones, is more obvious however within the West Broadway documents than in the City documents. This is likely due to West Broadway being an inner-city area that has experienced a greater proportional increase in housing costs and hosts a much higher percentage of low-income residents than the rest of the city. Given the demographics of the area there is more concern about potential displacement. This also leads to a much greater emphasis in the West Broadway documents on preserving the low-income housing that exists through pathways such as minor

interior and exterior fix-up programs, like the Rooming House Outreach Program. Small improvements to existing homes are less likely to greatly increase the cost than major renovations which makes minor fix-ups a good preservation option. City of Winnipeg documents do reference rehabilitation, redevelopment and reinvestment which can take many forms, but there is an emphasis also on preserving community character. In many places, this emphasis can be easily interpreted as intending to limit displacement.

A key aspect the City of Winnipeg planning and policy documents lack is specificity. There is limited mention of specific regulatory tools the City are using, or are considering using, to encourage creation or preservation of low-income housing, or even affordable housing. There is also no direct reference to rooming houses and SROs, and very limited reference to low-income or social housing in general, across all of the City documents reviewed. The City of Winnipeg makes clear the responsibility for the creation of these housing types does not lie with them, but they also neglect to identify any major role in preservation. The issue for West Broadway, which hosts many rooming houses and low-income residents, is that there is no identification of the necessity of preserving low-income housing. This also means there is nothing within the policy protecting low-income housing from being replaced or removed altogether. While one provision of the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* states affordable housing removed to make way for development must be replaced by an equivalent amount of affordable housing, there is no guarantee to the tenant, and it is very unlikely, that the replacement housing will be available at the same cost as that which was removed. The City of Winnipeg could take more responsibility for protecting low-income housing by implementing policies to ensure low-income tenants who are displaced by development have access to alternative units at the same cost as their previous unit.

In contrast, there is an emphasis specifically on low-income housing within the West Broadway documents reviewed. Whether through preservation, or encouragement of new developments fitting within the existing characteristics of the neighbourhood, WBCO and the residents of the community consulted to create community plans, rooming houses specifically are important. Most of the objectives contained within the West Broadway community planning documents relating to housing emphasize the need to preserve existing units and reinvest in those that are degrading.

Not surprisingly, the West Broadway documents also highlight the importance of interacting with tenants and with landlords of housing units in the area. Interacting with the people who live in and own low-income units in the West Broadway neighbourhood was noted in the documents as being important for their preservation. As demonstrated through the RHOP (see Section 5.2.3), encouraging tenants to engage with community can help to provide a sense of place, belonging and pride. These feelings can encourage people to do what they can to ensure the adequacy of their homes remains intact. For landlords and homeowners, interaction with the WBCO is an important way to gain access to property improvement programs and knowledge of existing social support for either themselves or the tenants if needed. Accessibility and proximity to residents is a major factor for community organizations to determine and advocate for the needs of the community. Proximity directly to residents is something the City understandably lacks due largely to very limited staff capacity and underinvestment in the housing department. Distance between the Planning, Property and Development Department and residents can however be bridged, and often is bridged, by community organizations.

6.2 Key Informant Research Summary

Through the key informant research, I found both the City of Winnipeg and West Broadway Community Organization feature many strengths and opportunities for preserving low-income housing. The main strengths identified were the willingness to work collaboratively and to consult with communities. As well, there leaders at both the City and community levels who identify the importance of accommodating low-income residents through a variety of affordable, adequate housing options. One of the notable ways the City has contributed to preserving low-income housing is through the WHRC and the HRIR (see Section 5.2.1). Both the WHRC and HRIR were recognized by some key informants as being very important sources for neighbourhood organizations to tap into for funding their programming or being used to help fund staff positions such as Housing Coordinators. Funding for both programming and staffing was acknowledged as being hard to come by. It is important the City continues to encourage the use of the WHRC and HRIR funding for such purposes.

Key informants highlighted strengths of the City's role in preservation of affordable housing, while also identifying the areas of potential action where the City lacks leadership. Another strength beyond the WHRC and HRIR funding pools was the fact that the City supports and funds the creation of neighbourhood housing plans. The housing plans are tools used as reference points for future development in their respective area. However, the former City of Winnipeg planner interviewee noted the implementation of neighbourhood housing plans was not well supported after their creation (see Section 5.3.3).

Ensuring there is a focus on low-income housing preservation and creation is one of the areas the City is not playing a big enough part in, according to many of the key informants. As established through the review of the City of Winnipeg policy and planning documents, the City

outlines the responsibility for low-income or social housing as a provincial and federal responsibility (see Section 4.4.1). Several of the key informants disagreed with this position and believed the City should be more proactive around low-income housing such as rooming houses and SROs rather than their current reactive stance on forming policy around these forms of tenure. One key informant noted some policies governing rooming houses have even contributed to the loss of over 50% of rooming house and SRO units in the inner-city (see Section 5.2.2).

One proactive approach to rooming house preservation was noted by a planner interviewed. The Planning, Property and Development Department at the City is actively encouraging the Province to adapt the building code so it includes code to apply to rooming houses (see Section 5.2.2). Another proactive tool the City uses to monitor the safety standard of rooming houses are semi-annual inspections. Inspections no doubt will ensure adequacy is maintained in rooming house units, but for the ones deemed inadequate, the City does not offer much support to landlords to upgrade their properties (see Section 5.2.2). Despite some recognition among key informants of proactive approaches to rooming house preservation, the overall sentiment was the City should be doing far more regarding low-income housing, including rooming houses, to protect low-income tenants against displacement.

There are ample opportunities for the City and for community organizations to improve efforts to preserve low-income housing and protecting tenants from displacement. Many of these opportunities were identified or alluded to through the key informant interviews. One opportunity is to invest further financially or accommodate more in policy and planning, the goals of the WHRC who maintain affordable and low-income housing. The fund already exists and was viewed by key informants as being one of the most useful tools the City has for preserving low-income housing. If the fund were to be further invested in and the goals better

accommodated, the WHRC could expand their impact. Another opportunity highlighted in multiple interviews as a current weakness, is the City of Winnipeg's leadership. Most key informants expressed there is a lack of leadership within City Council. If there were leaders with a stronger passion for preserving low-income housing, there would likely be policy and action plans created to realize the preservation priorities of communities.

For community organizations, opportunities exist in the form of both partnerships and programs. Many interviewees suggested fix-up programs are effective at a generally low cost. The WBCO enacted the RHOP which demonstrated great results that could be replicated by other community organizations, and in some cases are already being replicated. However, community organizations require funding and political support in order to establish these programs. Community organizations tend to be very good at forming partnerships with City government for short term funding agreement, but perhaps these partnerships could be expanded to include home ownership or apartment ownership. Ownership is risky for non-profit organizations because they require sustained funding to maintain ownership, which is hard to come by. If it were easier to secure funding for, non-profit operating of low-income housing would allow for it to be well-maintained and the use of these building would be easily justified.

While the City of Winnipeg does encourage affordable housing to be developed, there needs to be a concerted effort to do so if they are to work towards preserving the existing low-income housing. Without recognition in formal policy or planning frameworks of the benefit of preserving low-income housing, even housing not fully compliant with code, developers or home owners have no incentive or restrictions in regard to replacing these units. Rooming houses and SROs need to be recognized and preserved by the City of Winnipeg to prevent further losses of these units, which are often the only available option for residents between being housed and

being homeless. Revitalization and renewal of pre-existing rooming houses and SRO units, while easier said than done, will help to preserve the low-income housing stock in Winnipeg. There are many programs and tools the City of Winnipeg could be using in order to better preserve rooming houses. Existing or former programs like the WBCO's RHOP and the City's MHRP (see Section 5.3.3) were recognized as being highly effective for supporting minor improvements to housing units in need of rehabilitation or reinvestment.

The City has also provided support for the *Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg* which points to preserving rooming houses as an important part of the 10-year plan (End Homelessness Winnipeg 2014). Despite the creation of low-income housing resting in the hands of the Provincial and Federal governments, preserving what already exists in Winnipeg should be a priority of the City of Winnipeg through the implementation of planning tools and support for community programs.

“As a matter of finding funding for those programs, the City could find it because you could probably look at the economic impacts of preserving this kind of housing and housing low-income people. Even the importance of preserving rooming houses was part of recognising the Plan to End Homelessness, and rooming houses were part of that plan because they are a part of the housing available for homeless people.”

Housing Expert 2, September 20, 2017

Some of these programs and tools may be better administered by Community Organizations. Community Organizations were identified by all interviewees as being strong partners for the City, and in some cases being leaders, for working toward preserving rooming houses. In cases where a Community Organization creates a program for the purposes of revitalizing and renewing rooming houses, or any other existing form of low-income housing, they should be supported as much as possible by the City's Planning, Property and Development Department.

6.3 Revisiting the Key Questions

Q1) In what ways do existing housing plans and policies affecting the West Broadway area address the preservation of low-income housing in West Broadway, particularly SROs?

Through the document review, it was clear there is not a major emphasis by the City of Winnipeg on preserving low-income forms of housing like rooming houses and SROs. Both forms of tenure are hardly mentioned throughout any of the City of Winnipeg policy and planning documents, while being a primary focus within the West Broadway neighbourhood documents. The City of Winnipeg documents do however include a focus on both creating and preserving “Affordable Housing”, which, by definition, encompasses low-income housing. Preservation is addressed through one particular policy item stating when affordable housing is removed to make way for other development, it must be replaced by an equal number of units of affordable housing. The replacement of lost units is one way of preserving the number of affordable units overall, but does not address the preservation of existing units as they currently exist. The City also encourages the development of Affordable Housing through incentives, though their policies never specify which incentives.

The City of Winnipeg identifies West Broadway as a Mature Community throughout the documents reviewed. The classification of Mature Communities is an important identifier because there is an emphasis in Mature Communities on preservation of existing character, appropriate infill development, and conservation and rehabilitation of existing housing stock. In these documents, the City of Winnipeg does not specify that preservation will be focussed on preserving low-income housing, and does not make mention of rooming houses or SROs, but in broad terms, rooming houses and SROs can be classified within existing housing stock.

The West Broadway Community Organization documents reviewed highlight similar but more specific housing priorities than the City plans and policies reviewed. All the WBCO plans reviewed specify the importance of not only low-income housing preservation, and also directly discuss the importance of the rooming house and SRO stock in the neighbourhood. In alignment with the City of Winnipeg, reinvestment and rehabilitation in housing that is degrading is also an important element of the WBCO documents.

One of the main differences between the WBCO and the City of Winnipeg's approaches to low-income housing is how the WBCO documents address low-income housing much more specifically than the City of Winnipeg documents. The WBCO documents clearly outline the types of housing most prevalent in the neighbourhood, their importance, and how to support their preservation not only through physical improvements, but also social supports for tenants and homeowners. *OurWinnipeg*, *Complete Communities* and the City's policy documents must encompass the priorities for the entire city of Winnipeg, so these documents often state priorities in a vague way. The non-specific nature of the documents, while considered necessary in order to encompass the whole city, is not helpful for providing direction or support for specific neighbourhoods, such as West Broadway.

Several cities across Canada and the United States could be looked at for examples of how policy and programs are stated and implemented more strongly by municipal governments. Primary examples are identified in the conclusions Section 7.3.1 as possible precedents for the City of Winnipeg or future researchers to explore for applicability in Winnipeg.

Q2) What programs and tools exist to preserve rooming houses and SROs in Winnipeg, particularly in the West Broadway area?

City of Winnipeg Programs:

The City of Winnipeg has two primary programs that contribute greatly to the preservation of low-income housing in the city. The first is the Winnipeg Housing and Renewal Corporation (WHRC), which was found to be among the strongest City programs for preserving or creating low-income housing. The WHRC is mandated to develop affordable rental and home ownership, with a focus on older residential neighbourhoods and low-income housing. The WHRC was a partner agency in the development of the Bell Hotel and are currently the property managers of the Bell Hotel which is one of Winnipeg's largest SROs. The WHRC was identified as an entity that could potentially purchase or manage low-income housing such as rooming houses or more SROs. The other program identified in my research as being a strong contributor to low-income housing preservation is the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve (HRIR). The HRIR helps to fund the salaries of housing coordinators in community organizations and provides funds that contribute to housing within Housing Improvement Zones (HIZs). The identification of some areas as HIZs is also a very important designation the City has made including West Broadway as a designated area. The HRIR fund is funneled into the HIZ areas and has been very well utilized in West Broadway, contributing to multiple affordable and low-income housing projects.

Interior and Exterior Fix-up Programs:

The West Broadway Community Organization's Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP) was the primary fix-up program researched. The RHOP was originally aimed to revitalize homes in the West Broadway area through minor interior and exterior renovations. The program transformed into a more socially oriented program that not only included a renovation

component, but also a support component for residents and landlords. The renovation element of the program addresses preservation through improving the safety and appearance of homes. The social support element also impacts preservation by helping landlords improve their ability to maintain their properties and helping residents get the support they need to better maintain their living spaces. The Property Improvement Program that was, and is still currently running through the WBCO, is another example of an effective exterior fix-up grant the City provides funding for.

Fix-up grants from the City of Winnipeg such as the one contributing to the Property Improvement Program in West Broadway are also available in other neighbourhoods identified as HIZs. In addition to funding community organization fix-up programs, the City of Winnipeg also offers grants directly through the Minimum Home Repair Program (MHRP). The MHRP grants are only available however in four neighbourhoods.

Regulatory Tools:

The following regulatory tools were identified to be potentially applicable in Winnipeg for helping to preserve low-income housing:

- Expedited approvals – The lengthy and arduous process of attempting to license properties to an appropriate designation for rooming houses was determined to be a barrier to preserving already converted rooming houses that were not licensed properly. Just as the City of Toronto did through the Parkdale Pilot Project (see Section 5.3.4), the City of Winnipeg could fast track licensing applications for providers of low-income housing units and could assist them with legalizing their properties.
- Development/Property Management Levy – developers or for-profit property managers in the inner-city or Downtown could be charged a minimal fee that is pooled into a fund for

the preservation of low-income housing. This tool could be used in conjunction with a tool like inclusionary zoning whereby a developer or property manager could opt not to include affordable or low-income units in their buildings and instead would have to pay into a preservation levy fund.

- Inclusionary zoning – the Province has developed inclusionary zoning legislation as a tool to encourage developers to include a percentage of affordable housing in their developments, but the City has not implemented this tool yet. Inclusionary zoning was identified in this research as a tool that would encourage the development of more affordable housing, which is not the same issue as preserving existing low-income housing, but would be useful for preserving the overall number of affordable and/or low-income units.

Q2a. What are the primary barriers to implementing these programs and tools?

Barriers to implementing these programs and tools identified in this research include:

- Limited funds available to sustain effective programming
- Shifting government priorities
- Limited emphasis from the City of Winnipeg on low-income housing
- Lack of staff capacity at the City and community organization level
- Lack of follow through on objectives identified in the *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan*
- Minimal political will to invest in low-income housing
- Lack of recognition of rooming houses or SROs as important or acceptable forms of housing
- Rigid building codes
- No appropriate zoning to encompass rooming houses
- Stigmatization of rooming houses, SROs and their residents
- Lack of upscaling programs with proven effectiveness
- Lack of specificity within City plans and policies
- Limited research on the applicability for the Winnipeg context of programs implemented in other cities

- Low tolerance for units that do not entirely meet building code and zoning requirements
- Limited supports for landlords and homeowners to bring inadequate buildings into compliance

Q3) What roles, strategies and programs can a neighbourhood association undertake to advance the preservation of affordable housing, with particular attention to SRO housing?

Community organizations are typically publicly funded and do not have much capacity to implement programs on their own. Continuing to work creatively towards goals aligning with the priorities outlined in *OurWinnipeg* will put community organizations in a good position to gain more support from all levels of government. Programs and activities that preserve existing forms of housing align with many of the priorities of *OurWinnipeg* and as such, should be supported by the City. Community organizations could approach the City as less of a potential funding source and more of a partner that can leverage other funding or implement regulatory tools in their neighbourhoods. One particular regulatory tool that would impact the preservation of rooming houses and SROs is expedited approval processes for rezoning to converted residential dwellings with shared facilities (see Section 5.2.2).

As discussed in the document review (Section 4.2.2), one of the enabling strategies for the direction of eliminating derelict buildings (City of Winnipeg 2011a) is to partner with not-for-profit housing organizations to support them in acquiring and redeveloping derelict or vacant houses. Forming programs around the goal of redevelopment or reinvestment would be, and is already in many areas, one way community organizations can work with the City of Winnipeg to achieve one of the many goals of *OurWinnipeg*. Citing the alignment between renovation programs and *OurWinnipeg* objectives within funding applications and when requesting support from City planners or Councillors would be beneficial for community organizations, when trying to implement programs such as RHOP.

Community organizations operate differently within every neighbourhood because they must respond to the differing needs of residents. However, there are similarities in how community organizations operate within the overarching policies and planning structures of the City of Winnipeg. West Broadway Community Organization has been very active in their attempts to assist rooming house tenants and homeowners. Through the Rooming House Outreach Program, WBCO was able to improve the adequacy of several rooming houses alongside offering support and advocacy for tenants and homeowners. Programs like the RHOP could be scaled-up, or replicated to be implemented in other inner-city neighbourhoods by the respective community organizations.

The WBCO has also managed to form strong relationships with City planners and developers in the West Broadway neighbourhood. This kind of relationship building enhances the opportunity for community organizations to be consulted through planning endeavours or through development planning processes. It is likely that other community organizations are engaging in the same kinds of relationship building with City representatives in their areas, but if this is not the case, WBCO could be used a replicable example.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the practical findings of the practicum research. The recommendations presented here are intended to inform future planning, policy and programming dealing with the preservation of low-income housing in inner-city Winnipeg. Immediately following this Chapter is a brief Epilogue presenting upcoming opportunities for advancing low-income housing preservation efforts for both community organizations and the City of Winnipeg.

7.1 Implications for Other Community Organizations

This research has highlighted both the strengths and weaknesses of the City of Winnipeg in their accommodation of community organizations efforts to preserve rooming houses and SROs in their neighbourhoods. Using West Broadway Community Organization as an example, current City plans and housing policies do not accommodate the housing needs of low-income residents in a way that matches the priorities of community organizations. The City of Winnipeg must operate in a way that accommodates the needs of the entire city and is also manageable within their financial limitations. The City of Winnipeg would be unable to put all of their resources toward low-income housing because they require some profit in order to maintain the sustainability of their activities. WBCO and other community organizations, however, can help to bridge the gap between the City of Winnipeg's need to balance the financial needs of the city with the needs of low-income residents. By implementing innovative programs that combine capital from the City, the Province and private funding sources, community organizations are able to respond to the needs of their specific communities in ways the City does not have the capacity to.

Community organizations need to continue to work closely with the City, particularly the Planning, Property and Development Department to get their priorities heard and supported both through policy and through funding partnerships. The City is not shy in *OurWinnipeg, Complete Communities* and their housing policy documents to identify that they do not bear the responsibility for financing low-income or social housing, but they do highlight the opportunity to work with other forms of Government to do this. Community organizations can also tap into support from the Province of Manitoba or the Federal Government through a variety of funding streams, which takes pressure off the City to have to support them. The City then needs to do a better job at supporting community organizations through policy and regulatory planning tools, which community organizations must continue to advocate for.

7.2 Recommendations for Future Plans, Policies and Programs

Future City plans should identify an appropriate role in low-income housing preservation and should identify specific regulatory tools that apply to preservation of low-income housing. Due to financial limitations, the City's role in financing the preservation of low-income housing may have to be confined to collaborating with higher levels of government to encourage investment. Completion of the pending City of Winnipeg housing needs assessment should help with this. After the assessment is complete, the City of Winnipeg will have a clear outline for higher levels of government regarding the types and amounts of housing needed to accommodate current and projected populations of specific neighbourhoods.

One of the things missing from current planning and policy documents is the identification and naming of Reinvestment Areas. This would create better opportunities for community organizations to apply for funding or to create programs that would be supported by the City, because they would know whether their goals align with broader city priorities. The

City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013 identified a target for the City to come up with criteria for determining which areas would qualify as Reinvestment Areas, but the City has yet to follow through with this objective.

Within future plans and policies, the City should also recognize the importance of adequate rooming houses along the housing spectrum in Winnipeg. Without recognition in plans and policies, this housing form is challenging to make a case for preserving. However, the number of people living in rooming houses in the inner-city and beyond represent a significant portion of the population of Winnipeg whose rights to housing need to be acknowledged and protected. An alternative, more adequate form of low-income housing than rooming houses may be an ideal replacement for rooming houses along the spectrum of housing options. Until such an option exists, rooming houses and their tenants deserve to be more protected by planning and policy measures in the city of Winnipeg.

7.3 Recommendations for Further Research

The research has highlighted several pathways for academic research that would further the understanding of how planning and policy can improve the City of Winnipeg's ability to preserve low-income housing. Section 7.3 provides an overview of the recommendations for further research that would be most helpful in improving the City of Winnipeg's knowledge around effective preservation efforts.

7.3.1 Precedent Studies

More research needs to be done on current programs being implemented in cities across Canada to preserve low-income housing. While my research did include a brief exploration of existing rooming house and SRO preservation efforts in Toronto and Vancouver, the applicability of these interventions in Winnipeg is yet to be explored. Future research could

determine whether the rooming house and SRO preservation interventions in Toronto, Vancouver, or other precedents may be suitable as interventions within the policy and planning structures of Winnipeg. The Toronto example of the Parkdale Pilot Project (see Section 5.3.4) could be explored to determine what worked well and what did not, and further to determine the applicability of the project in a specified area of Winnipeg. The example from Vancouver in which the City of Vancouver implemented a by-law to prevent tenant displacement of SRO tenants could also be investigated to determine applicability to rooming houses (see Section 5.3.4). The fee developers are subject to pay if they do not relocate the tenant to a unit of equal or lesser cost could also be explored as revenue for a maintenance fund for rooming houses.

Other cities across North America are using innovative policy and planning tools to encourage both the preservation and development of low-income housing, some of which could be beneficial to further explore for applicability in Winnipeg. For example, Jersey City is using a tax abatement program to encourage development in certain areas over others, paired with inclusive zoning requiring developers to include affordable housing. This program began in 2013, encouraging developers to develop in certain areas by offering a short or long-term tax abatement depending on the particular area. In order to expand affordable housing throughout the city, Jersey City offered longer-term abatements to developers whose developments are in less sought-after areas and include affordable housing (Misra 2015). This type of tax abatement program may not be effective for developing new units in Winnipeg, but the idea of offering a tax abatement for owners of low-income housing is something that could be explored, presuming those units were well-managed. This is one of many incentive programs the City of Winnipeg could adopt, pending a thorough examination of applicability within Winnipeg's policy and governance structure.

Further from home are the innovative ways in which several Australian cities are addressing rooming houses. The City of Boroondora in Victoria, Australia offers a Registered Rooming House Subsidy that provides rooming house operators with the opportunity to apply for up to \$3,000 per property, once each year, to improve the safety, health and wellbeing of tenants (City of Boroondora 2018). Although \$3,000 may not seem like a lot of money considering how expensive housing renovations can be, the opportunity to make small improvements over time may be enough to prevent many rooming houses from falling into disrepair. Another example from Australia is the City of Casey, which has developed a full, City-led Rooming House Strategy that outlines planning and policy directions for rooming houses in the City. The strategy includes provisions that the City will make considerations for large rooming houses to be located close to amenities and for safety measures to be met in their City “Planning Scheme” (City of Casey 2015, p. 14). The strategy even includes a provision stating Council will promote best practice for operating rooming houses through a previously created tool book. Further, the City strategy identifies the importance of rooming houses among their available housing options by even including a suggestion to encourage the development of new rooming houses. These will provide “a greater supply of communal facilities than what is outlined in the minimum standards” (City of Casey 2015, p. 15). The strategy both promotes the general operation of registered rooming houses and encourages rooming house operators to strive to enhance tenants’ quality of life.

7.3.2 Alternative Low-Income Housing Forms

Rooming houses are not the most ideal form of housing due to the often-inadequate living conditions and the lack of support provided to both tenants and homeowners. Further research needs to be done on finding adequate alternatives to rooming houses for low-income residents.

Rooming houses have been identified in this research as being an essential form of housing for people with low-incomes, and in many cases, the only available option between being housed and being homeless. Despite their importance, rooming houses have been identified as unsafe and inadequate in many ways. Rooming houses also have a negative stigma associated with them which makes them unpopular to address politically or accommodate through planning mechanisms. If other, better-supported options existed rooming houses may become obsolete. Alternatives could include more purposefully built forms of SRO housing such as dorm-style housing units, as originally suggested by Housing Expert 4 (see Section 5.2.4). Dorm-style housing units could be designed as single room units with shared facilities and could be made to be cost efficient. Initial construction would be expensive, but capital subsidies could be provided by different levels of government, including through the National Housing Strategy discussed in the Epilogue following this Chapter. Other options for innovative low-income housing should also be explored to determine their suitability in the Winnipeg context. If the City of Winnipeg does not invest in creating alternatives, then the lack of support for preserving rooming houses could lead to a much larger homeless population.

7.3.3 Increasing the Role of Community Organizations

In the absence of municipal prioritization of adequate housing for low-income residents, community organizations have been innovators and leaders at addressing the needs of low-income populations. Community organizations are able to do this largely because of their proximity to their respective neighbourhoods and their ability to form personal relationships with residents to determine their needs and establish programs to support the identified needs. Further research should be done to determine how the City of Winnipeg can better support the effective activities by community organizations. Due to financial limitations, the City of Winnipeg may

not be able to support activity through funding increases, but other avenues of support should be explored. Avenues may include identifying and naming community organizations in official planning documents like *Our Winnipeg*, formally adopting neighbourhood housing plans as policy, or the City of Winnipeg creating secondary plans for inner-city neighbourhoods in partnership with community organizations.

7.3.4 Exploration of the Lack of Political Will to Invest in Low-Income Housing

Throughout the key informant research, one of the most consistently mentioned challenges for advancing low-income preservation in Winnipeg was the lack of political will in municipal government to prioritize investing in low-income housing. However, it was also mentioned that municipal government in the past has been more inclined to invest in low-income housing projects, including the somewhat recent case of the Bell Hotel. It would be useful to know why City Council has shifted away from prioritizing low-income and social housing projects in order to identify what might make them return to the levels of support they exhibited in the past for such projects.

An exploration of shifting priorities within municipal government more generally would also be useful. For example, the Property, Planning and Development Department was said by one interviewee to be much smaller now than it once was, which limits their capacity to be as involved in community planning as they once were. This is likely not a budget issue considering that the Winnipeg municipal budget has increased rather than decreased over the last few decades. The lack of investment in low-income housing and in community planning from the City of Winnipeg is likely more of an allocation issue. The City could choose to invest more of their budget in low-income and social housing but recently City Council has increased allocations to other areas of municipal spending instead such as the Police Service and Fire

Paramedic Service. Understanding the real reasons why City Council chooses not to allocate money or effort towards low-income and social housing anymore could help to identify how to encourage them to re-prioritize low-income housing and community involvement.

7.3.5 Exploring a Cost-Benefit Analysis Approach to Low-Income Housing Projects

There have been many studies that have identified the high cost of homelessness for governments and for tax payers. Homelessness is strongly correlated with mental and physical health issues and leads people to become more dependent on emergency and health care services. The cost of housing a homeless individual has been identified as being much cheaper than the average costs associated with that person not being housed and therefore utilizing publicly funded services much more frequently than they otherwise would. Highlighting the cost savings associated with a person being housed who would otherwise be homeless has already proven to be an effective policy tool. One of these cases was the expansion of the At Home/Chez Sois pilot project which was implemented in just five cities and later became a massive nation-wide housing program, Housing First. A cost-benefit analysis was done after the At Home/Chez Sois project was completed and was used to demonstrate the financial benefits to the project which aims to house chronically and episodically homeless Canadians.

Having seen the effectiveness of utilizing a cost-benefit analysis approach for encouraging investment in housing programs nationally, there is also a good chance that cost-benefit analyses could be used to encourage investment on a smaller scale as well. The cost-benefit of small-scale programs, including programs like the RHOP, should be further researched to help demonstrate their effectiveness and incentivize further investment from public funding sources.

7.4 Highlighting the City of Winnipeg's Housing Priorities

Policy and planning in Winnipeg demonstrate a very clear emphasis on the types of housing the City will support. Generally, this means supporting housing developments the City believes will result in revenue, rather than investing in the well-being of low-income residents. The most recent example of the City's prioritization of high-end residential dwellings involves the case of True North Square. City Council made the decision to waive a requirement associated with their Tax Increment Financing (TIF) policy that would have ensured 10% of the units in the development the TIF applies to are "Affordable Housing" (Mackinnon 2018). Upon completion, True North Square will bring 194 high-end rental and condominium units of housing to Downtown Winnipeg (True North Real Estate Development 2018). The developers will now benefit from the substantial perks of TIF through future savings on their property taxes, without having to accommodate lower-income residents by including affordable housing in the True North Square housing development. While the City's support for the True North development aligns with their goal to support Downtown development, their support does not in any way demonstrate support for affordable housing. The decision does not serve Winnipeggers in greatest need of adequate shelter, some of whom are left to reside in rooming houses due to a lack of affordable alternatives. City of Winnipeg plans, policies, tools and programs clearly do not sufficiently address, and to some extent completely disregard, the needs of low-income residents, including one of the most basic rights of ensuring that all residents have adequate shelter. The City of Winnipeg needs to reprioritize their plans and policies to reflect the pressing needs of residents who cannot afford to live in new builds downtown or in suburban regions.

Epilogue

The Government of Canada recently announced the first National Housing Strategy (NHS) in 25 years titled a “Place to Call Home”. The strategy includes a dedication of \$40 billion over the next 10 years to go towards the construction of up to 100,000 new affordable housing units and the repair and renewal of 240,000 existing affordable and social housing units (Brandon 2018). The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) will be delivering and leading the NHS on a federal scale (CMHC 2018a)

The NHS has multiple initiatives within it that could be important for advancing the preservation of low-income housing, as well as for providing community organizations with the opportunity to apply for funding to implement innovative housing programs. The first of these NHS initiatives is the National Housing Co-Investment Fund. The fund has two streams both open for application by community housing providers, municipalities, provinces and territories, Indigenous governments and organizations, and the private sector. The most pertinent of these two streams to the preservation of low-income housing is the Housing Repair and Renewal Stream. This stream will provide a 10-year total of \$2.26 billion for capital contributions and \$3.46 billion in loans to “repair and renew the existing community and affordable housing supply” (CMHC 2018b). Importantly, for rooming house or SRO housing projects, urgent repairs will be considered for exceptions to the streams’ preconditions for meeting minimum energy efficiency and accessibility requirements (CMHC 2018b).

The other stream of the Co-Investment Fund is the New Construction Stream which will help to create new affordable housing developments with investments of \$5.19 billion in loans and \$2.26 billion in capital contributions (CMHC 2018c). The NHS highlights that partnerships

between the housing provider and different levels of government are necessary for projects to be eligible for funding. This is in alignment with the City of Winnipeg's goal to partner with non-profit and community organizations to redevelop and renew existing housing and to develop new or infill housing (see Section 4.4.1). The NHS also has an Affordable Housing Innovation Fund for the development of new affordable housing. This fund will contribute \$200 million over the next five years to projects utilizing unique ideas and funding structures to help finance them. Municipalities and community housing organizations (CMHC 2018d).

A key element of the NHS especially important for non-profit housing providers and community organizations is that community housing sustainability and capacity building is identified as a priority action area in the strategy. Additionally, housing "vulnerable populations" is the primary priority area for action (CMHC 2018e). Community housing providers and community organizations in areas of Winnipeg such as West Broadway have large populations of people with mental health and addictions issues, homelessness, young adults and Indigenous peoples. These organizations have an opportunity through the above-mentioned funds to access substantial funding to improve and create affordable and low-income housing in their neighbourhoods. The City of Winnipeg also has an opportunity to access each of the above-mentioned funds and to partner with community housing providers to support the prevention of further loss of low-income housing units throughout the city.

The Government of Canada has called upon the Provinces to match their funding contribution over the next 10 years, but negotiations are still underway to determine if this will happen in Manitoba and elsewhere (Brandon 2018). The Government of Manitoba has not made any announcements yet in response to the National Housing Strategy and it will be interesting to see how they proceed. It would be beneficial for advancing low-income housing preservation if

the Province aligns with the NHS to prioritize the most vulnerable populations in our communities. Both the Government of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg have recently lagged in their efforts to consider the needs of low-income populations rather than just the populations who can still afford “affordable” housing. Hopefully, with the NHS identification of vulnerable populations as a priority area for action, this will change and the needs of those vulnerable populations in Winnipeg, and Manitoba more broadly, will be met. Community organizations and other non-profit housing providers should be prepared to engage in partnerships with the Province and the City of Winnipeg if the vulnerable populations in their areas are identified as a priority. Alternatively, if the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg continue to meet minimum “affordable” housing standards, community housing providers should be prepared to seek partnerships within the private sector to advance the low-income housing needs of their communities with the help of CMHC.

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Appendix A: Key Informant Interview Introduction and Schedule

Introduction for interviewee:

Hello (name of interviewee),

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research for this practicum. The interview to take place on (selected date) is intended to inform my research with the practical knowledge that only a person familiar with low-income housing would have. After reviewing the policy, planning and program documents related to the preservation of low-income housing, I am seeking to understand how these have influenced the efforts and actions of practitioners. The nature of this interview will be semi-structured. I encourage you to speak freely and openly about your professional experience, including any opinions you may hold about the current housing policies, plans and programs the City of Winnipeg and West Broadway Community Organization utilizes. The interview will be recorded with your written consent and in an effort to respect your privacy, your responses will be kept anonymous if you so choose.

I look forward to learning more about your work and experience.

Sincerely,

Breda Vosters

For more information please don't hesitate to contact me:

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Interview Questions:

1. What do you feel the City of Winnipeg does well in terms of supporting low-income housing preservation in the inner-city? 1a: What might they do poorly?
2. How do you think current housing policies in the city of Winnipeg impact the preservation of low-income housing, specifically SROs?
3. Winnipeg's guiding development plans, *OurWinnipeg* and *Complete Communities* use the term "affordable" several times, but never make reference to low-income housing, SROs, or rooming houses. What do you think this implies about the City's housing priorities, if anything?
4. The *City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013* states that one of the objectives of the policy is to encourage new housing that "establishes a sufficient supply of affordable, adequate and suitable housing throughout the city that meets the needs of the populations of Winnipeg:" Do you believe the City has worked toward this objective adequately so far? Why or Why not?

5. In your experience, are there any recent policies or planning measures (zoning, etc.) that have hindered the preservation, or lead to losses of low-income housing?
6. Is it important to continue to preserve rooming houses in the inner-city? Why or why not?
7a: Should this be the role of the City, neighbourhood associations, both, or neither?
Why?
7. Are you familiar with the Rooming House Outreach Program in West Broadway? Do you feel it has been effective or ineffective? Why?
8. Do you feel that policy and planning tools in Winnipeg have effectively assisted community organizations with programs like the Rooming House Outreach Program, or the preservation of low-income housing in general? (Zoning, for example)
9. What kinds of roles or strategies do you think neighbourhood associations should undertake to preserve low-income housing moving forward?
10. Toronto is an example of a Canadian city taking action to preserve and improve rooming houses, stemming from the Parkdale Pilot Program. (if they have not heard of the program I will explain it). How might a program like this could be implemented in Winnipeg, if at all? Why would or wouldn't it be effective?
11. Despite the difference in government and policy context, there are also some examples of rooming house preservation in Australia. One such example is the “Registered Rooming House Subsidy” in the city of Boroondara. This is a fund that is administered by the local government to selected “proprietors” who have applied for a grant to improve their property. The maximum amount awarded is \$3000 and improvements must fit into the areas of improved safety, health and well-being, or social inclusion of tenants. What are your thoughts about a program like this one being implemented in Winnipeg?
12. What kinds of changes do you think would be helpful for the City of Winnipeg to make in the areas of policy and planning to ensure that neighbourhood organizations are well supported for preserving low-income housing in core neighbourhoods?

Appendix B: Research Participant Information and Consent Form



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OF MANITOBA

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Faculty of Architecture

Statement of Informed Consent

Research Project Study: *Preserving Low-Income Housing in Winnipeg's Inner City: A case study of SROs in the West Broadway community*

Principal Investigator: Breda Vosters, Graduate Student, Master of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba

Advisory Committee: **Supervisor** – Dr. David van Vliet, Professor, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba

Introduction

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, please feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Study

The proposed research will explore the effectiveness of housing plans, policies and programs within West Broadway in their efforts to preserve low-income housing. The research will focus on the West Broadway area as a case study and will particularly examine the West Broadway Community Organization's (WBCO) Rooming House Outreach Program as the primary low-income housing program. This research has the potential to help ensure a future of affordable housing in core neighbourhoods of Winnipeg and may serve as a reference point for improvement in future plans, policies and programs. Some of the research will be gathered through semi-structured interviews with key informants in the City of Winnipeg's housing community. After these interviews have been analyzed, a questionnaire will also be sent out to participants reflecting the analysis results and asking you to rank certain barriers or opportunities by highest priority.

The Interview Process

If you choose to participate in this portion of the project, a time for an interview will be determined based upon what best suits your schedule. The interview will entail a series of open-ended questions (i.e. a semi-structured interview) about your professional experience working in the housing field or in the West Broadway area.

The interview will be done in person or over Skype depending on your preference, and is expected to be between 45 minutes and one hour in length. The location will be determined depending on what is comfortable, private, and accessible for both of us. You can feel free to decline to answer any questions and may end the interview at any time. Given your consent, the interview will be recorded using an audio recording device and will be transcribed shortly thereafter. If you would prefer not to be recorded, the interviewer will take notes by hand. After the transcription has been completed, the transcript will be sent to you to check for accuracy and any requested changes or omissions will be made prior to dissemination of the research.

If you choose to remain anonymous, all personal information will be omitted except for your professional affiliation as it will be essential for the research analysis for this to be acknowledged. If you are still identifiable based on this factor, the transcript may be altered to ensure your protection and any potentially compromising comments will be changed or deleted as you see fit. Pseudonyms will also be used unless you have stated that you would not like to remain anonymous.

The physical, psychological and/or emotional risks associated with this research are minimal. If you choose to participate, you will have the opportunity to share your knowledge, thoughts and opinions on the increasingly important urban issue of affordable housing.

Confidentiality

The interview transcription will be returned to you for review to seek your approval for use. Confidentiality will be provided at your request, which can be done by marking the corresponding box in question 7 on the form below. If confidentiality is requested, this process of sending you the transcription may occur more than once to ensure that any re-written versions of the transcription are approved. After obtaining your approval, the transcript will be analyzed and some of its' content will be included in the completed project as quotations. The questionnaire portion of the project will not include any direct references to any interviewees or any interviewees. It will present a summary of results based on a collective analysis and the wording will all be my own, not that of any of the participants. As such, this questionnaire will not present a threat to your anonymity.

Before the project is completed, the research data, including the voice recording and transcription of all interviews will be stored on a secure, password-protected computer. After the transcription has been approved, the voice recording file will be deleted from all devices. The written transcription will be deleted after completion of the project (February 2018).

Feedback and Dissemination

I will provide a copy of the transcription of your interview to review and approve before using for analysis and any form of dissemination. Your copy will be sent to you by whichever method you prefer (email, post, etc.) between 2 weeks and 1 month of the interview. After I have sent the transcript, you may take as much time as you need to review it before giving me approval for use or requesting alteration, but it would be much appreciated if this took around 3 weeks. If I do not receive any feedback after 5 weeks, I will not use your interview for analysis as I will not know if there is anything you should like to omit or alter and do not want to put your anonymity at risk without your full consent. If you have requested alterations after reviewing your transcript, these will be done within 2 weeks of your response and will be sent back to you. For this second round of review, it would be much appreciated if the time frame were around 2 weeks for your approval or request for alteration. The process will be repeated until approval is confirmed. You will also be provided with a copy of the final, approved practicum document in electronic or paper copy if you so choose. This is expected to be completed by February 2018.

The final practicum document will be disseminated in a hard copy format through the University of Manitoba/Fine Arts Library, and in an electronic format through the Library's MSpace website. The results of the project will also be presented at my oral defense.

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal from Study

This study is entirely based on voluntary participation. You are able to refuse to participate. If you choose to participate, you may also withdraw your involvement at any time. This can be done by emailing me at [REDACTED] or by phoning me at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] You may also opt out of answering any of the questions you are asked during the interview and are free to withdraw your participation after the interview has taken place. You will be able to withdraw participation at any point until the document is submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for final review in February 2018. In the case that you do wish to withdraw from the study, any voice recordings or transcripts still on file will be immediately destroyed.

Contact Information

Student Researcher: Breda Vosters

Graduate Student, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture,
University of Manitoba

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Research Supervisor: Dr. David van Vliet

Professor, Department of City Planning, Faculty of Architecture,
University of Manitoba

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Statement of Consent

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.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

If you agree to each of the following, please place a check mark in the corresponding “Yes” box.
If you do not agree, please place a check mark in the corresponding “No” box.

1. I have read or it has been read to me the details of this consent form. Yes
 No

2. My questions have been addressed. Yes
 No

3. I, _____ (print name), agree to participate in this study. Yes
 No

4. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded and transcribed. Yes
 No

5. I would also like to participate in the subsequent questionnaire phase of this research project, to be sent out by July 2017. Yes
 No

6. I agree to be contacted by phone or email if further information is required after the interview. Yes
 No
7. I agree to have the findings (which may include quotations) from this project published or presented in a manner that reveals my identity. Yes
 No
- Do you wish to receive a summary of the findings? Yes
 No
- How do you wish to receive the summary? Email
 Surface mail
- Address: _____
- Participant's Signature _____ Date _____
- Researcher's Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C: Practicum Defense PowerPoint Presentation

PRESERVING LOW-INCOME HOUSING IN WINNIPEG: The Case of SROs in the West Broadway Community

Practicum Defense by Breda Vosters

In partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master
of City Planning

University of Manitoba

November 23, 2018

Introduction

THE ISSUE EXAMINED
RESEARCH PURPOSE

The Issue Examined

- Current nation-wide housing crisis
- Contributing factors include conversions of rental units, aging stock, increasing rental rates
- Loss of low-income units is occurring rapidly in the inner-city
- Focus of this practicum is on preserving SROs/rooming houses in inner-city Winnipeg



Image Source: <https://www.noted.co.nz/money/economy/auckland-housing-crisis-house-of-the-rising-sum/>

Research Purpose

- To explore the effectiveness of plans, policies and programs within West Broadway as they relate to the preservation of low-income housing
- Responsibility for low-income housing provision has shifted in recent decades between levels of Government, creating a need for community organizations to become more involved
- The goals of this practicum are to identify ways in which City planning and policy enables or inhibits the West Broadway Community Organization's (WBCO) efforts to preserve low-income housing, and to provide recommendations for preservation of low-income housing moving forward

Research

RESEARCH DESIGN
RESEARCH QUESTIONS
RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

- Case Study
 - Used to “investigate a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly defined” (Yin 2014, p. 16)
- The selected site represents an extreme case
 - Extreme cases demonstrate unusual variations of the phenomenon being studied
- West Broadway
 - High volume of rooming houses
 - High proportion of low-income residents
 - Inner-city at high risk of conversion from rental to ownership

Yin, R. (2009) Designing Case Studies. Case Study Research Design and Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage Publications.

Research Questions

Q1) In what ways do existing plans and policies affecting the West Broadway area address the preservation of low-income housing in West Broadway, particularly SROs?

Image Source: <http://counselingoneanother.com/2018/04/10/40-questions-to-help-discern-factors-contributing-to-depression/>

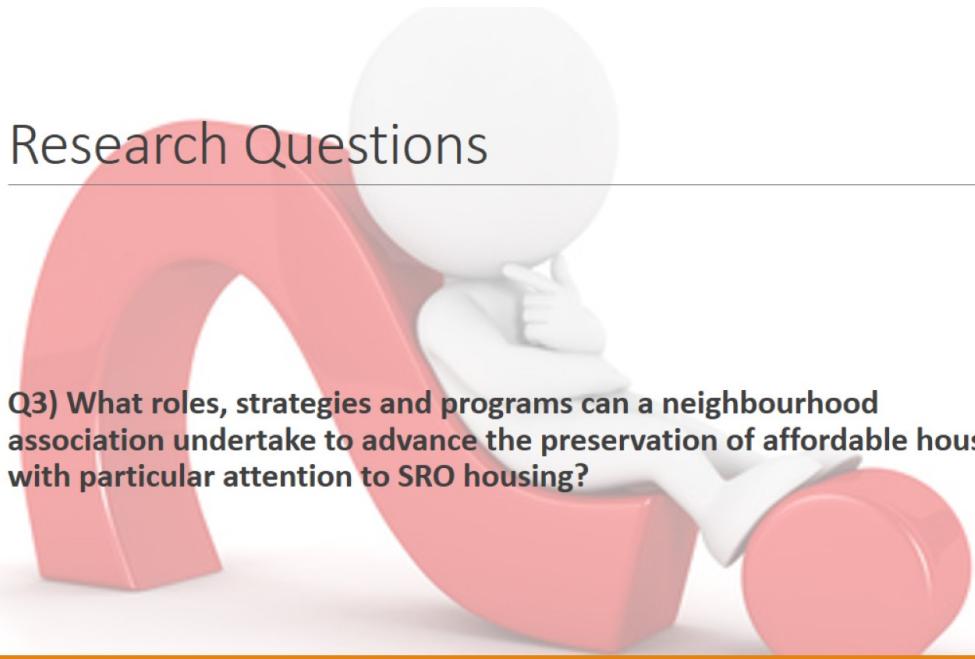
Research Questions

Q2) What are programs and tools that exist to preserve rooming houses and SROs in Winnipeg, particularly in the West Broadway area?

a. What are the primary barriers to implementing these programs and tools?

Image Source: <http://counselingoneanother.com/2018/04/10/40-questions-to-help-discern-factors-contributing-to-depression/>

Research Questions



Q3) What roles, strategies and programs can a neighbourhood association undertake to advance the preservation of affordable housing with particular attention to SRO housing?

Image Source: <http://counselingoneanother.com/2018/04/10/40-questions-to-help-discriminate-factors-contributing-to-depression/>

Research Methods

Document Review

- *OurWinnipeg*
- *Complete Communities*
- *The City of Winnipeg Housing Policy 2013*
- *The City of Winnipeg Housing Policy Implementation Plan*

- *West Broadway Community Plan 2011 – 2016*
- *West Broadway Community Plan 2016 – 2021*
- *West Broadway Housing Plan 2014 - 2019*

Research Methods

Key Informant Interviews

- Two West Broadway Community Organization employees
- Two City of Winnipeg employees (or former employees)
- Four housing experts/researchers

Findings

ANSWERING THE KEY QUESTIONS
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS

Answering the key questions

Q1) In what ways do existing plans and policies affecting the West Broadway area address the preservation of low-income housing in West Broadway, particularly SROs?

- Stark differences between City of Winnipeg and West Broadway specific documents
- Affordability is addressed by the City, but vaguely; low-income housing left out
- West Broadway documents have a major focus on preserving existing low-income units, including rooming houses
 - Prioritization of preservation is demonstrated through emphasis on fix-up programs

Q2) What are programs and tools that exist to preserve rooming houses and SROs in Winnipeg, particularly in the West Broadway area?

- City of Winnipeg operates two primary programs: WHRC and HRIR
- Smaller scale programs operated at community organization level identified as effective tools
 - City of Winnipeg's MHRP, West Broadway's RHOP and PIP (funded by the City)
- Existing tools include density bonusing, inclusionary zoning, expedited approval processes, development/property management levy

*"You can't build a rooming house now. It doesn't fit into the zoning criteria and you can't significantly change a rooming house because again, it doesn't fit. You can re-zone, but that is expensive and many rooming house landlords, I have been told, are not willing to go through that process. **The City has not put in place any tools that would support that. It could waive fees, it could expedite processes, those are things that cities can do, but it hasn't**" CM, Housing Expert/Researcher, August 31, 2017*

"We could take a page from the BIZ where there is a levy on all business properties that the City handles, but hands over to the BIZs and they have accountability requirements to fulfill their mandates. There's no reason that couldn't be applied to residents." Anonymous, Housing Expert/Researcher, June 26, 2017

Q2) a. What are the primary barriers to implementing these programs and tools?

- Limited funds to sustain effective programming
- Lack of capacity
- Minimal political will
- Lack of recognition of the importance of rooming houses/SROs
- Limited supports for landlords to bring properties into compliance
- Lack of specificity of City plans and policies
- Rigid building codes and zoning bylaws

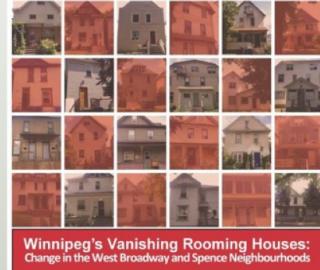
*"I've seen really good buildings shut down and multiple tenants evicted from excellent housing because licenses lapsed mistakenly, or it was **practically impossible to meet the building code standards** required by the province to convert a building zoned as triplex into a six-unit rooming house."* GM, WBCO, July 10, 2017

Q3) What roles, strategies and programs can a neighbourhood association undertake to advance the preservation of affordable housing, with particular attention to SRO housing?

- Continue to work creatively towards goals of *OurWinnipeg*
- Approach the City of Winnipeg as a partner to leverage funds rather than as a funder
- Place pressure on the City to implement existing tools in communities
- Scale up proven programs
- Focus on forming strong relationships with City planners and developers in their neighbourhoods

Significance of the Findings

- Rooming houses are often homes to those who have no other option
 - *"There's a connection between homelessness and rooming houses in that if you don't preserve the rooming house stock then people are at risk of becoming homeless and that is incredibly tragic."* MM, Housing Expert/Researcher, September 22, 2017
- No protection through planning and policy could lead to displacement of tenants
- Rooming houses are a viable housing form because they already exist and are worth protecting for now



Winnipeg's Vanishing Rooming Houses:
Change in the West Broadway and Spence Neighbourhoods

Image Source:
<http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/homepage/winnipegs-vanishing-rooming-houses/>

Conclusion

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

Implications for Other Community Organizations

- Community organizations should continue to look elsewhere from the City for funding
- Community organizations should focus on creating and building partnerships with the City
- Community organizations should engage in continual advocacy to encourage the City to implement regulatory tools that support their priorities

Recommendations for Future Plans, Policies and Programs

- Stronger identification of City's role in low-income housing preservation
 - *"I think [we need] a recognition of the role of rooming houses in the spectrum of housing available with a recognition that the City has a role in ensuring housing for its entire populous and that low-income people are particularly vulnerable."* MM, Housing Expert/Researcher, September 22, 2017
- Identification of specific regulatory tools that will be implemented
- Naming of Reinvestment Areas
- Recognition of importance of rooming houses/SROs on affordable housing spectrum

Recommendations for Further Research

- Precedent studies
 - Parkdale Pilot Project (Toronto), Displacement prevention bylaw (Vancouver), Registered Rooming House Subsidy (Boorondora, Australia), City-led Rooming House Strategy (Casey, Australia)
- Enhancing the role Community Organizations play in low-income housing preservation
- Alternative low-income housing forms
 - *"I think we need to preserve [rooming houses]. I think we need to maintain them and we also need to develop a new model that is maybe a little more safe, or a little newer, with newer buildings... build something like dorm style housing because it is very clear that you're not going to be able to manufacture apartments and provide them for what people are getting on EIA or whatever assistance they're on so if that's the case we need to come up with an alternative and right now that alternative is rooming houses."* JM, Housing Expert/Researcher, October 11, 2017



Thank you!

QUESTIONS?



Appendix D: Ethics Certificate of Completion

<p>PANEL ON RESEARCH ETHICS <small>Navigating the ethics of human research</small></p> <p>TCPS 2: CORE</p>	<p>Certificate of Completion</p> <p><i>This document certifies that</i></p> <p>Breda Vosters</p> <p><i>has completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE)</i></p> <p>Date of Issue: 26 March, 2016</p>
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