



ROOMING HOUSE

Tenant - Landlord
and
Community Cooperation



SPENCE NEIGHBOURHOOD



Institute of Urban Studies
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Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA) is a non-profit community driven organization working to improve the neighbourhood in areas of housing, safety, image, employment and health. SNA actively involves residents, business owners and volunteers in the neighbourhood to plan, develop and implement projects. Resident participation is the key approach of the organization.



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INTRODUCTION

In Winnipeg, the Spence Neighbourhood holds the dubious distinction of having the largest concentration of rooming houses which has been estimated to be high as 20%. * This finding was largely confirmed by this research through a detailed field analysis that found extreme volatility within the stock with regard to both overall quality and the actual number of operating rooming houses. ** Key informants and local residents suggested that some landlords do little to “keep up” rooming houses, especially those who visit infrequently, lack live-in caretakers, operate illegal properties or reside out of province. These rooming houses were also where some of the poorest of the poor lived and where problems related to feelings of lack of personal safety, poor quality rooms and resident turnover were most evident.

In terms of affordability, a typical rooming house will rent rooms starting at \$236, the same rate paid by under the Province of Manitoba’s Shelter Assistance program. However, many residents in rooming houses have found that the base level of \$236 is seldom offered, and more likely, they are being asked to supplement this by an additional \$20-\$30, depending on the room and the home’s amenities.

It is important to also note that rental properties are the dominant form of tenure in the Spence neighbourhood, and according to recent Statistics Canada Census data, 81.5% of the total housing stock in the area is rental property. Therefore ensuring that all available rental units, including rooming houses, offer the highest standards possible was a key objective of this research.

* The actual number of rooming houses remains difficult to accurately estimate as many operate without licenses. Theissen, *et al.*, (2004) estimated that there are approximately 145 known rooming houses in the Spence area with roughly 500 units. In comparison there are an estimated 1,000 rooming houses in Winnipeg, housing an average of 5,000 tenants, 70% of whom are on social assistance (Distasio *et al.*, 2002).

** In both interviews and fieldwork it was observed that many illegal rooming houses “spring-up” in the neighbourhood while others open and then close. It was suggested that on some streets there had been high turnover in the number of rooming houses operating.



The Spence Neighbourhood Association has also singled out rooming houses as being a priority and concluded that poorly-run rooming houses are associated with increased crime, negative perceptions and fire and health hazards. The sheer concentration of very low-income residents living in this deteriorating housing stock is seen as presenting the Spence neighbourhood with an ongoing challenge (Spence Neighbourhood Housing Plan, n.d.).

Based on the conditions noted above, it was contended that a new and innovative strategy was required to ensure that rooming houses can be made as safe and secure as possible. To ground this research, the Tenant-Landlord Cooperation (TLC) program in the West Broadway neighbourhood was examined because of its ability to yield positive results in the rental environment. The TLC program was developed by the West Broadway Neighbourhood Housing Resource Centre, and works by recognizing apartment blocks that are well-run, clean and have good reputations for offering residents a safe environment. The TLC program operates by ensuring that tenants and landlords cooperate to ensure that properties meeting the TLC standards are easily identifiable in the community and reflect locally developed standards (Williamson, 2003).

Given that the challenges facing rooming house tenants and landlords in the Spence neighbourhood are distinct, the objective was to develop a *TLC-like* approach that would build on the successes observed in West Broadway but also be more applicable to the rooming house stock and the Spence neighbourhood in general. The rationale for focusing on rooming houses in particular was based on a recent report that concluded that there are a number of circumstances and characteristics inherent to rooming houses that make them a particularly challenging environment and one in need of additional support (Distasio et al., 2002). Moreover, many rooming house residents are social assistance recipients and the financial realities of the \$236 shelter allowance has resulted in such low profit margins that owners often postpone or ignore repairs.



As well, many tenants who have special requirements such as requiring medical, psychological or other supports are often forgotten by the system or seek the help of rooming house owners who themselves are ill-equipped to deal with these issues. In addition to West Broadway's TLC program our intent was also to include the *community* as a key stakeholder, and thus the present effort becomes the "Rooming House Tenant Landlord Community Cooperation" project (RH-TLCC).

During the course of the project it was also recognized that to be successful, owners needed to be consulted early and be part of all aspects of the planning process. Furthermore, rooming house owners insist that they are business people, not social service providers. Often times, owners do not live nearby, or even in the same city, and leave management of their properties to resident caretakers. The general theme of *Out of the Long Dark Hallway** called for the need to improve relationships within rooming houses. Tenants, owners and caretakers must all work together to ensure rooming houses are well-run. However, supports must also be in place to help develop better rooming house models (Distasio *et al.*, 2002).

The proposed "Rooming House Tenant Landlord Community Cooperation" project was a collaborative process that led to the creation of an environment in which rooming house tenants and owners worked together to develop a fair and equitable set of guidelines that reflect current community-endorsed standards. It is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in the ability of rooming house tenants to voice their concerns, as well as for owners to operate more successfully. Once put into place, accreditation through a RH-TLCC will benefit landlords, tenants and community members whose cooperation will make safer places to live.

* This report may be found at: http://ius.uwinnipeg.ca/wira_publications.html



METHODOLOGY

This project examined the potential for adapting the existing West Broadway TLC principles and practices to the rooming house stock in the Spence neighbourhood. The research was guided by the following questions:

1. Can a Rooming House TLCC program contribute to the betterment of those living in this form of housing?
2. Can the Rooming House TLCC program improve the existing housing stock?
3. Can Rooming House TLCC principles positively affect working relationships between owners and tenants?
4. To what extent will the guidelines be transferable to other neighbourhoods?
5. How can a rooming house TLCC be sustained over the long term?

These five questions were used to examine the literature and also to work with the community and the various stakeholders to determine the best course of action for developing a RH-TLCC program that met the needs of all parties. This process required the buy-in of a number of key stakeholders including the Spence Neighbourhood Association, rooming house owners and tenants, and area residents. Although each group had distinct expectations, the end result was a program having the flexibility to evolve to meet changing community values and expectations.



A second aspect of this project was to build upon the ten recommendations that emerged from the aforementioned study: *Out of the Long Dark Hallway*. The ten recommendations emanating out of this report were based on the outcome of an extensive community consultation process that involved interviews with residents, owners, and local businesses (see the following table). It was felt that these recommendations would serve as a good starting point for developing a unique set of standards that could be applied directly to the rooming house stock.

Recommendations <i>Out of The Long Dark Hallway</i>	
1	Increase Shelter Allowance
2	A governmental subsidy program for employed tenants
3	Social service and supports for tenants with special needs
4	Ensure rooming houses have adequate “in-house” support in the form of live-in caretakers
5	Supports, financing, information and guidance should be provided to encourage the formation and running of associations for rooming house tenants and rooming house owners
6	Encourage communication between rooming house owners and the community
7	Government should review occupancy standards to ensure a reasonable minimum space allowance is enforced
8	Owners ensure a reasonable tenant-to-bathroom ratio to be set at 4:1
9	Improve safety/crime measures
10	A targeted government-funded program to assist owners in improving their properties

As was noted in the opening section, the Spence Neighbourhood Association determined that promoting good rooming houses and enhancing the rental stock in the community remains a priority. Therefore, a focus of the RH-TLCC project was to work with the community to reach a consensus on a set of *Community Based Standards* that would ultimately create better rooming houses within the area.



It was understood that agreeing on a set of standards was the first step towards creating a system in which participating rooming houses would display a RH-TLCC plaque on the exterior of their building. This would allow the community and potential tenants to recognize these units as meeting “community developed standards.”

To drive the research, consultations took place with the West Broadway Neighbourhood Association, particularly with those individuals who had been closely associated with West Broadway TLC program over the past few years. Following this initial phase of the research, informal discussions with landlords and tenants in TLC designated buildings were carried out. These informal interviews were critical in gaining a sense of the challenges and strengths of the approach taken in West Broadway.



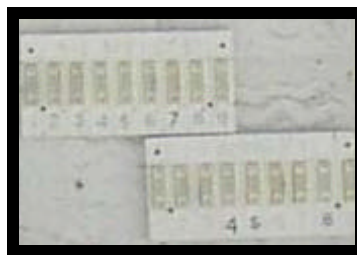
This report may be found at:

www.winnipegcommitteeofsafety.org



During the same time, two researchers conferred with approximately forty rooming house tenants, owners and members of the Spence community. This fieldwork included conducting an inventory of the rooming house stock and mapping the results using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) against a previous map that had been produced. The final map was able to capture the changes that have taken place to the rooming house stock over a short period of time (see the Geography of Rooming Houses in Spence, page14).

The specific methodology for compiling the updated 2004 rooming house map was partially achieved by undertaking a walking tour of the area. This tour used site assessments of individual properties to determine where rooming houses were located based on the outside appearance of the front and back of the units. Researchers looked for key markers such as multiple doorbells and mailboxes, third and second floor balconies (fire escapes) and “for rent” signs to distinguish whether a rooming house was in operation. The two researchers who undertook the fieldwork were a University of Winnipeg student and a local community member who had extensive knowledge of the area and the rooming house stock.



**Multiple Doorbells
Rooming House
Spence Neighbourhood**



In addition to the walking tour, the Spence Neighbourhood Association also provided a base map of the location of rooming houses as of August 2002. This list was used as a guideline to assess which rooming houses still exist, and if there had been any additional rooming houses added or removed from the current inventory. This work resulted in a map highlighting the rooming house distribution that combines the years 2002 and 2004.

In order to gauge public sentiment about the implementation of the RH-TLCC program within the Spence area, three neighborhood forums were held. During these events the community was able to express their interests and concerns. The first forum was an informal gathering at the SNA office and consisted primarily of rooming house owners who expressed their questions, comments and concerns regarding operating a rooming house as a business venture. This meeting was successful in terms of setting future goals of the project, such as designing *Community Based Standards*, *House Rules* and informal surveys to be conducted within the community of Spence. It was also an opportunity for researchers and the SNA to build the relationships necessary to ensure the functionality of the RH-TLC program.

The second forum focused on presenting the findings of the informal surveys and refining the set of *House Rules* and *Community Based Standards*. An outcome of this forum was the discussion of hiring and training an RH-TLCC Coordinator. This final forum's success came from having a balanced representation from residents of rooming houses, landlords and the community at large. The goal of the third forum was to summarize all the work to date and to reach consensus on the implementation of the RH-TLCC.



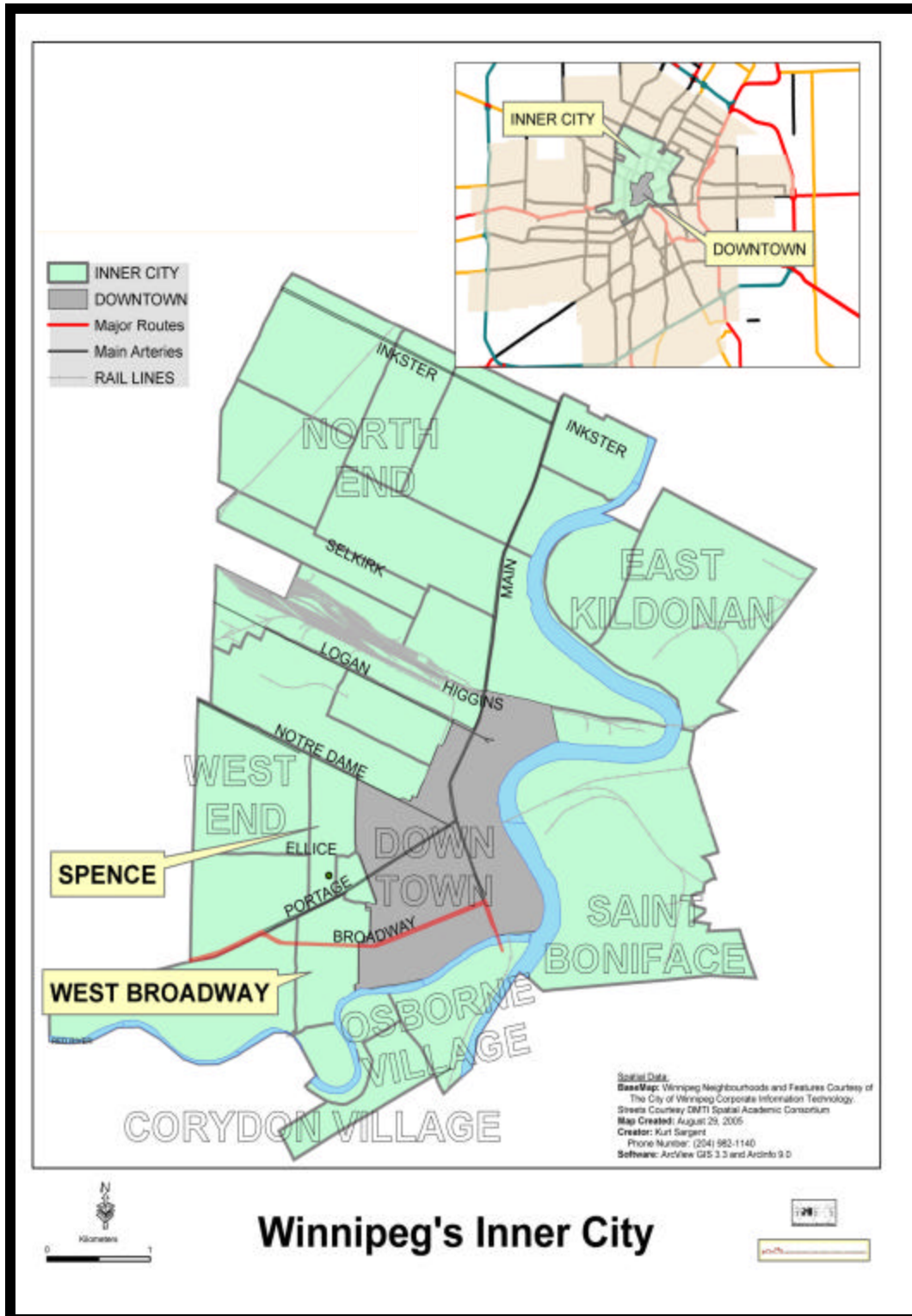
Finally, a breakfast meeting with key agencies was organized to seek recommendations for moving the RH-TLCC project forward (see page 30). These same agencies had been involved, in the same capacity, during the *Long Dark Hallway* study. This reunion was successful in that it re-confirmed the commitment of interested parties in addressing the issues surrounding rooming houses in the inner city of Winnipeg and also in the strengthening of the affordable rental market.

BACKGROUND OF THE SPENCE NEIGHBOURHOOD

The Spence Neighbourhood is located in the inner city of Winnipeg and occupies less than half a square kilometre. The neighbourhood is bounded by Notre Dame Avenue to the north, Balmoral Avenue to the east, Portage Avenue to the south and Agnes Street to the west. The Spence neighbourhood is an older community that has experienced extensive decline over the latter half of the 20th century. This situation is not unlike many other North American inner-city neighbourhoods that have deteriorated since World War II.



House in need of major repair





Over the last thirty years, the Spence neighbourhood population declined nearly 40%; from 6230 in 1971 to 3750 in 2001. The shifting demographics in the area have also resulted in changes to the family structure. For example, in 2001, 39.7% of families in the area consisted of single parents, which is more than double the city of Winnipeg average of 18.6%. Furthermore, single persons accounted for 50.7% (15 years and over) in the Spence area, in contrast to 33.7% for the city of Winnipeg (See Table Two below).

Marital Status in Spence	
15 years and over	Number
Never married (single)	1,480
Legally married (not separated) or living common law	800
Legally married and separated	175
Divorced	315
Widowed	150
Total	2,920

The Spence neighbourhood is also diverse with respect to ethnicity. For example, in 2001, Aboriginal peoples made up over 30% of the neighbourhood's population, while 17% were of Filipino ancestry. This is in significant contrast to the rest of the city, where Aboriginal peoples and Filipino community made up 9.6% and 4.9% of the population respectively. In addition, Chinese, Vietnamese, Portuguese and German, and increasingly, Sudanese and Somalian populations comprise increasing proportions of the residents within the neighbourhood.



Socio-economic characteristics indicate that many residents face challenges, especially with respect to income and employment status. The 2001 average family income was \$27,308, compared to \$63,567 for the city. In addition, the unemployment rate of 13.9% in the Spence neighbourhood is more than double the city's average of 5.7%. It is also important to note that although the unemployment rate has declined considerably from its high of 30% in 1996, more effort is needed to address this concern. With higher levels of unemployment and lower overall family incomes it is not surprising that more than 60% of families live below the poverty line in the Spence neighbourhood.

The final area of consideration is that of the age and condition of housing stock. Nearly 55% of the housing stock in the Spence neighbourhood was constructed prior to 1946 in comparison to only 20% for the city as a whole. Not only is the housing stock aging faster and in poor condition, the resale market had essentially collapsed by 1999, dropping overall values to a few thousand dollars in some instances. Though the housing market rebounded over the past few years, homes still sell for less than half of the value of dwellings within the rest of the city. The 2001 Census indicates that slightly over 80% of residents within the Spence neighbourhood were renters as of 2001. This contrasts significantly with the rest of the city, where 36.4% of residents rent their home.



Rooming House in Spence

Overall, the Spence neighbourhood can be characterized as being an older inner city neighbourhood in the midst of a long period of transition. This process accelerated rapidly since 1971, and is marked by the nearly 40% drop in population. Since this time, the area can be described as having a large concentration of single parents and individuals, along with increasing concentrations of various ethnic groups. The result has been higher levels of unemployment, lower family incomes, and increasing poverty. There is more recent evidence to suggest some stabilization is occurring with respect to rising house prices but more work is required to address affordability and the rental market. As this report has shown, the Spence neighbourhood continues to have a large concentration of rooming houses and, therefore, seeking ways to enhance this affordable option is critical in a neighbourhood that is increasingly being asked to provide support to those most in need of entry level rental units.



Front entrance rooming house in Spence



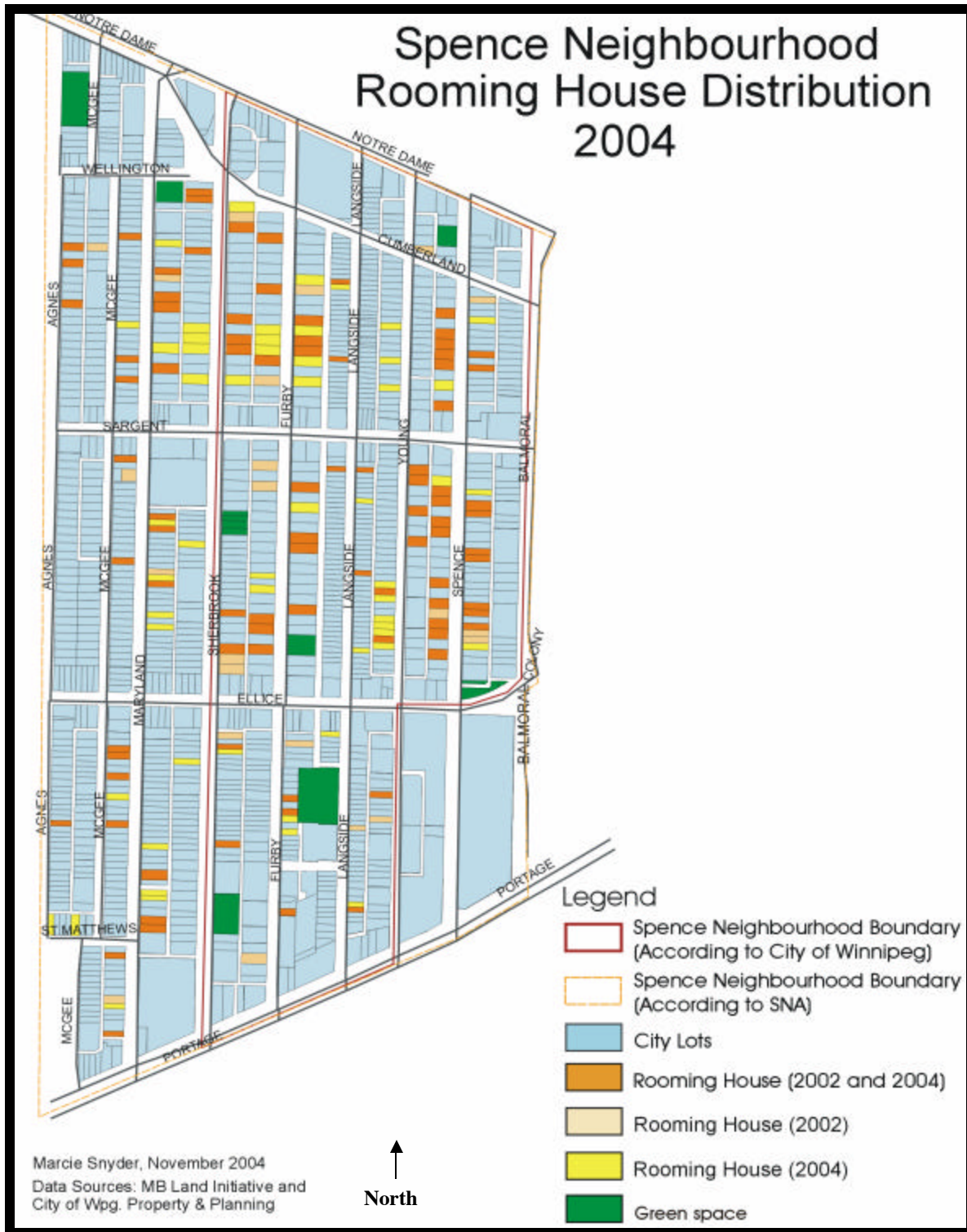
THE GEOGRAPHY OF ROOMING HOUSES IN SPENCE

A key aspect of this research was to examine the location of rooming houses in the Spence area and determine whether changes took place to the stock between 2002 and 2004. The results displayed on the map titled: *Spence Neighbourhood Rooming House Distribution 2004* were based on a site visit that consisted of visual inspections of the neighbourhood homes (front and rear) and search for characteristics of rooming houses such as multiple doorbells or mailboxes, the addition of fire escapes off second and third floors and other signs. Researchers used a 2002 map as a base and proceeded to map the current location of rooming houses. *

The result of this exercise was that over fifty rooming houses were thought to be added to the overall stock since 2002. In addition, some ninety units continued to operate during both periods. It is also speculated that just over twenty rooming houses ceased operation since 2002 and now function as either single family or perhaps two family units.

In total, our site visit accounted for approximately one hundred and forty rooming houses of various size and condition. What is also significant in the findings is that there are few blocks within the Spence neighbourhood that do not have any rooming houses. The concentration was most evident in the area north of Sherbrook and between Langside and McGee where nearly forty rooming houses were thought to be operating.

* While it is assumed that the process to map rooming houses was highly subjective, it is felt that the use of a local community resident and researcher, very familiar with the geography of the neighbourhood, provided an excellent approximation of the location and number of units in the area. Furthermore, the 2002 map is also of questionable accuracy but again, both are thought to provide a general representation of the overall distribution and change that has occurred over this period.



Please see Appendix Four for the map in black and white in order to produce better photocopies.



Overall, the map produced by the current research team resulted in a better understanding of the distribution of rooming houses and the changes that have taken place. Although, there remains a concern over accuracy, the findings nonetheless point to a wide distribution of rooming houses within the neighbourhood. It also appears that there has been a proliferation of rooming houses over a short two year period. This finding certainly bodes well for the speculation that there is a high level of volatility within this stock with respect to both resident turnover and in the opening and closing of units. Furthermore, the wide penetration of rooming houses within the Spence neighbourhood also lends itself to being a key area of interest for examining solutions that address the concerns of residents, particularly those in need of affordable rental units.

A final conclusion is that the housing market in the Spence neighbourhood is ill-equipped to provide the necessary affordable rental units. It is therefore contended that the pressure emanating from the market has made rooming houses increasingly more necessary to alleviate the pressure for entry level accommodation within not only the Spence neighbourhood but in the entire city.



**Spence Neighbourhood viewing north from
Ellice Avenue and Langside Avenue**



WEST BROADWAY TENANT AND LANDLORD COOPERATION (TLC)

Members of the Spence Neighbourhood Association conducted informal discussions within the community of West Broadway Neighbourhood (WBN) to evaluate the effectiveness of the TLC program. They were able to learn from the experiences of WBN and were successful at highlighting key issues that may be considered when applying a similar project within the Spence area.

One key finding was that not all participating caretakers or residents in West Broadway's TLC buildings were aware of the program. It was suggested by members of the West Broadway community that the TLC program could be enhanced by increased communication between caretakers and the residents of TLC designated buildings which could be achieved by the hiring and training of a TLC program coordinator. As a result, SNA concluded that a program coordinator is vital for the implementation and on-going organizational aspects of the RH-TLCC project. Having a program coordinator is also seen as central to the long term sustainability of the RH-TLCC, and this position will serve to enhance and foster the communication between parties involved in the project.



COMMUNITY FORUMS

The first community forum was held in the Spence Neighbourhood Housing Association office on Sherbrook Avenue at the end of May, 2004. Rooming house tenants and owners, in the community of Spence were invited; with eight rooming house owners and one caretaker participating. They expressed interest in the research and discussed challenges they encounter while operating rooming houses in the Spence area including the expenses of operating their businesses and the hardships they experience with their current tenant base.

During this meeting, the practicality of incorporating a set of *House Rules* for each participating rooming house was discussed. It was agreed that the rules should be kept to a minimum of ten for simplicity. A member of the Spence Neighbourhood Housing Association agreed to design a poster highlighting the rules and it was established that this document would be brought to the next forum for discussion and approval.

Below is the “suggested House Rules” with poster distributed for community approval on the following page.

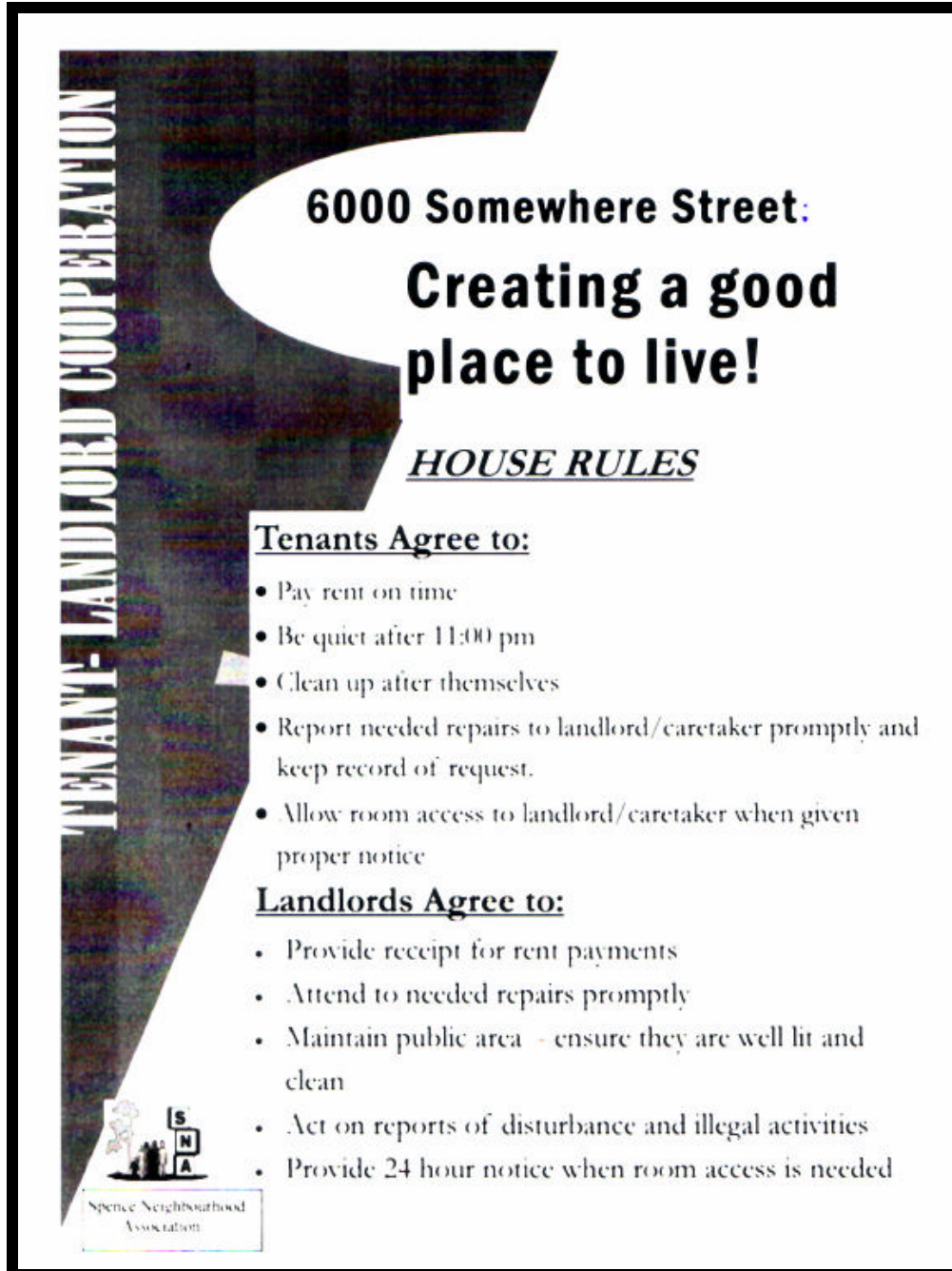
Tenants agree to:

- Pay rent on time
- Be quiet after 11:00pm
- Clean up after themselves
- Report repairs to landlord/caretaker promptly and keep record of request
- Allow room access to landlord/caretaker when given proper notice

Landlords agree to:

- Provide proper rent receipts
- Attend to needed repairs promptly
- Maintain public area-ensure that they are well lit and clean
- Act on reports of disturbances and illegal activities
- Provide 24 hour notice when room access is needed

These rules were intended to provide a starting point in the process of establishing the RH-TLCC. They were also thought as a first step in strengthening the relationship between owners and tenants.



TENANT-LANDLORD COOPERATION

**6000 Somewhere Street:
Creating a good
place to live!**


HOUSE RULES

Tenants Agree to:

- Pay rent on time
- Be quiet after 11:00 pm
- Clean up after themselves
- Report needed repairs to landlord/caretaker promptly and keep record of request.
- Allow room access to landlord/caretaker when given proper notice

Landlords Agree to:

- Provide receipt for rent payments
- Attend to needed repairs promptly
- Maintain public area - ensure they are well lit and clean
- Act on reports of disturbance and illegal activities
- Provide 24 hour notice when room access is needed


Spence Neighbourhood
Association

“House Rules” Poster



INFORMAL SURVEYS

The research team conducted informal surveys with twenty rooming tenants, five rooming house owners and fourteen members of the community of Spence. Generally, participants expressed that the RH-TLCC should have great flexibility and many commented that the SNA should not expect immediate changes in the rooming house stock.

Along with a set of general questions, those surveyed were presented with a chart displaying the elements of the community based standards * and were asked to rate them on their importance on a scale of one to five (five being the most important). The results were then tallied and the comments evaluated. The standards that were raised as high priority were presented to the participants during the second community forum for further evaluation and refinement.

PERSPECTIVES OF ROOMING HOUSE TENANTS

Of those surveyed, an overwhelming majority of the tenants stated they had lived in more than one rooming house. When asked how long the tenants had lived in this form of shelter, five reported less than five years, five between five to ten years, and six for more than ten years. In terms of their current residence, nine tenants had lived in their current rooming house for less than one year, six for three to five years and two had lived in their dwelling longer than ten years.

Generally, the three most pressing issues for the tenants were a desire for a clean, safe and quiet place to live. They also wanted to have on-site caretakers and owners that are responsive to their needs. They wanted the residents in their neighbourhood to view them in a positive light and be aware that they too share a concern over the safety of their neighbourhood.

* These community based standards were created through consultations with stakeholders within the community of Spence.



**RESULTS: COMMUNITY BASED STANDARDS
ROOMING HOUSE TENANTS**

<i>Rooming House Tenants</i>						
Proposed Community Standards 5=highest support	1	2	3	4	5	N A
Common telephone	2				12	5
Tenant to ratio bathroom (4:1)			4	9	3	1
Peepholes on interior doors	2	4	10		4	1
Solid deadbolts on interior doors	1		1	1	16	
Solid doors in interior of rooming house	1		1	3	14	
Sufficient lighting in hallways			1	7	11	
Sufficient lighting in front entrance way				2	16	
Sufficient lighting in back entrance way				2	17	
Door bells for each suite (outside entrance)			1	3	14	2
Peephole (outside entrance)	1	1	3	2	11	
Strong exterior door (outside entrance)					18	
Individual mailboxes (outside entrance)					9	
Surveillance cameras (outside entrance)	3	3	2		5	5
General maintenance supplies	1		1		8	5
Landscaping supplies						
On-site caretaker				2	6	1
RH-TLCC Coordinator	1	2	1	2	8	5
Set of "House Rules"						
Community handbook in rooming houses	5	6	3	2	3	
Tenants involved in resident selection	1		3	7	6	2



***“Nobody should live in one room.
You eat, sleep in the same place,
guys in jails have bigger places.”***

Over one third reported that if the RH-TLCC was in place, the program would have influenced their choice of rooming house for living quarters. Others reported that the program may slow down rates of residential mobility due to false claims by some caretakers that the rooming house is “quiet” when often this claim proves to be wrong. For example one resident stated, “I have had to move three times since last January, they always tell me it’s a quiet place when it is not” while another remarked that “ the caretaker gets a bonus if he rents the room so he tells everybody its nice and quiet so he gets a bonus.” On the other hand, one tenant claimed that he could not move because, “there is no other place to go.”

In terms of reporting disturbances to a RH-TLCC Coordinator, five reported that they would be inclined to report an incident; nine stated they would not, with three being unsure. Reasons for not reporting incidences involved previous experiences where the caretaker took no action when complaints were issued while others were concerned about their personal privacy and creating “mistrust” among the residents within the rooming house. For example, one resident responded that he would report a disturbance, “if they keep my name out of it.”

Many respondents stated that they want better management, in the form of a live-in caretaker, to reduce “parties” and increase levels of safety. One resident suggested that “tenants should be able to get rid of caretakers if they don’t do their jobs like they are supposed to.” Many residents agreed and added that caretakers need to be “the type of people who will take control.”



The size of personal space was also an issue, many find the rooms too small, *“Nobody should live in one room. You eat, sleep in the same place, guys in jail have bigger places.”* Others found it difficult to accommodate visits from family, *“ I have a kid, but last summer she couldn’t visit because I had nowhere for her to sleep or play.”*

Many of the residents noted that they would be willing to become involved in the RH-TLCC program, but suggested that financial incentives would be a motivator for participation. One tenant stated, *“I am not interested in it unless I get some money out of it”* while another reported that *“I would not mind doing some maintenance fixing up things, snow shoveling etc...if I could get a rebate on my rent.”* Some residents showed a willingness to compromise by stating, *“I would like to paint my place, new carpet maybe, if the owner would let me have it, I would do the work myself.”*

The tenant screening process was a point of contention because many rooming house residents felt that SNA could not legally create a *“bad list of tenants.”* Questions were raised about who would have access to personal information and if that information would be used to discriminate against potential tenants. While some participants insisted that tenants should have input into tenant selection, others argued that the owners should have sole responsibility for screening new tenants.



PERSPECTIVES OF THE ROOMING HOUSE OWNERS

Five owners participated in the informal surveys. Together, they own ten rooming houses in the Spence neighbourhood and have managed their rooming houses for an average of twenty years. Combined, one hundred and six tenants live in these ten rooming houses.

In general, the owners expressed optimism towards the implementation of the RH-TLCC. Some viewed the RH-TLCC project as one that would improve the physical appearance of the neighbourhood and believe that the RH-TLCC would, *“Provide more eye appealing properties and attract good tenants that respect their homes.”*

Most owners believed that by participating in the RH-TLCC program, tenant and landlord relations would improve and further stated that this program may attract “good” tenants. One owner was more cautious, in that some participants may not cooperate with the program, *“Some landlords and a lot of tenants that I have seen would not bother to get involved in this. A great many tenants have so many problems with drugs and alcohol that it rules their life.”*



Spence Neighbourhood Community Forum



Owners are aware that upgrading and maintaining their rooming houses is an important part of the RH-TLCC program but questioned whether funding and support is available to them through government subsidies and programs. They agree with other respondents that a RH-TLCC Coordinator would enhance lobbying for increases in rent subsidies and funding opportunities to put towards high maintenance costs (see table below).

**RESULTS: COMMUNITY BASED STANDARDS
ROOMING HOUSE OWNERS**

<i>Rooming House Owners</i>						
Proposed Community Standards 5=highest support	1	2	3	4	5	N A
Common telephone		1			3	1
Tenant to ratio bathroom (4:1)					3	1
Peepholes on interior doors		1	2		2	
Solid deadbolts on interior doors	1	1			3	
Solid doors in interior of rooming house	1		1	3	2	
Sufficient lighting in hallways					4	
Sufficient lighting in front entrance way					4	
Sufficient lighting in back entrance way					5	
Door bells for each suite (outside entrance)			3		2	
Peephole (outside entrance)	1		1		3	
Strong exterior door (outside entrance)				2	3	
Individual mailboxes (outside entrance)	2	1	2			
Surveillance cameras (outside entrance)	1				2	2
General maintenance supplies			1	1	3	
Landscaping supplies				2	3	
On-site caretaker					4	1
RH-TLCC Coordinator					3	
Set of "House Rules"			1		3	1
Community handbook in rooming houses					3	1
Tenants involved in resident selection				1	2	1



PERSPECTIVES OF THE COMMUNITY OF SPENCE

The RH-TLCC is viewed as a potentially beneficial project for the Spence neighbourhood primarily because of the high number of rooming houses in the area. Fifteen community members participated in the informal surveys. They welcomed the idea of a “RH-TLCC plaque” placed on the front façade of rooming houses and see this as offering the community a sense of pride. The majority of community residents stated that they would encourage the SNA to hire and train a Spence RH-TLCC Coordinator.

Out of fourteen respondents, only five stated that they were too busy or could not participate in the RH-TLCC program. They see their role in the project as one of offering support and participation in lobbying activities. Three respondents eagerly stated that they would volunteer their time towards the project by sitting on a committee. See the table on following page for the community’s assessment on the *Community Based Standards*.



Spence Neighbourhood Community Forum



**RESULTS: COMMUNITY BASED STANDARDS
COMMUNITY RESIDENTS**

<i>Rooming House Community Residents</i>						
Proposed Community Standards 5=highest support	1	2	3	4	5	N A
Common telephone	1	1	3	2	7	1
Tenant to ratio bathroom (4:1)		1		5	9	
Peepholes on interior doors		2	6	1	5	1
Solid deadbolts on interior doors		1	1		14	
Solid doors in interior of rooming house			1		14	
Sufficient lighting in hallways			1		13	
Sufficient lighting in front entrance way					13	
Sufficient lighting in back entrance way			1		12	
Door bells for each suite (outside entrance)	1		6		5	
Peephole (outside entrance)			4		8	
Strong exterior door (outside entrance)			1	2	13	
Individual mailboxes (outside entrance)	2	1			10	
Surveillance cameras (outside entrance)	6	1	2		6	
General maintenance supplies	2		1	1	6	3
Landscaping supplies	3	1	3	2	3	3
On-site caretaker	1		2		12	
RH-TLCC Coordinator	1	1	4		6	1
Set of "House Rules"	1		1		6	4
Community handbook in rooming houses	1	1	1		4	
Tenants involved in resident selection	1	1	1	1	7	1



SECOND COMMUNITY FORUM

The second community forum took place at the Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre (MERC) located in the Spence Neighbourhood in late June 2004. The objective was to review work to date on the RH-TLCC program and also to seek further input. There was a good balance of tenants, owners and members of the community as well as government representatives in attendance. A brief presentation was given highlighting the informal surveys that took place during the past two months within the neighbourhood of Spence. Following this, two discussion groups were formed to exchange ideas about *Community Based Standards*, *House Rules* and the concept of a RH-TLCC Program Co-coordinator.

It was made clear by attendees that while a set of house rules is an important feature for rooming houses, the rules must be kept simple so they may be easily adaptable to each rooming house. Generally, the participants felt that the rules offered a plan for “taking action” if problems arose.

The potential of hiring and training an RH-TLCC Coordinator was then discussed in great detail. In conjunction with implementing the proposed program, it was proposed that the coordinator would be responsible for the following:

- * Lobby for increased rental allowance and subsidies
- * Help landlords work with problem tenants
- * Research alternative models of housing options
- * Pass on information about *Rental Tenancy Board* to landlords and residents
- * Research supports needed for “special needs” tenants
- * Train and organize a support group for caretakers
- * Offer workshops for tenants, landlords and community residents



THIRD COMMUNITY FORUM

The third and final forum was also held at the Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre in Spence and was well attended by a cross section of stakeholders. Consensus was reached that the *Community Based Standards* should be accepted, however, it was determined that the standards would not be imposed upon the owners all at once, but rather four items may be regarded as objectives that would be met at a later date. Participants also reached agreement on accepting the *House Rules*, and expressed overwhelming support for the hiring and training of a RH-TLCC Coordinator.

Many community residents expressed that the program must be planned well and followed through in order to create significant change and improvements to the current rooming house stock. The community overwhelmingly supported any positive changes that may occur in the rooming house tenants' lives through this program.



Community Forum



PRESENTATION TO AGENCIES

A final step in the development of the RH-TLCC was to provide a presentation and overview of the program to a selection of key stakeholders. Representatives from key organizations, who were instrumental in providing support during the research process of *Out of the Long Dark Hallway: Voices from Winnipeg Rooming Houses* reconvened for a roundtable discussion in late November of 2004 to review the RH-TLCC project and provide valuable feedback and advice.

Organizations that attended included:

- * Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- * Manitoba Family Services and Housing
- * Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
- * Winnipeg Fire Services Department
- * Planning, Property and Development Department, City of Winnipeg
- * Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative
- * Sam Management Inc.

The primary goals of this gathering were to nurture partnerships previously established during the above mentioned study, garner support and evaluate the recommendations, which were the House Rules, the community based standards and the hiring and training of a RH-TLCC Coordinator as part of the RH-TLCC program. It is important to note that the SNA took a strong initiative in providing “homegrown” solutions to the rooming house stock as a form of affordable housing. Their efforts were endorsed by the invitees.

After a brief presentation outlining the work that the research team had completed it was agreed that SNA needs financial support for stabilization efforts towards rooming houses in the neighbourhood. Further, there needs to be a strong relationship built between the Residential Tenancy Board, rooming house tenants and rooming house owners. The group encouraged the SNA to move the RH-TLCC towards implementation and to engage various departments and agencies for support and guidance.



WHAT WILL THE RH-TLCC LOOK LIKE?

Based on the findings of this exercise and community forums it is anticipated that the RH-TLCC will have the following characteristics. It is important to note that the following is not the final plan but it is a positive step forward, reflecting what community stakeholders told us during many consultations.

First and foremost, acknowledging that the hiring and training of a *RH-TLCC Coordinator* is deemed vital for the implementation and on-going coordination and support of the program. This person would help give the program the attention it needs to become successful.

Secondly, the proposed *House Rules*, those decided and agreed upon through consensus, were viewed as a valuable component to the program. Tenant participation is key in serving to provide tenants with more responsibility and tools to assist in the development of their confidence and skills. The proposed *House Rules* are as follows:

Tenants agree to:

- Pay rent on time
- Be quiet after 11:00pm
- Clean up after themselves
- Report repairs to landlord/caretaker promptly and keep record of request
- Allow room access to landlord/caretaker when given proper notice

Landlords agree to:

- Provide proper rent receipts
- Attend to needed repairs promptly
- Maintain public area-ensure that they are well lit and clean
- Act on reports of disturbances and illegal activities
- Provide 24 hour notice when room access is needed



HOUSE STANDARDS

Based upon discussions with rooming house owners and tenants and the community stakeholders it was revealed that each group had five top priorities in terms of suggested rooming house standards. The following highlights each group's priorities.

Rooming House Tenants

- Quality Doors and Locks in both Exterior and Interior Doors
- Sufficient Lighting
- Individual Door Bells
- Common Telephone
- Individual Mailboxes

Rooming House Owners

- Sufficient Lighting
- On-site Caretaker
- Quality Doors and Locks in both Exterior and Interior Doors
- General Maintenance Supplies
- Common Telephone

Spence Community Residents

- Quality Doors and Locks in both Exterior and Interior Doors
- Sufficient Lighting
- On-site Caretaker
- Individual Mailboxes
- Tenant to Ratio Bathroom (4:1)

In essence, it is expected that a collaborative effort among the three groups will occur to design and implement the final components of the RH-TLCC based upon the key findings of this report and the numerous consultations within the community of Spence.



NEXT STEPS

This report has provided foundation for the RH-TLCC to move forward. To turn this report into a program, the following steps should be considered.

- * determine the hiring criteria for the coordinator, along with a job description;
- * revisit and refine *House Rules*;
- * revisit and refine the house standards;
- * develop the inspection method for rooming houses and the needed “checklist” for assessment;
- * finalize the program structure and advertising (development of the plaque and logo);
- * test the program and refine as needed.



CONCLUSION

In Winnipeg, rooming houses were shown to present a viable option for those in need of an affordable place to live. This study was centred in the Spence neighbourhood where a typical rooming house ranged from a sparsely furnished room with shared amenities to a self contained suite with its own bathroom and cooking facilities. Onsite services and supports in the way of a live in caretaker or such items as telephones, cable television and laundry varied from house to house in both quality and availability. With respect to the condition and size of the units, there is also a great deal of variation. Some rooming houses had two or three self-contained units while larger properties housed twenty small rooms with shared facilities. The overall condition of units remained a “moving target” as this attribute rested largely with the care given by the owner/ caretaker through regular maintenance and repair and the actions of residents who in some properties could inflict significant damage. With respect to the residents of rooming houses, they too were diverse and included students, employed persons, persons on assistance as well as pensioners. In discussions with owners, they highlighted that rooming houses tended to be a refuge for the ‘hard to house’ or those persons suffering from a variety of conditions that made their shelter requirements challenging.

It is also important to acknowledge that there was a great deal of volatility observed within the rooming stock, accented by a high transitory pattern of movement among residents. Many who moved did so for various reasons but issues of safety and quality remained high among those factors that pushed people from one place to another (sometimes moving only a few doors down the street). All agreed that by working together to create a more healthful and safe environment would help alleviate the residential instability that consumes many rooming houses.



The overall purpose of this research effort was to work with owners, residents and the general community to develop a set of standards that would help deal with the volatility and uncertainty that was all too often prevalent in this form of housing. But owing to the range of residents and the fact that rents start at \$236, our intent was to explore basic ideas and concepts for making modest improvements to the quality of life afforded to those residing in rooming houses. Although our focus and study was grounded in the Spence neighbourhood, it is thought that the guidelines proposed in this report would be applicable elsewhere. In fact, given that Spence has the highest concentration of rooming houses in the city, leads itself as being an excellent case study area. Therefore, making it work in the Spence neighbourhood, would be a solid indication of the relevance of such a program and its applicability elsewhere.

It is of value to reiterate that this was a project-oriented process in which the ultimate objective was the development of a set of definable guidelines that could be implemented in the Spence neighbourhood. The focus of the research and the methods to achieve this end were highly attuned to finding “common ground” from which rooming house owners, tenants and the general community would collectively begin the process of creating better places.

At the outset of the study, five research questions were posed to guide this research. A final thought is offered on each with respect to the overall findings of the project.

The first question asked *whether a rooming house TLCC program could contribute to the betterment of those living in this form of housing*. The outcome of the forums and interviews proved that by working cooperatively, a set of basic house rules could collectively be developed and used as a positive first step forward. This was reinforced by members of the community who also expressed the need to improve and protect this vital form of rental accommodation, while making the neighbourhood a better place to live.



The second question was related to determining *the extent to which the rooming house TLCC program could improve the existing housing stock*. Again, it was determined that if all parties worked together, the outcome would be better operating rooming houses where both owners and tenants would be aware of the boundaries by which they are expected to conduct themselves. However, all involved also recognized that there are limitations and with the low rents that are currently charged, little room existed for requiring owners to undertake radical transformation of their units. Hence, the outcome of this study focused on realistic measures of success that could be easily and cost effectively adapted to the existing stock.

A third question focused on the idea that *a rooming house TLCC can positively affect the working relationships between owners and tenants*. In this study, it was demonstrated that there is a willingness among all stakeholders to work towards creating better rooming houses through simple measures aimed at improving safety, clarifying expectations, and in some ways, setting identifiable boundaries. Each step in this journey was grounded in reaching consensus among all the vested parties. It was also clear that a coordinator would be paramount in establishing the thread to bind owners, tenants and the community. The coordinator would be the person to help mediate issues and work to ensure that the community standards are kept up, and when necessary, strengthened. By being the conduit, the coordinator would ensure that relationships would be established and maintained through having clear lines of communication among all, thereby giving a voice to those who are not commonly heard.

The final two questions examined the long term nature and transferability of the program. There is no doubt that to sustain such a program requires commitment. First and foremost, there must be funding to maintain a coordinator of the program. This position will require the skill of being able to bridge the gap between issues arising within the rooming houses



with the community's sense of having a stake in the process. It remains clear that those who contributed to this process want to see rooming houses become the best possible form of rental accommodations that they can. Again, all parties recognized the inherent limitations facing a form of shelter that is in many ways, the last choice of many, who face limited opportunities in securing shelter.

Originally, the RH-TLCC pilot project was to be implemented and evaluated during the course of this project. However, after reviewing the experiences of West Broadway's TLC program and feedback from the stakeholder consultations it was agreed that the project should proceed at a slower rate. SNA remains committed to this venture for the long term and has concluded that there are essential steps that should first occur to ensure the viability and life span of this project.

The most important outcome of this exercise was acknowledging the importance of the hiring and training of a RH-TLCC Coordinator. Cooperation between rooming house tenants, owners, and the community of Spence is a key feature of the RH-TLCC. Cooperation does not exist without good communication. The channels of communication amongst the various groups have been strengthened through the duration of this project. There is no uncertainty that this interaction will continue to flourish while the SNA embark upon their long-term goals.

In closing, this research lead to the creation of a set of community based standards and a program that will have a positive effect in the community.



Appendix One: Tenants Informal Survey Responses

1. As explained, if such a project was up and running, would this have made a difference in the rooming house you chose to live in? How?

1. Yes, it's if place is run well or not
2. Yes, would stop me from moving from place to place, they always say that the place is quiet and clean and it never is
3. Yes, as it is, you can't be sure what the house is like until you move in
4. I don't think so, if tenants complain they will probably be evicted if landlords hear them
5. Yes, I am a caretaker and it would help me
6. Yes, people would know if it's a safe place and run properly. I would want to know if tenants work and have to get up in the morning
7. No, I don't have much choice where I can live. All rooming houses are not that good but it's the cheapest way to live
8. Maybe instead of plaques, have social services and SNA keep a list of good places
9. No, when I move to a new place it is usually because I know others that live there they tell me whether it is good or bad
10. Don't know
11. Probably, I have had to move three times since last January, they always tell you it's a quiet place and its not
12. Yes, the caretaker gets a bonus if he rents the room so he tells everybody its nice and quiet so he can get the bonus
13. No, instead the money should be spent on apartment buildings and bigger places to live, not rooming houses
14. Yes, "bad tenants" would know places are clean and safe (quiet) it would stop them from trying to move in
15. No
16. Yes, it would save me from moving into a place I don't like

2. If an issue arose, such as noise disturbance etc... would you be willing to voice your concerns, to a Spence Neighbourhood Association Rental Rep?

1. It depends if I have to give my name
2. No, private issues
3. No, that's why they should have a good caretaker living in
4. Yes, most of the tenants voice their concerns with the other tenants responsible for disturbance
5. No, would the rep come at 3 am to stop the noise?
6. Our place is pretty quiet
7. No, I really don't think they could do anything about it and understand what a rooming house is like if the have never lived in one
8. I don't know, usually when there is a lot of noise it means people are drunk or high, then you call the police
9. Yes, if they keep my name out of it
10. We can look after ourselves, when we can't we call the police
11. No, I tell the owner
12. No, because sometimes I am the one who makes the noise
13. Yes, because the caretaker doesn't do anything when we complain
14. The police can't do anything
15. It's the owners job to look after their places
16. No, usually other tenants tell the owner if it happens a lot, and they get evicted
17. Yes but what will they do?



3. What would it take for you to become involved in a RH-TLCC project?

1. Can't say for now
2. Incentives such as money/better room
3. If I could see a real difference in improving rooming houses. It seems that nobody cares about us
4. Incentive, i.e., rebate on rent, microwave
5. Better place to live. I'd like to be able to fix my place a bit but I can't afford to get new blinds or paint, so that could be an incentive
6. Maybe if landlords would furnish rooms better then I wouldn't mind helping out just around my house, I don't like meetings
7. Don't know, maybe if we could make a few extra dollars every week by helping around the house, that would be my share
8. When I see that good things are being done for us rooming house tenants
9. Don't know
10. Not interested I look after myself that's enough
11. I am not interested in it unless I get some money out of it
12. I don't know I 'm trying to get back to school so I don't have much time
13. Only if it would help me move into a place where I could have my own bathroom
14. Don't know
15. Money
16. I would not mind doing some maintenance fixing up things, snow shoveling etc...if I could get a rebate on my rent

4. How long have you lived in rooming houses? Was there one that was run particularly well, and if so, what were the best things about living there?

1. Two months, this is my first rooming house
2. Ten to twelve years, no
3. Three and half years. The one I am living in now all the tenants get along
4. Off and on for seven years. In Ottawa a mix of tenants, students, income etc...
5. Almost fourteen years, No, why do you think I move around so much?
6. Twelve years the one I live in now is better. I'm a caretaker so I have more room and my own bathroom
7. About five years, I like the place I lived before because my friend lived there too
8. Since I moved from my reserve in 1992. I like the one I live in now, everybody minds their own business
9. Four years, there were only guys living in the house
10. Three years knowing the tenants before you move then we can help each other out when we are short on something.
11. Eleven to twelve years, owner lives here
12. Five years, none
13. Two years, nothing
14. Six years, yes, in the north end but I had to move closer to the hospital, there were only five of us we all kind of looked after the place
15. Five and a half years, caretaker was good, I had to move out because the owner sold the house to University of Winnipeg student housing
16. Longer I want to remember probably 14 years off and on depending on my financial situation, a couple of rooming houses were good because there was a caretaker who wouldn't take any lip from noisy or drunk tenants
17. Yes, it was mostly older people and caretaker was good



5. How long have you lived in this rooming house?

1. Two months
2. Two months
3. Two years
4. One month
5. Six months
6. Two years
7. Ten months
8. Since 1992, but I would like to get a bigger place
9. Six months. I move around a lot, but I think I'll stay here for a while, this present address is not so bad
10. April 2003
11. Eleven to twelve years
12. Two months
13. One and half years
14. One and a half years
15. Two years
16. Three months
17. One year

6. If you are interested in participating in any capacity, may we telephone/contact you to discuss this project further?

1. I'll think about it
2. No
3. Yes
4. I might come to a meeting first to see if it would help me
5. No I might come to a meeting and see what it's like
6. No
7. I don't have a phone, maybe I'll come to a rental committee with my friend
8. No, I work at night maybe for other things I would help (clean-up)
9. Yes, but I don't have a phone
10. Don't have a phone, might come to a meeting
11. No
12. Too busy with school
13. I don't have a phone and I have trouble walking, I stay close to home
14. Not for me (meetings and such) but would clean around the house if rent could be less
15. No, because I don't expect to stay here much longer. I am looking into renting a house with a couple of friends and share the rent

7. Do you have any comments or concerns?

1. Only that I hope that I don't have to live in a rooming house too long
2. I have some friends that live in other rooming houses (bad ones) but can't move because there's no other places to go
3. If house rules are made by landlords and tenants, it's not their business if I want to drink or have friends visit me for the night
4. Maybe there should be rooming houses for women only and others; young people, men etc...



5. I don't know if people will listen to us. Tenants with special needs should have people check on them more often (medication)
6. Not really
7. Nobody should have to live in one room. You eat, sleep in the same place, guys in jail have bigger places
8. I would like to have a better bed, cleaner furniture, but I can't afford it
9. That I get to stay where I am, landlord does not sell
10. Yes, I'm tired of moving to place to place. It would be nice to have better places to choose from
11. The tenants should be able to choose or get rid of caretakers if they don't do their jobs like they are supposed to, we never see the owner
12. I have trouble walking and in the bathroom I get dizzy sometimes. I might need a wheelchair soon so it will mean I'll have to try to find a place but it's hard
13. I have a kid, but last summer she couldn't visit (stay overnight) because I had nowhere for her to sleep or play. Before that there was an empty room beside me and she slept there. (Caretaker let me have the keys for room when daughter visited)
14. It is getting harder to find a decent place anymore because many have been closed down by the city and owners give up or sell the house to new owners that renovate them as duplexes or for themselves, and nobody builds new ones
15. That I might have to move out again because of "bad" tenants at my place

8. What is the three most important issues relating to this proposed project?

1. Clean place and safe, quiet tenants and neighbours, that everybody is treated the same
2. That people and neighbours see us in a better way, more choices in where we live, even if I like it I would like to get a bigger place but I can't afford it
3. Better management, better safety, improve image for community
4. Make them livable, better managed, on-site caretaker
5. If rooming houses improve, my kids could come and visit me more often. Now I don't have a place for them to sleep
6. That something comes out of this study, our neighbours (and community) know that we are not all bums and drunks, that bad landlords be forced out of business
7. The way the house looks, I would prefer my own bathroom, there is only two women living in rooming house, the rest are men and they never clean their mess (toilet bowl, bath)
8. That where I live is clean, and no bad tenants that fight and drink all the time, people listen to us, I don't live in a rooming house because I am bad and lazy. I never went past grade 9 and I have problems getting a job. But I mind my own business and don't hurt nobody. So I'm as good as somebody living in a house
9. Tenants getting along, bigger rooms, I would like to paint my place, new carpet maybe, if owner could let me have it, I would do the work myself
10. Other tenants, clean, no parties every night, no drugs, (we don't have those kind of tenants here, but know friends who have trouble with them)
11. The owner or caretaker be approachable, a clean place, new tenants don't cause trouble
12. Getting along with other tenants, maybe having place for just guys and just women, a clean place, clean mattress
13. Know who the owner is so we can talk to him if things are not alright, better caretaker, screening tenants



14. People who have disabilities or special needs should be looked after better; sometimes I don't feel safe because some of the tenants have friends over drinking. You should be able to feel safe in your own place. It would be nice if the landlord could fix the place better, better fridge and stove
15. Good owners, good caretakers, good tenants
16. Bigger rooms, and cleaner beds (mattress). Place to cook meals (stove and fridge) all I can cook on now is a hot plate
17. Good tenants, caretaker who does it's job, I'd like to meet my landlord!

Appendix Two: Owners Informal Survey/Responses

1. Would you support the Spence Neighbourhood Association (Rental Committee Rep) in acting as a mediator in tenant/landlord relationships? If no, why?

1. Yes, I would
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. No not entirely, other businesses don't need SNA to help with their issues
5. Possibly, depends on the amount of time

2. What would it take to get your involvement in a program like this?

1. If I have time I certainly would
2. Support services, information referrals
3. More funding, Rent regulations changes, rent increase
4. If help from the government. such as grants or interest free loans, I would certainly try to follow the guidelines. But as it is now, it is very hard to keep up with the maintenance of my property.

Benefits

1. This would help the good landlords & tenants in dealing with the tenants who are a lot of difficulty. It would also help good tenants in dealing with landlords who don't seem to care what is going on in their property. Having a list of tenants who are a real horror story available to landlords looking for good tenants would be a real help.
2. No comment
3. Educate tenants, better tenants
4. Improve our chances if we stand together and demand that the govt. do the same re: grants that homeowners get. Might convince SA to raise their rent allowance.
5. Enhances neighbourhood. Provide more eye appealing properties and attract good tenants that respect their home

Barriers

1. Some landlords and a lot of tenants that I have seen would not bother to get involved in this. A great many tenants have so many problems with drugs and alcohol that it rules their life.
2. No comment
3. Becomes a financial burden, landlords have to disburse money and keep up or join TLCC.
4. I think that the state of RH's has gone so down so bad I don't know if we will ever be able to catch up, unless immediate help comes our way. Bureaucracy. Does SNA have enough pull and interest to help? Owning RH properties is just like owning any other business, they get incentives to stay open and/or improve, tax rebates etc... Why can't we? Too little too late? Lack of time?
5. Government red tape, all levels



3. If SNA secured funding towards the setting up of the RH-TLCC program, would you be willing to participate? (Such as providing funds towards maintenance projects)

1. Yes, within reason
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. Yes, but only if the requirements to receive grants are reasonable, and not too much red tape.
5. Yes, on behalf of vendors

**4. Would you be willing to upgrade your property to fit RH-TLCC standards?
Yes or No?**

1. We are constantly fixing our properties; in the past month we have replaced 7 windows including one tripane that was broken by tenants girlfriend. We are in the process of painting the exteriors of 4 houses last year was 3.
2. Yes
3. Yes, depending on amount of money it would cost to follow guidelines

5. How many rooming houses do you own?

1. Seven including 2 triplexes in Wolseley, which are also called rooming houses by the city
2. One
3. One in Spence, One in the North End
4. One, but I am seriously thinking of selling
5. I manage three but only one in Spence

6. Approximately how many tenants do you have?

1. About fifty-five
2. Nine
3. Five units in Spence
4. Ten
5. Fifty

7. What changes have helped or hindered your business?

1. Some changes have helped a bit, but I would have to write a book about the changes that hindered our business
2. New Landlord, maintenance costs are too high
3. Hindered by no rent increase
4. There has been no change. Besides what do you expect us landlords to do when we can't raise the rent because of SA cut back 16 years?
5. Residential tenancies and rent control

8. How long have you been a rooming house owner?

1. 19 years
2. 2003 (November)
3. 20 years
4. 16 years
5. Management –10-12 years



10. If you are interested in participating in any capacity, may we telephone you to discuss this project further?

1. Yes
2. Yes
3. Yes
4. I am willing to try and follow the guidelines and receive any information and useful suggestions that's the most I could do. Besides owning this property, I have a day job and family to look after.

Comments or Concerns

1. Not now
2. Will it cost? Will the government help with improvements?
3. Concerns for S.N.A, rent regulations ACT
4. Some of our tenants need extra care, mentally, physically, addictions. There doesn't seem to be enough services to tend to these people. Some need medication on a daily basis but can't seem to deal with the responsibilities of following basic directions. Social workers should perhaps have an office in this community; be more accessible for those tenants.
5. Not at this time

Three Pressing Issues

1. Bad tenant screening, can't screen tenants, sex trade in area brings all sorts of problems
2. Address the neighbourhood issues, jobs, rent, social opportunities; Heating systems and major systems and windows all need attention in the area.
3. Rent increase, community support, the management of the TLCC program
4. Rent increase (allowance). Subsidies for the ones that work or attend school. Again, help has to come now, not in 2 years, now.
5. Funds available, easy access, amount 50/50 split between funds & landlords

Appendix Three: Community Informal Survey/Responses

1. As explained, do you think the RH-TLCC project would have a positive influence in the Spence area? If yes, how?

1. Don't know
2. I think so, maybe tenants would take better care of where they live if landlords have more help and fix things
3. Yes, many new homes and renovated apartments have been done. We should do the same and look after the "bad" rooming houses
4. Voice the issues
5. Yes, residents have been left out, sometimes they are active members of the community, they have particular characteristics
6. Yes, anything that is being done in our community to improve will benefit us all
7. By improvement of properties, would encourage tenants to improve as well. The system would decrease sub-standard accommodation and encourage landlords to properly maintain their property
8. Since Spence area has such a high number of rooming houses the influence should be significant
9. Yes, only if it can be promoted well enough to catch on. Standards are only meaningful if widely recognized. The existence of a standard may also guide the landlords on deciding if rooming houses are suitable for their properties or not



10. Yes, it would connect a lot of residents with their landlords. It would also inform tenants of their rights
11. I believe that low income renters or those on social assistance do not have a voice and with RH-TLCC project in place, it gives both the tenant and landlord an opportunity to discuss and work out issues
12. Yes, nothing else has worked so far, a new approach to involve more people and community members is worth a try
13. No, I think they should close down all rooming houses. Nobody should have to live in such a small space. Build apartment buildings instead
14. Yes, but only if the politicians are behind such a project

2. If an issue occurred involving a rooming house in Spence would you be willing to voice your concerns through a Spence Neighbourhood Association Rental Rep?

1. Yes
2. No, unless I know they would be able to help me
3. Probably if it was a serious issue, just like I would for any other. But the police and owners should be made aware of it first
4. Yes
5. Yes, the SNA would be appropriate if they have the proper tools
6. Probably
7. No
8. Yes
9. As opposed to not voicing them at all? I have not found the SNA particularly support the idea of renters as part of their vision for the neighbourhood so I am not sure how effective this would be
10. I would probably mention in passing if I was talking to SNA for some other reason
11. Yes, I would
12. Yes
13. It would depend, probably not
14. Yes

3. If the RH-TLCC project was put into practice, what role do you see the community playing?

1. Support them, not only financially
2. Don't know
3. Help by lobbying the government for more funds to help owners and tenants
4. Support
5. Help get the word out to all of the members, help lobby for the tenants and landlords. Role of the community supporting tenants in their efforts
6. Support
7. Only if program was maintained and continual and not just a short term project
8. What sector of the community do you mean? The tenants? Their neighbours?
9. The community would probably get the word out about the existence of the project
10. I see the community having more of a say in what is happening and being more informed
11. To participate in the committee
12. Don't know
13. There is more help needed than just a committee
14. Support and they will also need the support of other groups, i.e. organizations, church groups, women's groups etc...



4. Would you feel the community would benefit if there were RH-TLCC plaques indicating that a rooming house has met the “outstanding standards” in your neighbourhood?

1. Yes
2. Yes
3. Yes, it would show that we look after everyone in our neighbourhood by improving those properties; we are improving the whole community
4. Yes
5. Yes, people who are looking for places-puts pressure on landlords to maintain their buildings
6. Yes, it would show that we are doing all we can to make this work. It would show people who are thinking of buying or renting in our area
7. None
8. No
9. It would probably make residents of the neighbourhood “feel” better about the quality of the area, but in light of the tight rental market I don’t know just how many landlords would feel compelled to meet the standards
10. Yes it would. It would say something was being done
11. Yes, it gives the community a better sense of community and pride
12. Yes, it would show others that our community cares
13. No
14. Yes

5. Do you see any negative effects regarding the RH-TLCC project, if yes, what are they? Can you think of any alternative programs?

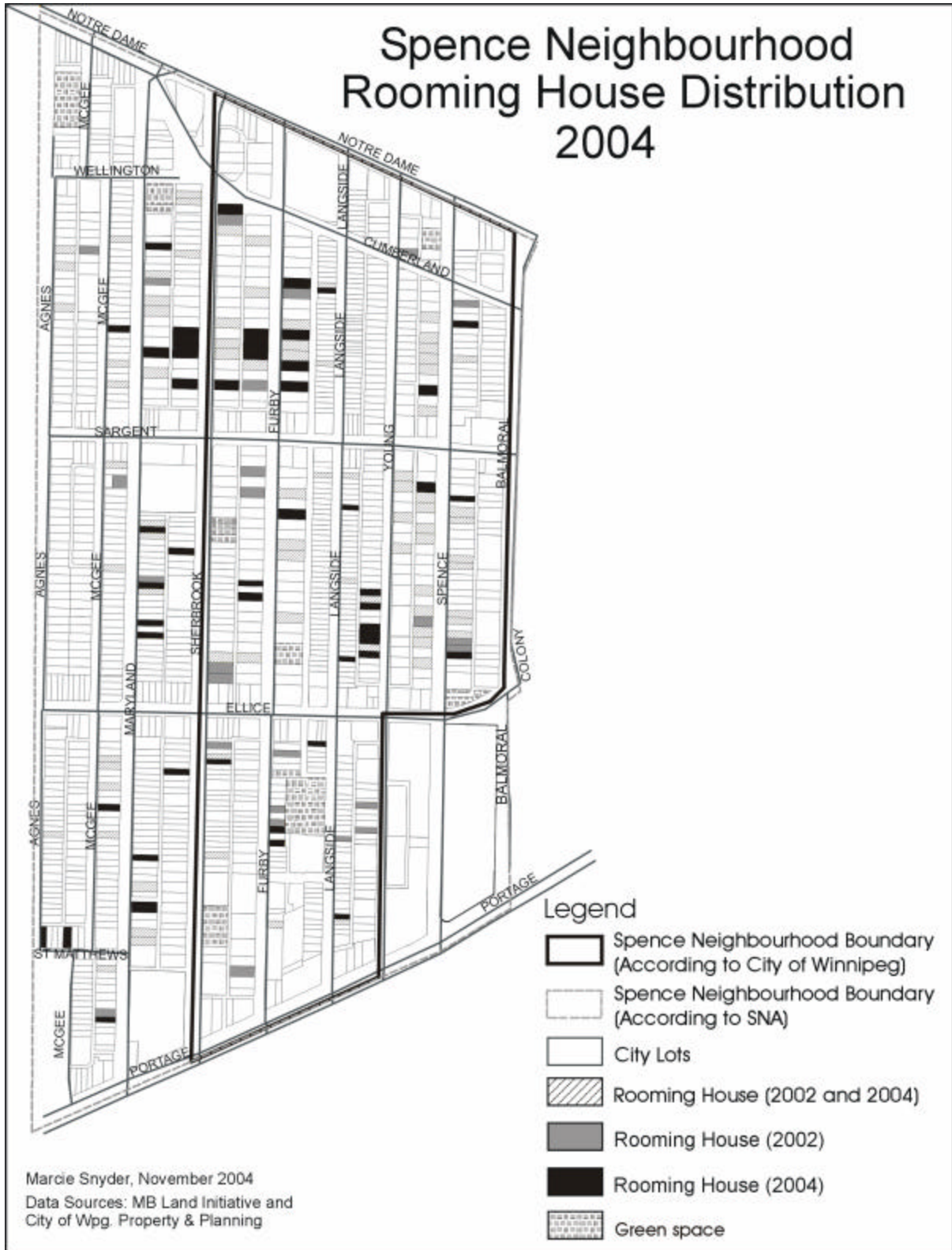
1. No
2. No
3. N/A
4. Yes, I see negatives. Creating an activity that has little power for change and may cause greater tension between landlords and tenant community. Alternative may be shelter allowance, government subsidies...
5. No
6. No
7. If the program is successful and catches on. The only negative effects would be felt by the landlords who keep their property (ies) in disrepair. These people may eventually have a harder time finding tenants.
8. No
9. Only if the residents or tenants voices is not heard
10. No
11. No
12. No

6. If you are interested in participating, in any capacity, in the RH-TLCC project, may we telephone/contact you to discuss this project further?

1. Don’t really have time
2. No
3. I’m not sure how I can help
4. Only in capacity of SNA Housing Committee
5. Through Streets Articles



APPENDIX FOUR: SPENCE NEIGHBOURHOOD ROOMING HOUSE DISTRIBUTION MAP





SOURCES

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