

Rental housing in Canadian cities: Barriers and solutions

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Catalyzing rental housing policy through policy learning

PHASE II WORKING PAPER

by

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Housing affordability is a major challenge in many Canadian cities. Rental housing is an increasingly important tenure type, but for several decades municipal governments have faced challenges in building new rental units and preserving existing units. The study, “Rental Housing in Canadian Cities: Barriers and Solutions to Implementation”, conducted by Dr. Ren Thomas (Dalhousie University) and Dr. Markus Moos (University of Waterloo), is funded by an Insight Development Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The study analyzes rental housing policy across 15 Canadian case studies, including plan/policy analysis, a survey, meta-analysis, and policy learning workshops. The goals of the study were to identify both barriers and solutions to rental housing protection and implementation. As the National Housing Strategy was introduced in 2017-2018, we also wanted to find out whether this had an impact on municipal policy and programs related to rental housing.

This working paper summarizes the second phase of the study (September 2018-August 2019), which included the meta-analysis of case studies and the policy learning workshops. The first phase of the study, which involved a policy analysis of municipal and provincial plans, strategies, and by-laws and a survey of planners, developers, and non-profit staff, is summarized in our first working paper, *Will Only the Strong Survive?* In this second working paper, we present the results of the meta-analysis, including summaries of each case study and the eleven critical success factors that were found to encourage or inhibit rental housing protection and implementation:

- Policy intent
- Policy strength
- Policy enforcement
- Planning tools
- Collaboration/partnerships
- Intergovernmental cooperation
- Municipal leadership
- Provincial funding
- Renter vulnerability
- Regional preferences
- Public support

Innovative approaches could be seen in both large and small cities, either because they had more support from their provincial governments (e.g. Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Sherbrooke) or took the lead on developing their own policies and programs (e.g. Vancouver, Edmonton, Montreal).

The critical success factors, as well as examples of policy approaches from the case studies, were used in two workshops in Halifax. These policy learning workshops showed that local planners, developers, and non-profit staff were able to use policy ideas from the other cases in discussing issues in the Halifax Regional Municipality. However, the participants also identified some challenges to adopting solutions from other contexts (e.g. weak levels of collaboration and cooperation between organizations, lack of a formal body dedicated to rental housing). They had some difficulties developing their own policy solutions, although they did suggest the development of a housing navigator to facilitate information and data sharing, and a research hub for students to explore new ideas for housing. While pre- and post-workshop surveys showed that participants would use insights from the workshop in their daily practice and communicate the results of the workshop to other members of their organization, only half felt that ideas from other cities were useful in selecting policy options for Halifax. In this case, it seemed to be more useful for planners, developers, and non-profit staff to use the policy ideas from other places to generate discussion among each other and agree upon the challenges the city is facing, a rare occurrence. This is precisely the way in which the policy transfer process should take place: using the ideas from other cities to discuss, learn from each other, and generate collaborative partnerships that can lead to new solutions to fit the local context.

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ABSTRACT

Housing affordability is a major challenge in many Canadian cities. Rental housing is an increasingly important tenure type, but for several decades municipal governments have faced challenges in building new rentals and preserving existing units. This report presents the second set of results from a study of rental housing policy across 15 Canadian case studies. Using a meta-analysis to compare patterns across the cases, the report describes the range of policy approaches and presents eleven critical success factors that were found to encourage or inhibit rental housing protection and implementation. Then, these critical success factors were used in policy transfer workshops with local planners, housing developers and non-profit organizations in Halifax. This process demonstrated that local planners, developers, and non-profit staff found policy ideas from the other cases useful in developing their own solutions, and that they would use insights from the workshop in their daily practice and communicate the results of the workshop to other members of their organization. The participants also identified some challenges to adopting solutions from other contexts (e.g. flexible planning tools that work in urban, suburban, and rural settings would be needed in the Halifax Regional Municipality).

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INTRODUCTION

Canadian cities have struggled to build and maintain rental housing for several decades. Rental housing is an increasingly important tenure type as housing affordability has moved out of reach for many households and smaller family sizes have become more prevalent, but rental housing remains difficult to build. In addition to this, cities often lose existing units through condominium conversions and demolition. What are Canadian cities doing, in partnership with their provincial governments and the new National Housing Strategy, to protect and implement new rental housing?

This working paper describes patterns in policy approaches across 15 Canadian municipalities and the factors that were most critical in successful rental housing protection and implementation. Using a meta-analysis of these case studies, and policy transfer workshops, the study aimed to use policy solutions from the case studies as learning and inspiration for local planners in Halifax. This paper presents the second set of findings from the study, which was funded by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Insight Development Grant (2017-2020). The first working paper described the 15 cases, their rental housing characteristics, and the policies most commonly used. It also presented the results from a survey of planners, developers, and non-profit organizations. This second working paper begins with a brief summary of some of the problems municipalities have experienced with maintaining and expanding their supply of rental housing. It then explains the potential of using meta-analysis to understand trends and patterns across Canadian cities, and describes the data and methods used. In the third section, the case studies and the critical success factors are presented. Then, results from the workshops are presented. Finally, we conclude with lessons for Canadian planners.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Housing affordability has reached a crisis point in many Canadian cities. Despite increased demand for rental housing, there has been a lack of stable funding and partnerships supporting the development of new rental housing in Canada (e.g. Hulchanski 2007, Oberlander and Fallick 1992, City of Waterloo 2016). Gibb et al. (2019) note that from 2011-2016, just 6 percent of new rental units built in the City of Toronto were in purpose-built buildings; the rest were secondary rental units (e.g. rented condominiums, apartments in houses). Preservation of the existing rental stock is challenging (Cheung 2017); rapid increases in rents for existing units have resulted in displacement of lower-income rental households (August and Walks 2018). Rental housing has emerged as a critical housing and tenure type in the housing continuum now that market ownership is out of reach for many, particularly single-person, immigrant, and senior households. Households may rent for a longer period of time or even forgo ownership completely (Thomas 2013). Demographic shifts (Moos 2013) and labour market shifts favouring shorter-term, lower-paying jobs (Mouck 2016, Walks 2013) have also contributed to an increase in demand for rental housing both in Canada and internationally (e.g. Gibb et al. 2019, Ronald et al. 2015).

The political agendas of federal and provincial governments have consequences for municipalities' abilities to address rental housing. There has been a slow erosion of policies supporting affordable and rental housing in Ontario (August and Walks 2018) and across Canada (Suttor 2016). They describe the shift to condominium construction in the 1970s, deregulation of rent control and tenant protection in Ontario in the 1990s, the withdrawal of the federal government from social housing provision, and large-scale, financialized investors taking over ownership of private rental buildings in the 2000s. Hulchanski (2007) and Bryant (2004) have tied political and ideological bias favouring homeownership to decreased programs and funding for rental housing, and Suttor's (2016) history of the dawn and dusk of the social housing era closely ties the prevailing political agenda to contemporary housing policy and program trends.

Municipalities experience constant tensions between protecting existing rental housing, building new rental housing, and supporting higher-value housing types and tenures such as luxury condominiums. Even though many municipal housing plans and strategies advocate rental housing (e.g. Housing and Homelessness Partnership 2015) and programs are in place to facilitate the retention of units (Housing Nova Scotia 2016), very little has been built. Preserving existing affordable rental units can be problematic for several reasons. First, the higher a property's land value, the more revenue the municipality can collect. Property taxes are the main source of income for cash-strapped municipal governments, so local councils often opt for redevelopment, resulting in more households and a higher-value building on a given site. In these circumstances, even non-profit housing associations face barriers in maintaining their current stock (Salah 2017). Second, many of the low-income neighbourhoods in Canadian cities are located in central parts of the city that have recently experienced a renaissance (e.g. Roth and Grant 2015), creating increased competition for housing and contributing to gentrification as entire rental buildings are upgraded and flipped (August and Walks 2018). Third, political will to protect or support rental housing is often weak: municipalities either lack the tools needed to protect existing rental housing from redevelopment, or are unwilling or unable to use them; existing programs may not offer enough incentive for developers to build new rental properties instead of condominiums.

A recent shift in policies and programs supporting rental housing prompted the development of this study. The past decade has seen some municipal, provincial and federal efforts to support the development of both market and affordable rental housing (e.g. units where tenants pay less than 30 percent of their income towards rent). In 2008, the City of Saskatoon adopted its first Housing Business Plan, which surpassed its goal of developing 2,500 units of affordable housing, and a new ten-year Housing Business Plan (2013-2022) introduced rental construction incentives. Municipalities have adopted policy tools such as inclusionary zoning, density bonusing, secondary suites, demolition control, and infill development, which have low direct costs to municipalities and are highly effective; housing levies, grants and loans, and direct provision of loans have both high direct costs and high benefit (OPPI 2001). Financial tools are

more expensive to implement than regulatory and planning measures, though it may be difficult to adopt alternative planning standards or inclusionary zoning in rural or suburban areas of metropolitan areas (Halifax Regional Municipality 2004). For the production of low-end rental housing, the most effective fiscal tools have been the use of municipally owned land, affordable housing trust funds, and waiving development fees; the most effective regulatory measures have been official plans, inclusionary policies, density bonuses, developer agreements, reductions in parking requirements, and secondary suites (Metro Vancouver Regional Housing 2012). There is cautious optimism among municipal planners with the rollout of the National Housing Strategy, which has resulted in two new programs to support rental housing in municipalities. Funding to repair 240,000 affordable and social housing units and remove 350,000 households from core housing need may also improve rental supply (Government of Canada 2017), though many remain skeptical that rental housing can recover after decades of disinvestment.

This study systematically compared case studies using a meta-analysis to determine patterns across cities. Meta-analysis is an ideal approach to take in the planning field (Van Egmond et al. 2004, Walter and Scholtz 2007, Thomas and Bertolini 2014) because case studies on planning processes and phenomena are so commonplace and both practitioners and researchers are used to learning from policies, programs, and institutions in other cities and countries. Meta-analysis allows researchers to enhance generalizability and deepen understanding and explanation well beyond the single-case study (e.g. Nijkamp et al. 2002). As a systematic comparison of policies and programs across Canadian cities has not yet been done, and offers potential learning opportunities for both researchers and practitioners, this study aimed to use meta-analysis to investigate:

- a) the barriers that still exist in rental housing implementation and protection
- b) the solutions that have been developed in Canadian cities, and
- c) the role of the National Housing Strategy in the development of these solutions.

More details on the data and method are included below.

DATA AND METHODS

The 15 case studies were chosen for their population size and range of approaches to rental housing policy, plans, and programs (from minimal, standard approaches to advanced, unique approaches). As several studies note the benefit of integrating negative and positive policy lessons in case comparison (Thomas and Bertolini 2014, Maxwell 2004) a range of case studies were chosen from “successful” to “unsuccessful”. Our definition of “success” was developed from a literature review:

Successful implementation and protection of rental housing is defined as the development of new rental units (either market-rate or below-market rate) that meets or exceeds targets set by the municipality/region, and very limited or no loss of existing rental units. Successful cities meet the needs of their renter households by integrating strong policy language, enforcing policies, and collaborating with a range of stakeholders to integrate programs and funding.

The cases were limited to Canadian cities because they all have the same political and cultural context, which has been shown to ease understanding among local practitioners, simplifying the process of policy learning and policy transfer (e.g. Thomas et al 2018). The cities range in population size from 200,000 to 4.0 million; all are Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) except for Mississauga, a Census Subdivision of the Toronto CMA, the largest CMA in the country. The cities can be broken down into three categories:

- Small to mid-size (200,000-400,000): Sherbrooke, Regina, Saskatoon, Windsor, Victoria
- Mid-size (400,000-1,000,000): Halifax, Waterloo, Mississauga, Hamilton, Winnipeg
- Large (over 1,000,000): Edmonton, Ottawa, Calgary, Vancouver, Montreal

Compiling the case studies involved two methods. First, existing data were used to understand each case study in relation to the total sample and the sub-group (e.g. mid-sized cities). The 2016 Census of Canada Community Profiles (Statistics Canada 2017) provided:

- Population size
- Percentage of households renting/owning
- Median after-tax individual income (2015)
- Households paying over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent
- Tenant households paying over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent
- Tenant households living in subsidized housing
- Percentage of the population in core housing need (as defined by CMHC)

The 2017 Fall Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rental Market Reports (CMHC 2017) provided the following data:

- Market rental vacancy
- Private apartment average rent
- Private apartment average turnover rate
- Number of secondary market rental units

The federal Investment in Affordable Housing per province is listed on the CMHC website (CMHC 2018).

This data was used in the demographic profiles of the cases, which were presented in the first working paper, *Will Only the Strong Survive?* (2018, p 6-14).

Second, publicly available official plans, housing strategies, and municipal by-laws were used to determine the policies and programs specific to rental housing protection and implementation. For the purposes of this study, “rental housing” includes both market-rate and affordable housing (defined by both CMHC and the Census of Canada as housing that costs less than 30 percent of a household’s pre-tax income). Rental housing as a tenure type has faced particular

barriers in a political context that favours home ownership, because it competes with condominiums. The online/document search was limited to 2008-2018, unless the current official plan was adopted before 2008. Because municipal housing provision relies upon provincial governments, provincial housing strategies and funding programs were also included. For example, provincial condominium acts regulate the development of condo units in the municipalities, but 13 of the 15 cases (all except Calgary and Edmonton) also have their own policies regulating the conversion of rental buildings to condominiums, usually in their official plans. Therefore, the term “policy” includes municipal official plans, strategies, land use policies, by-laws, and programs, as well as provincial strategies, policies, and programs. This broad definition was necessary in order to include the full range of tools used to build and protect rental housing, which includes all three levels of government. Because housing is often planned at the regional level in CMAs with multiple municipalities, every attempt was made to gather policy documents from multiple local governments within each CMA, e.g. documents from the CMAs of Waterloo, Kitchener, and Cambridge were used for the Waterloo CMA.

Using the policy analysis and descriptive data analysis, case reports were developed and coded according to six broad categories: policy strength and intent, funding, collaboration, land use planning, public/political support, and specific local characteristics. Coded data was entered into a meta-matrix (a large table organized by case study), which led to the development of critical success factors (CSFs). A detailed description of this process is included in the next section.

For the policy transfer workshops, planners, developers and staff from non-profit housing organizations were invited to attend. Two workshops were held at Dalhousie University, with the partnership of MacEachen Institute for Public Policy and Governance. The workshops included two exercises: first participants used a five-point ranking scale with the CSFs to evaluate Halifax. Then, they used ideas from the other cities to see if they could strengthen the weaknesses they identified in the region. Before and after the workshop, participants

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completed surveys that evaluated their understanding of policy transfer, the likelihood of them using the solutions from other cities in their own practice, and challenges to doing so.

RESULTS FROM THE META-ANALYSIS

The main purpose of the policy review and descriptive data analysis was the development of critical success factors (CSFs): those factors that were instrumental in rental housing implementation and protection, contributing to success or even failure (e.g. Maxwell 2004, Thomas and Bertolini 2014). This is why it was important to choose a range of cases that represented the spectrum of very basic and limited to very advanced and innovative approaches. This study used a case-oriented meta-analysis, which first determines the distinctive configuration and flow of events within each case, then compares these across cases (Khan and VanWynsbyrghe 2008). Variable-oriented meta-analysis, which determines the mutual influence of a pre-specified set of variables disaggregated from cases, is also possible, but it can be difficult to determine the variables at the outset of a study.

The CSFs were developed using an iterative process of reading the publicly accessible documents, developing reports for each case study, and coding the qualitative data according to six themes. Each code was developed in an iterative process (e.g. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006); each code had to:

- Apply to all the cases
- Indicate the specific policies, stakeholders, and roles and relationships between them
- Identify factors that encouraged or inhibited implementation or protection

Based on this set of criteria, a set of six broad codes were developed:

- Policy strength and intent
- Funding
- Collaboration
- Land use planning
- Public/political support
- Specific local characteristics

Once the case reports were coded, the coded text was added to a large table called a meta-matrix, which was organized with each case study in a separate column. Data was organized using the six codes, e.g. under land use planning, the policy about the use of municipal land for affordable housing would be entered, so that the researchers could scroll across the table row to view the approach each city took. An overall picture of the case could be obtained by scrolling down the column for the specific city. The quantitative data for each case were also added to the meta-matrix, e.g. the market rental vacancy rate for each city. As the data was added to the meta-matrix, possible barriers or keys to success were noted at the bottom of the table. The list of potential critical success factors was edited as each case was added to the matrix. The overall process was similar to that used in Thomas and Bertolini (2014), and can be described succinctly using Figure 1.

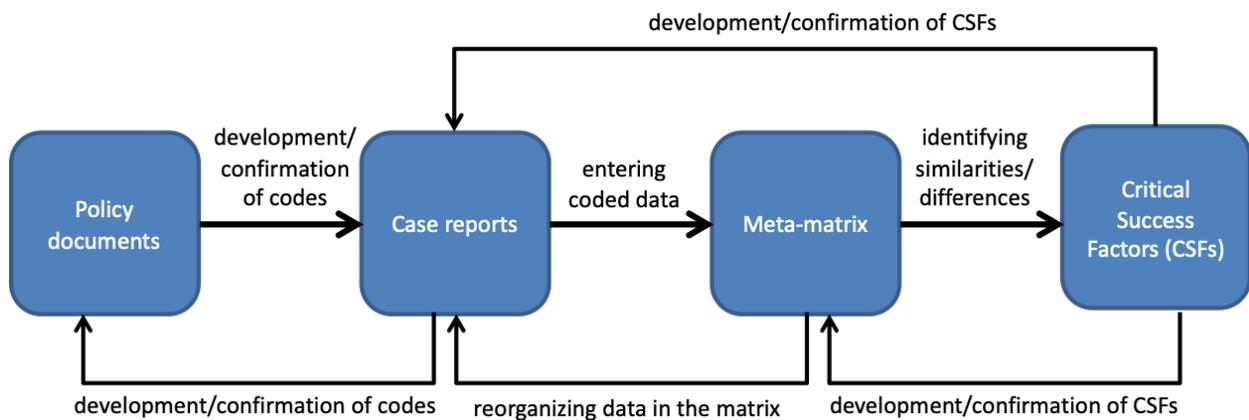


Figure 1. Developing the critical success factors

The process of creating case reports for each case study, coding the data, and entering the data into the meta-matrix helped identify the patterns across the cases. The first observation is that policy approaches to protect existing and implement new rental housing in the case study cities fall into several categories. Some cities use only the Universal and Common approaches, while others are more innovative with Uncommon and Unique methods.

- Universal (found in every case study): rent supplements and renovation/rehabilitation programs that allow units to remain affordable, and policies encouraging secondary suites
- Common (found in many of the case studies): condominium conversion policies, reduction/elimination of development fees for affordable housing, capital grants for new rental units, sale of municipal land for affordable housing, inclusionary zoning, and property tax exemptions
- Uncommon (found in only a few case studies): municipal development corporations, plans/strategies emphasizing building affordable housing near public transit and services, housing reserve funds, and land banks
- Unique (only found in one case study)

Our first working paper discussed each of these policies in more detail. Here, we take a case-oriented approach, summarizing each case study. The case summaries show the spectrum of basic to innovative policies. Each case study had its strengths and weaknesses in terms of policies and tools, the actors and partnerships/collaboration, and regional characteristics. The case summaries also show the development of the CSFs because they draw attention to cross-case similarities and differences. The list of 11 CSFs is shown in Table 1.

The 15 Case Studies: Patterns in Policy Approaches, Actors, and Regional Characteristics

In this section, case summaries are presented in order of the smallest to the largest population size. Overall patterns are discussed at the end of the section.

Small Cities

Sherbrooke

With 212,105 inhabitants, a high percentage (44 percent) of households in Sherbrooke rent, but just 33.7 percent of tenant households pay over 30 percent of their gross income in rent. The rental vacancy rate was a healthy 5.3 percent (3 percent is considered a healthy vacancy rate). Sherbrooke has strong cooperation with its principal government, resulting in more advanced approaches. For example, Quebec's program Habitation à loyer modique partners with non-profit organizations, municipal housing departments, and co-operatives to offer a rent-geared-to-income program for low-income households, allowing them to pay just 25 percent of their income towards rent (not including utilities). Sherbrooke's renovation/rehabilitation programs are slightly more advanced than other cases, including rooming house rehabilitation assistance and secondary suite renovation. The city is tough on conversion of rental properties: conversion is prohibited if the property is owned by a housing co-operative, non-profit organization or municipal housing corporation. Unique approaches include AccèsLogis, a provincial program run by Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) supporting the crowdsourcing of public, community, and private resources to create permanent rental housing for low- to middle-income households or permanent housing with supports for seniors. Sherbrooke contributes 15 percent to these projects, with a clear target of adding 239 new units from 2016-2019 (OMHS 2018b).

Regina

Regina has a population of 236,481, and 30 percent of households renting. Regina had a high percentage of tenant households (45.9 percent) paying over 30 percent of their gross income in rent. The rental vacancy rate was high at 7 percent. The city's Official Community Plan (2013)

and Comprehensive Housing Strategy (2013) agree on issues such as leveraging city land to increase supply and diversity, incentives to increase supply, and expanding areas where apartments and multiple-unit residential is permitted. Regina allows secondary suites in most residential zones, some commercial, industrial and special zones, and recently concluded a pilot project for laneway and garden suites. The city provides a range of tax reductions and capital grants to build market rental, laneway or garden suites, and affordable rental units. An Uncommon approach is the city's social development reserve fund used for affordable housing. Unique approaches come through the province: the Provincial Rental Development Program includes a forgivable loan of 70% or less of the capital cost of construction for projects providing housing for those unable to maintain private market housing, or projects providing supports for a target client group, with a minimum of 4 units. The Rental Housing Rebate program reduces provincial corporate income tax earned on new rental housing down to the 2 percent small business rate for 10 years.

Saskatoon

With a population of 295,095, 30 percent of households in the city are renters. Although 44.7 percent of tenant households pay over 30 percent of their gross income in rent, the rental vacancy rate was the highest of all the case studies at 9.6 percent. Clear action plans and monitoring show the city met or exceeded its 2012 target of 2,500 affordable housing units (City of Saskatoon 2013) and its 2016 targets for purpose-built rental units, secondary suites, and affordable rental units (City of Saskatoon 2017). Saskatoon has multiple examples of strong policy wording tied to funding, e.g. the city's secondary suites program provides up to 50 percent of the cost of new secondary suites up to a maximum of \$30,000. The condominium conversion policy is strict: if the vacancy rate is below 1.5 percent in the latest CMHC Rental Market Survey, conversion into condominiums will not be allowed unless the building has been vacant for 12 months or the property has been deemed to be dangerous to the public health or safety, depreciates the value of other land in neighbourhood, or 75% of the tenants approve the conversion. Tenants must have an option to purchase, and can live in the building for up to two years after conversion (City of Saskatoon 2011). Capital grants for purpose-built rental,

affordable ownership, affordable rental, and secondary suites include one with a long-term affordability requirement (New Rental Land Cost Rebate Grant).

Saskatoon is one of just four cases with a municipal development corporation: Saskatoon Land functions as the city's land development arm, producing affordable housing, contributing to the affordable housing reserve fund, developing and servicing land, and redeveloping greyfield sites. Saskatoon was one of only four cases with a reserve fund, which provides a 10 percent municipal contribution to a wide range of affordable housing projects; funds are raised through the sale of City-owned lands. From 1987-2007, the housing reserve fund supported 2,400 new housing units (transitional, affordable rental, affordable ownership, and market level rental) (City of Saskatoon 2018). Saskatoon's land bank is self-financing through an administrative fee on all sales. Like Regina, Unique provincial programs include the Provincial Rental Development Program, Rental Housing Rebate program, and the Rental Construction Initiative, which allows Saskatoon to obtain up to \$5,000 per new purpose-built rental unit.

Windsor

Windsor has a population of 329,144, and only 28 percent of households in the city are renters. Tenants are more vulnerable: 44.7 percent of tenant households pay over 30 percent of their gross income in rent. The rental vacancy rate was 2.4 percent. Windsor is definitely has less innovative approaches, e.g. the city only approved secondary suites in 2018, and the policy is basic. Windsor's condo conversion policy is stronger: the city does not allow conversion unless the rental vacancy rate is higher than 3 percent and tenants have the right of first refusal; tenants can occupy the unit for a maximum of two years after the condominium conversion registration. The city lacks Uncommon and Unique approaches.

Victoria

Victoria has a population of 367,770, and 36 percent of households in the city are renters. Tenants are quite vulnerable: 44.3 percent of tenant households pay over 30 percent of their gross income in rent and the rental vacancy rate was just 0.7 percent, the lowest of all the small

to mid-sized case studies. Victoria has some policy approaches linked to funding: the city allows secondary suites in most single family zones and offers homeowners grants of 25 percent of the construction costs up to a maximum of \$5,000 (City of Victoria 2018). The Permissive Tax Exemption Policy (2012) allows specific affordable rental housing projects to be considered for property tax exemptions for a maximum of 10 years. Uncommon approaches include a non-profit corporation owned by the Capital Region District: the Capital Region Housing Corporation, a leader in developing and managing 1,280 units of affordable housing, acquiring and developing properties, and aiming to increase the number of units near transit and other infrastructure (Capital Region Housing Corporation 2015). Victoria is one of four cases with a housing reserve fund; applicants to the fund must be, or partner with, a non-profit housing society which will own and operate the units (City of Victoria 2018). It is also one of just three cases with a municipal land bank.

Mid-Sized Cities

Halifax

Halifax is the smallest of the mid-sized cities, with a population of 403,390, and a high percentage of renters (40 percent). 43.3 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent and the vacancy rate was 2.3 percent, which indicates some vulnerability among renters. Halifax has a slightly more innovative renovation/rehabilitation program that includes assistance with rooming house rehabilitation. As of 2019, the city was still considering creating policies to widely permit secondary and backyard suites in the downtown area, and was considering inclusionary zoning. The city allows the sale of municipal land at below-market rates to non-profit organizations who want to build affordable housing, and property tax exemptions for non-profits, but overall policy approaches are basic, and Halifax lacks Uncommon and Unique approaches.

Waterloo

Waterloo has 523,894 inhabitants, and 32 percent of its households are renters. Waterloo has more vulnerable renters: 42.3 of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent, and the rental vacancy rate was low at 1.9 percent. Waterloo has fairly standard policies on secondary suites and condo conversion, but the Region of Waterloo offers Regional Development Charge grants, which offset development fees for rental housing projects that have received grants through the Affordable Housing Strategy Program. The Region also offers capital grants for non-profits and developers who will keep units affordable for at least 25 years; these grants created 1,535 new affordable rental units from 2001-2018 (Region of Waterloo 2018). Municipalities in the Region are struggling to encourage affordable housing along rapid transit lines as developers begin to take advantage of the increased accessibility of currently underused sites (Bueckert 2017). The city lacks Uncommon and Unique approaches.

Mississauga

Mississauga, with 721,599 inhabitants, has the lowest percentage of renter households of all the case studies (25 percent). But those renters are vulnerable: 46.3 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent, the highest percentage across all the case studies, and the rental vacancy rate was very low at 0.9 percent. The city has allowed secondary suites since 2009, and recently strengthened its approach by simplifying the process and regulations for creating these units (City of Mississauga 2017); their regional government introduced grants to renovate secondary suites in 2015. The city is tough on conversion: its Rental Protection By-Law (2018) prevents conversion or demolition if the vacancy rate is above 3 percent, and the rental rates are equal to or over 1.75 times the average market rent. In these cases, replacement of any rental units lost during demolition may be required, and the city can require the developer to allow existing tenants to return to the replaced or retained units at similar rents. Inclusionary zoning is allowed in Mississauga. The city lacks Uncommon and Unique approaches.

Hamilton

Hamilton has a population of 747,545. One-third (30 percent) of households are renters, and 45.2 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent. At 2.4 percent, Hamilton had the highest vacancy rate among the mid-sized cities. Hamilton's renovation program is slightly more advanced, allowing residential adaptation for people with disabilities. The city's condo conversion policy is strong: after a two-year moratorium on condo conversions ended in 2016 (Bennett 2015), Hamilton requires that the vacancy rate must be higher than 2 percent before rental units are converted to a condo, and it must remain at 2 percent afterwards. Hamilton has an advanced approach to the use of municipal land: the Municipal Housing Facility By-Law allows the city to make cash or in-kind contributions and make city-owned land available at below market value for affordable rental housing projects. When developing city-owned lands for residential purposes, Council may require inclusionary zoning (that at least 25 percent of the gross area of the land be affordable housing). Hamilton offers grants or fee rebates to offset development fees; reduced fees are available for non-profit housing corporations or co-operatives building housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households, if the land will be owned or leased by the non-profit for a minimum of 20 years. Hamilton is one of just four cases with a municipal development corporation/non-profit: CityHousing Hamilton, a leading organization whose projects include a mix of renewal, redevelopment of existing, or development of new affordable housing.

Winnipeg

Winnipeg is the largest of the mid-sized cities, with 778,489 inhabitants. With one-third (33%) of households renting and just 39.5 percent of renters paying over 30 percent of their gross income in rent, renters were less vulnerable than in most cities. The vacancy rate was healthy at 2.8 percent. Winnipeg has a very supportive, collaborative provincial government: Manitoba funds the city's Rooming House Assistance Program, a more advanced renovations/rehabilitation approach which aims to bring units up to health and safety standards. Manitoba's Secondary Suites Program provides forgivable loans for 50 percent of the construction and renovation costs up to a maximum of \$35,000 to create units for individuals

with incomes below the low-income threshold set by the Province; homeowners enter a ten-year agreement with the Province. Manitoba's Planning Act was amended in 2013 to authorize the use of mandatory inclusionary zoning in municipal zoning by-laws and the Winnipeg Charter was also modified. Unique approaches include a provincial program providing interest-free loans to help private non-profit/co-operative housing organizations prepare their detailed proposal to develop affordable housing for low-income households, if they have received capital funding. Manitoba's Rental Housing Construction Tax Credit Program (2013-2018) allowed corporations, non-profit organizations, non-profit housing cooperatives, and limited dividend companies that generated five or more rental units, where at least 10 percent were affordable, to earn tax credits. These amounted to 8 percent of the capital cost of a project or \$12,000 per unit, whichever was less, and at least 10 percent of the units had to remain affordable for five years.

Large Cities

Edmonton

Edmonton has a population of 1,321,426 and one-third (30 percent) of households are renters. Renters were in good shape: just 37.7 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent, which is by far the lowest rate among the large cities, and the city had the highest vacancy rate of the large cities (7 percent). The city has a number of advanced policies, including its renovation/rehabilitation program: Edmonton introduced a program to create approximately 75 new secondary suites and add another 75 new secondary suites per year from 2013-2016, facilitated through a program that funded up to 50 percent of renovations up to a maximum of \$20,000 (City of Edmonton 2011). Secondary suites are allowed in a broad variety of land use zones and housing types, including duplexes. Edmonton rebates municipal fees and charges for projects that provide low-rent units, or a portion of low-rent units, if long-term affordability is provided. The city is also more advanced on municipal land: it acquires, leases and sells municipal land for social housing, and will use surplus school sites for permanent supportive housing. Alberta's Modernized Municipal Government Act (2018) allows

Edmonton to include inclusionary housing in their land use by-laws; the city's affordable housing framework allows all neighbourhoods in the city to have 16 percent affordable housing (Riebe 2018). The city's collaborative Cornerstones program (2006-2016) offered capital grants and resulted in the creation or upgrade of 553 secondary suites and 3,300 affordable homes. Edmonton is one of just four cities with land use policies supporting building housing near transit infrastructure: new units, secondary or garden suites within 600 m of a Transit Centre or Light Rail Transit (LRT) Station, or within 150 m of a Transit Avenue, may qualify for parking reductions and may access other benefits through the Main Street Overlay.

Ottawa

Ottawa has 1,323,783 inhabitants, and one-third (33 percent) of households are renters. But renters are more vulnerable than in Edmonton: 40.6 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent, and the vacancy rate is low at 1.7 percent. Ottawa is slightly advanced in its renovation/rehabilitation program, which includes residential adaptation for people with disabilities, and secondary suites are widely permitted in residential land use zones. Ottawa charges no development charges and no fees for residential development in the downtown core areas. Non-profit or charitable developers have additional as-of-right incentives providing relief from development charges, planning application fees, building permit fees and parkland levies for the development of affordable. Action Ottawa, the city's main program for increasing the supply of low-income housing, facilitates mixed income communities through all three levels of government through capital grants (an average of \$60,000/unit) and long-term lease opportunities on City-owned land at nominal rates; new units have rents fixed at 70 percent of the average market rent as posted by CMHC. On inclusionary zoning, Ottawa's Official Plan (2003) states that 25 percent of all new rental housing is to be affordable to households up to the 30th percentile. The city lacks Uncommon and Unique approaches.

Calgary

With 1,392,609 inhabitants, Calgary has one of the lowest percentages of renter households (25 percent), and just 36.6 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards

rent. The vacancy rate is high (6.3 percent). Calgary's renovation/rehabilitation program is slightly advanced, including residential adaptation for people with disabilities. The city also has a few strong policies tied to funding. Calgary facilitates secondary suites, which are a discretionary land use in residential/commercial zones; the approval process was streamlined in 2018. Fee reduction/elimination is through the Housing Incentive Program, which grants \$50,000 for pre-development fees associated with an affordable housing project and a rebate on all city fees associated with an affordable housing project, supported by the City's Community Economic Resiliency Fund. Property taxes are also eliminated for non-profit housing organizations. Calgary sold seven surplus school sites to non-profit housing providers in 2017. As in Edmonton, inclusionary housing is allowed in Calgary. The city lacks Uncommon and Unique approaches.

Vancouver

Vancouver has a population of 2,463,431, and 36 percent of households are renters. Renters are vulnerable: 43.5 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent, and like Victoria, the city has a very low vacancy rate (0.9 percent). The city has many innovative and strong policies and plans, e.g. the Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan, which requires that redevelopment projects with three or more dwelling units replace every demolished rental unit or contribute to the replacement of the units (City of Vancouver 2018c). Vancouver offers capital grants to non-profit developers. Their inclusionary zoning policy requires 20 percent of residential floor space for affordable housing for sites over two acres in size, and their 10 Year Affordable Housing Delivery and Financial Strategy (2018d) proposed increasing the requirement to 30 percent. In the Cambie Corridor Plan (2018), specific areas such as the Oakridge Municipal Town Centre allow the development of 100 percent secured rental buildings with 20 percent of their floor area designated as social housing to be turned over to the City, or with up to 25 percent below-market rental housing.

Vancouver is one of just four case studies with a municipal development corporation/non-profit: the Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency (VAHA) was founded in 2016 to deliver new,

below-market rental housing on city-owned land with funding from public, private, and community partners. This includes the temporary modular housing program to house homeless residents with supports, in partnership with non-profit housing operators and BC Housing (City of Vancouver 2018). VAHA has a clear target to produce 2,500 new affordable rental units by 2021 and is on track to meet this goal. Vancouver uses housing reserve funds to build affordable housing, and is one of the three case studies to have address the issue of creating more rental housing near transportation hubs: the Housing Vancouver Strategy (2018b) prioritizes market and below-market rental housing on or adjacent to the region's Frequent Transit Network and suggests places where low-density areas near transit can be redeveloped. The City of Vancouver's Affordable Housing Choices Policy (2018) aims to produce projects that are up to six stories in height, located on an arterial street on Vancouver's Frequent Transit Network, and meet one of the affordability criteria: supplying 100 percent rental housing, selling units at 20 percent below market value, including a mechanism that ensures affordability over time (e.g. resale covenant), using an innovative model like co-housing where affordability will be enhanced, or using a Community Land Trust. This includes projects that are 3.5 stories and within 100m of an arterial street served by public transit.

Unique policies include the Rental 100: Secured Market Rental Housing Policy, which encourages rental housing development by providing a number of incentives to developers, such as reduced parking requirements, relaxation of unit size, no development fees, additional density where 100 percent of the residential floor space is rental, and concurrent processing of development applications for those requiring rezoning. The Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program allows the same incentives if 100 percent of the units are rental and at least 20 percent of the units have rents affordable for those earning between \$30,000 and \$80,000 per year (City of Vancouver 2018a). Vancouver instituted the country's first Foreign Buyers' Tax in 2016 to try to bring units that were unoccupied into the secondary rental stock and the Vacancy Tax By-Law in 2017 to motivate owners to rent out their empty or underused properties. Unique legislation passed in 2018 allows municipalities in the region to create rental

apartment-only zones in their land use plans, ensure preservation of rental housing, and demand that a certain percentage of units in new developments be rental tenure.

Montréal

Montréal is the largest city in the sample, with a population of 4,098,927. The city has the highest percentage of renters among the case studies (66 percent), and just 36 percent of renters pay over 30 percent of their gross income towards rent. The vacancy rate is healthy at 2.8 percent. Like Sherbrooke, Montréal benefits from a high level of cooperation with the Province of Quebec, e.g. the City and Province coordinate their subsidy programs for the renovation of rental housing and rooming houses. Capital grants through the municipal-provincial program, Habitation à loyer modique, funded 20,810 public housing and rooming house units by 2018 (OMHM 2018). Montréal has the same strict condo conversion policy as Sherbrooke. Inclusionary zoning is permitted; in Montréal, in new large residential developments (over 100 units) requiring rezoning, a minimum of 30 percent of units must be affordable (Ville de Montréal 2015) and the city is proposing to change this to 20 percent affordable units in developments of over 50 units (Scott, 2019). Montréal was one of just three case studies to emphasize building affordable housing near transit, through the city's inclusionary housing strategy (Ville de Montréal 2006, 2). One of just three cities to use land banks, tens of thousands of social and community housing units have been built using municipal land, though the quantity of land the city currently owns is limited (Ville de Montréal 2006). As in Sherbrooke, the Unique program AccèsLogis is operated through Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ).

Clearly, innovation is not only seen in the large cities: it can be seen in small and mid-sized cities as well. Universal and Common policies and programs show the range of basic, standard approaches to those that are more advanced. Collaboration with the provincial government, for example, led to some more advanced capital grants programs for secondary suites (e.g. Edmonton), construction of other types of rental housing units (e.g. Saskatoon), and stronger

renovation/rehabilitation programs (e.g. Winnipeg). More basic policies were seen in cases such as Windsor and Halifax, and some advanced approaches in Hamilton, Ottawa, and Mississauga. Cases with Uncommon and Unique policies and programs can be characterized as more innovative, either because their provincial governments were more supportive, offering a range of programs (e.g. Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Sherbrooke) or because they took the lead on developing their own (e.g. Vancouver, Edmonton, Montreal).

The process of developing case reports, coding the data, and entering and organizing it in a meta-matrix identified persistent patterns across the cases, despite their contextual differences (e.g. population size). Researchers have described as these as critical success factors (e.g. Nijkamp et al. 2002, Van Egmond et al. 2003, Thomas et al. 2014), but they are as indicative of both success and challenges in rental housing protection and implementation.

Critical Success Factors in Rental Housing Protection and Implementation

As described in the previous section, the process of coding the case reports, entering the coded data into the meta-matrix, and noting the cross-case patterns led to the development of the CSFs. They can be grouped into three categories: policies and tools, actor network, and regional characteristics (see Table 1). The policies and tools category includes factors related to the intent, strength, and enforcement of municipal policies as well as planning tools used to encourage the construction of rental housing or its protection (e.g. condominium conversion by-laws, secondary suites by-laws, development fee exemptions). This was not surprising since the focus of the study was on policies, plans, and programs and the researchers specifically coded for this. The second category, actor network includes the stakeholders within the region who work on rental housing implementation and protection, and their relationships with each other. For example, do they collaborate on regional housing goals? Do they meet regularly through a committee? Time and time again, these CSFs had a strong impact on the ability to set targets and meet them. Finally, the third category focuses on unique regional characteristics that seemed to be so critical to the success of a case study that they could not be discounted, e.g. a very strong preference for renting, or developers producing for more rental units than condominiums.

The CSFs tell us what increased or decreased success in a case study, e.g. policies that were enforced and monitored for progress towards targets led to greater success, while no enforcement or monitoring led to less success. A city does not have to be strong in all of the CSFs in order to be successful; in fact, none of the cities could be described as having “positive” aspects for all 11 CSFs. Rather, the cities that were successfully protecting or implementing rental housing integrated a range of the “increases success” column, while those that were less successful were using a combination of approaches that “decrease success”. As in other meta-analyses (Van Egmond et al. 2004, Nijkamp et al. 2002, Thomas and Bertolini 2014), there seems to be no magic combination of factors that led to success among the cases.

For policymakers and planners in cities who would like to strengthen their approaches to rental housing, strengthening several of their weaknesses (e.g. those on the “decreases success” side of the table) could impact their outcomes. They could use the CSFs to identify weaknesses in their city/region and work towards, e.g. poor collaboration and partnerships. Then they could set a goal to increase collaboration between stakeholders in the region, for example by introducing a series of meetings in which municipal planners, non-profit housing providers, and developers present their own strategies and plans for rental housing. This would allow the organizations to get to know each other’s goals and methods, and over time, could help develop common goals. Or if there is weak public support for rental, multi-unit or dense housing types, a municipality or non-profit could hold information sessions or produce online resources about the need for a range of housing types in the city.

Of course, there are CSFs that municipal planners and policy makers are unable to do anything about, e.g. provincial support, intergovernmental cooperation. The problem of unsupportive or uninvolved “senior governments” (e.g. provincial and federal governments) has long been acknowledged among municipal housing advocates as a barrier to their success (e.g. Hulchanski 2007, Suttor 2018, August and Walks 2018). Some cities have been able to introduce their own policies and funding programs, but these are usually the larger cities with far greater resources (e.g. Vancouver).

In order to apply the findings from the meta-analysis, we used the CSFs, and the solutions from the other cases, policy transfer workshops in Halifax. This gave us the opportunity of understanding how local planners could use the lessons from other contexts in their development of solutions to rental housing problems. This was critical to our overall goal: learning about the barriers that still exist in rental housing protection and implementation, and what solutions Canadian cities had used to overcome them.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTOR	INCREASES SUCCESS	DECREASES SUCCESS
POLICIES & TOOLS		
1 Policy Intent	Clear goals or targets for protection of existing/implementation of new rental housing, clearly linked to an implementation strategy/action plan/timeline	Very vague, unclear, or absent targets for protection of existing/implementation of new rental housing, with no implementation strategy/action plan/timeline
2 Policy Strength	Specific, strong policy wording on protection/implementation of rental housing, clearly linked to funding or other municipal support	Very vague, unclear, or absent policy wording on protection/implementation of rental housing, not linked to funding or other municipal support
3 Policy Enforcement	Policies are enforced (e.g. protection of units) and monitored for progress towards targets	Policies are not enforced (e.g. protection of units) or monitored for progress towards targets
4 Planning Tools	Widespread use of planning tools to encourage rental housing, e.g. density bonuses, tax exemptions, streamlined applications process	No planning tools to encourage rental housing
ACTOR NETWORK		
5 Collaboration/ Partnerships	Very good communication/collaboration on rental housing protection/implementation, major overlap in goals and vision, very clear roles	No communication/collaboration on rental housing protection/implementation, no overlap in goals or vision, very unclear roles
6 Intergovernmental Cooperation	Local plans and policies on rental housing clearly align with provincial priorities and programs	Local plans and policies on rental housing do not clearly align with provincial priorities and programs
7 Municipal Leadership	Strong municipal leadership in rental housing protection/implementation from municipal organization/department	No municipal body/organization takes a leadership role in rental housing protection/implementation
8 Provincial Funding	A wide range of grants and support for protection/implementation of rental housing (e.g. capital grants, advice for municipal staff, sharing technical expertise)	No provincial grants (e.g. capital) or support (e.g. advice) for protection/implementation of rental housing
REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS		
9 Renter Vulnerability	Census/CMHC data shows vacancy rates over 3%, fewer than 35% of tenants pay over 30% in rent, most units are in good condition	Census/CMHC data shows vacancy rates below 1%, over 45% of tenants pay over 30% in rent, most units are in poor condition
10 Regional Preferences	High preference for rental tenure/low preference for ownership	Low preference for rental tenure/high preference for ownership
11 Public Support	Strong public support for rental, multifamily, and/or dense housing types	Strong opposition to rental for rental, multifamily, and/or dense housing types

Table 1. Critical success factors in rental housing protection/implementation

WORKSHOP RESULTS: HALIFAX

While planners use a range of methods to develop community plans, draft policy, and deliver programs and services, the case study approach is one of the most frequently used methodologies in policy learning and development. Planners regularly study policies from other places, adapting them to suit local governance, policy, and cultural contexts. Bent Flyvberg proposed that learning from context-specific case studies allowed practicing planners to progress from “rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts.” (2006, 221) No matter what type of expertise a person has, Flyvberg argued that every expert “operates on the basis of intimate knowledge of several thousands of concrete cases in their areas of expertise.” (2006, 222)

Policy transfer can be described as:

the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions, and ideas in another political system. – Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, 5

Transferable knowledge, in this case, includes policy goals, content, instruments and programs; institutions, ideologies and attitudes; and even negative lessons. Although policy transfer can occur at the national level and involve government task forces, politicians and political parties, and international organizations, they can also involve local think tanks, activists, research institutes and media. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) identified four different types of policy transfer: copying (direct and complete transfer), emulation (transfer of the ideas behind the policy or program), combinations (mixtures of different policies) and inspiration (policy in another jurisdiction may inspire a policy change, but the final outcome does not actually draw upon the original). Spaans and Louw (2009) describe different “intensities of transfer” including using policy ideas for inspiration, learning, and transplantation. Akin to learning from case comparison, Stone (2004) argues that we can learn from more than one jurisdiction at a time and take away a few lessons, which would lead to hybrids and adaptive innovation to fit the local context.

Planners, politicians, or civil servants might look elsewhere for solutions if they're dissatisfied with current policies, if there are conditions of uncertainty (e.g. political, economic), or simply because they are linked to other professionals through networks that facilitate exchange and learning (e.g. national conferences, international learning exchanges).

In this case, as our research team is based at Dalhousie University in Halifax, we knew that local planners, policymakers and politicians have been trying to address the need for affordable housing and that the region already has a strong rental housing orientation (40 percent of households in Halifax rent). We wanted to see if local planners could take the solutions from the other 14 case studies and use them as learning or inspiration. To do this, we designed the workshops to include four components:

1. We presented the processes of policy transfer and introduced the CSFs
2. We had them participate in an exercise using the CSF five-point ranking scale (see Table 2)
3. We presented the policy lessons from the case studies
4. We asked them if the policy lessons from the case studies could be applied in Halifax, and if not, why not? (e.g. different public expectations, different governmental responsibilities)

We also designed pre- and post-workshop surveys to determine whether they understood policy transfer, whether they felt that their organizations could and would use ideas from other places, and whether these ideas could actually be applied locally (See Tables 5-8).

CONNECTING THE DOTS

	SCALE				
	1	2	3	4	5
POLICIES & TOOLS					
How clear would you say municipal targets are for the protection of existing/ implementation of new rental housing? (e.g. linked to an implementation strategy/action plan/timeline?)	Very vague, unclear, or absent targets with no implementation strategy / action plan / timeline	Mostly vague, unclear or absent targets with no implementation strategy / action plan / timeline	Some targets, not linked to implementation strategy / action plan / timeline	Several clear targets, linked to implementation strategy / action plan / timeline	Very clear targets, clearly linked to implementation strategy / action plan / timeline
How strong are municipal policies on protection / implementation of rental housing? (e.g. linked to funding or other municipal support like a streamlined application process)	Very vague, unclear, or absent policy wording, no funding / support	Mostly vague, unclear, or absent policy wording, no funding / support	Some examples of strong policy wording, some funding / support	Several examples of strong policy wording, linked to funding / support	Very strong policy wording, clearly linked to funding / support
Would you say that municipal policies are enforced (e.g. protection of units) and monitored for progress towards targets?	No enforcement or monitoring	Very little enforcement or monitoring	Some enforcement and less regular monitoring	Several are enforced and regularly monitored	Most are strongly enforced and regularly monitored
Are planning tools used to encourage rental housing across the region? (e.g. density bonuses, tax exemptions, zoning to allow certain housing types)	No use	Very little use in any municipality	Some use in a few municipalities	Regular use in several municipalities in the region	Widespread use in most municipalities in the region
ACTOR NETWORK					
How would you characterize the relationships between actors (public, private, and other) involved in rental housing? (e.g. communication, collaboration, overlap in goals or vision, clarity of roles)	No communication / collaboration, no overlap in goals or vision, very unclear roles	Very little communication / collaboration, no overlap in goals or vision, unclear roles	Average communication / collaboration, overlap in goals or vision, and less clear roles	Good communication / collaboration, overlap in goals and vision, and clear roles	Very good communication / collaboration, major overlap in goals and vision, very clear roles
Do municipal plans and policies align well with provincial priorities and programs?	No clear alignment	Very little alignment	Some alignment	A good level of alignment	Very clear alignment

Table 2. Five-point ranking scale

CONNECTING THE DOTS

	SCALE				
	1	2	3	4	5
ACTOR NETWORK					
How would you characterize municipal leadership on rental housing policy?	No municipal body / organization	Informal municipal body / organization with very little leadership	Informal municipal body / organization with some leadership	Formal municipal body / organization with some leadership	Municipal body / organization with strong leadership
How supportive is the provincial government in the protection/implementation of rental housing? (e.g. capital grants, advice for municipal staff, sharing technical expertise)	No grants / support	Very few grants / very little support	Some grants / some support	A good range of grants / good level of support	A wide range of grants / extensive support
REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS					
How vulnerable are renters in your municipality/region, in terms of availability, affordability, and condition of units?	Census/CMHC data shows vacancy rates below 1%, over 45% of tenants pay over 30% in rent, most units are in poor condition	Census/CMHC data shows vacancy rates between 1-2%, 40-45% of tenants pay over 30% in rent, many units are in poor condition	Census/CMHC data shows vacancy rates between 2-3%, 35-40% of tenants pay over 30% in rent, some units are in good condition	Census/CMHC data shows vacancy rates around 3%, 30-35% of tenants pay over 30% in rent, many units are in good condition	Census/CMHC data shows vacancy rates over 3%, fewer than 35% of tenants pay over 30% in rent, most units are in good condition
Is there a preference for rental housing in your municipality/region?	Very weak preference for rental / strong preference for ownership	Weak preference for rental tenure / some preference for ownership	Some preference for rental tenure / some preference for ownership	Strong preference for rental tenure / low preference for ownership	Very strong preference for rental tenure / very low preference for ownership
How would you describe the level of public support for rental housing? (including multi-family housing, higher densities)	No public acceptance / strong opposition	Very little public acceptance / some opposition	Some degree of public acceptance / public approval	Good public acceptance / public approval	Very high public acceptance / public approval

Table 2. Five-point ranking scale

CONNECTING THE DOTS

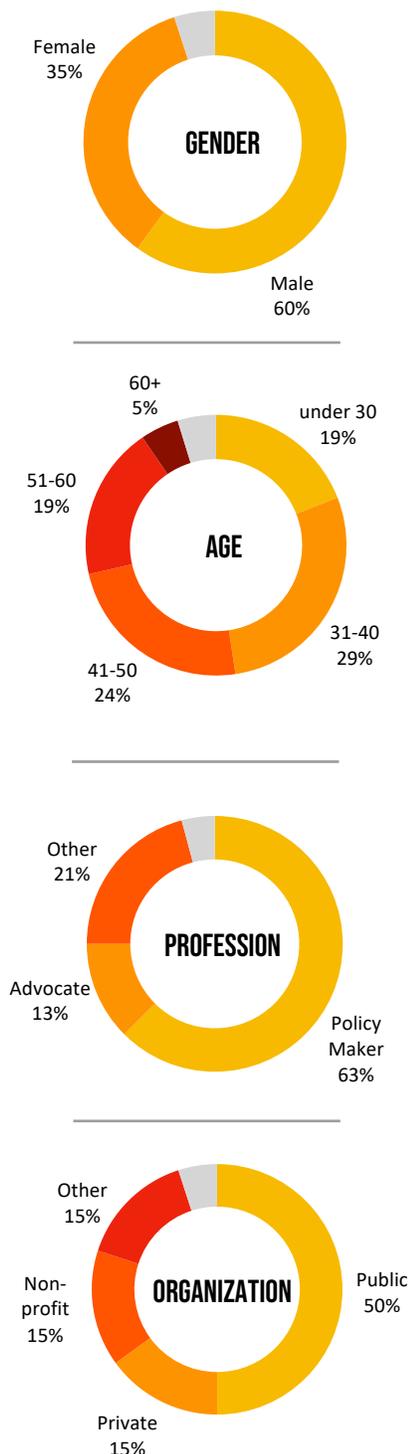


Figure 2: Workshop participants

Our two workshops were held at Dalhousie University on June 12 and July 9, 2019, at the MacEachen Institute for Public Policy and Governance. Combined, the workshops had 21 participants. The breakdown of participants can be seen in Figure 2 and Table 3. Overall, there was a broad range of participants in age, profession and organization they worked for. This mix informed the conversations that emerged from the two workshops.

Generally, participants felt positive about having participated in the workshop (see Tables 5-8). The majority of participants (18) agreed to its usefulness and would communicate the results to their organization. In terms of establishing a vision for the challenges, goals and possible solutions for rental housing, participants shifted from a neutral stance (pre-workshop) to agreement (post-workshop).

Participants also felt their understanding of the types of policy transfer was improved. Eighteen of twenty-one participants agreed with this. The majority maintained that approaches from other contexts were used in decision making at their organizations and the culture facilitated the process of learning from other cities.

There was agreement that the absence of cooperation between agencies hindered implementation. While eighteen participants agreed that policy ideas from outside contexts were useful for identifying weaknesses in Halifax, only eleven participants felt policies from other contexts were useful for selecting options for Halifax.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

GENDER			
	Male	Female	No answer
June 12	8	4	0
July 9	5	3	1
Total	13	7	1

AGE						
	<30	31-40	41-50	51-60	>60	No answer
June 12	2	4	3	3	0	0
July 9	2	2	2	1	1	1
Total	4	6	5	4	1	1

PROFESSION*					
	Planner/ Policy Maker	Developer	Housing Advocate	Other	No answer
June 12	8	0	2	3	0
July 9	7	0	1	2	1
Total	15	0	3	5	1

*Note: some participants identified with more than one profession.

ORGANIZATION*						
	Public Organization	Private Company	Freelance Consultant	Non-profit	Other	No answer
June 12	9	1	0	1	2	0
July 9	3	2	0	2	1	1
Total	12	3	0	3	1	1

*Note: some participants identified with more than one organization.

Table 3: Workshop Participants

Exercise One: Critical Success Factors Ranking Scale

Overall, participants scored the municipality low on its approaches to Policies and Tools. Actor Network and Regional Characteristics scored more favourably. However, the sentiment was midrange for the most part.

Participants were critical of Halifax’s current position. In relation to Policies and Tools used, the most frequent score for each subcategory was one. Policy strength and enforcement were areas that they felt were lacking. In terms of planning tools, half of the participants identified some tools in place as opposed to none. The perception of the Actor fared better with a midrange score of three for most of the subcategories. The City ranked fairly high on collaboration and intergovernmental cooperation, but lower on municipal leadership and provincial funding. For Regional Characteristics, participants agreed that renters in Halifax are particularly vulnerable, but they acknowledged that the slight regional preference for renting aided in fair levels of public support — both scoring threes.

	1	2	3	4	5
Policies and Tools					
1 Policy Intent	6	4	5	4	0
2 Policy Strength	9	7	2	0	0
3 Policy Enforcement	10	3	2	2	0
4 Planning Tools	7	4	6	1	0
Actor Network					
5 Collaboration/ Partnerships	0	8	7	4	0
6 Intergovernmental Cooperation	2	3	10	1	3
7 Municipal Leadership	2	7	7	1	1
8 Provincial Funding	4	4	9	2	0
Regional Characteristics					
9 Renter Vulnerability	2	15	1	0	0
10 Regional Preferences	1	0	12	5	0
11 Public Support	0	1	10	5	1

Table 4: Results from the Critical Success Factor Ranking Scale

In a discussion following exercise one, participants discussed the needs of the existing populations in the region with regard to rental housing. A common feeling was that there is support for rental development projects until they are proposed within their neighbourhoods. They reflected on the impact of these Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) attitudes towards rental development. Additionally, the media portrayal of

supportive housing was identified as a contributor to these attitudes and participants felt that a rebranding of multi-family and rooming houses would aid in better public understanding and acceptance. Overall, participants felt that there is room for improvement, particularly when it comes to low private sector involvement in collaboration. Participants felt that a lack of trust between government bodies and private developers has hindered the development of a potentially beneficial relationship. This conversation led to the question: how can we go about establishing better collaboration between private entities and government? Other issues included the absence of a formal body dedicated to rental housing and the inability of current funding to support new affordable rental housing development. Both of these issues spurred a call for more leadership. A final concern raised was the development of housing outside of the Halifax peninsula, particularly between the airport and the city, and the demographics they serve. Participants felt these areas further from downtown presented opportunity for persons looking to downsize, empty nesters and boomers who desire homes requiring lower maintenance.

Exercise Two: Application of Lessons

In general, participants felt there was a need for more focus on economics in planning for housing, cross-disciplinary job postings for a greater understanding of the multitude of factors that affect how housing is planned, and greater consideration for the outcomes of a lack of communication. But overall, they felt that affordability was the bigger issue. They understood that cities employing the approaches presented in the workshop are doing better in terms of affordability.

Policies and Tools

Limited municipal powers have affected the municipality's ability to make changes. This includes limited taxation powers and absence of natural person powers in HRM (in specific contexts). For example, currently the HRM Charter sets out all of the city's powers and responsibilities. If natural person powers were granted, the city could do anything that was not restricted in the Charter, such as entering into restrictive covenants protecting the affordability of a unit, or granting property improvement grants for a range of purposes. The majority of provinces have given their cities natural person powers.

Participants felt there was need for a better way to collaborate that reduces barriers. However, the conversation didn't fully consider the other municipalities in the area. Participants outlined the need for attainable goals, clear targets and responsibilities for each organization involved in developing rental housing, stronger leadership, and overall clarity of existing policy interpretation.

“ If you don't have an issue, do you need a policy? ”

- workshop participant

Participants felt that unclear roles and responsibilities in the region were intertwined with a lack of power to enforce policies. They felt there needed to be agreement across the board on definitions and terms that relate to rental housing to eliminate confusion. Additionally, since

HRM is a diverse regional municipality, it needs diverse goals. In order to accomplish this, the city needs to set demographic targets. For example, rural areas require flexibility of the policy tools so that they are able to effectively utilize them; tools like density bonuses would likely not work in these areas. Further, participants concluded that there should be an organization dedicated to planning and implementing rental housing.

Planning tools can be used by the municipality but there is an interpretation issue: HRM has fee reductions, waivers and reduced property taxes on land. However, property taxes and density bonuses should not be relied on solely to produce rental housing in the region: other regulatory tools are needed. Additionally, the policy realm is siloed: those working in policy have not been directly involved in the development process. This has led to a lack of understanding of developers' decision making processes. In turn, developers turn to private lenders rather than accessing public grants, leading to the development of market-rate rather than affordable housing.

*“ There is quick growth in Halifax. How do we set achievable goals?
We don't have a plan for that. ”*

- workshop participant

In the Regional Centre Land Use By-Law within Centre Plan Package A (Halifax Regional Municipality 2019), Halifax has a policy on secondary suites but participants felt that the policy needs supports to make sure the suites are implemented, as in Edmonton and Saskatoon. There is a need for information/education on the different types of housing and grants available, e.g., for homeowners and tenants. Additionally, more thought needs to go into enforcement of key policies, e.g., where do tenants go if units are found to be unsafe? The city needs to clarify which policies are meant to address which issues, which will help them to prioritize enforcement of existing policies and development of new ones. For example, fee rebates and relaxation of parking standards are better directed to the things the market cannot solve because they result in reliable decreases in costs for developers.

Participants indicated that it was easy for rental housing issues to be overlooked because they are ongoing issues. They pointed out that when a deadline was tangible, e.g. the building of a stadium, it was more likely to be tracked. However, with an issue as difficult and ongoing as rental housing, there are no set deadlines or goals to achieve. Our survey, detailed in our first working report, showed that most municipalities were much better at setting targets for new housing than achieving them.

Actor Network

Among participants, there was a feeling that they did not have the power to regulate and create housing. The income and population levels vary considerably across the province, but the tools available from the province are uniform; participants felt the need for HRM-specific tools. As all other cities in the province are far smaller in population size, HRM faces unique challenges. The lack of formal collaboration or partnerships between governments, private sector developers, and non-profits is also a barrier. Halifax Housing and Homelessness Partnership (HHHP), which brings together a number of these different organizations including HRM, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and United Way, does not have the ability to develop or enact policy decisions. Additionally, the ability to access and share information across organizations is a barrier. Only one person is responsible for affordable housing at the city and one at the province, and there is no one specifically focused on (affordable) rental housing. The province has less capacity than HRM, with only seven planners versus single teams of fifteen at HRM. Further, participants felt the priorities for the province and priorities for municipality aren't aligned due to a lack of leadership and adherence to deadlines. Finally, differing mindsets and values among policy makers versus developers and non-profits is another barrier.

Participants felt that there is a need for more comprehensive and collaborative decision making. Inadequate consultation with partner organizations contributes to large scale decision making at the provincial that level affects local planning. Health and housing are often siloed, but are overlapping areas and should be considered together.

The current lack of formal meetings between actors leads to overlapping of collected information, inefficiency and unawareness of what the various actors are doing. While the participants noted that some sharing of data and goals is happening, there is a need for greater clarity of roles and responsibilities. This could be done by bringing together all of the organizations, not just those who are already members of HHHP. A permanent body made up of housing experts of formal and informal actors (non-profit, governments, developers) could then be established. Further, sharing knowledge at different levels of government could be encouraged through networking channels at each level. This would allow various departments to be aware of what is being done along the network. Participants suggested increasing resources and capacity at the provincial level — at a minimum, the province should be able to provide advice and/or tools to develop rental housing. While CMHC has difficulty meeting one-on-one with each organization, it is open to engagement. However, it believes municipalities and provinces should lead, and lack of agreement on goals and targets in the region has led to a lack of leadership.

Participants also devised the creation of a housing navigator, a body that would help individuals or organizations searching for rental housing related information. There would be four categories: renters, investors, non-profits and researchers. It would be a neutral body with a centralized website or office that would be able to facilitate meetings across organizations. Participants felt HHHP could explore providing this type of service. Given its established network, this position could build upon relationships rather than starting from scratch. They would carry out tasks such as partnering with non-profits and developers, rental units searching for individuals, and establishing a database of potential sites for new rental housing development. Information on the availability of surplus city owned land is not publicly available and so it is difficult for interested groups to know which lands they might be able to bid on. Additionally, a tool which allows available sites to be easily found could lead to an increase in bids to create more rental housing. More flexibility is needed so that organizations like non-profits can also access funding and opportunities for development. A Navigator Street Outreach

program is currently operated through Spring Garden Area Business Association and Downtown Halifax Business Commission to connect homeless and street involved individuals to access services they need (Navigator Street Outreach 2019).

Regional Characteristics

Participants noted that HRM has some regional characteristics that act as barriers to rental housing development: Airbnb has restricted the supply of rental units, there are generally low incomes in the municipality, and there are significant NIMBY concerns. Within Halifax, there are pockets of people paying greater than 30% on shelter, often low-income individuals and households. Participants pointed out the need for a greater range of units. Currently most housing is built for two-parent, two-child households, not smaller households which are common in Halifax, a city of seniors and students. Mid-rise and high-rise housing has only recently become more common. However, developers avoid rezoning applications in an effort to avoid conflict with existing residents. Finally, there was concern about people buying condos as investments which could result in an absentee owners situation similar to that occurring in Vancouver.

Participants tackled the need for increasing building and protecting rental housing units. They felt that this should be done by increasing the capacity of non-profits to build new rental units and reducing the current barriers to access the necessary funding. Non-profits and municipal corporations should be given leeway to build more housing. There has been difficulty accessing funds, such as the National Co-Investment Fund established through the National Housing Strategy, because the thresholds for affordability are too high. For example, organizations applying for funding must keep rents for a minimum of 30% of units below 80% of the median market rental rate for at least 20 years. Other measures proposed were to use density bonusing and community benefit agreements, and to buy up existing stock in order to maintain rentals that are affordable. Non-profits should be allowed to purchase existing stock to add it to their supply of affordable housing.

In terms of countering NIMBY attitudes towards rental housing and new development, participants felt that sharing stories about multi-family housing, such as how difficult it is to build and the types of households that need rental housing, is important. Finding out what amenities communities need could also be beneficial, as could more social media and news articles about housing advocacy. Participants felt that there is a need to think about the roles of the media and organizations in educating the public. They would like to see the return of official housing advocates. Improving public support for multi-family and rooming houses could begin by updating the language used when organizations talk to the public about housing. For example, instead of mentioning the Housing First model, talk about providing adequate support and programs for people who rent and face particular challenges. Further, a new image for housing types like rooming houses could help with reducing stigma. Participants suggested education approaches could highlight how certain household types, such as college and university students, contribute to the economy. This would require ideological shifts, which could involve using international examples of housing with supports or rooming houses.

Participants also suggested the creation of a knowledge hub to encourage students to get involved in housing solutions through research. The seven post-secondary institutions in Atlantic Canada could be incubators of how to do housing differently. Nova Scotia could apply to CMHC funding to have a hub based in Halifax.

Halifax's mixture of urban and rural areas presents unique challenges. Participants also discussed how the availability of transit, instead of car ownership, could free up some household income that would allow spending on housing. They felt that an investment in transportation to allow people to remain in place — mobile services or shuttles to rural areas — should be considered. This would allow people to remain in their existing houses and save money by giving up their cars.

“ How do we get the \$3 billion necessary to build 1,000 units? ”

- workshop participant

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Participants also felt that they needed more data: rental housing locations, sites for development, Walk Scores for different neighbourhoods, etc., could be useful in the decision making process. The work of existing organizations can be used as models for determining where new housing is needed. For example, to determine community amenity needs, Between the Bridges did considerable research in North Dartmouth, and HRM and the Nova Scotia Health Authority did a spatial analysis of neighbourhood access to food in order to decide which ones most needed the Mobile Food Market. The ability to share information, and continuity in addressing housing problems, are key: the current city council is supportive of housing, but this could change in the future. There has been a lot of focus on developing a "silver bullet" for solving the housing crisis, but participants felt that organizations need to increase housing supply across the entire spectrum of housing, not just affordable housing.

Lessons and Insights

Overall, participants felt there were some potential solutions from other case studies, and these could be used as inspiration. However, barriers to rental housing protection implementation still remain. The roles and responsibilities of the organizations are not clearly defined. All of the groups represented at the workshops agreed that stronger collaboration is needed. There needs to be stronger links to the consequences of policy enforcement, e.g. rehousing tenants if their units need to be repaired as a result of enforcing minimum rental housing standards. Rather than focusing on a silver bullet to solve affordable housing, they felt it was better to set tangible goals and build understanding between groups. As a regional municipality, HRM will need a flexible approach that could be partly based on ideas from other contexts. A couple of unique solutions that the participants developed were a housing navigator and a housing hub. The housing navigator would be a neutral body that would share information on rental housing with tenants, developers, and non-profits and act as a facilitator for increased meetings between the organizations involved in rental housing development. The housing hub could bring together students across the colleges and universities to think creatively about solutions to housing problems.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	No answer
1 I think a workshop on rental housing protection/implementation will be useful for me	0	0	2	9	9	0	1
2 I think that the process will help me interact with other participants and understand their ideas about the challenges to rental housing protection/implementation in the region	0	1	1	5	13	0	1
3 I think that exercises will help me understand the barriers in rental housing protection/implementation	0	0	2	6	12	0	1
4 I think that exercises will help me understand possible solutions to barriers to rental housing protection/implementation	0	0	0	9	11	0	1
5 In the workshop, we will reach a shared vision of the challenges to rental housing protection/implementation in the region	0	1	10	5	4	0	1
6 In the workshop, we will reach a shared vision on the goals for rental housing	0	1	9	7	3	0	1
7 In the workshop, we will reach a shared vision on the possible solutions	0	1	9	8	2	0	1
8 I will likely use insights from the workshop in my daily planning practice	0	1	4	7	6	2	1
9 I will likely communicate the results of the workshop to other members of my organization	0	0	0	5	14	1	1

Table 5: Results from the “Pre-workshop: About the workshop” participant survey

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	No answer
1 The workshop was useful for me	0	0	0	9	10	0	2
2 The process helped me interact with other participants and understand their ideas about the challenges to rental housing protection/implementation in the region	0	0	1	5	13	0	2
3 The exercises helped me understand the barriers in rental protection/implementation	0	1	1	11	5	1	2
4 The exercises helped me understand possible solutions to barriers to rental protection/implementation	0	0	2	12	5	0	2
5 We have reached a shared vision of the challenges to rental housing protection/implementation in the region	0	4	4	9	2	0	2
6 We have reached a shared vision on the goals for rental housing	0	4	7	8	0	0	2
7 We have reached a shared vision on the possible solutions	0	1	6	9	3	0	2
8 I will use insights from the workshop in my daily planning practice	0	0	2	9	5	3	2
9 I will communicate the results of the workshop to other members of my organization	0	0	1	8	10	0	2

Table 6: Results from the “Post-workshop: About the workshop” participant survey

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	No answer
10 I have a good understanding of different types of policy transfer (copying, emulation, combination, inspiration)	1	5	4	10	0	0	1
11 I have some insight into the processes that play a role in the challenges to rental housing protection/implementation in the region	1	1	0	16	2	0	1
12 It is difficult to apply policies and ideas from other contexts to the Halifax planning context	1	8	9	1	1	0	1
13 Policies and ideas from other contexts offer new insights to planning problems	0	0	0	9	11	0	1
14 My organization has the ability to use solutions (policies and ideas) from other planning contexts	0	1	2	7	8	2	1
15 Conflicting policies between agencies inhibits the use of solutions (policies and ideas) from other planning contexts	0	2	5	8	5	0	1
16 Policies and ideas from other planning contexts would not likely be used in long-term planning decisions as my organization is not familiar with them	3	10	4	2	0	1	1
17 The culture of the organization where I work does not enable the use of policies and ideas from other planning contexts	6	7	4	1	0	2	1
18 The absence of formal/informal cooperation between agencies on rental housing is a barrier to implementation	0	1	4	9	5	1	1
19 Policies and ideas from other planning contexts are useful for identifying weaknesses in planning for rental housing in the region	0	0	1	3	14	1	2
20 Policies and ideas from other planning contexts would be useful in selecting rental housing strategies/options for this region	0	0	2	5	10	2	2

Table 7: Results from the “Pre-workshop: About the policy lessons and policy transfer” participant survey

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable	No answer
10 I now have a better understanding of different types of policy transfer (copying, emulation, combinations, inspiration)	0	0	2	9	9	0	2
11 I now have more insight into the processes that contribute to the challenges to rental housing protection/implementation in the region	0	0	5	9	5	0	2
12 It is difficult to apply policies and ideas from other contexts to the Halifax planning context	2	7	6	2	1	1	2
13 Policies and ideas from other contexts offer new insights to planning problems	0	0	2	7	10	0	2
14 My organization has the ability to use solutions (policies and ideas) from other planning contexts	0	0	2	9	6	2	2
15 Conflicting policies between agencies inhibits the use of solutions (policies and ideas) from other planning contexts	0	0	3	11	5	0	2
16 Policies and ideas from other planning contexts would not likely be used in long-term planning decisions as my organization is not familiar with them	2	7	4	2	0	4	2
17 The culture of the organization where I work does not enable the use of policies and ideas from other planning contexts	6	8	2	2	0	0	2
18 The absence of formal/informal cooperation between agencies on rental housing is a barrier to implementation	0	1	1	11	6	0	2
19 Policies and ideas from other planning contexts are useful for identifying weaknesses in planning for rental housing in the region	0	0	0	8	10	0	3
20 Policies and ideas from other planning contexts are useful in selecting rental housing strategies/options for this region	0	0	0	6	5	7	3

Table 8: Results from the “Post-workshop: About the policy lessons and policy transfer” participant survey

CONCLUSIONS

This working paper presents the second set of findings from our study, “Rental Housing in Canadian Cities: Barriers and Solutions to Implementation”. First, we described some of the challenges faced by Canadian municipalities in protecting and implementing rental housing. We discussed how meta-analysis could be used to understand cross-case patterns, systematically comparing policies, plans, and programs in a range of Canadian cities. The case summaries highlighted the range of approaches: some cities had strong Universal and Common approaches (e.g. Regina, Saskatoon, Mississauga, Hamilton, Edmonton, and Winnipeg). Uncommon and Unique solutions tend to be found in cities on the innovative end of the spectrum, such as Vancouver, where renters face particular affordability challenges. In the small and mid-sized cities, provincial governments seem to be critical partners in the development of innovative approaches (e.g. Sherbrooke, Regina, Winnipeg). Larger cities simply have greater resources to rely upon in the development of their own programs.

Using the meta-analysis of case studies, we found eleven critical success factors that encouraged or inhibited rental housing protection and implementation. The CSFs fell into three groups: policies and tools, actor network, and regional characteristics. These factors have been found to increase or decrease success across case studies, regardless of differences in their contexts. Municipalities who want to be more successful in rental housing protection and implementation can use this list of CSFs, and the five-point ranking scale, to understand and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. We explored this in two workshops with planners, developers and non-profit housing organizations in Halifax.

The workshops showed that Halifax stakeholders were generally open to learning what other cities had done to protect and implement rental housing, and that they felt that their organizations were also open to ideas from other places. However, a number of barriers to using these ideas in policy development still remain. The participants felt that Halifax was a unique municipality because it is large and diverse, therefore it would require flexible tools that

could meet the needs of rural, low-income, and senior households. They also identified weak collaboration between actors in the public, private, and non-profit sectors and poorly defined roles for organizations involved in rental housing provision. In particular, the lack of a lead organization was felt to be a barrier. The municipality also seems to lack the power to develop tools (e.g. inclusionary zoning) and lacks the capacity (e.g. dedicated staff) to enforce policies. Participants in the first workshop had particular problems moving past these barriers to developing solutions based on the policy ideas from the case studies. In the second workshop, participants were more solutions-focused: one of the strongest ideas was the development of a housing navigator organization that would act as a liaison and information provider for the public as well as organizations that wanted to build rental housing.

Overall, many Canadian cities are taking innovative approaches to rental housing implementation, backing up strong policies with funding and support. There has been less success in protecting existing rental housing, except for public housing or co-operative units created through federal-provincial funds. Planners, developers, non-profit organizations, and policy makers in other cities can use the critical success factors, and the five-point ranking scale, to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in their own cities. They can also use some of the innovative solutions from the case studies to generate their own policies, plans, and tools. They will likely encounter barriers to adopting the ideas from other places, as our Halifax stakeholders did, which will require them to develop solutions that more closely meet their needs. This is precisely the way in which the policy transfer process should take place: using the ideas from other cities to discuss, learn from each other, and generate collaborative partnerships that can lead to new solutions to fit the local context.

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Catalyzing rental housing policy through policy learning

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