

Beyond the Burbs: Affordable Housing Development in Rural Canada

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Outline

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- Community Needs Assessment
- Important Resources
- Example Research Highlights

Purpose

- Provide big picture overview of rural housing issues
- Set the stage for case study presentations
- Facilitate dialogue on options and opportunities

Defining Rural

- Rural and Small Town Canada
 - Outside CMAs and CAs
 - Less than 10,000 population
 - Incorporated and unincorporated
- There are degrees of rural
 - Metro-adjacent, non metro-adjacent, north
 - Zones of metropolitan influence

Defining Affordable

- The cost of adequate shelter should not exceed 30% of household income.
- Some people choose to spend more.
- Some people have incomes too low to realistically achieve this.
- North – might need a different definition of affordability / core need.
- Other definitions:
 - Below average market rent
 - Below average MLS value
 - Below average cost to build

Rural Housing Today - Supply

- Older stock, poorer quality
- Owner-occupied prevalent
- Limited rental, few “apartments”
- High operating costs
- Lack of housing choice and tenure options
- Limited new supply
- Resale is older and poor quality
- New construction is custom order driven and higher end (lack of spec building)

Rural Housing Today - Demand

- Problems for low income households
- Flat incomes, rising costs
- Residualization of renters
- Social housing vacancies
- More single person households
- Delayed family and household formation
- More seniors aging in place
- Services not available in rural communities

Opportunities for New Development - Programs

- F-P-T Affordable housing agreements
- CMHC SEED Funding
- CMHC PDF and mortgage interest write down
- CMHC Capacity Building funding
- “Green” infrastructure money
- Some province-specific programs

Opportunities for New Development – Segments

- Non-elderly singles
- Working wage individuals and families (work with employers in area to identify their LF problems, wages, etc)
- Single parents
- Newly formed families
- Low and modest income seniors
- Immigrants

Opportunities for New Development – Assets and Angles

- Modest homeownership units
- Modest apartment units
- Duplexes
- Cluster developments
- Land leased communities (manufactured housing sector) and other innovative tenure arrangements
- Municipal, private, and commercial land
- Green / energy efficient developments

Barriers to New Development

- Land cost
- Building materials costs
- Seasonal employment
- Lack of critical mass for private sector
- Zoning and bylaws
- NIMBY
- Depleted voluntary sector
- Low incomes
- Lack of information about small markets

Community Needs Assessment

- Appoint a committee to work on the project
 - Understand why the study / assessment is being done
- Layout a plan, including purpose, timeframes, resources, and responsibilities
- Hire technical support, if necessary
- Complete the housing study (use primary and/or secondary data)
 - Profile the existing housing stock
 - Assess various housing needs in the municipality
 - Assess potential future housing demand
 - Crunch the financial numbers
- Share the results
- Act on the recommendations

Important Resources

- Defining rural
 - V. du Plessis, R. Beshiri, H. Clemenson, and R. Bollman. **Definitions of Rural**. Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin. Vol. 3 No. 3. 2001. www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/21-006-XIE/free.htm
- Statistics Canada Data (from 2001 census)
 - www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/standard/themes/DataProducts.cfm?S=1 (click on Housing, then scroll to Topic-Based Tabulations)
- Housing research links
 - www.chra-achru.ca
 - www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca (click on order desk, then Research Highlights)
 - www.actprogram.com
 - www.mta.ca/rstp

Example Research Highlights from CMHC

- The National Summit on Affordable Homeownership
- Housing Needs of Low Income People Living in Rural Areas: The Implications for Seniors
- Housing Needs of Low Income People Living in Rural Areas
- Housing Needs of Low Income People Living in Rural Areas: Literature Review
- Ideas that Work: Best Practices in Affordable Housing Management
- Literature Review of Socio-Economic Trends Affecting Consumers and Housing Markets
- Housing Options for Women Living Alone in Rural Areas