

Improving Housing

North Central Community has struggled with deteriorating housing conditions in their community for over 15 years.

Current Situation

- ❑ Past Census stated over 3,000 houses are below minimum standard and need to be repaired or demolished
 - ❑ The largest portion of this is rental property
 - ❑ Studies have shown that there is a substantive link between crime and inadequate housing.
-

Current Situation

- A vital and attractive inner city is efficient to service with roads, utilities, police and fire services, and makes better use of limited resources from the property tax base available to the municipality.
-

Current Situation

- The cost of inaction can also be measured in declining property values and therefore declining tax base, and increasing costs for services such as fire, police, property inspection and maintenance. This occurs at the same time that roads, utilities and other infrastructure must be maintained. As a result, municipal finances are squeezed resulting in either higher tax rates generally, declining funds for services in other areas of the city, or a combination of these two. “Mayors Task Force on Housing”
-

Political Response

- Minimum Base Tax
 - Poorer Communities suffer
 - Good Residents and Good Landlords end up paying the bill
 - Communities end up doing the cleanup
 - Transient population looking for better housing
-

We are now in Crisis

- ❑ The community has identified that housing conditions are now in a state of crisis and action is needed now
 - ❑ What we are doing now is not working and action is needed to improve the situation
-

Community Releases Strategy

- ❑ Community releases their report on housing regulations
 - ❑ report discusses statistics and strategies involving numerous cities.
 - ❑ The idea was to provide information regarding approaches other cities have taken to address their rental housing issues, compare the results, and base a strategy around a model that would best fit the city of Regina.
 - ❑ Two distinct approaches emerged: Rental Unit Licensing & Landlord Licensing
-

Result

- ❑ Mixed reactions
 - ❑ Residents support initiative
 - ❑ Landlords in favour see this as means of eliminating lower end of the market
 - ❑ Some Landlords against
 - ❑ By dealing with substandard housing, employment opportunities are created for the many communities in the city.
 - ❑ New homes can be built
-

First - One Step Back

- ❑ Community Conflicts involve conflict over what is occurring and what should be done about it
 - ❑ Problem, when people argue about an issue, both of these dimensions are often intermingled or go unstated.
 - ❑ Deal with each separately – With out reaching an agreement on what the problem is, finding agreement on the solution is premature and difficult.
-

Approach

- A collaborative approach is tailored to the specific needs of the individual groups
 - The approach has two main components:
 1. a set of general agreed principals
 2. and a specific process that participants work through.
-

Principals

- Good Communication
 - Informational presentations (This Breakfast)
 - Dialogue
 - Inclusive, Not Exclusive
 - Finding all the points of view
 - Actively bring diverse viewpoints forward
 - Mutual Respect for All
 - Seeing landlords as partners and not the enemy
-

Principals –cont.

- Focus on interests, Not Positions
 - Moving beyond “what” people want (licensing), to “why” they want it (improving the Community)
 - Shared Goals
 - Participants shared interests or compatible goals can provide the basis for mutual learning and collaborative problem solving
-

North Central Principals

1. A significant amount of rental housing in Regina is below acceptable standards.
 2. Renters have a responsibility to maintain the standard of housing that is provided to them.
 3. An acceptable standard of housing is essential to a respectful, healthy and safe community.
 4. Working together, action is needed now to address the barriers to improving substandard rental housing.
-

Principals

- Consensus Building
 - Mutually acceptable solutions are worth seeking
-

Process

- Getting Started – NCCA will bring in a 3rd Party
 - Involve all Stakeholders
 - Essential Stakeholders:
 - City of Regina – Council, Community Services Department
 - Community Association Boards
 - Residents, particularly renters
 - Landlords
 - Other city community associations
 - Important Stakeholders:
 - Social services funders – DCRE, etc.
 - Partners – Police, Fire, Health Authority, etc.
 - Province – Justice Department
 - Community groups – e.g., First Nations, Métis, etc.
-

Process

- Establish Ground Rules
 - Agree on ground rules for communicating
 - Agree objectives for the process
 - Agenda for addressing the issues.
 - Define the problem
 - NCCA - Housing conditions
 - Landlords -Tenants being held responsible
-

Process Pre Negotiation

- Joint Fact Finding
 - Finding technical information
 - Determining what info each has regarding the issue
 - What additional info is needed
-

Process

□ Develop Criteria

- Parties must clearly state their interest to each other
 - i.e. Interests reasons, needs concerns, values and motivations underlying their positions
-

Process

□ Generate Alternatives

- After interests are stated the parties can agree to a period of “inventing without deciding”
 - Non judgemental process
 - This will work for both NCCA, Landlords and other stakeholders
-

Process

- Evaluate Alternative and Create Agreements
 - After coming up with a list of options, they must decide on which to include in the agreement
 - Combine idea's as package
 - Decide on a ranking
-

Process

- Bind Parties to their agreements
 - Develop provisions to ensure that the parties will honour the terms
 - Every party must be assured that the others will carry out their parts
 - Parties must discuss and agree upon methods for making such assurance tangible.
 - Multiple stakeholders (may be difficult)
-

Process

- Produce a Written Agreement
 - Parties document areas of agreement
 - Make certain terms are remembered
 - Ensures that the parties will not leave the negotiations with different interpretations of the agreement
-

Proces

□ Ratification

- All parties and stakeholders go back to their own groups for support.
 - Groups and stakeholders have been identified at the outset
-

Implementation Phase

Do it

- Individuals and groups implement the solution as decided and outlined in the written agreement

Monitor the Implementation

- Parties must determine how to keep track of success. Standards of measurement, stats, infractions etc.
-

Conclusion

- Excerpt -North Central 2020 Vision
 - Regina North Central is a safe, healthy and caring community and a source of pride for the area's residents.....The area's character stems from the well-kept homes and the mature natural environment of this section of the Queen City.
-