

Does planning acknowledge the cost of redevelopment on housing affordability?



Meaghan Dalton

Supervisor: Jill Grant

Technical Advisor: Ren Thomas

School of Planning, Dalhousie University

Independent Project (Plan 6000)

December 9, 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS I

SUMMARY II

INTRODUCTION 1

PROJECT BACKGROUND 2

IMPACT OF REDEVELOPMENT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING 2

OBJECTIVES 5

METHODS..... 5

FINDINGS 7

 METRO VANCOUVER 7

Plan Analysis..... 7

What Planners Say..... 9

 EDMONTON CAPITAL REGION 13

Plan Analysis..... 13

What Planners Say..... 17

 GREATER TORONTO AREA 21

Plan Analysis..... 21

What Planners Say..... 25

 HALIFAX REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY 28

Plan Analysis..... 28

What Planners Say..... 31

 ST. JOHN’S METROPOLITAN AREA..... 33

Plan Analysis..... 33

What Planners Say..... 35

DISCUSSION 37

APPENDIX 41

REFERENCES CITED 43

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research is part of a larger project examining the coordination of land use planning in Canada led by Dr. Jill Grant of the Dalhousie University School of Planning. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada funded this project. The Canadian Institute of Planners and the Dalhousie Transportation Collaboratory are partners in the work.

Many thanks to the previous research assistants who worked on the project and provided interview data and comprehensive analyses: Christina Wheeler, Ian Harper, Amanda Taylor, Nathan Hall, Tim Beed, and Tanya Markvart. Thank you to the planners from Vancouver, Edmonton, the Greater Toronto Area, Halifax, and St. John's who took part in interviews.

My research would not be possible without support from my peers and mentorship from Dr. Jill Grant. I owe enlightening and informative conversations that guided the direction of my research to regular meetings with Dr. Jill Grant, who provided me with excellent insight, resources, and passionate and encouraging discussion. Nic O'Dette and Janelle Derksen (also research assistants for Dr. Jill Grant) provided humour and support after hundreds of hours of research and coding. I am grateful to Dr. Jill Grant, Dr. Ren Thomas, and my Master of Planning classmates, especially Janelle Derksen, my peer reviewer, for giving me constructive feedback on my content, writing, and presentation style. Finally, the endless support and encouragement from my family and partner cannot be overstated.

Further research from Dr. Jill Grant's "Coordinating land use planning in the context of multiple plans" project can be found at: <http://theoryandpractice.planning.dal.ca/index.html>.

SUMMARY

Canadian media is showing increased coverage of residents struggling to afford housing and residents being displaced from their communities due to the rising cost of housing and neighbourhood redevelopment. Simultaneously, Canadian city-regions are encouraging high density housing in urban cores with mixed-uses as part of an increasing desire for smart growth. However, many researchers in urban planning are finding redevelopment in the forms of revitalization and densification may contribute to a loss of affordable housing.

My research explores to what extent planners from five Canadian city-regions (Vancouver, Edmonton, Greater Toronto Area, Halifax, and St. John's) address objectives for redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem (in discussion and planning documents), if planners recognize the negative impacts of redevelopment on affordable housing, and if the language for redevelopment and affordable housing objectives is equally compulsory and specific.

My analysis of interviews with 92 practicing planners and 24 planning documents indicates that planners address redevelopment objectives significantly more often than affordable housing objectives and the objectives are seldom addressed in tandem. The few times planners address both objectives together, planners often state that redevelopment (usually in the form of densification, but sometimes as revitalization) leads to increased and improved affordable housing. Planners rarely address the negative impacts redevelopment can have on affordable housing. The language for objectives to increase density is sometimes more compulsory than language used to increase or protect affordable housing. Many planners address frustration with provincial and federal governments not taking responsibility for affordable housing.

Research on revitalization and densification overwhelmingly shows these forms of redevelopment may lead to a loss of affordable housing (as prices increase and family-style housing is lost). However, Canadian planners have formed an unevaluated consensus that density and revitalization will improve and increase affordable housing. They are further encouraging site re-use, revitalization, and intensification.

INTRODUCTION

With the trend toward increasing urbanization and planning concepts of anti-sprawl and pro-density, urban cores are growing in population. Major Canadian cities are experiencing increased population growth due to immigration and greater job opportunities that draw residents to their communities. Cities are encouraging mixed-use and high density to reduce environmental footprint, to degrade less land (needed for agriculture and wanted for conservation of nature), and to add vibrancy to the urban core. In efforts to increase density in urban cores, redevelopment or site re-use of un- or under-utilized properties is common. Revitalization of aging areas that some consider “run-down” is also increasing.

With increased population comes increased need for housing, and in many circumstances, affordable housing. Most cities are struggling to provide enough affordable housing. A national rental housing index created by British Columbia’s Non-Profit Housing Association and Vancity Credit Union rated Halifax as 455th out of 523 Canadian cities examined (Silva, 2015). This poor ranking was based on how many households spend more than 30 per cent and more than 50 per cent of their income on rental housing costs when compared to all 523 cities across Canada (Canadian Rental Housing Index, 2015). In Nova Scotia, 20 per cent of residents pay more than 50 per cent of their income on housing (Brown, 2015). In order to combat the housing crisis in Vancouver, Councillors voted for a one per cent tax on vacant homes that are not being rented out (Canadian Press, 2016). In Edmonton, the number of residents on the Capital Region Housing Corporation’s waiting list for affordable housing tripled in 2015 due to the Province’s economic challenges (Theobald, 2016). Researchers have found that efforts to increase density (Burton, 1999; Dupuis & Dixon, 2002), encourage smart growth principles (Boyle & Mohamed, 2007; Nelson et al., 2002), intensify around transit nodes (Jones, 2015), and revitalize and redevelop communities (Smith, 1982; Lees, 2008) often leads to a loss of affordable housing.

My research examines five Canadian city-regions: Vancouver, Edmonton, the Greater Toronto Area, Halifax, and St. John’s (Newfoundland). Based on an analysis of 24 relevant plans and interviews with 92 practicing planners from those city-regions, my research identifies to what extent planners coordinate their efforts to redevelop the urban core with efforts to improve and increase affordable housing options. My research will also explore whether planners recognize the negative impact that redevelopment can have on affordable housing.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

This research is part of a multi-year research project on the coordination of plans led by Dr. Jill Grant from the Dalhousie School of Planning. The project aims to understand planners' perspectives on the challenges to coordinating an increasing number of plans in Canadian city-regions, the extent of coordination in planning, and potential good practices and strategies for coordinating planning in daily practice and in planning policies. With the trends of urban densification, "smart growth," and downtown revitalization on the rise, understanding to what extent redevelopment policies are coordinated with affordable housing policies becomes critical to investigate for anyone concerned about affordable housing needs.

IMPACT OF REDEVELOPMENT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Several studies demonstrate that policies promoting intensification can create an opportunity for increased affordable housing stock. Cullen (2005) demonstrates that intensification policy is often based on the premise that density is a socially and environmentally sustainable form of development. Many regions' sustainable development strategies include social sustainability; for that reason, increasing and protecting affordable housing should be complementary to intensification objectives. Researchers often claim that higher density developments lead to a greater variety of housing (Addison, 2012), which should support affordable housing objectives. Researchers also argue intensification can lead to greater social equity with better access to facilities and public transportation (Burton, 1999).

Many researchers have found, however, negative impacts of revitalization and intensification on objectives to increase and protect affordable housing. Gentrification theorists Smith (1982) and Lees (2008) have written extensively on the negative impacts of revitalization on an area's ability to maintain affordable housing. Gentrification is "the replacement of an existing population by a gentry (Lees et al., 2008, 4-5). Gentrification creates "chronic shortages of affordable housing" (44). By 1980, revitalization of communities displaced 5,000 American households each year (Smith, 1982). Lees (2008) argues that introducing middle and upper class residents to a community of formerly low-income residents (known as social mixing) further isolates lower-income individuals. Lees explains that social mixing is assumed to foster relationships among middle and lower class residents. The middle class can advocate for and set good examples to lower-class residents. Lees finds, however, that middle-class residents generally do not mix with lower-class residents; lower-class residents lose their social support networks and are ultimately displaced due to feelings of isolation.

Burton (1999), Nelson et al. (2002), and Jones (2015) examine the effects of intensification on affordable housing stock, and conclude that intensification can lead to increasing housing costs and less affordable housing. In Maywood, British Columbia, new trends of high-density development surrounding transit centres, known as transit oriented development, has led to a loss of affordable housing and increased housing prices (Jones, 2015). Most research on this subject concludes that while intensification does not inherently conflict with affordable housing objectives, intensification can lead to rising housing costs and fewer housing options when those objectives are not coordinated (Boyle & Mohamed, 2007; Cullen, 2005; Dupuis & Dixon, 2002).

Coordination of planning policies is lacking due to insufficient cross-department and cross-government collaboration, stringent funding, changing priorities in planning that compete with other objectives, and the proliferation of plans (Filion & McSpurren, 2007; Grant, 2013). While Cullen (2005) concludes that housing affordability is not inherently connected to intensification and must be coordinated in plans, other researchers conclude planning objectives generally must be coordinated for successful implementation of planning objectives (Bengston, 2004; Boyle & Mohamed, 2007; Filion & McSpurren, 2007; Grant, 2013).

While some research demonstrates that smart growth plans can lead to less affordable housing (Boyle & Mohamed, 2007; Nelson et al., 2002), and intensification policy can negatively impact objectives to increase and protect affordable housing (Burton, 2000; Cullen, 2005; Dupuis & Dixon, 2002, Jones, 2015), the extent to which intensification policy is coordinated with affordable housing objectives is not known. While Lees et al. (2008) and Smith (1982) clearly demonstrate the negative impacts of gentrification on the stock of affordable housing, we do not know the extent to which policies promoting revitalization coordinate with policies to increase and protect affordable housing.

While many plans across Canadian city-regions address revitalization, densification, and affordable housing, it is unclear if and to what extent planners recognize the negative impacts of revitalization and densification on affordable housing. As the literature demonstrates, densification and revitalization do not inherently decrease the stock of affordable housing, but without policies enforcing the protection of affordable housing in those areas slated for redevelopment, affordable housing is often lost. Most city-regions have some form of housing plan that usually includes affordable housing but the stock of affordable

housing is still lost to redevelopment (Burton, 2000; Cullen, 2005; Dupuis & Dixon, 2002, and Jones, 2015). An analysis of the concreteness of language used in policies calling for redevelopment and affordable housing is warranted.

Some research on plan coordination is emerging, as Fillion & McSpurren (2007) and Grant (2013) note the poor effects of uncoordinated policy generally. Bengston (2004), Boyle and Mohamed (2007), Burton (2000), Cullen (2005), and Dupuis and Dixon (2002) demonstrate the poor effects of uncoordinated policy specifically related to intensification and affordable housing objectives; however, this is a small sample of literature. No research has been found on the coordination of government-led revitalization policy and affordable housing. We need to know if objectives for revitalization and intensification are coordinated with affordable housing. If the objectives are not coordinated, intensification and revitalization policies can severely threaten objectives to preserve and increase affordable housing (Boyle & Mohamed, 2007; Burton, 1999; Cullen, 2005; Jones, 2015; Nelson et al., 2002).

Cullen's work (2005), which identifies poor coordination of intensification and affordable housing objectives, does not go beyond New Zealand to determine if this is a trend elsewhere; therefore, we do not know if what Cullen found in New Zealand is a unique circumstance or worldwide trend. My study will examine to what extent intensification and redevelopment policies are coordinated with affordable housing policies in the Canadian context, examining five city-regions: Vancouver, Edmonton, Greater Toronto Area, Halifax, and St. John's.

Cullen (2005) used interviews with planning professionals to identify whether intensification policies are coordinated with affordable housing policies in Auckland, New Zealand. She interviewed experts in housing and intensification who may be more aware of these planning objectives than planners in other areas. Those concerned by a loss of affordable housing can assume that, generally, planners are not recognizing the impacts of redevelopment on affordable housing, but my research will consider, based on systematic qualitative analysis, if there are differences in how prioritized affordable housing objectives are when compared to redevelopment objectives. My qualitative analysis will also identify how and if planners think about the negative impacts of redevelopment on affordable housing and if they address or try to mitigate the negative impacts of redevelopment on affordable housing in planning documents.

Examining the language in plans will shed light on the extent to which redevelopment and affordable housing policy actions are prioritized and taken seriously. My research uses interpretive analysis to examine if the policy actions for redevelopment and affordable housing are concrete; specific in place, time, and quantities; and whether the policies are compulsory.

OBJECTIVES

My comparative study using interviews and plans from Vancouver, Edmonton, Greater Toronto Area, Halifax, and St. John's will:

- Identify to what extent practicing planners and plan documents discuss objectives for redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem
- Report whether planners and planning documents acknowledge the impacts of redevelopment on affordable housing
- Explore the language of planning objectives for redevelopment and affordable housing and report differences in clarity and levels of encouragement or enforcement

METHODS

My comparative research used qualitative data analysis. I conducted content analysis of 24 planning documents from five city-regions. These plans include comprehensive plans, economic development plans, and affordable housing plans. Comprehensive plans cover the whole array of planning responsibilities for a community, whether for a town, city, municipality, or region. Such plans are most relevant to the policy objectives (redevelopment and affordable housing) being analyzed.

As Table 1 (page 6) demonstrates, more plans were analyzed from the Edmonton city-region. Edmonton has several housing plans and several overarching comprehensive plans for the city and the region. St. John's has a regional plan but it is from 1976 and not in electronic format, so accessing the plan was not possible. Halifax Regional Municipality does not have a housing plan, but a housing needs assessment was produced in 2015 to understand the context of affordable housing in the area and potential future strategies for addressing affordable housing. While the housing needs assessment may show the future direction of affordable housing policy in the Halifax Regional Municipality, it cannot be compared to other city-regions' affordable housing plans because there are no housing policies in the document.

| | VAN | EDM | GTA | HRM | SJ |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Comprehensive | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Housing | 3 | 3 | 1 | 0* | 1 |
| Economic Development | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 5 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| *HRM has no affordable housing plan but does have a housing needs assessment. | | | | | |

Transcripts of semi-structured interviews with 92 practicing planners and professionals in related fields from the five city-regions were analyzed in order to explore how planners talk and think about redevelopment and affordable housing. Researchers from Dalhousie University and the University of Waterloo conducted the interviews in 2014 for Dr. Jill Grant's research on coordinating multiple plans in Canada. Consequently, this data only represents the thoughts of planners at that moment. Moreover, the questions asked in the interviews were not specifically about the coordination and prioritization of redevelopment and affordable housing. The planners were asked about their experience in trying to coordinate planning objectives, to what extent they do coordinate plans, and the challenges they face in coordinating plans. While these questions do not inherently lead to answers that address redevelopment and affordable housing objectives, the topics are so prominent in planning discourse that they arose frequently in the interview data.

The interviews were semi-structured and conducted in person, by telephone, or by video chat. They lasted from twenty minutes to an hour and a half. All but one participant gave consent to be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Respondent confidentiality was protected.

| | VAN | EDM | GTA | HRM | SJ |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| City/Municipal | 7 | 16 | 26 | 7 | 5 |
| Regional | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Provincial | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 |
| Private | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Other | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| Total | 15 | 18 | 31 | 15 | 13 |

In order to identify common themes and contrasting differences in the interview transcripts and plans, I conducted several forms of content analysis. I used thematic analysis to identify how often a theme arose in the data. In this case, the themes were the policy objectives for site re-use, revitalization, densification (all of which are forms of redevelopment), and affordable housing. I coded the transcripts and plans for any time the objectives arose. I then used interpretive analysis to identify to what extent the policy objectives

(all forms of redevelopment and affordable housing) arose in tandem by the planners and within the plans to determine the extent to which the objectives were coordinated, complementary, or contradictory. I also used interpretive analysis to examine if the planners and planning documents acknowledge and address the negative impacts redevelopment can have on the stock of affordable housing as well as how concrete the policies for redevelopment and affordable housing are. I used comparative analysis to identify any similar themes or differences from across the five city-regions being explored.

FINDINGS

Metro Vancouver

The Vancouver city-region, also known as Metro Vancouver, comprises 21 municipalities and one Treaty First Nation. The population of Metro Vancouver is 2.4 million (Metro Vancouver, 2016a). Metro Vancouver is facing extreme population growth pressures and experiencing challenges in accommodating that growth. Metro Vancouver is committed to growing without sprawling, but this puts high demand on housing in the urban core, which has assisted in the rising cost of housing (Metro Vancouver, 2010).

Plan Analysis

| Name of Plan | Relevant goals emphasized |
|---|---|
| Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future (2010) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intensification - Transit-oriented development - Urban containment boundary - Affordable housing (through density) |
| Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (2016) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Meet housing demand estimates for very low and low income earners” - Support non-profit housing organizations and housing co-ops - Encourage mixed-income developments - Advocate for funding from provincial and federal governments - Increase rental stock in transit centres - Density for affordable housing |
| City of Vancouver Housing and Homelessness Strategy: 2012-2021 (2011) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End street homelessness - Provide more affordable housing - New zoning and regulatory incentives to allow for affordable housing - Protect rental stock - Advocates for mixed-income housing |

| | |
|---|---|
| Vancouver Economic Action Strategy (2011) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Support greater density- Support transit-oriented development- Encourages redevelopment |
|---|---|

The City of Vancouver’s economic development and affordable housing plans are supposed to be aligned with the plans from Metro Vancouver, which enforces what the City of Vancouver must plan for. In order to identify the extent to which redevelopment policies align with affordable housing policies in the Vancouver city-region, the Metro Vancouver 2040 plan, the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy, the city’s Housing and Homelessness Strategy, and the City of Vancouver Economic Action Strategy were examined, as they are the most relevant plans to the objectives in question. The City of Vancouver does not have a comprehensive plan for the whole urban core. Plans are made for neighbourhoods within the city and specific to the areas; thus, no comprehensive city plan was examined.

All of the plans, except for the economic development plan, substantially address redevelopment and affordable housing. At first glance, it seems the three plans that address both objectives coordinate the objectives because they are often spoken about in tandem. The regional plan advocates denser development focused around transit centres. The three plans that address affordable housing encourage density and redevelopment as ways of increasing and protecting affordable housing. The plans also advocate redevelopment of existing stock to accommodate a mix of incomes in communities. The plans are attempting to solve several planning issues at once by assuming redevelopment and intensification will lead to improved and increased affordable housing.

There are inconsistencies with how the plans address affordable housing challenges. Typically, a regional plan would guide what the city must commit to. Metro Vancouver 2040 states that all municipalities must prepare Housing Action Plans that support “higher densities and intensification which provide a diversity of (more affordable) housing options” (2010, 5). Metro Vancouver 2040 mainly encourages density in order to produce more affordable housing with only some emphasis on using redevelopment of existing sites and buildings as a means to acquiring affordable housing. The Regional Affordable Housing Strategy focuses on redeveloping sites to require mixed income housing. The City’s Housing and Homelessness Strategy does not encourage either density or redevelopment as means to increasing or protecting affordable housing, but pinpoints strategic actions governments must commit to, such as investing resources in supporting non-profit housing organizations, protecting existing rental stock, and creating regulatory and

financial incentives to encourage the creation of affordable housing. The region's affordable housing strategy does not align with the objectives of the region's comprehensive plan and the city's objectives do not align with the region in how to protect and increase affordable housing.

The language used to describe goals for redevelopment and affordable housing in these plans is not usually specific and concrete, but visionary. Terms such as 'encourage,' 'promote,' 'support,' and 'research' appear frequently. Language used to discuss goals to intensify development and avoid sprawl are rarely more forceful than language used to discuss affordable housing needs. In Metro Vancouver 2040, the goals to stop sprawl sound compulsory: "Accept Regional Context Statements that prioritize growth and focus high density development primarily in Urban Centres, and additionally to Frequent Transit Development Areas" (2010, 16). The urban containment boundary does not allow urban-style development to take place outside the boundary. While Metro Vancouver 2040 envisions better and increased affordable housing, it addresses goals for dense transit oriented development as though transit-oriented density already exists: "Metro Vancouver's compact, transit-oriented urban form supports a range of sustainable transportation choices" (2010, 8). The transit goal may be more prioritized than affordable housing. The plan also talks about addressing affordable housing as a frustration: "It is recognized that all levels of government have a role to play in creating opportunities

for diverse housing options and that federal and provincial funding is essential to meet the estimated demand for affordable housing" (2010, 45), suggesting the provincial and federal governments are not doing enough to address affordable housing.

Number of times
Vancouver plans
address impact of
redevelopment on
affordable housing:

ONCE

"This strategy devotes special attention to purpose-built market rental housing as an especially valuable component of the rental supply due to the security of tenure it offers tenants, and its vulnerability to redevelopment as condominiums" (Regional Affordable Housing Strategy, 2016b, 22)

What Planners Say

Planners working in the Vancouver city-region discussed densification far more than site re-use, revitalization, or affordable housing. Affordable housing is the second most common topic planners spoke about, followed by redevelopment, and then revitalization. However, sometimes these objectives were spoken of indirectly, as demonstrated by one planner who passed over the topic quickly: "You know, one of

our first tasks was to look at all the existing plans, from the affordable housing plans, to their sustainable community plan, to their active transportation plan...” (VAN05f). When the objectives were directly discussed and encouraged or spoken about with concern, affordable housing was the most discussed objective, but if the redevelopment objectives (site re-use, revitalization, and intensification) are combined, they outnumber the occurrence of discussions around concerns for affordable housing (see Table 4).

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Site Re-use | 7 |
| Revitalization | 2 |
| Intensification/Density | 20 |
| All forms of redevelopment | 29 |
| Affordable Housing | 26 |

Redevelopment was mostly spoken about in the form of intensifying developments in order to accommodate growth. Most planners who addressed density spoke about it as if they could not imagine development occurring in any other way, as the following two planners expressed:

So we have a secondary land use plan for this area around us here, the city centre. Now, that plan is really going to guide the future two decades of development, which will be high-density development here in the city centre. (VAN08m)

Like what are our Greenest City goals? Like let's densify smartly and strategically, and that sort of thing. So we're going to densify around rapid transit and you're going to densify where there's district energy and those types of things. So you see the plans reflecting that. Like that's where our growth is going to be. You look at everything from our regional context statement to our transit-oriented plans to our...you know, even to our Healthy City strategy, and it's like let's focus people where it makes sense in those areas. So then the developers should know and will work with us as part of that process to that's where our density is going to go, and that's where that growth is going to happen. (VAN06m)

Most planners expressed the view that density is effective in mitigating the negative environmental impacts associated with sprawl. They believed that it builds vibrancy in communities. As one planner described, density is encouraged in Vancouver “for sustainability reasons, for liveability reasons, to secure amenities, to deal with the growth coming our way” (VAN01m). Another planner described the fact that the world’s population is urbanizing as a good trend: “from an ecological footprint perspective, like that’s kind of what we want, right?” (VAN06m). One planner correlated a strong downtown with density and mixed use, stating:

“We believed in the idea of a strong downtown. We believed in the idea of mixed use densification” (VAN13m). This demonstrates that the planner’s opinion that density is a good development practice reflects faith, but not necessarily critical research of the impacts of densification.

Others spoke about smart growth concepts and said that density should be focused around transit centres. One planner spoke with frustration about why the City would allow a single storey commercial space at an intersection next to rapid transit. She suggested anything built around a rapid transit hub should be mixed-use and higher density (VAN08f). Another planner spoke with even more frustration about the lack of density around rapid transit stations, using rhetorical strategies implying what he thinks is fact in his explanation, such as “in this day and age,” “preposterous,” and “the fact”:

I think the other issue that we see really relates to the fit between transportation and planning. I mean we’ve got Sky Train stations in Vancouver surrounded by single family housing in this day and age. I mean that’s preposterous when you think about it. But the politicians and the planners are not prepared to go in and upset a community by saying we’re going to increase the density within the immediate vicinity of this Sky Train station... But it is, the fact that we do have expensive Sky Train stations surrounded by single-family houses, I think is an example of failure. (VAN09m)

When planners spoke about redevelopment of existing buildings or brownfield sites, some perceived redevelopment as positive and successful. One planner described the redevelopment of a public housing project in Toronto as interesting and explained that it “appears to have gone very well” (VAN09m). Another planner explained that redevelopment is necessary as the city encourages intensification (VAN10m). However, one planner expressed concerns about redevelopment because of its negative impacts on affordable housing:

Back in the '90s, well, in the late '80s and early '90s, we felt that there was building up a drive for redevelopment in the west end. And yet the west end was a long established higher density, primarily rental housing community with a lot of our stock of rental housing and affordable housing. And so we became quite worried about that. So we did two things. One is that we changed the west end zoning to make it very hard to be able to redevelop. And the second thing is we started opening up other areas of the inner city for new development. (VAN13m)

Vancouver is the only city out of the five city-regions examined that addressed concerns and needs for affordable housing almost as often as they addressed all forms of redevelopment in a positive light. This is most likely due to high housing prices in Vancouver and the major stresses on the housing market that make affordable housing difficult to achieve, as one planner stated, “affordability is a huge challenge in Vancouver, as you know” (VAN01m). Another planner from Vancouver said, “the availability of rental housing, affordable housing, that’s very important.” (VAN02m).

One planner understood housing is a challenge that needs addressing, but said the city does not get enough support from the provincial and federal governments. He stated:

...the city does a lot to encourage housing, but as you know, we don’t have a lot of national support for housing at this time. Provincial support comes and goes... we do what we can at the local level where it’s really not our constitutional jurisdiction but we acknowledge there’s a problem and we try to make some change. Whether it’s our Rental 100 program to get secured market rental housing or trying to replace SRO rooms in the downtown eastside, or partnering with non-profits to build affordable housing on our own land. (VAN01m)

Another planner explained that some of the city-region’s policies conflict, giving an example of how the sustainability policies conflict with affordable housing: “One of the things that we observed was that the city’s sustainability team was often imposing requirements that were directly conflicting with the ability to create more affordable housing. And that’s a very small detail but it was a concern that came up over and over again” (VAN09m).

Few planners addressed redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem, but one planner mentioned concerns about development pressures on affordable housing.

But I would say that affordability and homelessness are huge objectives right now. And that does bump things up a notch. Which is why we really needed to do a Downtown Eastside plan. Because there’s so much development pressure, we had to get a handle on how much social housing would be replaced, what we would do with the SROs, where we would allow height and density and market housing, and where we wouldn’t. (VAN01m)

Another planner who addressed redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem assumed that density is needed in order to implement more affordable housing: “But yes, if there’s a lot of people coming and the

development community feels, well, we don't have anywhere to build, affordability is becoming an issue, hey, maybe you need to update that OCP or allow for a bit more density somewhere" (VAN04m2). This planner assumes density is the solution to creating more affordable housing.

The plans and interviews with planners from the Vancouver city-region demonstrate that redevelopment (mostly in the form of densification) and affordable housing are both important issues in Vancouver. Density is required for the accommodation of population growth in the region. The plans and planners spoke positively about density and equally advocated for increased densification and transit oriented development. However, the potential negative impacts of densification on affordable housing do not appear to be understood by the plans or planners in this area. Only one planner mentioned the threat of redevelopment on affordable housing stock. The plans and some of the planners assumed that density and mixed-income redevelopment would lead to improved and increased affordable housing. Frustration with who is responsible for affordable housing is common amongst the plans and interviews with planners, which demonstrates that planners believe they need more support from the Provincial and Federal governments. This reflects the lack of commitment from the Province, which is supposed to be responsible for affordable housing.

Edmonton Capital Region

The Capital Region of Edmonton consists of 24 municipalities. According to an incoming growth plan for the region that is not yet passed, Edmonton is the second fastest growing region in Canada after Calgary (Capital Region Board, 2016b, 2). According to the Capital Region Board its population is 1.2 million, and by 2044, it is expected to see its population double to 2.2 million (Capital Region Board, 2016a). As the proposed growth plan explains, Edmonton has an "economy based on the boom and bust cycles of the energy industry" (Capital Region Board, 2016b, 2). Jobs from the energy sector caused the fast growing population of the Edmonton Capital Region (2). With a recent decline in the energy industry, Edmonton could potentially face challenges in finding a new economic and population driver.

Plan Analysis

| Name of Plan | Relevant goals emphasized |
|--|---|
| Growing Forward: The Capital Region Growth Plan (2009) | - Smart growth, Density, Transit-oriented development |

Does planning acknowledge the cost of redevelopment on housing affordability?

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Working Together: Report of the Capital Region Integrated Growth Management Team (2007)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advocates for social and market affordable housing (through smart growth) - Improved data and research on affordable housing - Density (Infill redevelopment) - Affordable housing |
| <p>Capital Region Housing Plan (2009)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable housing through smart growth and transit-oriented development - Municipal coordination for affordable housing - Density |
| <p>The Way We Grow: Municipal Development Plan (2010)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density (transit-oriented development) - Redevelopment of un/under-utilized sites - Neighbourhood revitalization - Affordable housing |
| <p>The Way We Prosper: The City of Edmonton's Economic Development Plan: A New Direction for Economic Development (2013)</p> <p>The Way Ahead: City of Edmonton Strategy Plan: 2009-2018</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revitalization - Redevelopment of un/under-utilized sites - Density (transit-oriented development) - Density - Increase affordable housing |
| <p>The Way We Live (2010)</p> <p>City of Edmonton Affordable Housing Strategy: 2016-2025</p> <p>Edmonton Area Community Plan on Housing and Supports: 2011-2015</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density - Downtown and business revitalization - Redevelopment of derelict structures - Affordable housing for all - Focus on affordable, social, permanent supportive, and supported - Non-market affordable housing |

Of the five city-regions, the Capital Region of Edmonton has the largest number of plans relevant to the objectives of redevelopment and affordable housing. The Capital Region has a comprehensive plan (Growing Forward: The Capital Region Growth Plan), an earlier plan that reported the needs for the Growth Plan, and the Capital Region Housing Plan. The City of Edmonton has a comprehensive plan (The Way We Grow), two plans involving economic development (The Way We Prosper and The Way Ahead), and three plans covering housing (The Way We Live, City of Edmonton Affordable Housing Strategy, and Edmonton Area Community Plan on Housing and Supports).

Most of the plans for the Edmonton city-region advocate density, smart growth principles, transit-oriented development, and affordable housing (usually intended to be achieved through intensification). Density is a high priority for every relevant plan except the City of Edmonton's Affordable Housing Strategy and the Edmonton Area Community Plan on Housing and Supports; thus, the goal to intensify the city-region of Edmonton is prioritized and demonstrates some level of coordination across the region and down to the city. The City's The Way We Live and The Way We Prosper are the only plans that do not advocate affordable housing. Affordable housing seems to be an objective that is prioritized and coordinated across the Region and down to the city level.

The plans for the Edmonton city-region coordinate objectives for redevelopment and affordable housing to some extent. The proposed way of increasing affordable housing in the plans that addressed affordable housing is often density. As in Vancouver, Edmonton claims its drive to intensify the urban core will not only protect the environment (mitigating sprawl) but also allow increase the stock of affordable housing. Many of the plans suggest more units will allow more opportunities to put affordable housing in place. The plans also suggest smaller units will be more affordable because the construction costs are less, thus creating more affordable units. The Capital Region Housing Plan explicitly states this claim several times saying a consensus has been formed that high density and small units is what the general population and developers should get accustomed to. The plan claims stakeholders just need to educate the public about accepting high density and small units.

None of the plans address the impact that density, site re-use, or revitalization can have on affordable housing stock. Some plans specifically advocate revitalizing whole neighbourhoods, such as the Quarters, the Blatchford (former airport) Redevelopment, and the Arena and Entertainment District. The Way We Prosper (Capital Region Board, 2013) explains that the perceptions of those areas need to change, as they are all great urban locations with potential for dense redevelopment and vibrancy. The Way We Prosper does not go into further detail of what the demographics or contexts are of the areas pegged for revitalization, but interviews with Edmonton planners shed light on the background of the communities. The perceptions of planners, as expressed in the

Number of times
Edmonton plans address
impact of redevelopment
on affordable housing:

NONE

interviews, will be analyzed in more detail below, but one planner working on the revitalization of the Quarters referred to it as a “skid row”:

So the Quarters is an area east of downtown. And in the past, it had a bit of, I guess, a negative history to it. So it was referred to as skid row. So there were a lot of hotels that have been in Edmonton for a long time, that generated a lot of crime, prostitution and drugs. So it is a very under-utilized area of Edmonton. (EDM12f)

Based on this information, it can be assumed that the Quarters was once an affordable place to live and with efforts to revitalize the area, affordable housing will most likely be lost. Concerns around the loss of affordable housing are never mentioned in the plans that discuss the revitalization of the area. The planner quoted stigmatizes affordable housing. Her perception of the Quarters as “under-utilized” demonstrates her belief that the community is a wasteland.

The language used to describe objectives for increased density, revitalization, site re-use, and affordable housing is all fairly visionary rather than concrete or specific. However, the discourse around the goal for increased density in the Capital Region Housing Plan sounds conclusive and implies everyone agrees that density is the top priority and the best way to deal with planning issues.

A consensus seems to be forming around the fact that industry needs to start building more efficiently and accepting smaller units in higher density developments that emphasizes innovation and affordability. (Capital Region Board, 2009a, 33)

The use of “the fact” as a rhetorical device is used to claim the so-called benefits of density and small units as “fact,” but the research to back that statement is missing.

Higher density housing, with smaller units, is one opportunity to increase affordable housing. There is an important role for all stakeholders to educate and inform the public about accepting higher density housing in their neighborhoods and smaller, higher density housing as a choice. (Capital Region Board, 2009a, 45)

The way the Capital Regional Housing Plan says the public needs to be educated into accepting higher density housing also demonstrates that planners think density is the best form of development and that they only need to convert the public to share that belief. The language surrounding affordable housing does not sound this conclusive or positive, however. The Way We Grow (Municipal Development Plan) uses the term “partnership” with almost every strategy for achieving more affordable housing. The plan talks about forming partnerships throughout the region, with different levels of government, with developers, housing

agencies, and sometimes simply with “others”. The language demonstrates that Edmonton does not want to take ownership of affordable housing. The affordable housing strategies’ use of the term “partnerships” means it will be more difficult to hold one party accountable for a lack of action.

What Planners Say

In the transcripts with 18 planners from the Edmonton city-region, the topic of redevelopment was spoken about most often, followed by density, then revitalization, and then affordable housing. However, the objectives were sometimes spoken about indirectly and planners did not say much about the topic. If the objectives are counted only every time they were addressed directly, the objective of density is the most addressed, followed by site re-use, revitalization, and then affordable housing (see Table 6).

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Site Re-use | 18 |
| Revitalization | 13 |
| Intensification/Density | 25 |
| All forms of redevelopment | 56 |
| Affordable Housing | 6 |

A common topic in the interview data with planners from Edmonton was that the city-region must develop more densely. Many of the planners spoke about the difficulty they experience implementing densification policies. Although they believe density is the best form of development, they either say the public is not interested in living in dense developments and people do not like the idea of density in mature neighbourhoods or Council is to blame, as they do not fully support high-density living:

And that is actually I would say the major point of contention or where we have trouble aligning, is that often what the community wants is not at all in line with our strategic policies. So infill is a great example. Many communities do not want infill. They want to maintain single detached homes to the exclusion of all other housing types. And that is very challenging because that's not consistent with the broad and specific policy direction that we have from council. So I think that's where a real challenge comes from. (EDM09m)

...we want to encourage smart growth... But whenever we bring a higher density residential to council, they always reject it. And so even though they have smart growth in their strategic plan, they're continuously rejecting having a variety of housing types... What they're trying to accomplish is these big lots and these big houses. And that's what people want... And people are buying them up like crazy (EDM01f)

As these quotes demonstrate, planners have differing views of Council's support (or lack of support) for density, and cast blame for a lack of density on Council's decisions.

Several planners spoke about old plans that make it difficult to implement density and redevelopment in mature neighbourhoods. One planner (EDM06f) explained that Edmonton has many Area Redevelopment Plans. She considered them to be "older protectionist plans" that do not allow change in older mature neighbourhoods. She said they contradict the city's policies for infill development and she had to fight against this conflict:

And there was kind of a revitalization committee of community members, and then out of that they said, "We want an ARP." And so council kind of said, "Okay, you have to do an ARP for this area." So lots of times it's at request of council, which comes from public kind of requests. And I think a lot of residents view ARPs as a way to protect what they currently have. And so that's a challenge of the city, is kind of communicating that okay, if you're going to get an ARP that doesn't mean you're going to be able to maintain single family homes. That ARP has to align with our strategic direction and part of that is making more sustainable use of our land and increasing density and some areas, and encouraging infill. (EDM06f)

Although there is a great deal of hostility from the public towards the idea of intensifying neighbourhoods and living densely, planners have put together educational workshops to teach the public about what compact living would do for the look of the city and also addressed the environmental impacts. A planner explained how the engagement workshop for The Way We Grow (Municipal Development Plan) went and described how people changed their perceptions about density with more education:

So if everyone in the consultation group says, "Well, yeah, we want big houses and big yards," then you can adjust that factor and you can immediately see the impact on the model to how your community looks from an environmental perspective, how your community looks from a fiscal sustainability perspective, how your community looks from, you know, all these different factors... That had a really big impact on the way that the community chose to move forward with the municipal development plan. Because you know, I'm sure as you know, it's one thing to say, yeah, we want a big house with a big yard but when you look at what the impacts long term are of that, then it changed everyone's perspective quite dramatically actually. (EDM08f)

Site re-use and revitalization of existing neighbourhoods and sites were also common topics raised in the interviews. Many revitalization and redevelopment projects are taking place in the Edmonton region. One planner stated: “the city is doing a lot to try to revitalize the city’s downtown... So the Capital City Downtown plan definitely receives a lot of priority because revitalizing the city’s downtown is a really big goal right now” (EDM04f). She also spoke about the Blatchford (former municipal airport) redevelopment and described it as a “priority project”. Revitalization projects like the Quarters were also discussed. As mentioned earlier, the Quarters had a bad reputation and was considered as a “skid row” of Edmonton by one planner. She said the goals of this revitalization project are beautification, cleanliness, and rezoning for the area.

Planners from Edmonton mentioned concerns around affordable housing or that they are working to improve affordable housing six times. Much of the discourse on affordable housing came from three planners of the total eighteen. Only one initiative to help increase affordable housing stock was mentioned. A planner mentioned that the City sometimes provides infrastructure like pipes and electric connections for small lots that the development industry is not interested in investing in. He stated that those lots are sometimes used for affordable housing projects (EDM09f). The same planner, however, expressed frustration with the Province. The Province is responsible for affordable housing, but this planner does not think the Province is doing enough. He stated: “we’re [the City] making it easy on the province by getting involved. But nonetheless, they feel that if the city doesn’t do it then we’re missing the link relative to our council’s vision about being that welcoming, inclusive, and caring city... So they’re prepared to take that job on.”

Planners from Edmonton spoke about redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem only three times. The planner working on the Quarters revitalization (EDM12f) project spoke about their partnerships with the YMCA, which runs some affordable housing in the area and Metis Capital Housing, which runs another ninety affordable housing units for seniors. The revitalization project for the Quarters is not forgetting about the need to protect affordable housing in the area.

Only one planner addressed the potential negative impacts of redevelopment on affordable housing. She explained the opposition to high-density redevelopment, especially in areas that are currently more affordable. In one particular area, she noted concern from residents: “It’s an area that perhaps caters to

lower income housing, and that redevelopment will bring higher prices and the people that will live there will displace the people that are currently living there” (EDM05f). However, most planners spoke about opportunities for site re-use, revitalization, and densification and did not address the impact on the stock of affordable housing.

As in Vancouver, a couple of planners assumed that densification would help improve and increase affordable housing stock. As one planner stated:

So you've got a snapshot to understand why the planning department or the sustainable development department and the transportation and planning branch is out in your community promoting infill. Because here's what it means. It means housing diversity, it means making spaces for different income streams and family unit types. And really in the end, we believe that that kind of revitalization or rejuvenation in older communities is a good thing. Right? All different levels.

(EDM09m)

Another planner also assumed that density is needed to provide affordable housing as she described her frustration with the public not supporting density. She stated that the demand for big houses on big lots is “making it so that it’s not affordable for the residents” (EDM01f).

All plans from Edmonton generally advocate density and most call for affordable housing. Many plans argue densification will increase affordable housing and even believe the public just has to get used to high density and small units. The plans and planners conclusively see densification as a positive development form. The plans and planners also spoke positively about site re-use and revitalization projects, such as the Quarters and the Blatchford former municipal airport. The Quarters particularly exemplifies how plans and planners prioritize beautification, safety, and vibrancy over existing affordable housing. The plans speak positively about revitalization but never address how it may affect the stock of affordable housing. Only one planner mentions that she partnered with affordable housing organizations while working on the project. Edmonton advocates density, site re-use, and revitalization, and claims to advocate affordable housing, but the language surrounding affordable housing sounds non-committal and the plans and planners demonstrate frustration. The current stock of affordable housing, often in poor communities like the Quarters, is devalued while hypothetical affordability that planners believe will happen through densification is prioritized. This demonstrates inherent class divisions in how society values low income areas versus higher-income areas. As in Vancouver, the plans and planners revealed frustration with who is supposed to

be responsible for affordable housing, underscoring a lack of commitment by all levels of government.

Greater Toronto Area

The population of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is approximately 6 million and growing. According to the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance, almost 47 per cent of residents in the Greater Toronto area are “foreign born” and the GTA is considered “North America’s premier immigration gateway” (2011). The Greater Golden Horseshoe’s (GGH) Places to Grow plan forces all communities within the GGH to accommodate substantial growth, stating all communities must focus 40 per cent of new development in existing built-up areas. Communities in the Greater Toronto Area are facing pressure to accommodate huge population increases and to mitigate sprawl, even though the market for low-density single-detached homes is still strong across the GTA.

Plan Analysis

| Name of Plan | Relevant goals emphasized |
|---|---|
| Places to Grow: Better Choices. Brighter Future Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density, transit-oriented development - Affordable housing |
| Toronto Official Plan (2015) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density, transit-oriented development, infill - Increase, protect, replace affordable housing - Revitalization (streets, buildings) |
| City of Toronto Strategic Actions 2013-2018 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density, smart growth - Increase, protect, maintain affordable housing - Revitalization of waterfront and apartments |
| An Affordable Housing Action Plan (2010-2020) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserve, repair, protect, increase affordable housing - Mixed-income revitalization of affordable housing - Affordable housing through density |

Four plans examined from The Greater Toronto Area are relevant to understanding the coordination and prioritization of objectives for redevelopment and affordable housing. Places To Grow covers the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region, which encompasses the area around Lake Ontario, from Niagara to Peterborough. Although this spans beyond the geographic scope of the GTA, Places to Grow is supposed to guide and enforce the direction and objectives of the GTA. The Toronto Official Plan is the comprehensive plan for the city of Toronto. The City of Toronto Strategic Actions is a plan from the City’s Council, which includes a comprehensive scope of objectives, similarly to the Toronto Official Plan. The

Affordable Housing Action Plan covers the City of Toronto and guides the objectives and strategies for increasing and improving affordable housing in the City.

Places to Grow, the Toronto Official Plan, and the City of Toronto Strategic Actions all prioritize objectives to increase density, use smart growth principles, and focus density around transit centres. The plans arguing for increased density explain the many benefits of density, including decreasing environmental degradation, reducing the consumption of valuable agricultural lands, improving commute times for workers, making better use of existing infrastructure, and saving on costs. As Places to Grow states: “It is estimated that over 20 per cent of infrastructure capital costs could be saved by moving from lower density development to more efficient and compact urban form” (2006, 22). Other than the Affordable Housing Action Plan, the prioritization of densification seems like a coordinated objective across the several relevant plans. Affordable Housing is another common objective across the plans. Every plan addresses the need to increase and protect affordable housing in the Toronto city-region, demonstrating a level of coordination from the region to the local level.

The plans coordinate redevelopment and affordable housing objectives in tandem in that the means of increasing and improving affordable housing is often determined to be either density or revitalization. The Affordable Housing Action Plan argues for revitalization of neighbourhoods with affordable housing so those neighbourhoods will include more mixed-income residents, which will “reverse the trend of income polarization” (2010, 5). The plan envisions mixed-income revitalization to “create mixed-use housing developments that may include private market housing, social housing, innovative long-term care, health care and supportive housing models and emergency shelter beds” (14). A major commitment of this plan is to repair and revitalize existing Toronto Community Housing and other non-profit and co-op housing units. The revitalization of these affordable housing communities, like Regent Park and Lawrence Heights, will “improve the quality of life in communities where residents live in poverty and isolation... residents will enjoy new shopping services and new recreation and aquatic centres, children’s hub and central park” (27-28), assuming injecting wealth into the community will automatically lead to the integration of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

The Toronto Official Plan, Places to Grow, and the City of Toronto Strategic Actions do not argue for revitalization as a way of continuing and improving existing affordable housing stock, however.

The Toronto Official Plan only coordinates redevelopment and

affordable housing once and it argues new affordable housing will be accommodated through intensification. Thus, while the Affordable Housing Action Plan coordinates revitalization and affordable housing objectives, the strategy is not being addressed across the other plans and demonstrates a lack of coordination in the strategies used to address affordable housing.

Number of times GTA plans address impact of redevelopment on affordable housing:

ONCE

“the conversion or demolition of rental housing reduces the choices available to lower income residents. The impact is greater when the market does not produce enough affordable rental housing” (City of Toronto, 2010, 24).

The Affordable Housing Action Plan addresses the negative impact redevelopment can have on existing affordable housing units, stating: “the conversion or demolition of rental housing reduces the choices available to lower income residents. The impact is greater when the market does not produce enough affordable rental housing” (City of Toronto, 2010, 24). Otherwise, the impact of redevelopment on the stock of affordable housing is never addressed in any of the plans examined. The plans encourage density but never address how it could negatively impact affordable housing with increased cost of housing in redeveloped areas. Revitalization of affordable housing is encouraged as a way of improving affordable housing but any potential negative impacts it could have on the affordability of housing in the surrounding areas that are market-affordable are not addressed.

The language used in each plan to describe objectives for redevelopment and affordable housing varies across plans. The language used to describe the strategy and vision for increasing density in the Greater Golden Horseshoe’s Places to Grow is specific and concrete. It sets a minimum target of how much residential development should occur within the already developed areas. It states: “By the year 2015 and for each year thereafter, a minimum of 40 per cent of all residential development occurring annually within each upper- and single-tier municipality will be within the built-up area” (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 2006, 2.2.3). It goes on to state stipulations around if the area already has 40 per cent of new development occurring in built-up areas, then the current percentage of how much development is

occurring will be the minimum target for that community. Places to Grow also talks about a settlement area boundary that may not expand unless specific situations are occurring:

a) sufficient opportunities to accommodate forecasted growth contained in Schedule 3, through intensification and in designated greenfield areas, using the intensification target and density targets, are not available: i. within the regional market area, as determined by the upper- or single-tier municipality, and ii. within the applicable lower-tier municipality to accommodate the growth allocated to the municipality pursuant to this Plan. (2.28)

The language used to prohibit sprawl and enforce intensification is forceful and specific.

The language used to describe objectives for affordable housing is more suggestive and visionary than the way density is being enforced. The Affordable Housing Action Plan states the following:

Private sector developers seeking increased density on individual large residential sites of five hectares or more will continue to be expected to incorporate affordable housing as a condition of the City's planning approvals. But most residential development in Toronto is on sites of less than five hectares. Such applicants are not required by the Official Plan to include affordable housing when they apply for zoning changes to permit an increase in the new housing to be built. (City of Toronto, 2010, 29)

The Affordable Housing Action Plan describes a policy implemented in 2002 to protect the demolition or conversion of affordable rental housing. It prevents demolition of buildings with six or more affordable units. The plan then goes on to state: "In 2007, Council confirmed this goal by adopting an enhanced bylaw that extends the range of housing to be protected. As a result, only 600 rental homes have been lost between 2002 and 2008, much less than in other large Ontario cities" (City of Toronto, 2010, 24). The loss of 600 affordable units is still a great loss to those who need affordable housing.

Despite specific policies regarding affordable housing, the language generally sounds vague and visionary. Such terms as "encourage," "support," "should be planned," "leverage opportunities," "research," and "develop plans" are used to describe goals for increasing and improving affordable housing. The language is not specific, forceful, and gives no implementable actions.

What Planners Say

In the interviews with 31 planners from the GTA, density was mentioned a total of 63 times, followed by revitalization mentioned 24 times, site re-use mentioned 17 times, and affordable housing mentioned 13 times. As in Vancouver and Edmonton, the planners sometimes only spoke about those objectives indirectly, not saying anything about the concept or demonstrating an opinion. If the objectives are counted for the number of times they are directly addressed (and in the case of site re-use, revitalization, and density, in a positive light) and if affordable housing is counted for the number of times it is addressed with concern or desire to improve or increase it, the numbers change. Intensification was spoken about most often, followed by site re-use and revitalization being spoken about equally, and with affordable housing being spoken about the least (see Table 8).

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Site Re-use | 13 |
| Revitalization | 13 |
| Intensification/Density | 38 |
| All forms of redevelopment | 64 |
| Affordable Housing | 11 |

Planners spoke about density more than any other objective being examined. Most planners spoke about how they think density should be focused around transit centres. Some thought it made sense to intensify around transit centres because the infrastructure for transit already existed. Density around transit would increase ridership:

We had to redesign and reorient, realign some of the public streets in the neighbourhood. And we had to try to work with the TTC to also improve the conditions around some of the subway stations to make them more inviting and make people feel a bit safer around them. Which was one of the reasons why people weren't using them. And also to increase the density around some of them to make better use of that infrastructure, the subway infrastructure from a ridership perspective.

(GTA06m)

So our strategy is basically, yes, since we've invested a lot of money in that in the centres and the corridors, why not focus and concentrate the development there? So our strategies have been guided somewhat by the need to prioritize where growth should be based on our investment at this point. (GTA09m)

we're trying to direct them to areas which can better accommodate that growth which has very active transit. And the transit route along Trafalgar Road isn't just Oakville Transit but GO operates along there as well. So trying to put the right growth in the right spot. (GTA17m)

Others spoke with frustration about low-density housing that has developed around transit corridors. Many planners in the GTA think accommodating the growth required by Places to Grow from the Greater Golden Horseshoe (40 per cent within built-up areas) should be done through transit-oriented development, most likely to avoid increased congestion:

Generally community expectations revolve around mainly transportation and density. Like across the street here, you've got intensification. It's the north side of Highway 7, just kitty corner. And because it's a transit hub, Highway 7, it should be high density. But the people building it are single family. (GTA15m)

In the case of Markham, a planner spoke with frustration about high-density development that has occurred along highway corridors, with no public transportation:

Markham is totally dependent on the region and the province on transit. So we're doing all this beautiful TOD (transit oriented development) development. What's missing? Transit. I mean we've got high density along corridors with no real transit. (GTA11m)

Another common reason as to why planners spoke about density was through frustration because density is being forced on every community within the Greater Golden Horseshoe and for some small communities, that means a fifty per cent increase in population, as a planner from Halton Region explained (GTA21m). Some planners agreed that density is the best way to develop and accommodate population increase, but questioned if it is possible to achieve 40 per cent intensification in existing built-up areas and worried about financial pressures it could put on the municipalities:

You know, 40% intensification is a... You know, I'm not saying it's not achievable. We think it is. But is the market there today to achieve that?... if we're not getting the high rise market we predicted, and the development charge revenue from that particular market, that could have some implications on short term capital delivery in various projects. (GTA07m)

A planner from Halton Hills worried about the effect densification will have on the small-town feel of some communities. He asked: "How do you integrate a brand new community into the existing community without

overwhelming the existing community? And how do you integrate, how do you make sure that you get that small town feel?" (GTA21m)

Site re-use, revitalization, and affordable housing were discussed less often than density, but they were often discussed in tandem. Many planners spoke about the site re-use and revitalization of social housing projects such as Regent Park and Lawrence Heights. One planner spoke about the revitalization of Lawrence Heights, a Community Housing Corporation development. He described the revitalization as making the community "much more inclusive for a wider range of people of different income levels" (GTA06m). However, his use of the term "inclusive" is unusual, as he is considering more expensive housing as catering to a wider socioeconomic demographics (wealthier residents), whereas most would consider providing more affordable housing as more inclusive to residents because more can afford the housing. He also said it creates a "real sort of complete community centred around more open space, a bigger park area" (GTA06m). Another planner spoke about the revitalization of Regent Park, a Toronto Community Housing development. He described it as "ideally located... It's just next door to Chinatown, just north of Queen West neighbourhood and south of Kensington" (GTA10m). Another planner called the redevelopment of Regent Park a "model" for the world to learn from and follow (GTA04f). None of the planners who spoke about the redevelopment of social housing projects confirmed if the redevelopment improved the affordable housing in those areas or discussed impacts on the residents of affordable housing.

Planners seldom discussed any potential impacts of redevelopment on affordable housing. One planner who spoke about the redevelopment of Regent Park did state there is a zero displacement principle, where, "Throughout the revitalization, no one should have to leave if they don't want to leave, the resident knowing full well that they would be living through 10, 15 years of construction" (GTA10m). Another planner argued that trends in high-density development are causing an increase in the cost of low-density housing because the supply of ground-oriented housing is reduced but the demand is still high (GTA11m).

Overall, the plans spoke positively about encouraging density in all parts of the GTA. Many of the planners interviewed, however, spoke with frustration about the region forcing densification and extreme population growth in their communities. They worried about finances because there may not be demand for high-density housing, they are losing their small-town feel, and they are worried about how to accommodate

such drastic population growth. All of the plans briefly argued density would provide affordable housing, but the Affordable Housing Action Plan went into detail about the need to revitalize and redevelop social housing communities in order to improve affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Action Plan's revitalization goals demonstrate a lack of coordination, as the comprehensive plans do not encourage revitalization as a way of improving affordable housing. Plans and planners spoke positively about encouraging redevelopment of affordable housing but never mentioned potential negative impacts redevelopment could have on existing affordable housing stock within the social housing communities or for nearby market affordable units. While revitalization and site re-use are seen as ways of improving affordable housing in the GTA, the plans and planners demonstrate a lack of awareness of how it can negatively affect affordable housing.

Halifax Regional Municipality

Halifax Regional Municipality has a population of 417,800 (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2016). The population has grown slightly while almost every other county in Nova Scotia experienced a decrease in population (Julian, 2016). The regional municipality contains sixteen districts, ranging from urban, suburban, to rural. Halifax is the regional centre of the Maritimes, as the largest city in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island, yet the HRM (and the Maritimes in general) struggle to retain youth who cannot find meaningful employment.

Plan Analysis

| Name of Plan | Relevant goals emphasized |
|--|--|
| Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (2014) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density (25% growth in regional centre) - Mix of housing types: auxiliary dwellings, small units |
| A Greater Halifax: Economic Strategy (2011-2016) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need more development, redevelopment - Density, population growth - Revitalize urban core |
| Halifax Economic Growth Plan (2016-2021): Action Plan: Years 1 and 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density - Support and encourage affordable housing |
| Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (2016) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density (no sprawl, infill, soft density) - No dislocation from massive neighbourhood redevelopment |
| Downtown Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (2014) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attract residents and businesses to downtown |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Redevelop Cogswell Interchange - Density (small units for affordability) - Density bonus zoning |
| Halifax Housing Needs Assessment (2015)* *Not a plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable housing (seniors most in need) - Rental and multi-family units - Need less restrictive zoning (allow for secondary suites and group homes) - Direct growth to where services exist |

Five plans and one assessment are examined to understand to what extent objectives for redevelopment and affordable housing are coordinated and prioritized. The Regional Municipal Planning Strategy is the comprehensive plan that guides the municipality. The Halifax Partnership is Halifax’s economic development organization. It put together the economic growth strategies for Halifax: A Greater Halifax: Economic Strategy and Halifax Economic Growth Plan (Action Plan Years 1 and 2). Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy is the plan for the peninsula of Halifax while the Downtown Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy only covers the downtown area. The Halifax Housing Needs Assessment is not a plan. It is a study evaluating which demographics are most in need of affordable housing, and what type of affordable housing is needed in the city-region. Halifax does not have an affordable housing plan, but the Halifax Housing Needs Assessment could guide an affordable housing plan in the future.

The plans for Halifax all support an increase of density in the urban core, meaning that objective has been coordinated from the region down to the local level. Most of the plans encourage changes in zoning to allow soft density in the form of auxiliary units. Unlike Vancouver, Edmonton, and the GTA, affordable housing is not emphasized in all or most of the plans; thus, there does not seem to be much coordination in addressing affordable housing in Halifax. Overall, plans in Halifax address affordable housing much less often than Vancouver, Edmonton, and the Greater Toronto Area. Density is the only well-emphasized objective of those being examined.

All of the plans speak highly of densification, stating it makes the city “more attractive” (Halifax Partnership, 2011, 17), and that it mitigates environmental degradation. The plans say that planning policy needs to be more flexible to allow for soft density through infill housing, auxiliary units, granny suites, and small-scale development. The Regional Plan, however, also promotes high-density in the form of high buildings. It supports “incentives for growth through streamlined development approval processes, tax policies, density bonusing, capital investments and other strategies to attract new development” (2014, 8).

Revitalization is a common objective in Halifax plans. The plans encourage revitalization to attract new residents and businesses to the area. The Greater Halifax Economic Strategy supports the objectives to “further the liveability and attractiveness of our urban core..., repair and enhance the public realm, [and] establish an ongoing dedicated ‘Strategic Urban Reserve’ fund for urban core beautification, ‘pole-free area,’ public art and infrastructure improvements” (2011, 17). The Regional Plan encourages revitalization, but simultaneously encourages neighbourhood stability. One of its goals is to “protect neighbourhood stability and support neighbourhood revitalization” (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2014, 10), which could conflict, as revitalization could cause change in aesthetics and the cost of housing in a neighbourhood, making the neighbourhood unstable.

Affordable housing is seldom discussed in tandem with objectives to increase density or revitalize areas. The only time affordable housing and density are discussed in tandem is when the Regional Plan advocates density as a way of increasing affordable housing stock, encouraging auxiliary units, decreasing requirements regarding lot frontage, size, and parking, allowing for smaller units, and introducing bonus zoning in order to incentivize affordable housing. The plans in Halifax do not address potential impacts that the revitalization or density they are advocating could have on affordable housing stock.

Number of times Halifax plans address impact of redevelopment on affordable housing:

NONE

The language used to encourage density in Halifax is much more concrete than the language used to encourage the increase or protection of affordable housing. As in Vancouver, Edmonton, and the GTA, there are challenges around which level of government is responsible for affordable housing. The Regional Plan states: “In Nova Scotia, the Provincial Government is the leader in the provision of social services and subsidized housing” (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2014, 57). The municipal level of government does not have the authority to take full responsibility of affordable housing because they believe the Province should be dealing with it. The plan goes on to state: “HRM can also play an important role in supporting housing affordability and social inclusion through policies and regulations. Opportunities may also arise through participating in partnerships or programs with housing organization, the Province or the Government of Canada.” There is some effort being shown by the municipality to take part in improving affordable housing, but language like “HRM can also play an important role” and “opportunities,” and “partnerships” make it

sound as if no one is responsible for affordable housing and no one can be held accountable for a lack of action on affordable housing.

What Planners Say

In the interviews with 15 Planners from the Halifax Regional Municipality, density was spoken about far more than site re-use, revitalization, or affordable housing. Density was mentioned about 34 times, followed by site re-use mentioned 15 times, affordable housing mentioned 7 times, and revitalization mentioned 5 times. However, planners sometimes only passed over briefly those terms and did not mention their opinions or experience with the planning concept. When the objectives are counted for the number of times planners address them directly, the numbers diminish but the order of how often planners spoke about them remains the same (see Table 10).

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Site Re-use | 8 |
| Revitalization | 4 |
| Intensification/Density | 26 |
| All forms of redevelopment | 38 |
| Affordable Housing | 3 |

Several planners think dense development is better for the environment and leads to more vibrancy in the city. One planner explained that density requirements laid out by the Regional Plan are not enough. Currently, the Regional Plan states that 25% of all new development should occur in the regional centre, with 50% occurring in urban communities, and 25% in rural areas. The planner thinks this policy does not push for enough density and said it was “not sustainable” (HRM09m). He later went on to say he considered sprawling development on undeveloped lands to be “unconscionable.” Another planner stated: “The densification of developments, I mean that’s important if we’re going to have a vibrant city... density is necessary if we want to have more of a transit system and not be just dependent on vehicles” (HRM12m). These ideas were shared among most planners interviewed.

The objective to increase density in Halifax was brought up with frustration several times. A few of the planners spoke about their frustration with those working for Traffic Management, as their goals often conflicted with the planners goals to increase density:

The traffic people used to drive me crazy... So for instance, I could be developing on a specific piece of waterfront land, and it really makes sense to put density there... But then you will have a

department tell you that, well, that's all well and good, but, you know, to get an entrance in here or the traffic impact that this sort of development would have, it doesn't fit here. (HRM04f)

You know, everyone has their own mandate, right. So you know, TPW [Transportation and Public Works], their mandate may be to... Like if you were looking at Traffic Services, maybe they're trying to just keep traffic moving and keep the roads maintained. You know, Planning's mandate may be trying to intensify the urban core. So spending a lot of money on improving roads far away, far from the centre. It's kind of at odds, you know. (HRM05f)

A planner also spoke with frustration about the height restrictions for developments in downtown Dartmouth:

Pretty much everywhere but Dartmouth, for a multi, you can allow greater density than is permitted in the zone. But in Dartmouth, somewhere the interpretation was made that you can't exceed the density that's stated in the zone. And the zone is pretty restrictive. That's why you don't see a lot of big buildings outside of downtown Dartmouth. Downtown Dartmouth has a different plan. But that really hinders a lot of development in Dartmouth. (HRM05f)

Affordable housing was seldom addressed in the interviews with planners in Halifax. One planner referred to affordable housing as a “significant issue” (HRM15m) and another planner suggested affordable housing would be dealt with in more depth in the upcoming Centre Plan (HRM02m). One planner briefly mentioned that affordable housing is seen as important in the Vancouver context when describing what the public demands are for new developments:

If I announce in Vancouver tomorrow I'm building a 32 storey tower in central Vancouver, the general approach is going to be, oh, so where is that being built and what are you going to be contributing to, and what are you going to be doing in the community, and what's it going to look like on the street, and what will be the retail, will there be retail, will there be townhouses, is it going to be affordable? That's not coming from me as a planner. You're going to get those questions from an average person on the street. (HRM06m)

Despite the three planners who made statements implying they believe affordable housing is an important issue, most planners never mentioned it, or passed over the topic without demonstrating any concern.

Density was mentioned several times in the interviews with planners from Halifax, but affordable housing was only mentioned with any concern three times. Planners from Halifax never mentioned objectives to

increase density, re-use sites, and revitalize in tandem with objectives to increase or protect affordable housing; planners also did not address any potential negative impact that redevelopment could have on affordable housing.

Analysis of relevant plans and interviews with planners shows that density is the most important and noteworthy objective in Halifax. The Regional Plan had concrete language to enforce densification while little was said about affordable housing. Redevelopment and affordable housing were only mentioned in tandem one time in the plans examined. The Regional Plan advocates density as a solution to increasing affordable housing. Planners never addressed redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem, and therefore never addressed any potential impacts redevelopment could have on affordable housing. Halifax plans also demonstrate frustration with a lack of responsibility over affordable housing from the different levels of government, showing little commitment to take responsibility for it.

St. John’s Metropolitan Area

The St. John’s Metropolitan Area covers the Avalon Peninsula and includes 13 municipalities. The population is 214,285. The city of St. John’s has only grown slightly after a downturn in 2001 (City of St. John’s, 2011). St. John’s is the most populous area in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is considered the “economic engine” of Newfoundland and Labrador (City of St. John’s, 2003, II-9). Its economy has been boosted by growth of the offshore oil industry in the past decade (City of St. John’s, 2016).

Plan Analysis

| Name of Plan | Relevant goals emphasized |
|---|--|
| City of St. John’s: St. John’s Municipal Plan (2003) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density (infill, mixed land uses) - Redevelopment in areas with services - Urge provincial and federal government to reinvest in social housing |
| Roadmap 2021: A Strategic Economic Plan for St. John’s (2015) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Density (soft density) |
| Affordable Housing Business Plan: City of St. John’s (2014) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase affordable housing stock - Focus: gap between supported and private - Density for affordable housing - Affordable housing landlord programs - Research housing needs - Redevelop underutilized land for affordable housing |

Only three plans from St. John's city-region are analyzed for the objectives being examined. The St. John's Urban Region Regional Plan, created in 1976, is not accessible; the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador states a new regional plan is currently being worked on. The St. John's Municipal Plan is a comprehensive plan that guides development within the City of St. John's. Roadmap 2021 is an economic development plan for the City of St. John's and is relevant in that economic development plans often promote redevelopment to attract new residents and businesses. The Affordable Housing Business Plan is a strategic plan for the City of St. John's that sets out several specific actions to improve and increase affordable housing in the city.

The plans for the St. John's city-region promote higher density development. Roadmap 2021 discusses how density reduces sprawl, reduces environmental impacts, and makes a city more vibrant, attractive and liveable (City of St. John's, 2015). Roadmap 2021 specifically encourages soft density through laneway housing. The Municipal Plan also promotes density and minimizing sprawl, but encourages density to develop through "large-scale integrated developments in all expansion areas" (City of St. John's, 2003, 1.2.3). The means to increasing density in St. John's is not coordinated across the two plans promoting it.

Roadmap 2021 does not mention goals for affordable housing. The Municipal Plan mentions affordable housing briefly, stating: "Perhaps the single most important function of municipal government is assisting in the provision of suitable, affordable, and attractive environments for housing of all groups in the population" (City of St. John's, 2003, 19). It also states that the City needs to urge the provincial and federal levels of government to reinvest in affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Business Plan goes into much more detail about affordable housing and identifies specific actions and targets to achieve more affordable housing. These include creating a program to report standards violations in rental housing, researching senior housing needs, combining provincial and city housing waiting lists, redeveloping underutilized land for affordable housing, and promoting an affordable condominium pilot project where an experienced non-profit developer will be invited to build (City of St. Johns, 2014, 11-12). The Affordable Housing Business Plan sets concrete targets for the number of units that will be created by 2017, such as 200 rental homes affordable to households below 65 per cent of the median income, homeownership for 100 individuals or families who are below median income, and 100 age-friendly homes to those below 65 per cent of the median income (City of St. John's, 2014). The Municipal Plan uses vague language to describe the need

for affordable housing. Affordable housing does not appear to be a high priority in the Municipal Plan compared to the language used in the Affordable Housing Business Plan.

The plans for St. John's seldom discuss redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem. The Affordable Housing Business Plan states: "higher density housing promotes affordability" (City of St. John's, 2014, 8). The plan also promotes the redevelopment of underutilized land for the development of affordable housing (12). Potential negative impacts redevelopment could have on affordable housing are never mentioned in the three plans.

Number of times St. John's plans address impact of redevelopment on affordable housing:
NONE

What Planners Say

In the interviews with 13 planners from the St. John's city-region, density was discussed far more than site re-use, revitalization, or affordable housing. Density was mentioned a total of 26 times, followed by site re-use, mentioned 8 times, then affordable housing, mentioned 7 times, and revitalization, mentioned 4 times. Some of those times planners mentioned the planning objectives being examined, it was only indirectly mentioned and passed over. When counting how many times planners directly spoke about the planning objectives and showed concern or a desire to work towards those objectives, the numbers diminish (see Table 12).

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| Site Re-use | 4 |
| Revitalization | 3 |
| Intensification/Density | 22 |
| All forms of redevelopment | 29 |
| Affordable Housing | 7 |

Several planners addressed the benefits of St. John's encouraging density in new developments. Planners spoke about the environmental benefits and vibrancy that density brings to cities. One planner said decreasing sprawl and increasing density and walkability creates "good, sound neighbourhoods and vibrant downtowns" (SJ07m). Another planner spoke about a neighbourhood called Churchill Park that was developed in the 1950s to be a mixed-use development. He explained: "You could leave your house, you could walk to whatever store you wanted. They were all located in the Square. The houses and apartments

were all around it. And that was the whole idea” (SJ06m). The same planner also mentioned the financial benefits to the public when density is increasing, noting that sprawl costs taxpayers more money because new services have to be extended (SJ07m). One planner spoke about a past development, Kenmount Terrace, which she considered “shameful” for its sprawl. She described it as “the worst of Calgary suburban sprawl implanted in the heart of St. John’s” (SJ10f), and so was glad to see St. John’s encouraging density. These stories and opinions from planners in St. John’s demonstrate that most planners see density as a much better form of development than sprawl.

Many planners spoke about implementing density with frustration. Planners noted public opposition to density that would cause Council to stop supporting increased density (SJ02m). Planners also addressed residents using “not in my backyard” thinking, where they thought density was a good policy until they felt threatened that it might occur in their neighbourhoods (SJ04m). Planners spoke about conflicts between density and traffic. As one planner put it: “higher density means smaller frontages, less landscaping which ultimately means where the heck are we putting the snow on these properties?” (SJ12f).

Concerns about affordable housing were addressed a few times, but mostly by a single planner. He spoke about the rising cost of housing in St. John’s due to the oil industry. He explained that those working for the oil companies are getting paid much higher salaries than most in St. John’s, which he said is spurring housing development, but also driving up the cost of housing. He stated:

The people that don’t work for oil, you know, this causes a problem... I mean apartment vacancy rate here now is like 1 or 2 per cent. And the rents are through the roof. So I mean before if you couldn’t afford to buy a house, at least you could rent something... People are being driven further out to try and lower the cost of buying land and/or renting. (SJ06m)

He then went on to explain what towns are trying to do to help those struggling with the increased cost of housing explaining that towns are trying to keep their tax rates low and still somehow delivering services. He stated the only way to continue to keep taxes low and provide services is through regional cooperation.

Only one planner spoke about redevelopment and affordable housing objectives in tandem. She made a similar case to planners in Vancouver, Edmonton, and the GTA that increased density would look after “a whole range of provincial and municipal objectives: affordable housing, poverty reduction, health, and

wellness” (SJ01f). No planners from St. John’s addressed potential negative impacts that redevelopment could have on the stock of affordable housing.

Overall, redevelopment and affordable housing do not appear to be well coordinated and there were even contradictions of how to promote the same objectives. All three relevant plans examined and most the planners interviewed promote densification in the St. John’s city-region. There are contradictions in how the plans encourage density, however. Roadmap 2021 encourages soft density through auxiliary units while the St. John’s Municipal Plan promotes large-scale densification in expansion areas, which could be perceived as sprawl and certainly has a different effect on the ground compared to soft density. There also seems to be a lack of coordination with the plans promoting density and the lack of support for it from the public and the Council. Roadmap 2021 does not mention any goals for affordable housing and the Municipal Plan only mentions vague support for affordable housing. The Affordable Housing Business Plan goes into great detail about specific actions and targets the city should work towards; therefore, there is seemingly no coordination of affordable housing across the plans in St. John’s. While Roadmap 2021 and the Municipal Plan encouraged density, they never addressed potential impacts it could have on affordable housing, demonstrating a lack of recognition of those impacts or demonstrating that planners have not yet run into the negative impacts of promoting higher density housing. Planners only spoke about redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem once, with a planner making the assumption that increased density will generate more affordable housing. No planners or plans addressed the negative impacts that redevelopment can have on affordable housing.

DISCUSSION

Most of the language describing the objectives is fairly non-specific and visionary, but in some circumstances, the language used to enforce density is more concrete and compulsory while the language used to promote the protection and increase of affordable housing is rarely specific or compulsory.

Vancouver plans speak about an urban containment boundary, which does not allow sprawling development; thus enforcing density. The GTA has compulsory growth and density requirements enforced by the Province of Ontario, as outlined in the Greater Golden Horseshoe’s Places to Grow. There are no such requirements regarding affordable housing. There are visions and goals of how to achieve improved and increased affordable housing, but little commitment is demonstrated.

All of the city-regions expressed concern with challenges to improving and protecting affordable housing for their populations. The lack of commitment to improve and increase affordable housing, however, may be due to something three city-regions have in common. Vancouver, Edmonton, and Halifax all note (whether in plans or by planners) frustration with provincial and federal governments not doing enough to invest in and take responsibility for affordable housing. Many of the plans used the term “partnerships” when describing how to deal with affordable housing, which makes it appear as though no one has sole responsibility for affordable housing. This means no one can be held accountable for a lack of action on affordable housing.

| | VAN | EDM | GTA | HRM | SJ |
|--|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Site re-use | 7 | 18 | 13 | 8 | 4 |
| Revitalization | 2 | 13 | 13 | 4 | 3 |
| Intensification/Density | 20 | 25 | 38 | 26 | 22 |
| All forms of redevelopment | 29 | 56 | 64 | 38 | 29 |
| Affordable housing | 26 | 6 | 11 | 3 | 7 |
| Acknowledge impact of redevelopment on affordable housing | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

!

Overall, what these plans and interviews with planners demonstrate is that redevelopment (especially in the form of densification) is much higher on planners’ priorities than affordable housing. As Table 13 demonstrates, Vancouver is the only city where planners addressed affordable housing almost as often as redevelopment. Planners from Edmonton, the GTA, Halifax, and St. John’s spoke far more about redevelopment than about affordable housing. The plans also demonstrate that population growth and density are far more important concerns to the city-regions than the protection and improvement of affordable housing options. This ultimately demonstrates that objectives for redevelopment are not being coordinated with objectives to increase and protect affordable housing.

The main objectives of this study are to explore to what extent planners in five major Canadian city-regions coordinate redevelopment and affordable housing and to identify if planners acknowledge the negative impact that redevelopment can have on affordable housing. At least one of each city’s plans and a significant proportion of the interviews with planners (except Halifax) argue that increased densification will encourage and allow more affordable housing. The GTA and to a lesser extent, Vancouver, also argue revitalization will assist in the improvement of affordable housing. This demonstrates the answer to my

question of whether planners acknowledge and recognize the negative impacts of redevelopment on the stock of affordable housing. Only one plan and one planner from Vancouver, one Edmonton planner, and one GTA plan recognized potential negative impacts of redevelopment on affordable housing stock. The number of times plans and planners addressed redevelopment and affordable housing in tandem was low in every city-region, and again, most times the objectives were addressed in tandem, it was to argue that some form of redevelopment improves options for affordable housing.

The trend that planning believes redevelopment inherently improves and increases the stock of affordable housing is worrisome based on researchers' findings that site re-use, intensification, and revitalization have usually led to less affordable housing in the areas being redeveloped. Gentrification theorists like Neil Smith (1982) have argued for decades that revitalizing a community leads to increased housing prices and displacement of low-income residents (i.e., gentrification). Loretta Lees (2008) has seen that current efforts by cities to revitalize affordable housing communities and encourage social mixing are also displacing low-income individuals from their communities. Craig Jones (2015) researching the impact of transit-oriented high density development taking place in the Vancouver city-region, has also found that these efforts to intensify areas around transit have led to the removal of older but more affordable rental stock, displacing lower-income residents. Several other researchers found that intensification can lead to rising housing costs if providing and protecting affordable housing is not coordinated with objectives to increase density (Boyle & Mohamed, 2007; Cullen, 2005; Dupuis & Dixon, 2002). My research suggests that Canadian planners are not necessarily acknowledging findings that redevelopment negatively affects affordable housing.

Planners have formed an unevaluated consensus that densification and, to some extent, revitalization, will improve and increase affordable housing. The planning community has faith in densification as a way of solving several planning issues. Densification and smart growth principles generally continue to be promoted without challenge from the planning community. However, research shows smart growth and densification principles lead to a loss of affordable housing. While pro-densification and smart growth principles continue to envelop planners' discourse, equity will continue to be undermined. Planners cannot count on trends of densification and revitalization as a means of protecting and increasing affordable housing. It is alarming, then, that planners have formed this consensus without any evidence. Until

Does planning acknowledge the cost of redevelopment on housing affordability?

affordable housing is directly connected with objectives for redevelopment, based on scholarly research, we can expect to see a further decrease of affordable housing options.

APPENDIX: Plans Reviewed

| City-Region | Plan | URL |
|------------------|--|---|
| Vancouver | Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future (2010) | http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/RGSAdoptedbyGVRDBoard.pdf |
| | Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (2016) | http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/RegionalAffordableHousingStrategy2016.pdf |
| | City of Vancouver Housing and Homelessness Strategy: 2012-2021 (2011) | http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Housing-and-Homeless-Strategy-2012-2021pdf.pdf |
| | Vancouver Economic Action Strategy (2011) | http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-economic-action-strategy.pdf |
| Edmonton | Growing Forward: The Capital Region Growth Plan (2009) | http://crb-dev.e-cubed.biz/documents-and-resources/strips/approved-regional-documents/column1/growing-forward-the-capital-region-growth-plan/capital-region-growth-plan/ |
| | Working Together: Report of the Capital Region Integrated Growth Management Team (2007) | http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/Working_Together.pdf |
| | Capital Region Housing Plan (2009) | http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/egovdocs/2009/alma/172916_05.pdf |
| | The Way We Grow: Municipal Development Plan (2010) | https://www.edmonton.ca/documents/PDF/MDP_Bylaw_15100.pdf |
| | The Way We Prosper: The City of Edmonton's Economic Development Plan (A New Direction for Economic Development) (2013) | https://www.edmonton.ca/documents/PDF/The_Way_We_Prospers_March_2013.pdf |
| | The Way Ahead: City of Edmonton Strategy Plan: 2009-2018 | https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/Revised_2012_Way_Ahead.pdf |
| | The Way We Live (2010) | https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/The_Way_We_Live_Plan_July_2010.pdf |
| | City of Edmonton Affordable Housing Strategy: 2016-2025 | https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/City%20of%20Edmonton%20Affordable%20Housing%20Strategy%20(2016-2025).pdf |
| | Edmonton Area Community Plan on Housing and Supports: 2011-2015 | https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/Edmonton_and_Area_Community_Plan_on_Housing_and_Supports_2011-2015.pdf |

Does planning acknowledge the cost of redevelopment on housing affordability?

| | | |
|-------------------|--|---|
| GTA | Places to Grow: Better Choices. Brighter Future. Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006) | https://www.placestogrow.ca/content/ggh/2013-06-10-Growth-Plan-for-the-GGH-EN.pdf |
| | Toronto Official Plan (2015) | http://www1.toronto.ca/planning/chapters1-5.pdf |
| | City of Toronto Strategic Actions 2013-2018 | https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Manager's%20Office/City%20Manager%20Profile/City%20Initiatives/Strategic%20Actions%20for%202013%20to%202018_FINAL.pdf |
| | An Affordable Housing Action Plan (2010-2020) | http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/ex/bgrd/backgroundfile-22103.pdf |
| Halifax | Regional Municipal Planning Strategy (2014) | https://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/documents/RegionalMunicipalPlanningStrategy.pdf |
| | A Greater Halifax: Economic Strategy (2011-2016) | http://www.halifaxpartnership.com/site/media/Parent/AGREATERHalifax_Halifax_Economic_Strategy_2011-16.pdf |
| | Halifax Economic Growth Plan (2016-2021): Action Plan: Years 1 & 2 | http://www.halifaxpartnership.com/site/media/Parent/11x8,5_HP_GrowthPlan_PRINT.pdf |
| | Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (2016) | https://www.halifax.ca/planning/documents/Halifax_MPS.pdf |
| | Downtown Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy (2014) | https://www.halifax.ca/planning/documents/DowntownHalifax_MPS.pdf |
| | Halifax Housing Needs Assessment (2015) | http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/SCcped/documents/HousingNeedsAssessmentInfoReportOct152015wattachmentsWeb.pdf |
| St. John's | City of St. John's: St. John's Municipal Plan (2003) | http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/St.%20John%27s%20Municipal%20Plan%20August%202016_0.pdf |
| | Roadmap 2021: A Strategic Economic Plan for St. John's (2015) | http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/Roadmap2021.pdf |
| | Affordable Housing Business Plan: City of St. John's (2014) | http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/Housing%20Business%20Plan%20Final%20Draft.pdf |

References cited:

- Addison, Carey, Sumei Zhang, and Bradley Coomes. (2012). Smart Growth and Housing Affordability: A Review of Regulatory Mechanisms and Planning Practices. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 28 (3), 215-257.
- BC Non-Profit Housing Association. (2015). Rental Housing Index. *BC Non-Profit Housing Association*. <http://bcnpha.ca/research/rental-housing-index/>.
- Bengston, David N, Jennifer O. Fletcher, and Kristen C. Nelson. (2004). Public Policies for Managing Urban Growth and Protecting Open Space: Policy Instruments and Lessons Learned in the United States. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 69, 271–286.
- Boyle, Robin and Rayman Mohamed. (2007). State Growth Management, Smart Growth and Urban Containment: A Review of the U.S. and a Study of the Heartland. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 50, 677–97.
- Brown, Laura. (2015). New rental housing index shows too many paying over 50% of income on rent. *Global News*. <http://globalnews.ca/news/2212743/new-rental-housing-index-shows-too-many-paying-over-50-of-income-on-rent/>.
- Burton, Elizabeth. (2000). The Compact City: Just or Just Compact? A preliminary Analysis. *Urban Studies*, 37(11), 1969-2001.
- Canadian Press. (2016). City of Vancouver approves empty homes tax. *CBC News*. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/city-of-vancouver-approves-empty-homes-tax-1.3853542>.
- Capital Region Board. (2016a). About the CRB. *Capital Region Board*. <http://capitalregionboard.ab.ca/about-us/>.
- Capital Region Board. (2016b). Edmonton Metropolitan Region Growth Plan: Re-Imagine. Plan. Build. *Capital Region Board*. <http://crb-dev.e-cubed.biz/documents-and-resources/strips/approved-regional-plans/column1/2016-edmonton-metropolitan-region-growth-plan/part-a-setting-the-context-xv-27/>.
- Capital Region Board. (2009a). Capital Region Housing Plan: Strategy and Implementation Plan. *Capital Region Board*. http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/egovdocs/2009/alma/172916_05.pdf.
- Capital Region Board. (2009b). Growing Forward: The Capital Region Growth Plan. *Capital Region Board*. <http://crb-dev.e-cubed.biz/documents-and-resources/strips/approved-regional-documents/column1/growing-forward-the-capital-region-growth-plan/capital-region-growth-plan/>.
- City of Edmonton. (2009). The Way Ahead: City of Edmonton Strategic Plan 2009-2018. *The City of Edmonton*. <http://www.hme.ca/sdplans/Edmonton%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf>.

- City of Edmonton. (2010). *The Way We Grow: Municipal Development Plan*. *City of Edmonton*.
https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/MDP_Bylaw_15100.pdf
- City of Edmonton. (2011). *Edmonton Area Community Plan on Housing and Supports: 2011-2015*. *City of Edmonton*.
https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/Edmonton_and_Area_Community_Plan_on_Housing_and_Supports_2011-2015.pdf.
- City of Edmonton. (2013). *The Way We Prosper: The City of Edmonton's Economic Development Plan | A New Direction for Economic Development*. *City of Edmonton*.
https://www.edmonton.ca/documents/PDF/The_Way_We_Prospers_March_2013.pdf.
- City of Edmonton. (2016). *Affordable Housing Strategy: 2016-2025*. *City of Edmonton*.
[https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/City%20of%20Edmonton%20Affordable%20Housing%20Strategy%20\(2016-2025\).pdf](https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/City%20of%20Edmonton%20Affordable%20Housing%20Strategy%20(2016-2025).pdf).
- City of Toronto. (2006). *Toronto Official Plan*. *City of Toronto*.
<http://www1.toronto.ca/planning/chapters1-5.pdf>.
- City of Toronto. (2010). *An Affordable Housing Action Plan: 2010-2020*. *City of Toronto*.
http://www1.toronto.ca/city_of_toronto/affordable_housing_office/files/pdf/hot_actionplan.pdf.
- City of Toronto. (2013). *City of Toronto: Strategic Actions*. *City of Toronto*.
https://www1.toronto.ca/City%20Of%20Toronto/City%20Manager's%20Office/City%20Manager%20Profile/City%20Initiatives/Strategic%20Actions%20for%202013%20to%202018_FINAL.pdf.
- Context Ltd. (2011). *Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy: 2012-2021 | A home for everyone*. *City of Vancouver*. <http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Housing-and-Homeless-Strategy-2012-2021pdf.pdf>.
- Cullen, Alice Jane. (2005). *Urban Intensification and Affordable Housing in Auckland*. Masters Thesis, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- Development Duffett. (2016). *Halifax & Dartmouth Development News*.
<http://developmentduffett.ca/post/148688835232/the-maple-the-roy-and-the-nova-centre-halifax>.
- Dupuis, Ann and Jenny Dixon. (2002). *Intensification in Auckland: Issues and Policy Implications*. *Urban Policy and Research*, 20 (4), 415-428, DOI: 10.1080/0811114022000032627a.
- Filion, Pierre, and Kathleen McSpurren. (2007). *Smart Growth and Development Reality: The Difficult Coordination of Land Use and Transit Objectives*. *Urban Studies*, 44(3), 501-523.
- Government of Alberta. (2007). *Working Together: Report of the Capital Region Integrated Growth Management Plan Project Team*. *Government of Alberta*.
http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/Working_Together.pdf.

- Grant, Jill L. (2013). SSHRC Insight Grant 2013 to 2016: Coordinating land use planning in the context of multiple plans. *Planning in theory & practice*.
<http://theoryandpractice.planning.dal.ca/multiple-plans/working-papers.html>.
- Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance. (2011). Population Forecast and Growth Rate. *Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance*. <http://www.greatertoronto.org/why-greater-toronto/economic-overview/population>.
- Halifax Partnership. (2011). A Greater Halifax: Economic Strategy 2011-2016. *Halifax Partnership*.
http://www.halifaxpartnership.com/site/media/Parent/AGREATERHalifax_Halifax_Economic_Strategy_2011-16.pdf.
- Halifax Partnership. (2016). Halifax Economic Growth Plan 2016-21. *Halifax Partnership*.
http://www.halifaxpartnership.com/site/media/Parent/11x8,5_HP_GrowthPlan_PRINT.pdf.
- Halifax Regional Municipality. (2014a). Downtown Halifax Secondary Municipal Planning Strategy. *Halifax Regional Municipality*.
http://www.halifax.ca/planning/documents/DowntownHalifax_MPS.pdf.
- Halifax Regional Municipality. (2014b). Halifax Regional Municipal Planning Strategy. *Halifax Regional Municipality*.
<http://www.halifax.ca/regionalplanning/documents/RegionalMunicipalPlanningStrategy.pdf>.
- Halifax Regional Municipality. (2016). Halifax Municipal Planning Strategy. *Halifax Regional Municipality*.
https://www.halifax.ca/planning/documents/Halifax_MPS.pdf.
- Jones, Craig E. (2015). Transit-Oriented Development and Gentrification in Metro Vancouver's Low-Income SkyTrain Corridor. *Cities Centre: University of Toronto and Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership*. <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/documents/2015/07/vancouver-skytrain-corridor.pdf>.
- Julian, Jack. (2016). Nova Scotia population rises just a touch as Halifax grows. *CBC News*.
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/nova-scotia-population-slight-increase-1.3444594>.
- Lees, Loretta. (2008). Gentrification and Social Mixing: Towards an Inclusive Urban Renaissance? *Urban Studies*, 45 (12), 2449-2470.
- Lees, Loretta, Tom Slater, and Elvin K. Wylie. (2008). *Gentrification*. New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Metro Vancouver. (2010). Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future | Regional Growth Strategy. *Metro Vancouver*. <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/RGSAdoptedbyGVRDBoard.pdf>.
- Metro Vancouver. (2016a). Metro Vancouver: Services and Solutions for a Livable Region. *Metro Vancouver*. <http://www.metrovancouver.org/>.

- Metro Vancouver. (2016b). Regional Affordable Housing Strategy. *Metro Vancouver*.
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/RegionalAffordableHousingStrategy2016.pdf>.
- Nelson, Arthur C, Rolf Pendall, Casey J Dawkins, Gerrit J. Knaap. (2002). The Link Between Growth Management and Housing Affordability: The Academic Evidence. The Brookings Institution Centre on Urban and Metropolitan Policy.
<http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/publications/growthmang.pdf>.
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs. (2006). Growth Plan: for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006. *Queen's Printer for Ontario*. <https://www.placestogrow.ca/content/ggh/2013-06-10-Growth-Plan-for-the-GGH-EN.pdf>.
- SHS Consulting. (2015). Halifax Housing Needs Assessment: Final Report. *Halifax Regional Municipality*.
<http://www.halifax.ca/boardscom/SCcped/documents/HousingNeedsAssessmentInfoReportOct152015wattachmentsWeb.pdf>.
- Silva, Steve. (2015). Halifax ranks poorly in rental housing index. *Global News*.
<http://globalnews.ca/news/2214026/halifax-ranks-poorly-in-rental-housing-index/>.
- Smith, Neil. (1982). Gentrification and Uneven Development. *Economic Geography*, 58(2), 139-155.
- St. John's. (2003). City of St. John's: St. John's Municipal Plan. *City of St. John's*.
http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/St.%20John%27s%20Municipal%20Plan%20August%202016_0.pdf.
- St. John's. (2011). Population Projections for the City of St. John's. *City of St. John's*.
<http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/CSJ%20Population%20Projections.pdf>.
- St. John's. (2014). Creating Opportunities: Housing our Community | Affordable Housing Business Plan: City of St. John's 2014-2017. *City of St. John's*.
<http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/Housing%20Business%20Plan%20Final%20Draft.pdf>.
- St. John's. (2015). Roadmap 2021: A Strategic Economic Plan for St. John's. *City of St. John's*.
http://www.stjohns.ca/sites/default/files/files/publication/Roadmap2021_0.pdf.
- St. John's. (2016). Strategic Sectors. *City of St. John's*.
<http://www.stjohns.ca/doing-business/economy-and-statistics/strategic-sectors>.
- Theobald, Claire. (2016). Waiting list for affordable housing in Edmonton tripled to about 4,500 families in 2015. *Edmonton Journal*.
<http://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/wait-list-for-affordable-housing-in-edmonton-tripled-to-about-4500-families-in-2015>.

Meaghan Dalton

Vancouver Economic Commission. (2011). *The Vancouver Economic Action Strategy: An Economic Development Plan for the City. City of Vancouver.*
<http://vancouver.ca/files/cov/vancouver-economic-action-strategy.pdf>.