



# Smart Practices for Mixed-Market Housing

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Open Doors Conference

# Questions...

What is the optimal income mix?

Is full cross-subsidization possible?

Other revenue sources?

Best building design features?

Is there an optimal rental mix?

Other ways to reduce operating expenses?

How to facilitate resident interaction?

Additional tenant supports?

Increase tenant involvement in decision-making?

Are we improving tenants' lives?

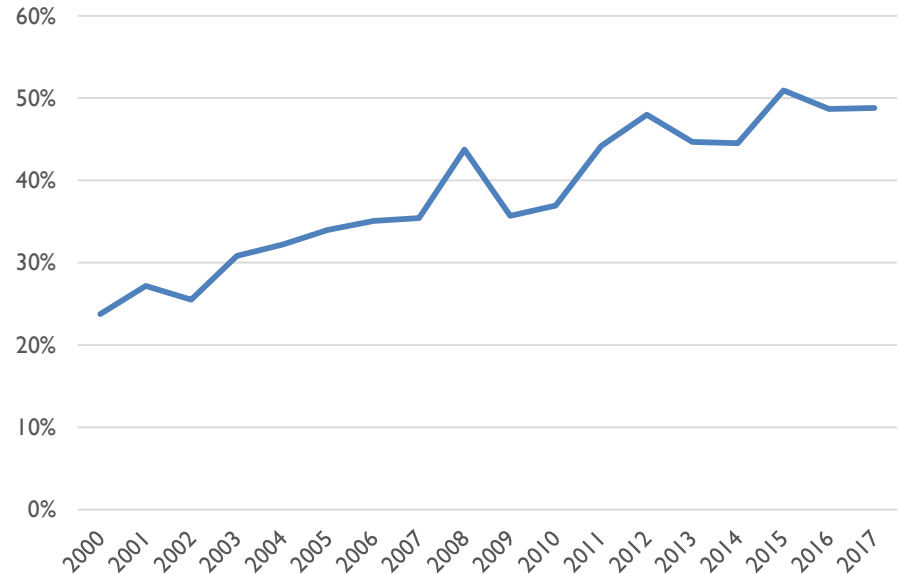
# Methodology and methods

- Literature review
  - Mostly from the United States, but also Canadian and Australia contexts
- Participant interviews
  - Semi-structured, qualitative
  - A total of 7 participant organizations, mostly those who currently operate mixed-market housing
- Participant data collection
  - Quantitative
  - Vacancy rates, turnover rates, building mix, bedroom mix, income mix
  - Comparison with private rental market

# Data collection insights

- Large portion of portfolios were lower density semi-detached and townhouse
- Vacancy rates considerably lower than private rental market
- Portfolios very stable with turnover rates much lower than private market
- Rental/income mix varied: no magic formula

Growth in Apartment Starts, Canada Urban Centres  
(% of Total Starts)



Source: CMHC

# Common building and unit characteristics

- Well integrated with surrounding community but densifying
- Attractive common and unit amenities that don't differ between income levels
- Exceptions for above-market or premium units
- “Pepper potting” of units throughout development
- Commercial and common space being reviewed/reconfigured
- Employing latest building envelope/environmental technology

# Observations of resident interaction and income mix

- Most rated resident interaction to be “moderate”
- Broad mix of incomes with moderate income tiers: no single income/rent mix for success
- Targeting the “low end” of market
- Common activities/common areas: most cited was gardening
- Homeowner tenure mix was not employed, seen negatively
- Open marketing/market to the “communitarian”

# Marketing



## THE BUILDING

The Downtown Commons is a modern, "green" residential tower located in Winnipeg's downtown close to the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the University of Winnipeg. Enjoy the convenience of living within walking distance to several major event centres, restaurants, daycares, shops, and parks.

- A mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments with several different sizes and plans will provide a range of choices to accommodate a variety of lifestyles
- Access to an on-site car co-op program and an electric car charging station
- Indoor, secured lock-up room for bikes



## SUSTAINABILITY

In response to the University of Winnipeg's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol, the Downtown Commons primarily utilizes clean hydro generated electricity for over 90% of its energy consumption which significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

The Downtown Commons has achieved Power Smart designation from Manitoba Hydro and a public meter board will provide direct feedback on the building's energy use.

## SUSTAINABLE Community Living

## COMMON AREA



The main floor is devoted to tenant use to encourage vibrant, connected community living with a lounge that has a terrific urban view and provides:

- Community kitchen space
- Wi-Fi
- Access to landscaped terrace
- Accommodations for smudging ceremonies
- Common laundry facilities



## MARKET & AFFORDABLE SUITES

- Triple glazed windows for added energy performance and noise reduction
- Open concept kitchen, dining, and living areas
- Flat paneled and modern white kitchen and bathroom cabinets with classic, large scale Italian marble laminate design
- Environmental conscious contemporary grey luxury plank vinyl tile throughout main living areas and corridors
- Wall-to-wall neutral carpet in bedrooms for added softness and warmth
- Three GE white appliances include: dishwasher, fridge with pull-out bottom drawer freezer and range with electric glass cooktop.
- Year-round energy efficient heating and cooling system
- Pre-wired telephone and cable outlets in living areas and bedrooms for high-speed internet access
- Lighting is a combination of wall sconce fixtures, surface mounted overhead and bathroom vanity lighting
- Fully sprinklered building with smoke and heat detectors as per code regulations
- All utilities (heat/central air, hydro, water) are included in the rent, with the exception of cable, internet and telephone
- Eligible applicants can apply for The Affordable Housing Program which is designed to support lower-to-moderate income student households



## PREMIUM SUITES

- Open balcony with an urban view
- In-suite stackable washer/dryer
- Modern satin stainless steel finish hardware throughout
- GE stainless steel appliances include: dishwasher, fridge with pull-out bottom drawer freezer, range with electric glass cooktop, and over-the-range microwaves
- Covered parking is available

## ACCESSIBLE SUITES

- Countertops are lower in bathroom and kitchen with open knee space under kitchen sink
- Pull-down shelving in kitchen upper cabinets for easier reach
- Refrigerator with swing doors for both fridge and freezer components
- ADA range with front controls and range hood with remote control
- Electrical outlets strategically located at front of counters in kitchen
- Light switches at accessible height for wheelchair users
- Side-by-side washer & dryer units
- Pedestal sink in bathrooms with comfort height toilets and grab bars
- ADA roll-in shower units with flip-down seat, easy to access soap dishes, factory installed stainless steel grab bars, and hand-held shower system with slide rail

# Ideas: governance, supports and outcome measures

- Have rules, but not overly burdensome
- Approach to participatory governance varied
- Importance of delivering tenant supports
  - Expanding tenant and staff knowledge of available supports
  - Tenant support workers
- Portfolio measures, but few outcome measures
  - Tenant satisfaction surveys, referral tracking, employment tracking, reason for leaving



# Key smart practices

- Densification
- Marketing near-market/mixed-market
- Outcome measures
- Tenant relations / tenant supports
- Participatory governance

