



**HOMELESSNESS
IN THE TERRITORIAL NORTH:
STATE AND AVAILABILITY OF THE KNOWLEDGE**

**Report Prepared for the Housing and Homelessness Branch,
Human Resources and Social Development Canada**

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Preface

This Report was prepared for the Housing and Homelessness Branch of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. The National Research Program of the National Homelessness Initiative provided MaxSys Consulting with the funding to carry out the Project.

The first phase of the Project consisted of structured consultations with Northern stakeholders. The consultation research methodology and related data collection were the responsibilities of Researcher Peter Jackson. Subsequently I was engaged to complete the project. This involved analysing the consultations data, undertaking a review of the literature and the statistical data available, authoring the Report, and finalising the Project.

The National Homelessness Initiative's National Research Program funding carries the expectation that the Report, and the Report's *Highlights* summary document, will be available publicly. Accordingly, researchers and others may freely use, quote from, circulate, and make copies of both documents. Stakeholder organisations may post these documents on their websites in order to allow free public downloads. These permissions are conditional upon not altering the documents from their original forms. Please cite the Author and origin when quoting from, or referring to, these two documents.

To obtain a copy of the full Report, you may contact Marta Nestaiko, Research Analyst, Housing and Homelessness Branch, at Marta.Nestaiko@hrsdc-drhcc.gc.ca. The *Highlights* document will be posted in both official languages on the Housing and Homelessness Branch website at http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/home/index_e.asp.

Except where the views of informants, participants, and others are stated, the views expressed in the Report are my own. The research, conclusions, and recommendations do not necessarily represent the views of Housing and Homelessness Branch.

Notwithstanding this, I can confidently state that the various officials and consultants involved in this Project greatly appreciate the assistance of the stakeholder informants. We all hope that this Report will contribute towards further relevant research, improved knowledge sharing, and better allocation of scarce resources in the challenging field of mitigating the problem of homelessness in the Territorial North.

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Executive Summary

Background

The Housing and Homelessness Branch of Human Resources and Social Development Canada commissioned this Report. MaxSys Consulting received funding to undertake the Project. This Report examines the state of understanding of the challenges and the solutions regarding homelessness in the Territorial North. To this end, this Report has four objectives:

1. Describe, from the literature and other data, the context of Territorial homelessness;
2. Assess, and observe upon, the information available to stakeholders, especially the stakeholders on the front line of dealing with homelessness in the Territorial North;
3. Solicit and summarise stakeholders about the nature and remedies of the homelessness challenges that they face, and put these responses in a “big picture” perspective; and
4. Provide realistic recommendations about preliminary steps to address knowledge gaps, and to improve information sharing, networking, and collaboration between stakeholders.

This Report does not attempt to propose measures to prevent or alleviate the problem of homelessness in the Territorial North. Its detailed discussion of the context of Territorial homelessness is with a view towards furthering appreciation of the complexities and special challenges that are at play. Many questions arose, and few answers found, but this Project is foremost a first step in towards improving information sharing on Northern homelessness.

This study has identifies clear deficiencies in information sharing. Its conclusions and recommendations therefore focus on realistic ways to begin addressing reflect these deficiencies.

Extent of Information on Northern Homelessness

From the contextual research, undertaken during the course of this Project, it is apparent that the corpus of statistical, descriptive, and analytical literature relevant to Northern homelessness is greater than generally thought. Making this source information more generally available will further basic research that has to be done. This should also help delivery agencies improve their services to the homeless.

There is an almost complete lack of the quantitative data needed to understand some of the drivers of Northern homelessness. No attempts at quantitative or rigorous qualitative research seem to have taken place. Policy and programmes continue to be anchored on anecdotal evidence, field reports and correspondence from officials, and the ‘school of hard knocks’ when shelters, particularly, have to turn away clients whom they lack space for. Many of these necessary data could be collected and shared, given co-ordination, data protocols, standardised

formats, and not necessarily at high cost. There is currently no discernable movement towards making this happen. Leadership would be required.

Counts of homeless people in shelters, or estimates of tent occupancy, are insufficient to explain and project patterns of homelessness in the North. Foremost it is necessary to examine three things: migration patterns in light of socio-economic change; aggregate caseload data such as shelter counts and contacts with social services; and comparisons of standardised individual level case data. These are all possible, given proper co-ordination and privacy protection for individual data. Failure to do so will condemn the stakeholders to reacting to challenges as they occur, and delivering programmes which at times are questionably effective and which sometimes re-invent the wheel. The latter is especially apparent from the cyclical crises that all territorial shelters seem to experience.

Recommendation 1: Commence a research and consultation project to identify the statistical data needed to understand trends in Northern homelessness. This project should also identify data issues.

Recommendation 2: As a next step, commence a project to develop standardised indicators ranging from shelter head counts to individual-level linkages with programmes such as housing and social assistance.

Recommendation 3: Ideally, Recommendations 1 and 2 would occur under the guidance of the data committee of the Working Group proposed in Recommendation 4.

Information Sharing

Northern stakeholders who deal with homelessness tend to be out of touch with existing technical resources on matters pertaining to homelessness. This is not because they lack access to the Internet; generally, their Internet access is good.

Information exchange between Northern stakeholders generally could stand great improvement. This extends to information sharing between concerned territorial agencies, not just between NGOs. Compared with their Southern counterparts, Northern stakeholders seem to have a lower level of familiarity with any literature on homelessness. This is apparently not usually by choice. Over half of the informants identified general or specific documents or types of information that they could use. These are often available when one knows where to look.

Access to, or familiarity with, documents on territorial homelessness appears unconnected with whether or not the informant is situated in a larger centre, where presumably access would be easier. This and the poor level of access and familiarity generally, make a strong case for a co-ordinated means of alerting Northern stakeholders to documents of potential interest. A bulletin system, and/or a periodically updated, annotated bibliography, comes to mind as ways to overcome this problem.

The high costs of travel, and of long-distance telephone, make the Internet the logical mode for improving the sharing of information about Northern homelessness. The infrastructure for this is

in place and the stakeholders are connected – or can become connected in most cases without high cost.

With minor exceptions perhaps, Northern stakeholders are operating in silos in terms of information sharing. In this regard, there appears a clear lack of co-ordination or leadership is evident in each territory. Leadership is necessary. It does not seem that this leadership will materialise, in the near future, without outside assistance and funding.

Lacking information to think otherwise, it is prudent to assume that information sharing is no better between the territories. There is no “Northern clearing house on homelessness information”, no common structure to contemplate the challenges and the solutions, and no common voice for the stakeholders. Co-ordination is needed, but economy of scale, and critical mass, preclude duplicating such an initiative in each territory. A shared approach seems much more likely to be feasible and useful.

Recommendation 4: The Housing and Homelessness Branch should propose, and facilitate the establishment of, a standing “Working Group on Territorial Homelessness”. This body should comprise a manageable number of the main governmental and NGO stakeholders in Northern homelessness. This body would have a mandate to conduct research, communicate common messages, facilitate dialogue, and issue reports particularly an Annual Review of Northern Homelessness. Modest and inexpensive outputs, such as these, would go a long way towards improving collaboration and state of the knowledge.

Recommendation 5: In connection with Recommendation 4, if possible, establish a web-based “Northern Homelessness Network” of all stakeholders in Northern homelessness. There seems no reason why this network could not include northern provincial stakeholders who experience homelessness challenges similar to those of their territorial colleagues.

Recommendation 6: The proposed Northern Homelessness Network should make maximum use of broadband webcast capability to hold routine and special meetings and conferences between stakeholders.

Recommendation 7: Known and future documents, which concern Northern homelessness, should be collected (or at least indexed and linked) for free electronic access on a dedicated website that is highly user-friendly. This initiative should involve an updated, annotated bibliography and a web-based system to notify stakeholders of additions.

Recommendation 8: To the extent possible, these documents should be in “.pdf form” in order to facilitate local printing.

Recommendation 9: Establish a convention so that publicly available “.pdf form” documents on Northern homelessness are *not* locked against users copying sections for research and planning purposes; locked documents can only be viewed or printed.

Recommendation 10: Index web-based documents on Northern homelessness by topic, keyword, and title. They should be searchable through a search engine accessible on the site. The index should contain an “annotated bibliography” type description for each document.

Recommendation 11: Statistics, or links to statistics, on Northern homelessness should be available on or through the same site as the documents.

Recommendation 12: The source documents and statistics available on / through this website should include information which is not homelessness-specific but which is relevant to understanding territorial background and context.

Types of Northern Homelessness

“Hidden homelessness” applies when persons live in overcrowded and/or inadequate conditions. The literature review, media scan, and informants are consistent that hidden homelessness is a pervasive, widespread, and improperly appreciated problem in the North. The gravity of this problem appears poorly understood in the South, from where Northerners draw support and financial assistance.

Substantial and credible evidence proves that the contention, that absolute homelessness does not exist in the North, is false.

Recommendation 13: Further debate, on the hypothesis that absolute homeless does not exist in the North, should cease on grounds that it would be a distraction from more pressing and practical issues.

Recommendation 14: territorial hidden homelessness should be the subject of a specific study. Among other things, this study should quantify the number of new households that would form if the problem of hidden homelessness were solved. It should also quantify the prevalence of “couch surfing”, and estimate the extent to which households give, on humanitarian grounds, temporary shelter to homeless non-family members. In order to be useful this study should include a large-scale sampling of households.

Extent and Trajectory of Northern Homelessness

There are sufficient demographic, socio-economic, and descriptive data to conclude that the Yukon’s homelessness problem is not intensifying as it is in the other territories. The Yukon’s population and economy are generally stable. Its social housing stock appears adequate. We can say this among the general population but not about Yukon’s reserve-based First Nations, where data are harder to come by. This does not suggest that homelessness in the Yukon is not a problem, but rather, that the statistics on homelessness in the Yukon are deficient (See Recommendations 1 to 3).

Homelessness in the NWT is a serious practical problem with multiple social and economic consequences. This problem has existed for many years, largely due to chronic shortage of housing, but it has intensified sharply in connection with this territory’s recent economic boom. The NWT is now on the brink of another mega-development: the MacKenzie Valley pipeline and associated petroleum production. Realising that this will have significant socio-economic

impacts that will need mitigation measures, the federal government has identified (conditionally, unless economic performance diminishes) \$500 million to mitigate anticipated effects. This may, or may not, offset the increased homelessness expected from factors such as migration. This is a situation that deserves monitoring and analysis.

Recommendation 15: The social impacts monitoring associated with the MacKenzie project should include analysis of impacts on homelessness particularly in respect of economic-driven migration.

By all accounts, the extent, trajectory, and spin-off consequences of homelessness in Nunavut are truly dreadful, and indeed difficult for some Southerners to believe. The evidence is overwhelming and the Author has never found occasion to make such blunt a pronouncement in a report. These facts ought to be better understood in the South, from where money for the solutions flows. Southerners may feel that the recent the \$300M federal investment in territorial housing has solved the problems of crowding and homelessness. Most likely, they will only be stabilised or mitigated; it is hard to imagine any Federal Government that would be eager to broadcast this message and risk further expenditure when there are many national priorities.

Recommendation 16: Northern stakeholders should be mindful of a need to counter a possible Southern tendency towards imagining that recent investments adequately address territorial housing shortages. This calls for co-ordination and common voice, a strategic plan including a communications strategy, and new, solid data to describe the reality.

An almost non-existent housing market, near-total dependency of Nunavut on federal transfers, and high rate of income assistance dependency clearly require the investment of very large sums in order to increase the supply of social housing. Nunavut is alone, among the territories, in that the main solution to its homelessness problem is so clear. The problems and solutions in the other territories are more multivariate.

The \$300M recently earmarked for territorial housing will certainly have a positive effect on mitigating or reducing territorial homelessness. The \$500M for mitigating socio-economic impacts in the NWT will likely also have a beneficial effect, in the NWT. However, we cannot say that the homelessness situation in the NWT will improve owing to further socio-economic dislocation expected from the MacKenzie gas project. The additional funding available to the GNWT may be insufficient, and besides, the situation is multivariate and increased funding is not the only solution.

Nonetheless, this is a large injection and clearly welcome, although the distribution and conditions associated with this funding are unclear at present. This seems an ideal opportunity to establish a multi-year research to assess the now-and-after affects of the major construction schemes on territorial homelessness.

Recommendation 17: Establish inter-governmental and inter-stakeholder discussions with a view towards establishing a large-scale research project to examine the effects of the major housing investments on the incidence and character of territorial homelessness. The federal and the territorial governments may all be in positions to assist such a project.

Part 1 - Introduction

1.0 Objectives

This Report examines the state of understanding of the challenges and the solutions regarding homelessness in the Territorial North. To this end, this Report has four objectives:

1. Review and describe, from the literature and other available data, the context of homelessness in the Territorial North;
2. Assess, and makes observations upon, the information that is available to stakeholders, especially the stakeholders on the front line of dealing with homelessness in the Territorial North;
3. Solicit and summarise the views of these stakeholders on the nature and remedies of the homelessness challenges that they face, and puts these responses in a “big picture” perspective; and
4. Provide realistic recommendations about preliminary steps that can be taken to:
 - i. Address knowledge gaps in the understanding of, and solutions to, Northern homelessness, in ethical ways which respect culture and jurisdiction; and
 - ii. Improve information sharing, networking, and collaboration between the stakeholders.

This Report does not attempt to propose programme solutions, or other measures, to prevent or alleviate the problem of homelessness in the Territorial North. Its detailed discussion of the context of territorial homelessness is with a view towards furthering appreciation of the complexities and special challenges that are at play.

1.1 Background

The Housing and Homelessness Branch of Human Resources and Social Development Canada commissioned this Report. The mandate of Housing and Homelessness Branch includes investigating homelessness issues and empowering stakeholders with supports such as information tools. This Project falls within that mandate, and the Territorial North is one of six domains identified by the Branch for its 2003-2006 research agenda.

Work on this Project commenced on 6 June 2005 under funding from the National Research Programme of the National Homelessness Initiative. MaxSys Consulting received funding to

undertake the Project. This followed, during the winter of 2005, submission of a successful proposal under a “Call for Proposals on Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Development”.

The Housing and Homelessness Branch had previously noted that the study of homelessness in the Territorial North – i.e., the three federal territories – appeared less developed than the study of homelessness in the provinces. This apparent deficiency is consistent with the need for further information collection and synthesis evident in the context of Aboriginal homelessness in Canada; i.e., Beavis et al. (1997) observed that:

There is very little literature that addresses the issue of Aboriginal homelessness in Canada per se. Other bodies of literature that may be relevant are: the general literature on homelessness in Canada; the research of Aboriginal socio-economic conditions and housing; the literature on urban Aboriginals and street youth; the literature on Aboriginal health issues; and the research on the Aboriginal "skid row" lifestyle.¹

Note that, while the present Report concerns itself with territorial homelessness, Aboriginal people represent a large cohort of the territorial populations. Furthermore, and clearly, a disproportionate percentage of homeless people in the three territories are Aboriginal. Housing and Homelessness Branch staff member Piali Das Gupta completed a preliminary environmental scan on 8 September 2005. This was entitled: “Homelessness in the Northern Territories: a Review of Existing Research”. It provides an overview of the territorial homelessness context, including who the main stakeholders are, and it identifies relevant research projects known to be underway. It also confirmed the suspicions about deficiencies in the knowledge of territorial homelessness.

The present Report is a modest next step towards closing the knowledge gaps. It attempts this by two means; first, it provides additional contextual information so that the causes and challenges of territorial homelessness can be better understood; and second, it seeks to engage Northern stakeholders in the process of identifying the challenges and ways forward, and in so doing, understand what information and information sharing systems they have at their disposal. Note that the present Report is a “stand alone” document rather than a continuation of previous research.

Engaging the stakeholders directly is required as a matter of courtesy, but also because of the normal expectations of ethical research in the north context and the Aboriginal context. Indeed, an invitational community forum entitled “Toward a New Canadian Housing Framework”, held on 22 January 2005 at the Explorer Hotel in Yellowknife, NWT, planted the seeds of the present Project^a. An absolute need for better information about the housing needs of North and its population emerged as a strong theme. The participants concurred that the housing needs and priorities of their community members must be determined by their communities, rather than by far-off researchers who may lack attachment if not understanding.

^a This was one of the first of a series of nation-wide consultations conducted by the National Homelessness Initiative and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, with a view towards developing a new, long-term Canadian Housing Framework. This Framework is to be a strategic plan covering all aspects of the housing continuum, from emergency shelter such as for the homeless, to assistance for homeowners.

Northern homelessness is clearly, but not strictly, a housing issue. Its causes, management, and solutions are multivariate and multidisciplinary. The present Project, “Information Sharing on Homelessness in the North”, therefore includes a preliminary scan of stakeholder perspectives. The intent is to provide a clearer picture of the differing perspectives, to identify knowledge gaps, to propose measures to improve the state of the knowledge, to improve stakeholder collaboration, and to improve information sharing.

This Report presents the information provided by the key informants in an anonymous manner, in accordance with accepted ethical principles. The Researcher assured the survey participants that they could feel free to provide professional opinions that might contrast with the views of, say, a government employer. The intent was to solicit the unfettered views of people working on the front lines of homelessness in the North. The Author has endeavoured to distinguish clearly between his own views, the views of other researchers and players, and the views of the informants. These distinctions may shed light on what constitutes common ground, divergence of opinion, knowledge gaps, and perhaps misconceptions.

Part 2 - Methodology

2.0 Overview

This Report combines analysis of data from existing printed sources with new data obtained through a survey of key informants in the Territorial North. The data sources comprise a literature review and information gained from a survey of key informants.

2.1 Methodology – Literature Review

The methodology for this additional literature review is simple. A search was made of the holdings of federal libraries for additional documents with tangible relevance to the study of Northern homelessness. The libraries consulted comprised: departmental library of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC); departmental library of Health Canada; library of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC); and Library of Parliament. Note that this search was completed after the surveys were completed, taking into account any additional sources suggested by the informants. This explains why these additional documents were *not* included in the informant survey of documents. The additional document search included an electronic search, of Internet-available documents, for studies, reports, statistics, and media reports of homelessness issues in recent years.

It was anticipated that the small number of persons assisting homeless people, in the Territorial North, would make it difficult to find a substantial number of survey informants. Accordingly, the media scan portion of the literature review was to provide as much quotation from Northern observers and stakeholders as possible. The aim was to provide some sense of the evolution of the homelessness landscape using the published words of Northerners. The words of the survey informants would then add to the richness of the complete picture.

Appendix C contains the full results of the literature review and media scan. It provides a lengthy discussion of the diverse factors that shape the landscape of homelessness in the Territorial North. Its length also reflects a decision to make maximum use of quotations, from media and reports, with a view towards described the situation as much as possible using the words of Northern stakeholders. The emphasis is on description; analysis takes second place. Section 3.0 is a synopsis of Appendix C. Readers seeking references for material contained in Section 3.0 should consult Appendix C, which is fully referenced by means of endnotes.

2.2 Methodology - Key Informant Survey

2.2.0 Design and Conduct of the Survey

The Researcher carried out a survey of key informants in the three territories during the closing months of 2005. The Researcher attempted to contact all territorial organisations that operate shelters or otherwise have a significant stake, or involvement, in homelessness issues. Service Canada officials based in Alberta (whose responsibility includes territorial liaison) assisted the Researcher and his colleagues in each territory. The Researcher contacted 27 stakeholder organisations / agencies; representatives of 22 of these completed a questionnaire. All 27 organisations participated in unstructured interviews. An additional stakeholder was consulted subsequently.

The stakeholder survey is no more than a preliminary scan to obtain a better sense of views and environment. Note that the three territories, combined, do *not* have sufficient potential key informants to allow for statistically significant numerical study.

Potential informants received a covering letter (Appendix A) and a survey questionnaire (Appendix B). The questionnaires could be completed longhand, or filled in using a computer, according to the informant's preference. The informants returned the completed questionnaires by mail, e-mail, or fax. The Researcher made follow-up telephone calls to clarify unclear responses. He solicited further input when necessary.

The survey sought, among other things, to determine the familiarity of informants with documents mainly selected by the Researcher from the Das Gupta review of literature on Northern homelessness. The selection of documents, on the list provided to informants (See Appendix B), was based on which seemed to contain the most North-relevant material. The Researcher did not provide any of these documents to the informants. It was realised that this might yield a low response rate if, as suspected, Northern stakeholders tend to be challenged in their ability to access the relevant literature. However, the main intent was to assess their access to the literature rather than rate their views on specific documents.

The Researcher, and his field assistants, consulted various documents about ethics and Northern homelessness before designing and administering the survey.² One person was engaged, in and for each territory, to identify, approach, and liaise with stakeholders.

The first part of each questionnaire comprised fields to capture the informant's name and co-ordinates, for purposes of making follow-up contact and for furnishing a copy of the final Report. There was also a consent statement: "By completing the questionnaire and submitting it to the study investigator(s) either electronically or on paper, you are explicitly consenting to the use of the information for the purposes of preparing the study." The Researcher made assurances that the reporting would be anonymous. This promise was kept: the names and co-ordinates of informants were removed when the survey data were forwarded to the Author of this Report.

2.2.1 Format of the Survey

The survey sought to obtain the following information:

- a) Information to categorise each informant's involvement in homelessness issues, and to determine the informant's access to the Internet.
- b) Information to assess the familiarity of informants with documents considered potentially relevant and useful.
- c) The views of the informants on the value or relevance of these documents.
- d) The sources of information, on homelessness issues, that the informants rely upon during the course of their work.
- e) The type and form of information, relating to their work on homelessness issues, that informants would prefer.
- f) The priorities of informants about homelessness in the Territorial North.

Let us now consider these information requests sequentially:

- i. General survey questions, mainly to categorise the informant's involvement in homelessness issues and to determine the informant's access to the Internet.

The questionnaire asked informants to identify themselves as a member of one of four groups:

- | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Group 1: | Those who provide immediate help for homeless people (e.g. work at/operate a shelter or find alternative living spaces for people, and/or work with homeless people as part of their regular activities). |
| Group 2: | Those who plan or develop programmes to help homeless people as a group or who provide advice and assistance to those who do. They do not usually meet with homeless people directly. |
| Group 3: | Those who consider themselves advocates for homeless people and who provide information about homeless people to those in the groups above. |

Group 4: This “Other” group allows informants to explain their role. This was necessary because an informant could be a member of Groups 1, 2, and 3 simultaneously.

The informants were also asked whether they had access to e-mail, to dial-up Internet service, or to high-speed internet service.

ii. Survey questions to assess the familiarity of informants with documents identified.

The Researcher selected 69 documents which, based on their titles, appeared to have information useful to persons such as the informants who deal with Northern homelessness issues.

iii. Survey questions to determine the views of informants on the value or relevance of selected documents.

The informants were asked to rate the documents they had read according to the following scale:

Very useful.	The report/study contained information that was directly applicable to the performance of my functions.
Useful.	The report/study contained information that was of interest and may prove useful in the future.
Of interest.	The report/study contained information that was of interest but not applicable to my functions.
Not useful.	The report/study did not contain useful information and did not appear applicable to my functions.
No value.	Based on the title or the synopsis, did not consider that it would be of value in my function.
Could not find a copy.	Considered that it may be of value and wished to read it but could not locate a copy.)
No time.	Considered that it may be of value and wished to read it, but have not had time.

- iv. Survey question to determine the sources of information that informants rely upon in the course of their work on homelessness issues.

The informants were asked: “What sources of information are important or helpful in the fulfilling of your role?” They could answer this in writing as they saw fit.

- v. Survey question to determine the type and form of information, relating to their work on homelessness issues, that informants would prefer.

The informants were asked: “What type and form of information would you like to have access to, to help you fulfil your role?” They could answer this in writing as they saw fit.

- vi. Survey question to determine the priorities of informants in the area of homelessness in the Territorial North.

The informants were asked: “What are your priorities for Homelessness in the North?” They could answer this in writing as they saw fit.

Part 3 – Discussion

3.0 Homelessness in the Territorial Context

3.0.1 Overview

This Section describes the main determining factors that set territorial homelessness apart from the homelessness in the southern, provincial milieu. Some of these determinants are obvious. Others are obscure or misunderstood, even among Northern stakeholders. The aim of this Section is twofold:

First - Fill a gap in the published knowledge by offering a brief, but thorough, account of the main determinants of the territorial homelessness problem. It is expected that such a description will help stakeholders in the North and the South develop a more complete and balanced worldview of the situation.

Second – Put the responses of informants in context, and allow for an analysis of issues arising. Note that this Section is a description only. The responses are analysed later in Part 3.

The Author felt that the needs of most readers, for a contextual description of Northern homelessness, are best served if the main considerations are synthesised under seven headings:

- 3.0.2 Historical Considerations
- 3.0.3 The Jurisdictional Landscape
- 3.0.4 Demographic Considerations
- 3.0.5 Geographic and Climatic Considerations
- 3.0.6 Socio-Economic Considerations
- 3.0.7 Supply and Condition of Housing
- 3.0.8 Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Territorial Homeless People

Appendix C contains the detailed analysis that these synthesis sections are based upon. Readers wishing an in-depth appreciation of the context, or who wish to follow up by reading the source literature, should consult Appendix C.

The Author cautions that, while Appendix C is long and detailed, it is by no means the complete story. Furthermore, the synthesis sections, based on Appendix C, reflect the Author's judgement about which main points are the most enlightening to the majority of the readership.

3.0.2 Historical Considerations

Problems related to housing are relatively new in the Territorial North. For millennia the mobile Aboriginal populations built seasonal, temporary, or permanent dwellings when they needed them, where they needed them, and with the materials on hand. Homelessness was not an issue to mobile groups of people able to construct their own shelters. Housing only became an issue in recent decades when the Aboriginal population took up settlement-based life.

The Yukon (YT) was the first territory to experience colonisation. The gold rush of the late 1890s brought thousands of immigrants and for the first time in the North, a permanent government presence. The end of the gold rush signalled economic stagnation and White out-migration, but a couple of thousand Southerners remained, mostly in Whitehorse and Dawson. Clashing cultures and interests resulted in the establishment of reserves for the Yukon's Indian population. There the Indians could be supervised by an Indian agent and kept distant from the White population – Important aspects of the old Indian Policy. The people living on these reserves had to see to their own housing for many decades.

The boom in the Yukon spurred the Crown to deal with Indian land occupancy in the Northwest Territories (NWT) with a view towards eventual colonisation of that area. Treaty Number 8 (1899) covered the southernmost part of the MacKenzie District. Treaty 11 later covered the rest of the Western Sub-Arctic. The Dene Indians had no interest in reserve life, so apart from settling the land ownership question in Southern minds, the treaties had little immediate impact. There was little organised settlement, besides the HBC posts and mission posts, until World War 2 (WW2) brought roads, increased and permanent government presence, and sufficient infrastructure to support resource development. War also brought – especially in the Yukon – a new and severe round of epidemic diseases. These killed many Yukon Indians and upset their socio-economic life.

The War had less effect on the Inuit in what is now the Nunavut Territory (NT), but post-War military development had a profound effect. Government policy was still to leave the Inuit to their own devices, providing them with destitute rations and supplies as required through isolated detachments of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, trading posts, and missions.

A massive, strategic plan to improve Indian health and socio-economic conditions began in 1945. Soon the MacKenzie District of the NWT, and the Yukon, saw the arrival of Indian nursing stations, Indian schools, and systemic economic measures including the beginnings of access to financial assistance programmes. The early 1950s saw the construction of a Distant Early Warning radar line with stations across the Central Arctic. Embarrassed by media reports originating from American military and construction personnel, which described Inuit destitution and government neglect, the federal government revised its plans to include large-scale socio-economic intervention across the entire North. This vision included increasing the federal presence and establishing a basic grid of programmes and services for the Aboriginal populations. The first government houses were for the accommodation of federal employees and military personnel. The late 1950s saw a sharp increase in accommodation for personnel involved in Northern Affairs, Indian Affairs, and Indian Health.

An unprecedented strategy, to encourage Natives to take up permanent residence, now began. During the 1940s and the 1950s, most of nomadic Aboriginal populations took up residence in approved localities. Social programmes, including the provision or denial of housing, rations, and government allowances, acted as incentive and disincentive to encourage settlement. The plan concentrated most of the Aboriginal populations in localities where their welfare could be administered, but high and chronic levels of welfare dependency ensued, and despite improvement in some areas, problems related to dependency persist today.

The first housing assistance to Northern Indians comprised building materials to help with the construction of cabins. These required local materials to complete. The federal government felt no obligation to provide housing for the Métis; they were mostly left to their own devices. From the start, the Inuit received prefabricated “matchbox” houses with oil stoves, assembled during the brief summer season by outside workers. These early prefab “welfare houses” units were soon supplied in designated Indian settlements. Indian Affairs introduced a comprehensive Indian and Eskimo Housing Programme in the early 1960s, but it did not assume overall responsibility for Indian housing until several years later.

By the late 1960s, territorial low-cost housing programmes and CMHC's *National Housing Act* loans were proving essential to Non-Indian and Non-Inuit people not supplied with a government house. Few of these people had the constant income needed to obtain bank financing. The Yukon Housing Corporation was established in 1972, contemporaneously with its NWT counterpart (1974), and five years after the first Yukon housing programme was introduced. Henceforth the Yukon and NWT Housing Corporations developed along broadly comparable lines. Their assistance grew from the initial rental and purchase programmes to include homeownership assistance, access assistance, and expanded down payment assistance.

By the late 1960s, CMHC was deeply involved in the territories with the construction of institutional facilities for children and seniors, assisting with delivery of low-income units, and providing loans direct to homeowners. In fact, CMHC was almost the only provider of mortgages to the general population. Private mortgages were available in Whitehorse and Dawson but were difficult to obtain elsewhere in the Yukon. Private mortgages were virtually unavailable in the NWT. Banks wanted dwellings insured. Insurance was, and still is not, available in some of the still-unincorporated settlements.

Today the direct role of CMHC in the North is greatly diminished. The territorial housing corporations are overwhelmingly the main players. The exceptionally high cost of capital construction of modern, national-standard homes made the importance of these corporations grow, although these corporations were even more dependent on contributions from CMHC than they are today.

The territories were relatively hard-hit when, in 1993, the federal government froze new spending on social housing and stopped its off-reserve, Aboriginal-specific housing assistance. Excepting some locally funded projects, little if any new Aboriginal-specific social housing has been built for non-reserve aboriginal households since 1993. Notwithstanding this, off-reserve Aboriginal

people in the territories continue to receive assistance through the general programmes of the territorial housing corporations.

By 1999, when the NWT was divided to form Nunavut, the NWT Housing Corporation had built more than 6,000 houses, and had renovated and assisted with many more. This is not to suggest that needs are being met; merely that the territorial corporations – especially in the former NWT – have been very active. These corporations generally deliver CMHC’s existing programmes in the Territorial North. This is in addition to delivering their own programmes.

Today the Nunavut Housing Corporation provides territorial housing assistance in Nunavut. The Inuit continue to protest that the termination of Inuit access to Aboriginal-specific housing assistance, over a decade ago, has contributed to housing deficiencies in Nunavut. However, the Conservative Government’s Spring 2006 Budget has re-introduced federal contributions to off-reserve Aboriginal housing. To the Inuit and other off-reserve stakeholders, this appears to be a major victory. It remains to be seen how the off-reserve Aboriginal housing funding will be allocated, or indeed whether the Nunavut Housing Corporation will be able to access a portion of these funds for general rather than Inuit-specific housing. These questions aside, it would appear that additional assistance to territorial off-reserve Aboriginal people is now forthcoming.

3.0.3 The Jurisdictional Landscape

The federal-provincial jurisdictional demarcations – and disputes – regarding responsibility for homeless people are not mirrored in the territorial context. One observes similarities but also significant differences.

The territorial legislatures, as statutory creations of the federal Parliament, lack Constitutional legitimacy, although by long-established convention, the federal government permits them to pass laws and generally behave as a province. Territorial statutes are enforceable by the courts. The territories therefore have fiscal and administrative pseudo-jurisdiction in respect of social housing and other provincial-type programme areas that concern homeless people.

There is a common perception in the Territorial North that the federal government has a more direct responsibility towards territorial homeless people than it has towards provincial homeless people. Yet the main problem then comes down to money, not jurisdiction. The Nunavut, NWT, and Yukon governments (in that declining order) are exceptionally dependent on federal transfers for their basic functioning. They lack the ability to raise significant revenues. While they exercise provincial-like powers, their weak economic positions mean a limited ability to implement robust measures to address the homelessness problems that they face. There is a tendency to look to federal coffers for assistance under such circumstances.

Aboriginal people comprise much of the territorial populations. It is widely, and wrongly, imagined that their welfare is legally and universally a federal responsibility. In fact, the provinces and territories deliver most programmes and services to Registered Indians who reside off-reserve, and on-reserve the federal government provides a minimum of support in the absence of provincial or territorial involvement. This rule also applies, with some aberration, in the three

territories. In respect of programmes and services including social housing and measures for the Aboriginal homeless, neither the Constitution nor case law provides a binding definition of the nature and the extent of responsibility.

In 1964, the federal government proposed to transfer all of its Indian programmes and services to the provinces. This was unsuccessful and, for years, the federal government has reluctantly funded a basic level of provincial type services on-reserve on the basis of policy rather than sense of legal obligation. No attempt is made to mirror all of the programmes and services offered by the relevant province or territory off-reserve. This also applies to reserves in the Yukon. Over a period of decades, the federal government has reduced its off-reserve Aboriginal programmes and services until the off-reserve realm is almost completely P/T fiscal responsibility. Today, the most significant programme left is arguably the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Programme of Health Canada. This provides drugs, medical supplies, eyeglasses, patient transportation, and a few other medically necessary services to Registered Indians and Inuit regardless of residence. This programme is important to the many territorial Indian and Inuit homeless.

Despite the existence of treaties, which provide for the option of reserve creation, there are many Indian communities in the NWT but only two reserves. One of these is the tiny Salt Plains Reserve #195 near Fort Smith, while the other is Hay River Dene Reserve #1 at Hay River. The former is little more than a collection of cabins while the latter is a reserve in the full sense, except that the NWT's government, not federal departments, is responsible for most basic services including housing. Most Yukon Indians have long lived on reserves. As in the provinces generally, these reserves are islands of federal land specifically set aside for their residents, and surrounded by a P/T programmes and services realm. No reserves exist in Nunavut.

The territorial housing corporations serve the entire populations in the NWT and Nunavut, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, with little distinction. This is also true in the Yukon except on Yukon reserves, where CMHC and INAC have more direct role as they have in the provinces.

The financing of housing on reserves is especially challenging. The *Indian Act* prohibits the seizure of the property of Indians on reserves. This makes it difficult for reserve Indians – and other people residing on reserves – to obtaining bank or other financing for building, repairing, or expanding their homes. As do reserve residents in the provinces, residents of territorial reserves face additional bureaucracy, delays, and occasionally refusals when seeking federal housing loan guarantees. Without these guarantees, there would be no loans from non-government sources. Moreover, the general housing market does not operate in reserves, making it difficult to buy or sell a house there. People can own their house but not the land under it. Band members therefore must obtain a ticket to occupy a lot in order to build a house. Sometimes, for various reasons, obtaining financing or a lot is impossible, forcing the family to leave the reserve.

Today we see an accelerating pace of regional self-government in the Yukon and the NWT. The settlement of land claims is a precondition to the negotiation of self-government. The self-government arrangements provide a degree of lawmaking capability in a wide range of areas including housing, but to date the self-governing communities have not exercised these powers much. In the absence of exercising these powers, territorial statutes and regulations apply.

Where a self-government agreement does *not* exist in the NWT or the Yukon, and the band is situated off a reserve, local governance is municipal under a territorial municipal government ordinance.

An unknown, but apparently significant, number of urban territorial homeless people are Aboriginal people from the smaller communities. There is little that their communities of origin can do to stem the out-migration that occurs - if they wished to - for they have their own local homelessness pressures to perplex them. Moreover, it is difficult to imagine how a self-governing community would be better positioned to address these matters than a municipality. The municipalities experiencing homelessness problems are limited in their own responses by the nature of local governance. They rely upon benevolent organisations (i.e., Salvation Army) to provide refuge services and most of the support services that territorial government departments do not furnish. These organisations try to respect culture and tradition in the services they provide, a difficult challenge given their diverse clientele.

Note that on 1 April 1999, the former the NWT was split into a high Arctic territory (Nunavut or “NT”) and a western Arctic / sub-Arctic territory (the NWT as it now remains). This changed the location of Nunavut’s central government to Iqaluit, but not the delegated nature of territorial authority. Nunavut is *not* an Inuit self-government zone. It is a territory like the others, with a public legislature and system of public municipalities. The Inuit control the political agenda by virtue of their strong demographic dominance.

3.0.4 Demographic Considerations

Population Growth

The three territories occupy a vast land area but have, in total, barely a hundred thousand inhabitants. Their second demographic distinction is exceptionally high proportions of the population that are Aboriginal. Three quarters of Nunavut’s residents are Aboriginal, and nearly all are Inuit. In the NWT, 44% of residents are Aboriginal, mostly North American Indian followed by Inuit and Metis. Only 21% of Yukon residents are Aboriginal, and 90% of these people are North American Indian.

The territorial populations are growing slower than some might imagine, and the growth – especially in Nunavut – is mainly driven by high Aboriginal birth rates. The NWT’s population has returned to growth after a rate decline in the 1990s. Major resource developments in the NWT (e.g., diamond mining and MacKenzie Valley petroleum) have attracted migrants from out-of-territory, but have not had the profound population impact that one might expect, when the effect of high Aboriginal birth rates is considered.

The Yukon population is stable, despite growth of the First Nation cohort, because deaths and especially out-migration are balancing influences. More people left the Yukon Territory than moved into it during the decade 1993-2003. Note that, unlike the NWT, the Yukon is not

experiencing major new resource-related economic developments. The Yukon's medium growth population projection suggests that, in 2015, the total population will only have increased 4.4%.

Demography and Northern Homelessness

There are no credible estimates of the number of territorial homeless people. It is generally believed, with good reason, that their actual number exceeds the count of people with no fixed address who are accommodated in emergency shelters. Systematic attempts to count the various categories of territorial homeless remain to be undertaken. We can say confidently that the 2001 Census occupancy rate data for the Territorial North are gross understatements, if only on grounds of known counts of shelter occupancy: NWT – 20; YT -15; and NT – 5. Anecdotal media reports and comments from informants suggest that their representation in shelters is at least as great as their representation in the overall population.

Despite an absence of numerical data, it is fair to state from anecdotal reports that Aboriginal people comprise a visible and large part of the territorial homelessness problem in the larger centres, particularly the four^b municipalities with general shelters for homeless people. Research has shown that Aboriginal people typically account for a disproportionate number of homeless people in southern urban centres. This, and anecdotal reports, lead one to presume that Aboriginal representation among the territorial urban homeless is very high.

There is a severe lack of data about origins and migration of territorial homeless people. We also lack data on the general movement of territorial residents between communities. Yet we have a fair idea of the migration characteristics of the overall population. The territorial populations are extremely mobile, with very high rates of internal migration in particular. One presumes that a highly mobile population, with limited economic opportunities and insufficient supply of shelter, will have a high incidence of homelessness. We also know that the mobility tendency of Aboriginal people can have numerous negative impacts upon the service agencies who attempt to provide these people with services, as well as negative impacts upon the clients themselves.

In the territories, as in the provinces, there is a long-term migration from rural and isolated regions towards urban centres. Intra-territorial migration patterns – who moves from where – are imperfectly understood due to a shortage of data. The urbanisation trend is nonetheless evident from urban growth and rural decline, or from urban growth that is greater than rural growth. Urbanisation seems especially prevalent in the NWT. Urbanisation is a less recent phenomenon in the Yukon, where 74% of the population live in and around the capital Whitehorse, and only one of 17 serviced communities is not on the road system. The bulk of Nunavut's population lives in small centres. While Inuit migration to the capital Iqaluit is often cited as a cause of many problems, credible migration statistics are unavailable.

Part of the explanation of the territorial homelessness problem would appear to be a high tendency towards mobility of the territorial populations. The Aboriginal populations appear to be the most nomadic of the groups. Travel by air and road is common today, but so too is less

^b Iqaluit, Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Whitehorse.

expensive travel by boat and snowmobile. To many families and individuals, the prospect of a journey over the land of hundreds of kilometres, in challenging weather, is a fact of life.

3.0.5 Geographic and Climatic Considerations

Geographic and Climatic Effects on Housing Supply

Most of the inhabited territorial regions have discontinuous or continuous “permafrost” or permanently frozen ground. Farther north, it is entirely continuous and up to 2,000 metres deep. Permafrost poses moderate to severe transport and engineering challenges in the construction of housing. Permafrost means that roads must be heavily engineered, at great expense, or else the frozen underburden will thaw and the road surface will collapse. The high cost of building stable roads is a major factor in the continued isolation of many communities, and a prime driver in the cost of most goods and services.

Most of the Yukon’s communities are much better connected than their NWT counterparts. This is largely due to the Yukon’s good all-weather road system and access to the Alaskan seaport of Skagway. Conversely, the NWT’s all-season road system is little more than a paved road north from Alberta, through Hay River to Yellowknife, with a gravel-surface branch heading west to Fort Simpson and south to Fort Nelson, BC. This system has some branches, but many communities rely on a seasonal ice road for shipment of heavy goods. Many others lack any road access. Particularly away from navigable waters where barges can operate, it is common to deliver building supplies after freeze-up via winter roads. The construction season is short. In all the territories, materials delivered during the summer must be hastily assembled into basic structures, which can be heated, before the winter makes outdoor work too difficult for the workers.

The road situation in Nunavut is simple: Nunavut communities lack road connection with the outside and with each other. Ships and barges deliver housing materials, once or twice during the summer, at extreme cost.

Influence of Severe Climate on Housing Design and Condition

For several decades most structures built with government funding, and to approved designs, have taken into account the problem of permafrost. Unless a home is built on rock (and some must be, an additional challenge), or supported on raised and possibly insulated posts, heat from the dwelling will gradually thaw the permafrost. The foundation will then sink, and the site may become useless for further construction.

Prolonged deep cold, often below -30°C, requires expensive extra insulation and more robust heating arrangements, although there are still log homes in the YT and NWT with only a wood stove. The cold requires homes to be kept closed-up for most of the year. This makes special ventilation measures necessary so that moisture does not produce rot, mould, mildew, and

damage from water film or puddles. Thus, the cold influences indoor air quality, especially when occupants smoke or the dwelling is crowded. Other aspects of harsh environment (e.g., wind, dryness of the air, and occasionally extreme variations in temperature in a year) reduce the life expectancy of housing units.

Heating oil is transported under difficulty and at high cost. So too is the diesel fuel which powers most electricity generation. The generation stations are usually situated in the communities; a particular maintenance and logistical challenge. Fuel costs therefore have a major impact on the affordability of housing. Heating subsidies are consequently more important to territorial home occupants than generally elsewhere.

Influence of Severe Climate on Loss of Housing

There is no convincing evidence that loss of housing, in the territories, is more attributable to severe climate than elsewhere in Canada, but one can make two general statements about climate and housing loss. First, territorial public housing authorities can be exceptionally reluctant to evict unruly or destructive tenants due to concerns over their survival under the weather. Some housing authorities have an unwritten policy towards tolerance, particularly when the winter is at its worst, while others will evict without mercy when rules are broken or rent is not paid. Second, severe climate often exacerbates the difficulties that follow a house fire. Territorial homes do not seem to catch fire with greater statistical frequency than elsewhere. What is different is that, especially in winter and mainly in small communities, house fires tend to be catastrophic. The prospect of fire in the remote communities is particularly dreaded.

Geographic and Climatic Effects on the Homeless

It appears that a significant proportion of homeless people are from small, and often isolated, communities. The costs of travel, back and forth, are high and sometimes extreme. Lacking money for fares or the means to travel such as a boat, the destitute homeless find it extremely difficult to return to their community of origin. Stranded far from their families and support structures, and possibly in an unfamiliar cultural setting, homeless people can experience additional psychosocial stresses.

Geography makes the climate harsh and unforgiving. It is worth considering the unique impacts this has on homelessness and the homeless. Disregarding homeless people in the North is not an option when the weather is severe. In Nunavut, the mercury can approach minus 50°, while in the Yukon and NWT, minus 40° is not uncommon. An intoxicated person can come to injury or death under such conditions. Despite this, many homeless people in the North, sober or not, spend cold winter nights in unheated tents. There is reason to believe that territorial authorities and charities face an elevated challenge in mitigating and treating weather injuries – and medical complications resulting from weather - among the territorial homeless.

Extraordinary measures are sometimes taken to bring homeless people indoors so they will not die. These measures range from the invisible – such as residents bringing a person in overnight so he or she will not freeze – to the highly politicised.

3.0.6 Socio-Economic Considerations

Territorial Dependency on Federal Transfers

The ability of the territorial governments to address their exceptional homelessness challenges is constrained by their relatively economic positions. Compared with the provinces, the territories are extremely dependent on federal transfer payments and extremely challenged to raise own-source revenue to apply to non-core activities. Core activities include housing programmes but not specific measures to address homelessness.

The NWT leads in terms of economic independence, but still three quarters of its revenues are federal transfers. Until its recent economic boom, the NWT tended to be less independent than the Yukon. Nunavut has by far the greatest dependence on federal transfers and the lowest fiscal ability to address non-core issues. Nunavut, with only 8.7% own-source revenue, remains deeply and chronically dependent on transfers.

Socio-Economic Trends

Yukon Socio-Economic Trends

Of the three territories, and in recent years, the Yukon's economy has been the most stable and the least dominated by public sector activity. In the absence of the type and scope of resource development activity that is occurring in the NWT, the Yukon's economic position is one of steady, natural, unspectacular growth. In the Yukon, unlike in the other territories, we do not see strong economic reasons for changes in homelessness problems or patterns. Additionally in the case of the Yukon, in the absence of migration data, and data about homeless persons and their needs, it is impossible to hypothesise much about trends in homelessness.

The Yukon's employment situation is far better than in the other territories, and close to provincial norms, while the unemployment rate on Yukon's reserves is probably high. The Yukon has high levels of some social problems, particularly those related to poverty conditions, alcohol, and drugs. Yet the human side of the Yukon's overall socio-economic landscape is not as desperate as in the NWT or Nunavut. A recent federal stakeholder study, comparing victim services in the three territories, paints a comparatively favourable picture of victim services and key indicators of social dysfunction in the Yukon. It would be too much to conclude from this that the Yukon's socio-economic landscape makes homelessness an issue less challenging than supposed. What might be concluded is that the NWT and Nunavut face additional, or exacerbated, socio-economic pressures which compound their homelessness situations.

NWT Socio-Economic Trends

The NWT has the only territorial economy that is growing sharply and transforming fundamentally. Since 1999, its economy has risen by a remarkable 69.0%, mostly due to diamond extraction and petroleum exploration and development. Yet despite the current resource boom, the public sector remains the dominant sector of the NWT's economy. There has been little change in tourism, fur sales, and the other land-based activities of particular importance to the Aboriginal communities which do not directly benefit from these resource developments. This might seem to imply increased economic pressure to migrate in search of work, and with other challenges, to potentially fall into the homelessness trap. The unemployment rate for Aboriginal people is close to 50 per cent, but improving.

The recent economic trends tell us little that is concrete about the NWT's homelessness situation. What we can say is that a profound, unprecedented economic transformation is underway and that the positive impacts of this boom vary greatly and geographically. A strong urbanisation trend is underway and the population is a mobile one. The resource boom has had a disproportionately positive impact on the small proportion of the population that is well educated. The greatest barrier to employment in the NWT today is low education levels, especially among the mostly Aboriginal people from small communities. This imbalance is likely a factor in the high percentage of Aboriginal homeless in the major economic locales, but lacking research, this remains a supposition.

The NWT's economic prosperity is neither uniformly enjoyed nor without social costs. The NWT, and the other territories, continues to experience high rates of social pathologies, in large measure a result of insufficient economic opportunity, cycles of rapid development, and clashing of cultures. A recent federal review of formal services in the NWT recently explored the nature and extent of formally structured social services available to victims of crime. The study described deeply challenging social ills and painted a stark picture of inadequate, inefficient, and sometimes insensitive programmes and services. The study identified strong systemic pressures and prejudices among community members and among some service providers. Blaming and shunning victims – including homeless people– and denying services were cited as significant obstacles.

These and other socio-economic changes complicate, and probably worsen, the problem of homelessness in the NWT. Without further research, we can only appreciate that the homelessness situation is especially complex and without simple solutions.

Nunavut Socio-Economic Trends

Nunavut's economy remains locked in the grip of near-total dependence on government spending. A recent, steady increase in the Nunavut Government's revenues reflects higher transfers rather than improved economic performance. One can best understand the socio-economic landscape in terms of progress that has *not* occurred over the last generation.

In 1988 a report, entitled *Lords of the Arctic, Wards of the State*, described grim conditions prevailing at the time, and painted a bleak future for Inuit society if the social welfare system continued on its present course. It projected that most Inuit in 2025 would be second-generation wards of the state, living in welfare ghettos and plagued with extreme crime rates. Whites would remain in charge of higher management in the private and public sectors. The welfare state would have usurped control of care giving, and Inuit traditional culture would have largely collapsed.

Today, the creation of Nunavut has given Nunavut's Inuit control of administration and of priorities, but as indicated by extreme reliance on transfers, not a greater degree of economic independence or capacity to implement robust programme solutions to a range of serious and entrenched socio-economic problems. Without commenting upon whether the 1988 prediction will be proved right or wrong in 2015, it is fair to state that Nunavut's socio-economic situation remains desperate. Notwithstanding some improvements, it is unchanged in some respects and worse in others. Inuit organisations and social observers commonly use dismaying terms to describe the status quo and prognosis. The Conference Board of Canada recently used measured terms to describe the persistence of racially stratified levels of social welfare dependency and unemployment, which, in 1999, were far in excess of the provinces or other territories.

A recent federal study explored the nature and extent of formally structured social services available to victimised Nunavut residents including some of Nunavut's homeless population. It concluded that, while there appears to be an array of social services in each Nunavut community, it would be wrong to assume that there are adequate, or that they provide any services at all to victimised people including the homeless. The study made strong statements not just that social problems are systemic and overwhelming, but that Nunavut's service infrastructure is generally seriously deficient in fundamental ways. The deficiencies often involve insufficient funding or support, but often also poor training, management, and inter-stakeholder co-ordination.

3.0.5 Supply and Condition of Housing

Nature of Territorial Home Occupancy

Three classes of housing exist in the territories as they do in the provinces: government staff housing, social (or public) housing, and private housing. Yet the nature of home occupancy is, on the balance, fundamentally different in the territories, where the importance of public versus private housing is reversed compared with the South. Nunavut offers the extreme example. Although there are no reserves to complicate financing, only 7% of dwellings in Nunavut are occupant-owned. Seventy percent of dwellings are social housing (45% of the total, with 99% occupation by Inuit), government staff houses, or rental units. Reliance on territorial government housing assistance, by all segments of the population, is excessive.

The situation in the NWT is not as extreme but is still heavily dependent on public housing programmes. In 2005, just over one-half of homes were privately owned and a quarter was

rented from private owners. Social housing accounted for 17% and staff housing 6%. Comparable figures for the Yukon are unavailable, but it is clear that private ownership approaches, but does not meet, provincial levels.

Housing supply and affordability are not the only determinants of homelessness. However, in the territorial context where government housing units, government financing, and government subsidies are particularly important, territorial housing programmes occupy a pivotal role in the prevention of homelessness and repatriation of homeless people to permanent dwellings. In Nunavut this dependence on government assistance is extreme, in the NWT it is high, and in the Yukon it is significant. The role of federal housing programmes is extremely important on the Yukon's Indian reserves.

Nunavut has almost no housing market at all. The NWT has a recognisable housing market in the larger centres, while in the smaller communities, it can be impossible to buy or sell a house for a variety of reasons. The Yukon's housing market is the best developed of all.

In all territories, the houses of government workers are typically superior to those of surrounding residents, especially in remote communities. This can be a source of social discontent among the mostly Aboriginal local residents, who are often compelled to live in crowded and/or dilapidated quarters. The government usually gives its employees accommodation when they work outside the community of their present residence. This assistance usually comprises allocation of a rental unit or assistance to purchase a home. Obtaining a government job is usually the best way to fast-track access to accommodation.

Loss of Housing – A Special Northern Challenge

A person can lose his or her housing for reasons including, and additional to, those that apply in the provinces. Inability to pay the rent or the mortgage is an important factor. Each of the territories recognises this and offers needs-tested subsidies or social assistance. The effect of this on preventing homelessness is unknown, but compared to the provinces, robust rent-assistance measures exist.

The question of affordability – and the measures to ensure affordability - is complex. Almost a half of territorial homeowners pay under 15% of their total towards major payments – a similar level as nationally. However, the percentage of renters paying under 15% of income towards gross rent differs significantly: as isolation increases and the southern-type housing market forces diminish, paying the rent becomes much more affordable. Data such as those above attest to the general view that the most challenging problem is insufficient supply of units, followed by other challenges including affordability.

A person who loses his or her job, when that job includes housing, can be in immediate and serious housing trouble. Former employees must usually vacate the premises very soon. It can be difficult or impossible to arrange for alternate accommodation on short notice. There may be options in the larger centres but possibly none in a small community. Migration is usually necessary unless local friends or family can temporarily assist. Housing can be lost for other

reasons. Depending on the local or employer policies, the occupant of a social unit or a staff unit can be evicted if the unit is left vacant for a specified time. Particularly in a small community, loss of housing through fire can create an immediate homelessness situation with no better prospect than migration or boarding with a family.

Every community – and indeed each housing corporation - has its own waiting list for social housing and assisted housing. Often the allocation priorities are determined locally. What is universal is that persons having lost their accommodation, and newcomers to a community, start at the bottom of the list. This creates elevated risk of homelessness when a person migrates; the migrant loses his or her place on the local list and must re-apply at the destination.

Housing Situation in Nunavut

The housing situation in Nunavut is markedly worse than in the other territories. The 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey suggests that 20% of the population in almost half of Nunavut's 25 communities inhabit crowded homes. The highest rate is 43% (Kugaruuk), the lowest is 9% (Cambridge Bay), and the average is almost 19% versus about 5% for Canada. The distribution is strongly skewed towards the highest. Nunavut's Inuit face a 54% crowding rate, second in Canada only to the 68% facing the Inuit of Nunavik in Northern Quebec. The average number of occupants in Nunavut's social housing is 3.27 versus the national average of 2.39 per house. Over 52% of all dwellings in Nunavut have more than five occupants. It also appears that the higher-density units tend to be the smallest in terms of floor area. The estimates of CMHC place core need in Nunavut at 38.8%, versus the national average of 15.7%.

Nunavut's housing need trajectory is made steeper by a birth rate that is the highest in Canada and one of the highest in the world. The population of Nunavut's communities rose on average 8% in five years, between the 1996 Census and the 2001 Census. The populations of some communities rose by 22%. One-half of Nunavut's population growth occurred in Iqaluit, whose municipal population grew 24.1%. The City of Iqaluit estimates that between 1,181 (low projection) and 2,243 new units (high projection) will be needed in Iqaluit alone by 2022.

Nunavut has practically no private sector housing market outside of several larger communities, and even there it is weak. The Nunavut Government is now trying to address this by focusing effort on Inuit who are ready to assume the responsibilities of home ownership. Many Inuit are not ready for home ownership. Far too many Inuit are inured to intergenerational welfare dependency, beset by social maladies, and accustomed to the government providing and maintaining their social accommodation.

Housing Situation in the NWT

While the housing situation in the NWT is beset with difficulties related to the NWT's current economic boom, few would dispute that Nunavut's housing situation is markedly graver. This statement is meant simply to contrast, not to understate or diminish the needs in the NWT.

The Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has a clearer idea of its territorial housing situation than the Nunavut Government. This is a merely a statement on statistical capacity, and in no way suggests that fewer statistics means lesser need. A 2004 survey counted 13,902 occupied dwellings in the territory. It estimated that 4,015 households (29%) had some sort of housing problem and 2,260 households were in core need (16%). The 2004 survey shows a significant *decrease* in the number of households in core need between 2000 and 2004. In 2000, 2,726 households (20%) were found to be in core need, while in 2004 the number was 466 lower, giving a 2004 rate of 16% (4% decrease). Additionally, the incidence of core need decreased somewhat in 27 of the 34 communities. Except in Yellowknife, the economic hub of the development boom, there has been a significant decrease in core need over the last decade. This is especially evident in the smaller communities.

Since 1981, the number of persons per dwelling has been declining in a manner similar to the corresponding national trend. In 1981, the NWT had 0.7 more persons per dwelling. This has declined to about 0.3 persons. One might contest these Census-based measures, but it is fair to say that the crude housing density in the NWT was not, and is not, grossly higher than the national average. The crude densities may be roughly comparable but some other indicators differ dramatically. The percentage of dwellings in need of major repair is double in the NWT. The percentage of households with 5 or more persons is nearly double. The percentage of households spending over 30% of income on rent or mortgage is more than double.

The NWT housing statistics give a picture of the supply and condition of the housing stock, but they fail to do more than hint about the extent of territorial homelessness. Nonetheless, these statistics should be borne in mind later in the present study when we describe the homelessness situation based on reports, and when we consider what the survey informants had to contribute.

A new development has the potential to improve the GNWT's financial capacity to address problems relating to homelessness. The 2006 federal Budget provides a ten-year, \$500-million fund to support initiatives from local communities to mitigate any negative socio-economic effects arising from the MacKenzie gas project. This funding is conditional upon the gas project advancing according to milestones. Assuming that the project does proceed – some approvals have yet to be given - there will likely be an intense debate within the NWT on how the remedial funding should be spent. It seems unlikely that some, at least, would *not* go towards addressing housing deficiencies and providing services to homeless people. However, this would be a new development on top of the ones already causing social upheaval. There would be additional impacts upon an already dislocated socio-economic milieu. Furthermore, mega-developments of this type, in the context of northern communities in general and Aboriginal communities in particular, have been found to create markedly more socio-economic dislocation than the cost-benefit analyses of their promoters suggest.

This said, it appears that another wave of major socio-economic dislocation, coupled with targeted attempts to mitigate the negative impacts, is on its way. Whether this will worsen or mitigate the NWT's homelessness situation is a matter of speculation. It will very likely complicate the homelessness situation further.

Housing Situation in the Yukon

The Yukon's housing situation, while beset with challenges sometimes unlike and additional to those in the provinces, is the least desperate of the three territories. The 1986 Census suggested that the quality of housing in the Yukon was among the worst in Canada. Two decades of effort, mainly on the part of the Yukon Housing Corporation, have improved the situation considerably. The data available today paint a picture considerably less pessimistic than is the case in Nunavut and the NWT. More striking may be the Yukon Housing Corporation's 2004 assessment that the number of social housing units is expected to remain adequate unless the size of the population wanders from its trajectory of slow growth.

Recall that the Yukon's socio-economic circumstances are relatively stable; particularly, there is no development boom of the sort that the NWT is experiencing. The Yukon is actually moving in the opposite direction, from a resource economy towards a service and tourism economy. The rate of territorial population growth is also very low. These factors are reflected in the Yukon Housing Corporation's low assessment of the Yukon's future need for social housing.

Surveys indicate that affordability problems – spending over 30% of income on shelter - are less prevalent than in the other territories. The Whitehorse and Yukon wide results are similar: 10% of households and 8% of households respectively. Yet while the supply situation in the Yukon is much more favourable, the Yukon of much of the Yukon's housing stock is deficient. A markedly greater prevalence of very old units provides much of the explanation.

The available data on housing supply and condition in the Yukon do *not* point to extreme pressures towards homelessness. In particular, the supply situation and crowding situations are more positive than in the other territories. The condition of the overall Yukon housing stock, however, is poor and a sizeable proportion of Yukoners live in difficult conditions. These considerations do not detract from the problems of homelessness. What they do is to suggest that other factors – such as perhaps family violence – may be stronger determinants of homelessness. This is a question worthy of further research.

Housing Supply in Territorial Reserve Communities

Few statistics are available about the housing situation on reserves in the NWT and the Yukon. A 2001 report suggests that the condition of stock on Yukon's reserves is deteriorating rapidly, a situation hardly uncommon according to the 2003 report of the Auditor General. A continued downward trend – perhaps not so severe – has probably occurred. This one presumes from the subsequent lack of notable investments in on-reserve housing.

There is a compelling, if not abundant, literature attesting to extremely unsatisfactory housing conditions among most of Canada's Registered Indian population on- and off-reserves. There seems no compelling reason to imagine that the situation is different in the Yukon's reserve communities. Two decades ago, the 1985 Neilson Task Force Report noted that on-reserve housing was still the poorest in Canada, with 25% of units needing major repairs and a third being crowded. In 1992, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs reported that just half of

the 70,000 on-reserve units were fit to inhabit. The Auditor General noted in 2003 that 44% of units needed renovations.

The most recent, and interesting, data on First Nations housing come from the 2002/03 First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (“RHS”). Those data suggest that, while social housing plays a minor role in the mainstream, the importance of social housing is reversed in the First Nation (FN) context: 61.9% of on-reserve families live in “band-owned housing” which is actually social housing. Of FNs situated in the provinces, 74.1% of under-\$10,000 households are thus in social housing, as are 64.4% of under \$30,000 households. Such figures are explained by factors like extreme poverty, banks not giving on-reserve mortgages without a federal guarantee, and sometimes-prohibitive geography-related construction costs.

Other statistics from this source suggest that:

- One third (33.6%) of FN homes need major repairs, up from the one quarter figure cited in 1985 by the Neilson Task Force. Another third (31.7%) need minor repairs. These are higher rates for necessary repairs than the Auditor General’s 2003 estimates.
- The mean room density rate in FN communities is 0.76 persons per room, almost double the national rate of 0.4 persons per room. The occupant density in the FN context appears to be increasing, while in the general population it has declined over two decades.

Unfortunately, for the purposes of the present Report, the RHS has a policy of not reporting results by province or territory. Nevertheless, we can reasonably assume that the on-reserve housing situation in the Yukon is broadly reflective of the national picture. The situation on Hay River Reserve in the NWT may be different owing to the direct involvement of the NWT Housing Corporation, and smaller roles played by CMHC and INAC.

The immediate question is to what extent the housing situation on Yukon’s reserves, particularly, is a pressure towards homelessness either on-reserve or off-reserve. In the absence of data, one can only hypothesise that a disproportionately poor housing situation prompts at least some residents to consider relocating off-reserve. Whether this is true, and whether socio-economic and cultural barriers conspire to make some such off-reserve migrants homeless in the urban setting, are questions worthy of study.

3.0.7 Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Territorial Homeless People

Note

This Section’s examination of programmes, services, and facilities for territorial homeless is unable to convey a reasonable appreciation of the needs in relation to the remedial measures. The longer Appendix C, upon which this Section is based, provides a much better sense of the social reality. Appendix C attempts to convey this sense by means of quotations from stakeholders, which the limits of space prevent duplicating here.

Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Homeless People in Nunavut

Having contemplated the housing situation, the reasonable observer concludes that the pressures towards homelessness in Nunavut should be extremely high. Indeed they are, by the reckoning of various stakeholders including Nunavut's territorial government, which states:

Nunavut's profound housing challenges are situated in a remote, Arctic environment where, for many months of the year, flesh freezes in seconds, not minutes. Absolute homelessness *per force* does not exist in the territory. Instead, Nunavut's "hidden homeless" sleep in shifts within already overcrowded homes, homes that average less than 1,000 square feet in size and that offer living space cramped by potable water tanks, washers/dryers, furnaces and hot water makers. In a territory that represents more than one-fifth of Canada's land mass, suitable, adequate living space is a scarce resource rather than a basic right³.

The Nunavut Government is acutely aware of the problem of invisible homelessness, and compared with other jurisdictions generally, admits the existence of this problem in high-level public policy documents. It sees "the lack of adequate housing" as the principal cause of specific social problems including invisible homelessness, domestic violence, and crowded homes.

Unlike some jurisdictions where homelessness lacks specific programmes and budgets, the Nunavut Government is taking a direct approach in confronting homelessness and problems related to homelessness. The Department of Education has established a Homelessness Secretariat, but a scarcity of funding seems to have prevented the initiative from commence full operation. Another aspect of the Nunavut Government's approach to homelessness is administrative change rather than financial investment: creating a closer linkage for housing solutions, using the "continuum of care" model with a special emphasis on homelessness and overcrowding.

The present Nunavut Government's resolve, in addressing the homelessness situation in Nunavut, appears to be a recent about-turn after largely ignoring the matter. Until recently, dealing with homeless people was left to sympathetic homeowners (or renters), the men's emergency shelter in Iqaluit (which now has two beds for women), and the Wellness Centre in Cambridge Bay provides a crisis shelter for emergencies, and both women and men are accepted. There are two other shelters for women (Cape Dorset and Iqaluit) who may be homeless or temporarily displaced, but victims of abuse.

A 2003 study of victim services in the Territorial North gave a highly critical assessment of the system of service providers in Nunavut who deal with victims. These providers are frequently the same as those who interface with the homeless, and sometimes the homelessness is a result of victimisation. The 2003 study identified serious and sensitive obstacles, towards assisting victims, which result from Inuit social norms. It would be wrong to assume that these difficult-to-discuss challenges apply equally in the context of general homelessness. However, they do suggest the existence of entrenched societal patterns of stigma, rejection, and worse. It would be wrong to assume that the apathy suggested by the 2003 study means that Inuit lack sympathy for the homeless. The Pauktuutit (Inuit Women's) Society's publication *Inuit Healing in Contemporary Inuit Society* (2004) provides stark examples of the plight of Inuit homeless and

the strength of those attempting to help. Furthermore, Inuit households often grant shelter to desperate homeless people whose alternative is possible death in the cold.

As stated previously, an abundant literature testifies to extraordinary levels of social pathologies in Nunavut. Substance abuse, person-abuse, battering, and neglect are far too common if not endemic. Pathologies such as these are associated with homelessness in various jurisdictions and contexts. In the case of Nunavut, we lack sufficient data to make these correlations although there is no shortage of anecdotal evidence.

Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Homeless People in the NWT

Earlier in this Report, we have examined the socio-economic dislocations resulting from the present, unprecedented, resource-driven economic boon in the NWT. Those facts need no repeating here, but they form the backdrop of the NWT's current homelessness patterns. They also set the character of homelessness in the NWT – at least partially – apart from the character of homelessness in the other two territories.

In the 'big picture', public consultations and impact assessments of mega-developments, in the NWT, are beginning to recognise that housing supply problems exacerbate homelessness as development progresses. Stakeholders are now making calls for transition shelters for an anticipated increase in the number of homeless people. Second, the GNWT is the first of the territories governments to produce a report, with recommendations, on homelessness.

The Salvation Army reports an average of 45 men in its Yellowknife shelter at any time of the year, and that the number has tripled since 1999. The Centre for Northern Families in Yellowknife provides shelter for single women. It reports an average of 25-30 women per night. Inuvik has reported 5-10 homeless single men and women requiring shelter at any time of the year. The population of local homeless people in Hay River is reported to be six or fewer, plus transients who are briefly stranded on their way to Yellowknife to seek employment. Hay River has emergency and transitional shelter measures co-ordinated through Social Services (although no regular shelter for the homeless). Tuktoyaktuk and Fort Smith both have emergency shelters for women and children only. There are no emergency or transitional shelter options in any of the smaller communities. Note that the Inuvik and Yellowknife estimates – which total about 85 persons – do not include persons not taking shelter in facilities. Additional people squat in empty buildings, or occupy tents or hutments, singly or in groups. Some are transients with a fixed address, but others – many perhaps – have no other place to call home.

By 1997, homelessness appears to have become a well-established feature of Inuvik, although perhaps it was not regarded as "homelessness" when people camped in tents. It appears that local land development and the prospect of major oil and gas activities, not simply goodwill, were the main factors in stimulating a more organised, more robust approach to homelessness. The first oil and gas exploration camps were established around Inuvik in 2000. Major social impacts began to be felt immediately. A sharp increase in migration to Inuvik, and increased social ills attributed to various aspects of sudden economic development, soon resulted in a 10-bed, year-round shelter known as the Turning Point.

Turning Point ran on a shoestring, always in financial peril. Like many homeless shelters elsewhere, Turning Point did not accept people who were under the influence of drugs and alcohol. This policy, which was not without grounds, had the effect of causing people seeking shelter to be turned away in the dead of winter. Disturbing accounts of long-term homelessness problems began to appear in the press. These accounts did little to make Inuvik's residents, its local government, or the territorial government more inclined to financially contribute towards housing Inuvik's homeless population. Largely due to this reluctance to pay, Turning Point has been in and out of financial crisis. It continues to operate with minimal and uncertain funding, with a client population that is as large, or larger, than before.

The services for homeless people in Yellowknife are more organised and robust than they are in Inuvik, but Yellowknife's homelessness situation is larger and associated with particularly disturbing social ills. Today Yellowknife has a Homeless Coalition and a variety of government and NGO players assist the homeless population. The range of players is similar to that in Inuvik, but Yellowknife is a much larger municipality with a larger homelessness problem. For a number of years the Salvation Army has operated, in Yellowknife, a relatively large Men's Emergency Shelter. This shelter is the Salvation Army's co-ordinating centre for its entire territorial homelessness support operations. The Yellowknife shelter has 44 beds. It functions year-round and offers two hot meals daily, while a soup kitchen is open to anyone who needs it.

Yellowknife also has one of the five shelters for abused women in the NWT. The other such shelters are located in Hay River, Fort Smith, Inuvik, and Tuktoyaktuk. The Yellowknife women's shelter, Alison McAteer House, provides a temporary home for women and children who are experiencing violence. Women and children can obtain counselling and other support. A small shelter for homeless women also operates. This, the Centre for Northern Families, is supported by the Yellowknife Women's Society. This provides shelter to single women who are homeless; to sexually assaulted women in crisis; to battered women unable to access the usual shelter because it is full; and to women with psychiatric or emotional disorders.

As in Inuvik, the vast majority of homeless youth and adults in Yellowknife are Aboriginal. One of the more perplexing challenges in Yellowknife is what to do with homeless youth. This problem stems from the fact that "regular" shelters invariably have an age threshold, and Yellowknife's street youth are mindful of the obligation of Social Services to take homeless minors into protective care. The more street-savvy homeless youth tend to avoid settings where their apprehension by Social Services is a possibility. Outreach and drop-in initiatives operate, but the challenge of providing safe shelter for homeless minors, in bitterly cold and sometimes-exploitative Yellowknife, remains especially perplexing.

A further unique challenge is that Yellowknife's housing shortage appears to be driving employed workers, who lack accommodation, into the emergency shelters. Mostly this clientele is male. Note that the extremely high prices, of hotel accommodation in Yellowknife, leave a worker without an apartment or without sympathetic friends in a difficult bind.

Finally, particularly since the MacKenzie Valley pipeline project recommenced after a two-decade delay, there have been various calls for transition houses for the homeless. There remains

the problem that the regular shelters provide emergency accommodation for sober people, not shelter with structured assistance towards social re-integration. This may, or may not, prove a greater handicap as petroleum development accelerates and social outfall possibly increases.

Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Homeless People in the Yukon

An examination of factors such as demography, socio-economic conditions, and housing supply suggests is that the Yukon's homelessness landscape is quite different from the other territories, and closer to a provincial landscape. The organisations attempting to assist the Yukon's homeless population work within this unique milieu. This does not suggest that homelessness is less of a challenge in the Yukon – merely that the mix of factors, which defines homelessness in the Yukon, differs from the NWT and Nunavut.

As in the other territories, the main player in dealing with homelessness is the Salvation Army, who operates a small shelter in Whitehorse with ten beds in three rooms. The Salvation Army also provides a Meal and Drop-in Centre and a Family Care Centre, which offer various supports for persons on the socio-economic periphery. Obtaining donations or government funding was very difficult from the start, and periodically the Whitehorse shelter has been at risk of closure.

Another player is Mary House in Whitehorse, operated by the local Rotary Club, a safe home that provides warmth and hot meals to the Yukon's homeless. Mary House is supported by community donations and run by volunteers from the Yukon's Catholic community. Whitehorse also has Kaushee's Place Yukon Women's Transition Home. This provides shelter, support, and advocacy to women and their children who have experienced abuse. A modest temporary shelter, operated by the Dawson Shelter Society, also exists in Dawson City. This is for women in need.

A new stakeholder coalition, the Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness, developed a Whitehorse Community Plan. This received federal funding in 2001. An amount of \$886,820 was authorised to help homeless persons, including youth at risk, and a further \$300,000 was authorised to address Aboriginal homelessness. It is impossible to comment further on the direct benefits of this initiative until its evaluation is completed. It can be stated, however, that this financial assistance does not seem to have been sufficient to provide the delivery agencies with full relief from funding pressures.

A researcher investigating homelessness in the Yukon would be struck by a shortage of mention of homelessness in reports originating from the Yukon's territorial and municipal governments, or from the Yukon's news media. The topic is also of low interest in the Yukon legislature. This may, or may not, suggest a low level of public interest in the Yukon. This does not mean that homelessness in the Yukon is not a problem. Indeed, until their recent awakening, the government and the public in the sister Territory of Nunavut were inclined to turn a blind eye to homelessness problems.

3.1 Survey Results

3.1.0 Assurances of Anonymity

Despite assurances that the responses are anonymous, potential informants generally balked at filling in the identity fields on the questionnaires. It was soon apparent that the way forward was to omit the page containing identification information. This page also contained the consent clause, which, while not strictly necessary when anonymity is involved, is usually considered courteous. The Author attributes this reluctance to a wariness of research in general – Northerners frequently feel over-researched or unethically researched – and to a desire to speak freely without risk of repercussions from employers. Some of the informants' views were, in fact, critical of the system in which they worked. Consequently, in order to ensure a level of confidence, it was agreed that the identities and co-ordinates of the informants would be known only to the Researcher, and not passed on to the Author whose job was to analyse the data and write the Report.

3.1.1 Participation

Twenty-two of the twenty-seven stakeholder organisations / agencies originally contacted returned completed questionnaires. Those that did, and those that did not, provided additional information through interviews. Subsequently a further stakeholder (Inuit Tapirisat Kanatami, nominally based in Ottawa) provided both a questionnaire and interview response.

Northern Stakeholder Organisations / Agencies Participating in this Study^c

Nunavut	
Iqaluit	Salvation Army
Iqaluit	Government of Nunavut
Baker Lake	Mianiqsijit Project
Baker Lake	Government of Nunavut
Ottawa	Inuit Tapirisat Kanatami
NWT	
Yellowknife	City of Yellowknife
Yellowknife	John Howard Society
Yellowknife	NWT Housing Corporation
Yellowknife	Side Door Youth Centre
Yellowknife	Salvation Army (responsibility for operations in all three territories)
Yellowknife	Tree of Peace Friendship Centre
Yellowknife	Yellowknife Association for Community Living
Yellowknife	Yellowknife Homeless Coalition

^c The persons who participated did so as knowledgeable individuals rather than as representatives of the organisations they worked for. The departments of the Territorial government officials are not identified so that those informants cannot be identified.

Yellowknife	Yellowknife Housing Authority
Inuvik	Inuvik Homeless Shelter
Inuvik	Inuvik Interagency Committee
Fort Good Hope	Government of the Northwest Territories
Fort Simpson	Government of the Northwest Territories
Paulatuk	Government of the Northwest Territories
Wrigley	Government of the Northwest Territories
Hay River	Hay River Housing Authority
Yukon	
Whitehorse	Government of Yukon
Whitehorse	Kwanlin Dun First Nation
Whitehorse	Youth of Today Society
Whitehorse	Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness
Whitehorse	Government of Canada - PSEP
Whitehorse	Government of Canada – Service Canada
Whitehorse	Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon

A considerable and protracted effort⁴ went into identifying potential key informants with a significant stake in homelessness issues. A general hesitance to be a research subject was observed, but this was not the main challenge: the pool of potential key informants was discovered to be quite small. There are only four shelters for homeless people between the three jurisdictions. Moreover, the infrastructures and networks for dealing addressing homelessness issues are new, severely deficient in critical aspects, and in need of co-ordination.

Yet because homelessness is pervasive and arguably endemic – particularly in Nunavut and the NWT – the number of officials and volunteer workers *peripherally* involved in homelessness issues is high. This range appears wider than in the south, if only because an unknown but apparently significant percentage of homeowners temporarily take in transient and known-homeless people to avoid them suffering in the cold. There are reasonable grounds to believe that, compared with the Southern context, a disproportionately large number of Northerners are involved with or impacted by the problem. This assertion is reasonable for various reasons, including credible reports of the widespread practice of “couch surfing”; it is difficult to imagine a common practice of Southern families letting in homeless people so they do not freeze in the cold.

The final number of completed questionnaires was thought to be a reasonable number, considering that the number of active stakeholders involved in organised efforts is smaller than in the provincial contexts. In the Territorial North, one observes that the parties and agencies that actually *do* something about homelessness, besides offering their couch to someone who would otherwise freeze, is a fraction of those who largely talk about it. This is not to diminish the importance or legitimacy of advocacy. It merely expresses the fact that measures to address homelessness – especially shelters – are both recent and limited.

3.1.2 Responses – Categories of Respondents

The survey informants included at least one member of each identity group, with one exception: Nunavut, where no completed survey was received from anyone working directly and regularly with the homeless:

Category of informant	NWT	Nunavut	Yukon
	Number of responses		
1 - I provide immediate help for homeless population (e.g. I work at/operate a shelter or find alternative living spaces for people. I work with homeless people as part of my regular activities).	4	0	2
2 - I plan or develop programmes to help homeless people as a group or I provide advice and assistance to someone who does. I do not usually meet with homeless people directly.	5	1	2
3 - I consider myself an advocate for homeless people and provide information about homeless people to those in the groups above.	5	3	1
4 – Other (describe). ^d	3	2	1

Two informants reported being in two categories; overlap is possible. With the addition of interviews, it was finally possible to obtain input from someone in each category from each territory. This provides a full spread across a small pool of informants.

One professional – a Homelessness Co-ordinator – pointed out that s/he was new to the North and was occupying a newly-created position. This raises a useful point: One should not assume that all of the people involved in organised attempts to address Northern homelessness are even from the North. This person reported that s/he previously:

“...worked directly with homeless or at risk of homeless women, exiting the sex trade and in recovery from addiction. I operated a transitional home (my own) housing 4 women, teaching and modelling such things as life skills, appropriate decision making skills, cooking, chores, gardening, manners, relationship communication, personal hygiene, money management, addiction support, medication administration, and general overall personal support”.

This begs the question of how often a shortage of experienced Northerners makes it necessary to recruit Southerners to work for, or with, the homeless. The answer to this is unavailable. More relevant is that Southerners who do assist must rapidly come to grips with a vastly different socio-economic and cultural landscape.

^d This Report omits the descriptions when anonymity would be compromised.

3.1.3 Responses - Internet Access

Internet access	NWT	Nunavut	Yukon
	Number of responses		
Do you have access to e-mail? (Yes)	12	4	6
Do you have access to e-mail? (No)	1	n/a	n/a
Do you have high speed access to Internet? (Yes)	11	4	5
If no, do you have dial-up (slow speed) access to the Internet? [°]	2	n/a	1

The Internet access questions simply confirm the fact that most territorial communities regardless of remoteness now have broadband Internet connectivity. Consequently, Internet-based supports for NWT stakeholders are quite feasible. Moreover, given the high costs of long-distance telephone charges, Internet-based supports are the most practical way of networking, sharing information, and co-ordinating efforts.

3.1.4 Responses - Questions to assess the familiarity of informants with documents identified, and survey questions to determine the views of informants on the value or relevance of those documents

The informants were asked to rate the documents they had read according to the following scale: Very useful; Useful; Of interest; Not useful; No value; Could not find a copy; Maybe useful but no time to read it. Appendix D shows a table of results. The numbers in the table correspond to the identity groups and document serial numbers from the questionnaire,

The Author is reluctant to draw more from the study results than would be considered reliable. It is inadvisable to examine the distribution of responses in detail beyond what the small sample size allows; the number of informants is far below the number necessary for any sort of statistical confidence. Nonetheless, it is possible to draw some useful inferences:

1. First, the most common response (16 out of 23) was unaware of any of the documents. Second, it is clear from other informants that some of the documents were valuable, and indeed some of them appear to be amongst the more relevant documents currently obtainable.

Observation: The majority of the Northern stakeholders seem to have little or no ability or reasonable opportunity to access the potentially relevant literature, period. This might have a variety of causes, but the underlying fact is that they are mostly disconnected from the literature – even the relevant territorial literature.

[°] Two NWT informants reported having low speed in addition to high speed.

2. Many of the documents identified cannot be found on the Internet, and some might only be available from Southern sources. Ergo, in a way, asking informants in the North to find these documents is unlikely to result in a high rate of access.

Observation: The results do make a valid point: resource materials such as the documents identified are generally useless to Northerners unless they are posted and easy to find on the Internet.

3. It is inadvisable to discuss which documents a small number of stakeholders found useful or not, especially when the documents selection reflects the Researcher's judgement, and when many of the documents are territory-specific. The matter would be different if a larger number of completed questionnaires were available. Only nine of 23 informants rated any documents and 23 is, itself, a small number. No pattern can be discerned within this small population except that most (34) of the 36 documents were considered very useful, useful, or simply interesting. Only two were reported as being not useful.

Observation: This is nevertheless enough to suggest that resource documents will be read, and often enough made use of, provided they are somehow available. This begs the question of how to make them available easily.

4. A Yellowknife informant could not find a copy of any document. This person wrote: "I have not read any of the listed articles that I can remember but find many titles that would be very appealing to read (if I could find them)." Another, from Whitehorse, identified none documents as "Not aware but would like to read". Another, from Whitehorse, had read and found at least interesting three documents. This person wrote "All the rest I have not read. Some look interesting but time constraints are such that I probably would not go looking for them". Another informant, a Homelessness Co-ordinator just arrived from the South, tried to find 13 documents that seemed interesting without success. One informant unfamiliar with, and unable to find, all but two documents is a senior representative of the ITK based in Ottawa. This informant is probably geographically the best positioned to obtain copies of the documents.

Observation: Access to, or familiarity with, the documents appears unconnected with whether or not the informant is situated in a larger centre, where presumably access would be easier. This, and the poor level of access and familiarity generally, makes a strong case for a co-ordinated means of alerting Northern stakeholders to documents of potential interest. A bulletin system, and/or an annotated bibliography that is kept updated, come to mind as ways to overcome this problem.

5. While few informants indicated that they had no time to locate or read documents, two thirds were unaware of any of the studies. One wrote: “May have read the NWT Housing ones but not sure. No time to check them all. Good luck!” There is little to suggest that more than a quarter of informants were able to take the time to locate documents. Discussions with informants suggest that some – and maybe most - of the documents that they did rate were already known to them. This is consistent with reports in the literature and the media that the stakeholder organisations have overburdened staff and high turnover rates.

Observation: Measures that are put in place to facilitate access by Northern stakeholders to documents will likely serve little purpose unless access is highly user-friendly and practically instant.

3.1.5 Responses - Question to determine the sources of information that informants rely upon in the course of their work on homelessness issues

The informants were asked: “What sources of information are important or helpful in the fulfilling of your role?” They could answer this in writing as they saw fit. The complete responses follow:

Nunavut

“1 – In general there are huge housing issues, lack of same. Local housing authority will evict leaving people no place to go; 2 – Youth under 18 years old can not enter into legal contract (leases) H&SS [Health & Social Services] get asked to find non-existing housing for people; 3 – Income Support [social assistance unit] states that they will pay the rent, but not back rent, until the back rent is paid the people can not get alternate housing with the authority”. (Iqaluit)

“N/A - I’m a health/social counsellor with Social Services / Health Services” (Baker Lake)

“Would like general information about the issue.” (Baker Lake)

NWT

Left blank. (Yellowknife)

Left blank. (Yellowknife)

Left blank. (Yellowknife)

“We have no housing for homeless people. We refer to social services”. (Hay River)

“Community housing issues and needs”. (Fort Good Hope)

“Statistical data on: 1 - the demographics of the population that are homeless and at-risk of homelessness; 2 – housing trends; 3 – housing quality; 4 – Crowding.” (Inuvik)

“1 – Community resources available to clients, e.g., soup kitchens, programming to help people get back on their feet; 2 – Staff training – staff at the shelter should have, where / how to get it; 3 – Needs of homeless individuals – e.g., counselling, life skills, coaching etc.; 4 – ‘Success stories’ in other communities – e.g., programmes that have worked in helping homeless to get back on their feet”. (Inuvik)

“Need more information on homelessness in the North”. (Fort Wrigley)

“1 – Programmes / funding available; 2 – Facilities available in communities; 3 – Resources available in communities.” (Fort Simpson)

“In many smaller communities there is a great shortage of units (houses) to accommodate all those applying for a home. Many of these individuals remain on waiting lists for years,^f creating overcrowding and unhealthy conditions. The cost to build new/more homes is phenomenal, especially in marine communities with no road access; therefore minimal units are being built over a long period of time.” (Paulatuk)

“It is important that we look at providing jobs for the homeless get them back in [illeg.] or ask to do a survey on homeless people, see what they want.” (Fort Good Hope)

“1 - Input from the youth themselves to determine their needs and how to best address them; Info from other drop-in centres who have similar overnight programmes – Finding out what works and what does not.” (Yellowknife)

“Demographic information including age, # of people with disabilities and the type of disability (functional restrictions).” (Yellowknife)

“1 – Support programmes needed by homeless population to assist in overcoming issues and movement forward into independent community living; 2 – Support programmes required by front line staff and management; 3 – Number of homeless population including status such as gender, single, family...; 4 – How many people/families are in overcrowded / inappropriate / shared housing; 5 – Ethnicity-specific; 6 – How long they have lived in Yellowknife; 7 – What was the last type of long term housing; 8 – What programmes / services are missing in Yellowknife.” (Yellowknife)

Yukon

“Reports such as the Youth Homelessness Study; Whitehorse Community Plan on Homelessness.” (Whitehorse)

“The Youth of Today Society ran a housing programme for homeless youth in 2003-04. We had to shut it down due to lack of funding. (Report Attached) Lack of funding is the biggest issue.” Whitehorse.

^f Waits measured in years is also a frequent observation in the literature and the media. Wait time statistics are difficult to obtain because the wait lists are maintained locally, and the determining of priorities is managed locally. Northerners tend to view the problem of very long wait times as established fact.

“Information from NGOs who serve the homeless population”. (Whitehorse)

“1 - Research done through the Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness; 2 – Info from daily contact with homeless people or their support workers; 3 – Articles in media about homelessness initiatives elsewhere in Canada.” (Whitehorse)

“Working groups, personal connections (knowing who to contact), NGOs who are working in the field.” (Whitehorse)

“Access to money”. (Whitehorse)

“Best practices – prevention and services, effective partnerships, communication and awareness.” (Whitehorse)

The range and number of responses do not allow us to discern patterns about the type of information that informants use during the course of their work.

The results reveal more about what information sources informants are *not* using that what sources they *are* using. Almost a half (10) informants did not know how to respond or what to respond with. The informants do not seem to be using any source more than another. “Sources” include documents and sources of documents. One informant, from Whitehorse, identified elsewhere on the questionnaire five documents that s/he uses and considers worth the attention of others⁸. Otherwise there were no suggestions made about new or know documents to read.

Almost a half (10) of the informants made requests for information rather than statements about where to find information. This likely reflects the fact that no territory has a clearing house, or cogent system, for information sharing or access between stakeholders. Some may be using few if any sources, and working largely or completely without the benefit of stakeholder connections or literature. The Author raises this as a possibility rather than as a clear conclusion drawn from the questionnaires.

3.1.6 Responses - Question to determine the type and form of information, relating to their work on homelessness issues, that informants would prefer

The informants were asked: “What type and form of information would you like to have access to, to help you fulfil your role?” They could answer this in writing as they saw fit. The full responses are below:

⁸ “Youth Homelessness Report, Northern Research Institute, Yukon; Silent and Invisible – What’s Age Got to do with It – Older abused women. BC/Yukon Society of Transition Homes; Study of older seasonal workers in the Yukon (contact me for info); Yukon Youth Strategy consultation report; and a capella report (women’s directorate).”

Nunavut

“1 – Number of homeless across Nunavut; 2 – Number of children within homeless families; 3 – Number of children in care due to homelessness of parents.” (Iqaluit)

“Emergency Housing.” (Baker Lake)

“General information about the issue.” (Baker Lake)

NWT

“I do not deal with any homeless people in my community - ?” (Hay River^h)

“Additional funds need to be provided to provide homes to the many adults living still with their immediate families.” (Paulatuk)

“1 - Data as mentioned aboveⁱ; 2 – Contact information about other agencies working in this area in the North; 3 – Downloadable academic and government reports; 4 – Educational / Awareness material suitable for use to educate the public in the North; 5 – Detailed Census data; 6 – Literature review / Annotated Bibliography.” (Inuvik)

“1- Reports; 2 – Spreadsheets involving resources, etc. – Quick access to important information; 3 – Info should be available electronically; 4 – Statistics.” (Inuvik)

“1 – Resources and programmes available; 2 – Needs study / survey.” (Fort Simpson)

“Pamphlets, videos.” (Fort Wrigley)

Left blank. (Hay River)

“Interest[ed] in information on youth homelessness.” (Yellowknife)

Left blank. (Yellowknife)

Left blank. (Yellowknife)

“1 - A national data base or at least a northern one with stats on various problems and issues; 2 – More available info about northern, small community problems”. (Yellowknife)

“1 – All the above^j plus: 1- Housing advocate; 2 – Statistics; 3 – Wellness advocate; 4 – Addictions knowledge for front line staff; 5 – Staff safety training.” (Yellowknife)

^h This informant self-identified as “advocate for the homeless”.

ⁱ “Statistical data on: 1 - the demographics of the population that are homeless and at-risk of homelessness; 2 – housing trends; 3 – housing quality; 4 – Crowding.”

^j “1 – Support programs needed by homeless population to assist in overcoming issues and movement forward into independent community living; 2 – Support programs required by front line staff and management; 3 – Number of homeless population including status such as gender, single, family...; 4 – How many people/families are in overcrowded / inappropriate / shared housing; 5 – Ethnicity-specific; 6 – How long they have lived in Yellowknife; 7 – What was the last type of long term housing; 8 – What programs / services are missing in Yellowknife.”

“We maintain our own list of singles and others and know the need for more housing in community” (Fort Good Hope)

Yukon

“More statistics on rate of homelessness.” (Whitehorse)

“We understand what the problems are, we even know many of the solutions, but we can’t always have the resources or autonomy to act.” (Whitehorse)

“What funding is available.” (Whitehorse)

“1 – Evaluations of services; 2 – descriptions and evaluation of communities that have a comprehensive range of services and are approximately Whitehorse’s size; 3 – info on effectively involving a ‘smallish’ private sector.” (Whitehorse).

“Statistics, technical expertise on issues facing the homeless, consultations involving the homeless”. (Whitehorse)

“To strengthen our position/case it would be beneficial to know the numbers of youth and others who are at risk of being homeless in Whitehorse. We understand that absolute homelessness is more rare in this climate so the numbers are difficult to obtain. Nevertheless, in order to achieve a commitment and funding, numbers are important.” (Whitehorse)

This question, about what type and form of information that informants would prefer, closely relates to the previous question about information sources. The responses to both questions reinforce the observation, made in Section 3.0 (Homelessness in the Territorial Context), that:

- Important basic statistics and research on Northern homelessness do not exist, or else they are not shared.
- Northern stakeholders seem unaware of such statistics that do exist and which we considered in Section 3.0 (e.g., Census, statistics collected by territorial housing agencies, statistics collected by other agencies and collated by the territorial statistics units, etc.). For a variety of reasons, it appears, the statistics that do exist are often unavailable to stakeholders.
- Even the agencies operating shelters seem to lack basic statistics about the overall homeless caseload.
- Requests for contact and programme information suggest fragmentation of effort and inadequate communication between players within each of the territories. When the organisational affiliations of the informants are considered, one observes that even territorial government employees feel they lack access to programme information, reports, and statistics originating from other departments in the same territory.

- The information deficiencies include elementary programme information that does exist – but may not have been be collated – such as information on funding sources and on roles and responsibilities of agencies.
- Mention was made of need to take into account what homeless people themselves have to say about their challenges, needs, and solutions. Indeed, the literature displays a distinct shortage of input from homeless people themselves, although there is no shortage of media interviews with homeless people eager to have their say. This makes a case for measures aimed at bringing homeless people into participatory research, and measures to involve them more in workshops and conferences.

One informant suggested a need for pamphlets and videos. This raises an important point about form of information: *Measures to address information gaps, and improve co-ordination and information sharing, should not be so technical or otherwise removed from the small-community experience that they are intelligible only to the better educated.*

It is clear that overly academic, or complex, language or systems will be of little benefit to many stakeholder individuals. This is especially so of the stakeholders in the smaller communities. Communications and measures will also have little impact if the cross-cultural context is not considered; much of the population, being Aboriginal, is strongly grounded in oral tradition. Likewise, information developed for public consumption should be of a form and level that the target population can comprehend.

It is fair to say that, with minor exceptions perhaps, Northern stakeholders are operating in silos in terms of information sharing. There appears to be a clear lack of co-ordination or leadership in each territory. Lacking information to think otherwise, it is prudent to assume that information sharing is no better between territories.

3.1.7 Responses - Question to determine the priorities of informants in the area of homelessness in the Territorial North

The informants were asked: “What are your priorities for Homelessness in the North?” They could answer this in writing as they saw fit. Shown below are all the responses:

Nunavut

“To eradicate it altogether”. (Iqaluit)

“Everyone should have a place to live”. (Baker Lake)

“Adequate housing”. (Baker Lake)

NWT

“Voice their opinions for them”. (Ft. Wrigley)

“None”. (Hay River)

“Uncertain”. (Paulatuk)

“Long term – Facilitating programmes to help people get back on their feet, finding housing, gaining life skills, drug / alcohol treatment; Immediate priorities are – getting people off the street, giving homeless people the necessities: food, shelter, support etc.” (Inuvik)

“1 – Need definition of ‘homelessness’; 2 – Identify the numbers; 3 – Identify the resources; 4 – Implement an action plan.” (Fort Simpson)

“1 – Prevention through addressing root causes (housing, substance abuse, domestic violence, etc); 2 – Effectively serving existing population; 3 – Assisting existing population towards more independent living”. (Inuvik)

“With limited available housing in the smaller communities, it is difficult to house single parents and single people. We need more houses for this group.” (Fort Good Hope)

“Put onus on them. Get them motivated start work”. (Fort Good Hope)

“Accessible, affordable, range of supported living arrangements” (Yellowknife)

Left blank. (Yellowknife)

“Trying to help them get back on their feet at a young age. Development of skills for a better life”. (Yellowknife)

“1 – To increase housing availability – traditional, semi-independent, group homes, low income...for all populations (women, men, families, mental health); 2 – To increase support programmes to assist persons to overcome personal issues and barriers; 3 – To increase capacity of front line workers working directly with at-risk population; 4 – To increase community awareness and gain community support.” (Yellowknife)

“To provide a temporary place for youth 16 to 19 until a [illeg.] place can be found for them.” (Yellowknife)

Yukon

“1 – Building partnerships including private business; 2 – Provide better access to services and appropriate services; 3 – Better understand the needs of the homeless; 4 – Develop long term plans. For example, Youth shelter needs”. (Whitehorse)

“Supported homes for people living with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders”. (Whitehorse)

“1 - Long term disability pensions; 2 – Supports and services to help build strong and health families; 3 – Custom fit educational programmes; 4 – Substance abuse / addictions assistance.” (Whitehorse)

“Addressing the multi-layered and complex needs of youth and youth homeless”. (Whitehorse)

“Addressing youth homelessness.” (Whitehorse)

“Creating long term housing initiatives for homeless youth. (Whitehorse)

“1 – Development of sufficient truly affordable housing; 2 – A wide range of ‘ownership’ of homelessness solutions; 3 – Effective comprehensive services; 4 – Effective, productive partnerships”. (Whitehorse)

Again, the smallness of the sample population makes one cautious about reading too much from the range of responses. We shall instead leave the responses, as they stand, for consideration by the stakeholders.

One can nevertheless reasonably infer the following from the range of responses. Some stakeholders have thought more about priorities than others, and as one might expect with a multi-variable social problem, their priorities vary widely. The priorities stated range from the relatively simple and realistic in the short term, to complex and requiring major government policy change and financial outlay. *This suggests that further examination of priorities should be organised and focused, if the organisers and participants expect there to be useful discussions which are followed up on, and which lead to measurable, incremental change.* This may be a statement of the obvious, but it bears repetition. The informant priorities listed above testify to lack of common ground – This might be rectifiable given leadership and structured dialogue.

The number and character of the responses to the questionnaire cause one to ask about what is the best way to capture the homelessness priorities of Northern stakeholders. There is no compelling reason to think that other questionnaires, in other studies, are likely to achieve results that are stronger or more practical. *This suggests a strong need for workshops and conferences if the goal is to properly capture – and especially reach common ground on - priorities.*

Further Information Obtained From Interviews

Differences of Opinion over Definition of “North”

The Researcher’s records indicate a repeated concern by informants that the Study is limited to the Territorial North. Respondents gave various treaty, cultural, and geographic reasons for expanding the definition of “North” and indeed the boundaries of the Study. The Researcher noted that, when he explained the Report’s Territorial North boundaries, “he was advised very strongly that the cultural and social connections were very important and that the northern provincial communities should also be included.”

The present Author acknowledges two things. First – research into homelessness in the provincial ‘norths’ falls within the provincial domain studies of Housing and Homelessness Branch. Whether or not these studies – or the present Report - make links with counterpart communities is another matter. Second – it is difficult, or impossible, to set cultural boundaries without incurring the wrath of at least some group who feels slighted on grounds such as culture and identity. It is unethical and ineffective methodology to impose such judgements. Using jurisdictional lines is more respectful and much simpler.

Nevertheless, the informants made valuable comments about communications and co-operation between stakeholders in nearby jurisdictions. For instance, the Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness has close connections with Northern British Columbia communities. There is generally a fair degree of collaboration between homelessness stakeholders in BC and the Yukon. Some counterpart drug and alcohol counselling organisations in the NWT and Alberta exchange experiences, programme ideas, and even personnel. There are other instances also.

An informant representing an Inuit organisation wrote the following:

“But we know, from contacts and what we see on the street that the homeless crisis is far greater among Inuit in Ottawa and Montreal than other aboriginal peoples.. simple because .. these are the places .. where the big planes from the north land.”

Indeed, this is an important observation about the fact that Northern homelessness spills over into the provinces, and that inter-jurisdictional collaboration is necessary. Consider this media report from 2005:

Staff at the Montreal Friendship Centre are looking north for help to assist the urban Inuit they serve. The centre has become a safe haven for many Inuit who end up in the city. It provides hot meals, workshops and prevention programmes for urban aboriginal people. One of the centre's managers, Sky Bellefleur, says about two thirds of the centre's clientele are now Inuit. That's why she'd like northern governments and organizations to provide more help. "I would like to see, in the future, more sharing of ideas, of support, of finances, you know the whole spectrum," said Bellefleur. With more northern support the centre would be able to do a better job of assisting the Inuit in the city, she said. About 300-500 people a month drop in for a hot lunch, she said. The Ka'wahseh street patrol also delivers meals and warm clothing to people living in doorways or on benches. Volunteer and part-time employee, David Paneguyuk, who is originally from Nunavut, said the centre fills an important void. "It's very important because they give services for people that are homeless, need someone to help to find a place to live, or a place to go and eat, or to just be around native people," he said.⁵

Extent of Absolute Homelessness

The Researcher noted that the informants tended to be animated over the statement, made in various sources, that absolute homelessness in the North is a myth. They disagreed with the notion that absolute homelessness applies to those living on the street, in emergency shelters or in locations not meant for human habitation, and therefore, because of harsh climate, absolute homelessness is virtually impossible in the North.

This is a patently incorrect supposition. Absolute homelessness exists in the North. The Author concurs with the Researcher and the informants on this point. The Researcher recorded the following arguments, supporting this view, from informants:

- “Absolute Homelessness” as defined above exists in all three territorial capitals. Inuvik is a regional centre and it too has absolute homelessness and operates the only homeless shelter outside the three capital cities.
- In Whitehorse, homeless people are sleeping under tarpaulins along the river bank. When the authorities move them away every couple of weeks, they move into caves in an area known as the “clay banks”. When moved from there, they migrate back to the river (the flowing river gives off some heat along with the danger of high humidity). People are also living in shelters that they have constructed in the woods. These are not to be confused with people who wish to live on the land as their ancestors did. These are people who have constructed a shelter because they have no other place to live. Indeed, it was pointed out that these people would probably not identify themselves as homeless persons. These shelters are their homes but few Canadians would consider such structures “meant for human habitation”.
- In Yellowknife it was reported that the homeless try to get bank machine cards so they can find shelter in the entrances to bank machines. The Yellowknife shelter for men sleeps up to 24 on mats on the floor each night in addition to those lucky enough to have a bed. There is no proper shelter for youth (16 to 19 years old) so the drop-in centre is staffed all night long in order to allow homeless youth to sleep in the chairs or on the floor. The provision of mats would constitute being a shelter and exceed the licensing regulations.
- In Iqaluit, some homeless sleep in empty containers, in unlocked cars or in the enclave of ATM machines. Recently, a young mother with a very young baby was found to be sleeping at an ATM machine - there are no homeless shelters for women in Iqaluit. The men’s shelter has only 20 beds and there are no areas for mats on the floor.
- “On the street homelessness” may not be as obvious as in the south because in order to find shelter from the cold, northern homeless need to find more private places to get warm than the public places available in the south. In Iqaluit, there are no sidewalks, warm air vents, public places to put tents or temporary shelters and no alleyways. In the summertime, some homeless families do pitch tents and camp with other people.

The Author adds the following from the literature and media reviews in Appendix C of this Study:

- There are authenticated instances of Northerners without a fixed address living in tents for as long as 20 years. This is not a traditional Aboriginal manner of nomadic occupation, but encampment in tents in one locality. It is difficult to consider a tent a fixed abode.

- Some Northern homeless do survive in tents despite conditions of extreme cold, although most if not all appear to take indoor shelter when the opportunity arises.
- Homeless Northerners have broken into empty buildings in order find shelter.

The body of recorded examples seems sufficient to put debate on the hypothesis of “no absolute homelessness” to rest.

Extent of Hidden Homelessness

“Hidden homelessness” applies to persons living in overcrowded and/or inadequate conditions. The informants all felt that this is a pervasive and widespread problem in the North. The Researcher recorded^k from the informants he interviewed:

- Lack of shelters leads many young people to trade sex for shelter. Girls as young as 13-14 are prostituting themselves, trading sex for warmth, perhaps just for the night, then they must move on. Young boys are doing the same thing but the cultural prohibitions against homosexuality and paedophilia make it very difficult to discover. Respondents in Iqaluit reported the case of a young woman who had agreed to trade sex for shelter. It is not known whether she changed her mind or if the incident occurred once sex had been exchanged, but an altercation ensued and she was put out during the night. Because of the extreme cold she reportedly suffered frost bite injuries to her hands and feet.
- Many households are overcrowded to the point that people must share beds and sleep in shifts. School-aged children are expected to do their homework in these conditions. Often they find it next to impossible to keep up with their studies. In numerous cases, abusers, both physical and sexual, return to be housed with their victims because there is no other accommodation available. Living conditions are squalid and proper food preparation practices are ignored.
- This [hidden homelessness] is the reality of the North and is well documented in the literature. However, this leaves the impression that people are living as part of an extended family. In some cases this is true but a more sinister situation is described by the term “couch surfing”.

An informant for an Inuit organisation wrote about “couch surfing”:

In the Inuit regions, the homelessness is what we term "hidden" because people won't put others on the street at forty below. So homelessness is really reflected in the severe overcrowding...and it is at the heart of the social disorder.

This person also said:

^k In the interests of authenticity, the Author cites the Researcher’s own recorded words, uncorrected for grammar.

Even in Nunavut, where its really cold, you find destitute people drifting from home to home looking for overnight accommodation. Families ask themselves: “Do I let him freeze?” No, they can’t. So they take them in and it’s a cycle of house to house. You also have to always ask yourself questions, like: ‘Can I get rid of this person?’, ‘Will my family get sick?’, and ‘how far can I trust him?’ It’s not a good feeling when it’s a whiteout and you have some smashed or stoned guy crashing on your couch or the floor.” You can call this ‘hidden homelessness’ if you want, but it seems pretty absolute to me.

Social and Staff Housing

By far the most common theme in written and verbal responses was the importance of social and staff public housing programmes in reducing homelessness. The Researcher noted the following:

- All territories provide public housing units that are under the control of a housing corporation. The members of the corporations are elected officials who are supported by permanent employees. Waiting lists for this housing are long, several to many years was frequently cited.
- Priorities are assigned and those who have a low priority (usually single men), although on the list, will always be bumped lower by others and never be assigned public housing. In Iqaluit, for example, the population is less than 6,000 but it is estimated that there is a requirement for an additional 1,000 bedrooms.
- All tenants are responsible for damages, and if their repayment is in arrears, they cannot be re-assigned another unit. This causes particular problems for many of the mentally handicapped who are in public housing. Others frequently take advantage of them, using their units for parties. With alcohol and drugs omnipresent, violence often occurs and units are damaged. In addition to the all too common violence to their person, mentally handicapped then find themselves required to pay for damages and in danger of being evicted.
- Similar situations occur during family disputes. The person in whose name the unit is provided is responsible regardless of who commits the damage.
- Many employers provide housing for their workers, frequently at greatly reduced rates. Under residential tenancy regulations, a worker who quits or who is fired must vacate such accommodation within seven days. Given the long waiting times for public housing described above, local workers are reluctant to give up public housing for employer provided housing

Housing Availability and Domestic Abuse and Violence

From the Researcher’s record:

- In these situations, the housing allocation may be in the name of the threatening person¹, which means that the people threatened must be removed. However, rules are being amended to allow the removal of the threatening person. In Iqaluit, women and children can be taken to the women's shelter but only for six weeks.
- There is a very strong sense of extended family in the communities. If the violent person is from the community and the victim is not, it is the victim that is ostracised. Some families have sufficient social standing within the communities that a member of that family will be supported regardless of the circumstances.
- In smaller communities, where there are no shelters, abusive situations must be dealt with by separating the abused and the abuser and finding some other family willing to take in the abuser. Over a period of months or even years, conflicts continue to occur and eventually it may be necessary to move abusers back in with the abused since no one else is willing to accommodate them.

Housing Difficulties Arising From Long Distance Medical Treatment

It is a Northern fact that long-distance travel – and extended stays – to access specialised and super-specialised medical services is a fact of life that most people experience at some point. The Researcher noted:

- Territorial residents who require medical treatment not available locally are flown to one of the provinces to receive treatment. Since such treatment is frequently of long duration, the family accompanies the patient. The family is then encouraged to take up residency in the province providing the treatment so that after three months, the province – not the territory – becomes responsible for the medical costs. However, as a consequence of changing residency, the family will lose their public housing or their place on the waiting list.

Note that Registered Indian and Inuit populations of the territories receive coverage under Health Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Programme. This provides medically necessary patient and escort transportation, prescription drugs, medical supplies, basic vision care items like eyeglasses, and some miscellaneous benefits. This programme applies on- and off-reserve across Canada.

The NIHB Programme continues to pay regardless of time spent away from home. In the case of treatment in the provinces, the provincial health plan will automatically cover the basic treatment costs after a certain period in residence. However, the NIHB Programme's coverage of escort travel is strictly limited. For the most part, a recipient undergoing extended treatment in a distant centre will be socially isolated unless his or her family relocates. If this happens, they may be able to find rental accommodation in the new location, but their return will be difficult: They will have given up their public housing and could not reapply unless they actually returned.

¹ In the case of married couples, the unit is registered in both names.

High Cost of Utilities

Informants told the Researcher that having shelter is only part of the solution: the cost of heating, electricity and water is so high that many residents cannot afford to maintain accommodations without subsidy. An informant observed that the cost of supplying a gallon of water to a household is about the same as a gallon of gasoline.^m

Government Assistance Programmes

From the literature review, media scan, questionnaires, and interviews it is abundantly clear that most stakeholders in Northern homelessness – and probably most Northerners – believe that greatly increased government housing assistance is the main part of solving the homelessness problems. This view is almost universal in Nunavut, widespread in the NWT, and frequently encountered in the Yukon where the housing situation and market closer resemble the provincial norm. Persons holding the “programmes are the solution” view typically feel that the onus is on the federal government to provide the programmes and funding.

From our discussion of context, we see that the Government of Nunavut is particularly vocal that the federal government is legally obligated to provide the massive aid being called for. An informant from the ITK added in writing:

What any of the 69 studies will not say is that these conditions would not be acceptable anywhere else in Canada. The situation is also the direct result of the federal government removing itself from northern housing programmes in the early 90's...One study that would be interesting is #51 from the Inuit Woman Association.. it paints a dismal but accurate picture.. and then compound that by two or three or four times because of ten additional years, with the highest birth rates in Canada.. and ten years of the absence of the northern housing programme. In #46.. Most Nunavut suffer in silence gives a good picture of the reality.. but again the situation has probably doubled again in the past five years.

This informant said later in an interview:

Ottawa denies Inuit access to the kinds of housing assistance that Indians get, even though the legal obligation is the same says the Supreme Court. Nunavut is totally dependent on federal transfers and it gets a fraction of what it needs to house the population. The Housing Corporation takes this little pot and skims off what it needs for staff housing for essential workers. Most of these people are Southerners. The Inuit get what's left. And staff units are bigger and better than social units. This creates real racial and class friction that the feds pretend can't happen in Canada – go see for yourself.

Additional messages captured by the Researcher:

- Funding programmes in the North must be very flexible to be useful. In the eastern Arctic, most programmes require a two year delivery period because of fiscal year funding. The money required to buy goods for delivery to Montreal docks in time for the

^m This may well be correct, but the Author has not been able to determine the costs of supply of water and gasoline.

annual shipping season is not available early enough in the current fiscal year. The goods must therefore be acquired and stockpiled for shipping in one fiscal year and delivered and used in the next.

- All programmes, but especially those providing funding, need very precise definitions. Nevertheless, terms such as “Aboriginal” or “First Nations” have different legal meanings and their use in programmes can cause difficulties in the north. Agencies must recognise that the territories are different. Small populations will mean that funding provided on a per capita basis across Canada will probably lead to insufficient money being available to conduct the programme in the North. Both base funding and per capita funding are needed in order to account for the geographical and climatic differences in the North.
- In Iqaluit, rules on funding brought a successful project to an abrupt halt and led to serious consequences. A local corporation was formed to establish a youth cottage for 16-26 year olds, using funding provided by the National Housing Initiative. The funds were to purchase a home in 2003 and provide programme funding to staff the facility. New money was promised in March 2004, to begin in April 2004, but the call of a federal election meant no money was released until about September 2004. The cottage was providing shelter to six youths and required staff for supervision. The local Iqaluit entity responsible for funding was not able to establish a quorum until October. However, costs continued for staff and utilities. In November 2004 the town loaned \$12,000 to the organisation sponsoring the youth cottage, anticipating that the project would be funded as promised.
- Although funds were finally made available in March 2005, National Housing Initiative rules did not permit the money to be used for expenses that had accrued prior to the issuing of the grant, despite the expenses having been incurred based on the promise of funding. By this time the project was about \$300,000 in debt, \$200,000 of which was for taxes and benefit withholdings from staff salaries. The Canada Revenue Agency found itself in the awkward position of having to foreclose on the debt. Although CRA was as helpful and flexible as possible, eventually its operating rules demanded this action. In April 2005 the City of Iqaluit decided not to fund the programme because of the debt to Revenue Canada. This decision was based on a rumour that Revenue Canada would move quickly and seize the building and all assets of the Society. Although this was not the case, the youth have been forced to leave the cottage and the building will be lost as a shelter for the community.

Continuum of Care

The Researcher observed from interviews:

- Many homeless people have mental illness problems or substance dependenciesⁿ. The care required to deal with these problems varies by geographical area but in general, the need is much greater than the help available. In Iqaluit there is no second stage housing. An attempt was made to provide a transitional house for abused women and their families who had completed the shelter's six-week residency course.
- Accommodation was acquired and two families moved in, supposedly on a temporary basis. However, with nowhere else to go, the families took up more or less permanent residence. The accommodation reverted to the landlord and the families remained there supported by public housing. And so ended the transition house project.
- The mentally ill need care (not necessarily active treatment) but there is no street support system in place for them and very few street workers or detached support workers. The mentally ill are often attacked and taken advantage of.
- Women and men are often seriously abused particularly if they do not have the living skills to stop people from using their units as drug dens, for example. Their dwellings are wrecked by others but as the occupant they are responsible for the damage and there are not enough public advocates to look after their rights.

Research as Opposed to Action

The Researcher recorded that “the most telling comment during the interviews was that more than enough research had been done on northern homelessness. What is needed now is funding and action.” A further informant wrote that:

There is only one solution.. it is to make a serious commitment to a long term sustained housing programme. The focus needs to shift to solutions, and away from endless study.. as a way of pretending to address the issues. I know that is general.. but again.. they need to stop talking and get on with it.

Yet one must balance these calls for action against frequent demands for more data and more research, made in the literature, the media reports, and frequently in the responses to this Survey's questionnaires. It is difficult to dispute that Northern homelessness is poorly understood except by those in direct and immediate contact with it (and who tend to see only their portion of the picture). It is likewise difficult to dispute that few statistics, or studies on the causes and solutions, exist anywhere.

ⁿ The Researcher was told that in Iqaluit, for example, no less than 70% of the men in shelter have a mental deficiency for which they are receiving medication.

Part 4 - Conclusions and Recommendations

4.0 General

The Author is mindful of the need to avoid any expectation that this Report should be all things to all stakeholders. One should also realise that the considerable length of this Report simply reflects a desire to frame Northern homelessness in a reasonably complete perspective. The questionnaire and interview responses helped to reinforce observations from the literature analysis and the media scan. Many questions arose, and few answers were found, but this Project was never meant to be more than a first step in towards improving information sharing on Northern homelessness.

The objective of this Project is to assess the extent of information sharing, and to recommend ways to improve information sharing. This study has identified clear deficiencies in information sharing. Its conclusions and recommendations therefore focus on realistic ways to begin addressing reflect these deficiencies.

4.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

Extent of Information on Northern Homelessness

From the contextual research, undertaken during the course of this Project, it is apparent that the corpus of statistical, descriptive, and analytical literature relevant to Northern homelessness is greater than generally thought. Making this source information more generally available will further basic research that has to be done. This should also help delivery agencies improve their services to the homeless.

There is an almost complete lack of the quantitative data needed to understand some of the drivers of Northern homelessness. No attempts at quantitative research seem to have taken place, yet. Little qualitative research has occurred or is occurring. Policy and programmes continue to be anchored on anecdotal evidence, field reports and correspondence from officials, and the ‘school of hard knocks’ when shelters, particularly, have to turn away clients whom they lack space for.

Many of these necessary data could be collected and shared, given co-ordination, data protocols, standardised formats, and not necessarily at high cost. There is currently no discernable movement towards making this happen. Leadership would be required.

Explaining and projecting homelessness patterns in the North require more statistics than simply counts of homeless people in shelters or estimates of tent occupancy. Foremost it is necessary to examine three things:

- migration patterns in light of socio-economic change;
- aggregate caseload data such as shelter counts and contacts with social services; and
- comparisons of standardised individual level case data.

These are all possible, given proper co-ordination and privacy protection for individual data. Failure to do so will condemn the stakeholders to reacting to challenges as they occur, and delivering programmes which at times are questionably effective and which sometimes re-invent the wheel. The latter is especially apparent from the cyclical crises that all territorial shelters seem to experience.

Recommendation 1: Commence a research and consultation project to identify the statistical data needed to understand trends in Northern homelessness. This project should also identify data issues.

Recommendation 2: As a next step, commence a project to develop standardised indicators ranging from shelter head counts to individual-level linkages with programmes such as housing and social assistance.

Recommendation 3: Ideally, Recommendations 1 and 2 would occur under the guidance of the data committee of the Working Group on Territorial Homeless proposed in Recommendation 4.

Information Sharing

Northern stakeholders who deal with homelessness tend to be out of touch with existing technical resources on matters pertaining to homelessness. This is not because they lack access to the Internet; generally, their Internet access is good.

Information exchange between Northern stakeholders generally could stand great improvement. This extends to information sharing between concerned territorial agencies, not just between NGOs.

Compared with their Southern counterparts, Northern stakeholders seem to have a lower level of familiarity with any literature on homelessness. This is apparently not usually by choice. Over half of the informants identified general or specific documents or types of information that they could use. These are often available when one knows where to look.

Access to, or familiarity with, the documents appears unconnected with whether or not the informant is situated in a larger centre, where presumably access would be easier. This, coupled with poor levels of access and familiarity generally, makes a strong case for a co-ordinated means of alerting Northern stakeholders to documents of potential interest. A bulletin system, and an annotated bibliography that is periodically updated, come to mind as ways to overcome this problem.

The high costs of travel and long-distance telecommunication make Internet-based information sharing is the logical mode for improving information sharing on Northern homelessness. The infrastructure is in place and the stakeholders are connected – or can become connected in most cases without high cost.

It is fair to say that, with minor exceptions perhaps, Northern stakeholders are operating in silos in terms of information sharing. In this regard, there appears a clear lack of co-ordination or leadership is evident in each territory. Leadership is necessary. It does not seem that this leadership will materialise, in the near future, without outside assistance and funding.

Lacking information to think otherwise, it is prudent to assume that information sharing is no better between territories. There is no “Northern clearing house on homelessness information”, no common structure to contemplate the challenges and the solutions, and no common voice for the stakeholders. Co-ordination is needed, but economy of scale, and critical mass, preclude duplicating such an initiative in each territory. A shared approach seems much more likely to be feasible and useful.

Recommendation 4: The Housing and Homelessness Branch should propose, and facilitate the establishment of, a standing “Working Group on Territorial Homelessness”. This body should comprise a manageable number of the main governmental and NGO stakeholders in Northern homelessness. This body would have a mandate to conduct research, communicate common messages, facilitate dialogue, and issue reports particularly an Annual Review of Northern Homelessness. Modest and inexpensive outputs, such as these, would go a long way towards improving collaboration and state of the knowledge.

Recommendation 5: In connection with Recommendation 4, if possible, establish a web-based “Northern Homelessness Network” of all stakeholders in Northern homelessness. There seems no reason why this network could not include northern provincial stakeholders who experience homelessness challenges similar to those of their territorial colleagues.

- Recommendation 6: The proposed Northern Homelessness Network should make maximum use of broadband webcast capability to hold routine and special meetings and conferences between stakeholders.
- Recommendation 7: Known and future documents, which concern Northern homelessness, should be collected (or at least indexed and linked) for free electronic access on a dedicated website that is highly user-friendly. This initiative should involve an updated, annotated bibliography and a web-based system to notify stakeholders of additions.
- Recommendation 8: To the extent possible, these documents should be in “.pdf form” in order to facilitate local printing.
- Recommendation 9: Establish a convention so that publicly available “.pdf form” documents on Northern homelessness are *not* locked against users copying sections for research and planning purposes.
- Recommendation 10: Index web-based documents on Northern homelessness by topic, keyword, and title, and make them searchable through a search engine accessible on the site. The index should contain an “annotated bibliography” type description for each document.
- Recommendation 11: Statistics, or links to statistics, on Northern homelessness should be available on or through the same site as the documents.
- Recommendation 12: The source documents and statistics available on / through this website should include information which is not homelessness-specific but which is relevant to understanding territorial background and context.

Types of Northern Homelessness

“Hidden homelessness” applies when persons live in overcrowded and/or inadequate conditions. The literature review, media scan, and informants are consistent that hidden homelessness is a pervasive, widespread, and improperly appreciated problem in the North. The gravity of this problem appears poorly understood in the South, from where Northerners draw support and financial assistance.

Substantial and credible evidence proves that the contention, that absolute homelessness does not exist in the North, is false.

Recommendation 13: Further debate, on the hypothesis that absolute homeless does not exist in the North, should cease on grounds that it would be a distraction from more pressing and practical issues.

Recommendation 14: Territorial hidden homelessness should be the subject of a specific study. Among other things, this study should quantify the number of new households that would form if the problem of hidden homelessness were fully addressed. It should also quantify the prevalence of “couch surfing”, and estimate the extent to which households give, on humanitarian grounds, temporary shelter to homeless non-family members. In order to be useful this study should include a large-scale sampling of households.

Extent and Trajectory of Northern Homelessness

There are sufficient demographic, socio-economic, and descriptive data to conclude that the Yukon’s homelessness problem is not intensifying as it is in the other territories. The Yukon’s population and economy are generally stable. Its social housing stock appears adequate. We can say this among the general population but not about Yukon’s reserve-based First Nations, where data are harder to come by. This does not suggest that homelessness in the Yukon is not a problem, but rather, that the statistics on homelessness in the Yukon are deficient. (See Recommendations 1 to 3).

Homelessness in the NWT is a serious practical problem with multiple social and economic consequences. This problem has existed for many years, largely due to chronic shortage of housing, but it has intensified sharply in connection with the territory’s recent economic boom.

The NWT is now on the brink of another mega-development: the MacKenzie Valley pipeline and associated petroleum production. Realising that this will have significant socio-economic impacts that will need mitigation measures, the federal government has

identified (conditionally, unless economic performance diminishes) \$500 million to mitigate anticipated effects. This may, or many not, offset the increased homelessness expected from factors such as migration. This is a situation that deserves monitoring and analysis.

Recommendation 15: The social impacts monitoring associated with the MacKenzie project should include analysis of impacts on homelessness particularly in respect of economic-driven migration.

By all accounts, the extent, trajectory, and spin-off consequences of homelessness in Nunavut are truly dreadful, and indeed difficult for some Southerners to believe. The evidence is overwhelming and the Author has never found occasion to make such blunt a pronouncement in a report. These facts deserve better recognition in the South, from where money for the solutions flows. Southerners may feel that that the recent \$300M federal investment in territorial housing has solved the problems of crowding and homelessness. Most likely, these problems will only be stabilised or mitigated; it is hard to imagine any Federal Government that would be eager to broadcast this message and risk further expenditure when there are many national priorities.

Recommendation 16: Northern stakeholders should be mindful of a need to counter a possible Southern tendency towards imagining that recent investments have adequately addressed territorial housing shortages. This calls for co-ordination and common voice, a strategic plan including a communications strategy, and new, solid data to describe the reality.

An almost non-existent housing market, near-total dependency on federal transfers, and high rate of income assistance dependency, clearly require the investment of very large sums in order to increase the supply of social housing. Nunavut is alone, among the territories, in that the main solution to its homelessness problem is so clear: much more social housing must be built. The problems and solutions in the other territories are more multivariate.

The \$300M recently earmarked for territorial housing will certainly have a positive effect on mitigating or reducing territorial homelessness. The \$500M for mitigating socio-economic impacts in the NWT will likely also have a beneficial effect, in the NWT. However, we cannot say that the homelessness situation in the NWT will improve owing to further socio-economic dislocation expected from the MacKenzie gas project. The additional funding available to the GNWT may be insufficient, and besides, the situation is multivariate and increased funding is not the only solution.

Nonetheless, this is a large injection and clearly welcome, although the distribution and conditions associated with this funding are unclear at present. This seems an ideal opportunity to establish a multi-year research to assess the now-and-after affects of the major construction schemes on territorial homelessness.

Recommendation 17: Establish inter-governmental and inter-stakeholder discussions with a view towards establishing a large-scale research project to examine the effects of the major housing investments on the incidence and character of territorial homelessness. The federal and the territorial governments may all be in positions to assist such a project.

Appendix A – Survey Covering Letter

Hello

My name is Peter Jackson. I am the Principal Investigator for MaxSys Professionals and Solutions of a study being conducted for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, National Secretariat on Homelessness. This study will help the National Secretariat on Homelessness develop activities to increase knowledge of homelessness in the North. It will facilitate the use of existing information, identify areas where additional information is needed, and help develop plans to acquire and share that information.

Your name was given to me by (name to be inserted at time of writing) as someone knowledgeable about northern homelessness who may be interested in participating in the study. The purpose of this E-mail is to introduce the study and to start to build a community of partnerships

I am interested in hearing from you, if you would like to participate in the study or be kept informed as it develops please respond to this message indicating your interests. If you can identify organizations or groups that should be considered stakeholders, that would be most appreciated. As well, I would appreciate any feedback/suggestions you may have.

I am certain that you will agree that a comprehensive communications strategy for the sharing of information on homelessness in the North will be very beneficial.

Thank you

*Peter Jackson
Principal Investigator
Information Sharing on Homelessness in the North
Tel: (819) 778-2737
Jackson@maxsys.ca*

Information Sharing on Homelessness in the North - Study Overview

Study Objective

This study will provide recommendations to develop activities to increase knowledge around homelessness in the North and ways that knowledge may be shared.

Study Approach

This study will be based on primary research. Literature searches will be limited to familiarising the researchers with the current body of information available on homelessness in the North.

To increase knowledge implies that we know what knowledge now exists and to a certain extent what value it has. A questionnaire will be used to determine how current stakeholders use existing information, how valuable they find the information, how easy it is to access, and what additional information they require.

After reviewing the questionnaires, the researchers will conduct interviews to validate the questionnaires and to seek stakeholders' input where questionnaires may not be appropriate. The interviews will also address the need to speak directly with members of the communities and to understand their needs and their priorities.

Whenever feasible, the study team will encourage Capacity Development by using local researchers. The feasibility of developing northern research as a recognised discipline and the actions needed to implement it will also be addressed.

Appendix B - Research Questionnaire

INFORMATION SHARING ON HOMELESSNESS IN THE NORTH

Introduction

Toward a New Canadian Housing Framework was an Invitational Community Forum held at the Explorer Hotel, Yellowknife, NWT on January 22, 2005. A number of key themes emerged during the day, one of which concerned Information. Among the Forum's recommendations was a need for better information about the North and its population. Participants agreed that there is a need to speak directly to people in the communities to understand their needs and their priorities and that the capacity to do research in the North should be developed.

This study will address these recommendations. The investigators will speak directly with people in the communities to understand their needs and priorities. It will seek to determine what sources and types of information are most useful to those addressing the problem of homelessness in the North.

The study is designed to help increase knowledge about homelessness in the North, improve current capacity to use available information on the topic, and create a legacy of sustained research on northern homelessness.

As a first step, this questionnaire has been prepared to identify what information is being used now and what additional information is needed. It will be followed with a series of interviews to speak directly with people in the communities. A description of the questionnaire follows.

Please return completed questionnaires to pjackson@videotron.ca . If necessary, questionnaires may be returned by mail to:

Peter Jackson
254 rue De Honfleur
Gatineau, QC J9H 6R7

Return postage costs will be reimbursed during the follow-up interview.
If you have any questions, please call collect 819-778-2737.

Section 1

The information you provide in this section will be available only to the study investigators and will be used solely to track the questionnaires during the study and to allow the investigator to contact you to clarify any areas of uncertainty. By completing the questionnaire and submitting it to the study investigator(s) either electronically or on paper, you are explicitly consenting to the use of the information for the purposes of preparing the study.

Last Name _____

First Name _____

Street Address _____

City, Town, or Village _____

Territory or Province _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone (____) _____

E-mail _____

Section 2

From the following groups, please check that which best describes your function at this time. If you are a member of more than one group or have been in the past, please add a brief explanation:

- I provide immediate help for homeless people (e.g. I work at/operate a shelter or find alternative living spaces for people. I work with homeless people as part of my regular activities).
- I plan or develop programmes to help homeless people as a group or I provide advice and assistance to someone who does. I do not usually meet with homeless people directly.
- I consider myself an advocate for homeless people and provide information about homeless people to those in the groups above.
- Other (please describe)

Do you have access to E-mail?

- Yes
- No

Do you have high speed access to the internet?

- Yes
- No If no, do you have dial-up (slow speed) access to the internet? Yes No

Section 3

In this section please address any issues about information sharing on Homelessness in the North that you consider important.

3.1 What sources of information are important or helpful in the fulfilling of your role?

3.2 What type and form of information would you like to have access to, to help you fulfil your role.

3.3 What are your priorities for Homelessness in the North?

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Appendix C - Homelessness in the Territorial Context: Detailed Examination of the Context

Overview

This Section describes the main determining factors setting territorial homelessness apart from the homelessness in the southern, provincial milieu. The determining factors discussed are ones that create the problem, as well as ones that make complicate attempts to solve the problem by means of southern approaches. Some of these determinants are obvious while others are obscure or misunderstood, even among Northern stakeholders. The aim of this Section is twofold:

First - Fill a gap in the published knowledge by offering a brief, but thorough, account of the main determinants of the territorial homelessness problem. It is expected that such a description will help stakeholders in the North and the South develop a more complete and balanced worldview of the situation. This Report is an overview, so the Author makes no claim of absolute completeness.

Second – Put the responses of informants in context, and allow for an analysis of issues arising. Note that this Section is a description only. The responses are analysed later in Part 3.

Historical Considerations

Housing in the Pre-Settlement Period

Problems related to housing are relatively new in the Territorial North. For millennia the mobile Aboriginal populations built what they needed, where they needed it, and with the materials on hand. These dwellings were usually seasonal or temporary. Homelessness was not an issue to mobile groups of people who could construct their own shelters. Housing only became an issue in recent decades when the Aboriginal population took up a less mobile mode of settlement-based life. The recentness of this transition continues to influence the Northern housing situation⁶. In particular, it is difficult for a Southerner to comprehend the housing or homelessness in the North without a basic understanding of this history.

The establishment of fur trading posts – starting in the 1600s in the Eastern Arctic – marked the introduction of European dwellings. These were built of local wood where possible, or else entirely of imported materials. The posts, most of which were operated by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), comprised the entire government presence for three centuries. Indeed, until the HBC ceded the North ("Rupert's Land") to the Crown in 1870, the HBC administered the North as a pseudo-government on behalf of the Crown. In places, this role actually continued until the establishment of government infrastructure, as late as the 1950s. In some places – and often near the trading posts – the churches built missions. The Metis - a people known for entrepreneurial

spirit – and a few Indians built permanent dwellings near the missions and posts. This was usually because they derived employment from these places. However, the vast majority of the Aboriginal population came to these places only when they needed to trade or engage in social activity with neighbouring bands or communities.

The Yukon (YT) was the first territory to experience colonisation. The gold rush of the late 1890s brought thousands of immigrants seeking their fortunes, and for the first time in the North, a permanent government presence including police detachments. The end of the gold rush signalled economic stagnation and White out-migration, but a core of a couple of thousand Southerners remained in the first organised Northern settlements: principally, Whitehorse and Dawson. Clashing of cultures and interests resulted in the establishment of reserves for the Yukon's Indian population. There, under the old and paternalistic Indian Policy, they could be supervised by an Indian agent and kept distant from the White population. For many decades, these people on reserves were expected to see to their own housing⁷.

The boom in the Yukon spurred the Crown to deal with Indian land occupancy in the NWT with a view towards eventual colonisation. Treaty Number 8, covering the southernmost part of the MacKenzie District, was signed in 1899. Treaty 11 later covered the rest of the Western Sub-Arctic. The Indians there – the Dene – had no interest in reserve life, so apart from settling the land ownership question in the eyes of Southerners, the treaties had little immediate impact. There was little White presence in the MacKenzie District, outside of the HBC posts and the mission posts (which sometimes had schools), until the arrival of thousands of troops during World War Two. The War brought the first roads, increased and permanent government presence, and sufficient infrastructure to support ongoing resource development. War also brought – especially in the Yukon – a new and severe round of epidemic diseases. These killed many Yukon Indians and seriously upset their socio-economic life. Gold mining led to the establishment of Yellowknife. This initial colonisation and urbanisation directly affected only a fraction of the Aboriginal population. Most of the Dene, living in the vicinity around remote trading posts, continued as before. Housing was thus still not an issue, and social housing was not yet thought of.

The War had little effect on the Inuit in what is now Nunavut, but military development during the subsequent peace had a profound effect. Government policy was still to leave the Inuit to their own devices, providing them with destitute rations and supplies as required through isolated detachments of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, trading posts, and missions. The Inuit were particularly hard-hit by diseases such as tuberculosis, periodic food shortages, and a rapidly collapsing fur economy. They were highly dependent on government assistance have been described as being in a chronic state of “tea and biscuit servitude”. Yet the Government resisted robust measures to assist these people, who were in clear and desperate need⁸. The Government did not ignore the Northern Indians. A massive, strategic plan to improve Indian health and socio-economic conditions started in 1945. Within a few years, the MacKenzie District and the Yukon saw the arrival of Indian nursing stations, Indian schools, and more systemic assistance including the beginnings of access to financial assistance programmes.

The early 1950s saw the construction of a Distant Early Warning radar line with stations across the Arctic. American military personnel and American contractors mostly constructed these

stations. The Americans were shocked when destitute Inuit gravitated towards the construction sites – including Frobisher Bay (now Iqaluit) – seeking employment or handouts. The Americans, upset that the Government showed no interest and disregarded requests that the Canadian Government should help the Inuit, did what they could to assist. They also protested – unofficially - through the media. The federal government was embarrassed and started making plans for large-scale socio-economic intervention⁹.

By this time – the early 1950s – the federal government was working out a strategic vision for Northern development. This vision included vastly increasing the federal presence and establishing a basic grid of programmes and services for the Aboriginal populations. The first government houses were for the accommodation of federal employees and military personnel. The late 1950s saw a sharp increase in accommodation for personnel involved in Northern Affairs, Indian Affairs, and Indian Health.

Interlude: Early Federal Housing Programmes in the North

Let us pause to consider assistance that was available to persons Northerners other than government employees, Indians, and Inuit¹⁰. This requires a brief look at the development of federal housing programmes. During the 1950s, the federal government was almost the only government player in housing policy or assistance. Its involvement began during the Great Depression as a means to stimulate the economy through housing construction. The *Dominion Housing Act* (1935), the first national housing legislation, provided loans. These aided in the building of 4,900 units over three years. The Federal Home Improvement Plan of 1937 subsidised interest rates on housing rehabilitation loans for 66,900 units. The *National Housing Act* or NHA (1938) assisted those able to obtain credit to buy a home, refit low-income housing to sanitary standards, and modernise existing homes. The Act also provided for construction of low-rent social housing.

The predecessor of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Wartime Housing Corporation, was created during the War. This organisation built 45,930 units in eight years and assisted in upgrades and refits of existing houses. Its assets passed to CMHC^o, whose initial mandate was to provide homebuyers with mortgages at favourable rates. In 1949, the Government amended the NHA to provide for joint federal-provincial programmes to construct publicly owned and provincially managed housing for low-income families, disabled persons, and seniors.

In 1954, CMHC started insuring loans for mortgages made by private investors against default by the borrower. A *Bank Act* amendment enabled chartered banks to lend mortgage money. This allowed the federal government to phase out its lending role. In 1964, federal legislation allowed for loan transfers, of up to 90% of the cost of construction, to the provinces for the construction of provincially owned public housing. This set the stage for the subsequent establishment of provincial – and territorial – housing corporations.

^o Now “Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation”.

Otherwise, what role did these federal measures have in the Territorial North? The Depression Era federal housing measures do not seem to have applied in the Territorial North. An NHA amendment (1949) established federal-provincial arrangements to build public and provincially managed housing for low-income families, disabled persons, and seniors. However, the territorial governments, still committees of federal bureaucrats based in Ottawa, were unsuitable as partners in these initiatives. Therefore, from the late 1940s until the 1960s, most housing assistance to territorial residents was based on partnerships with municipalities, and through direct federal loans, grants, and guarantees to individuals.

Housing Implications of the Settlement Plan

An unprecedented strategy, to encourage Indians and Inuit to take up permanent residence, began after the War. During the 1940s and the 1950s, most of these people took up residence in approved localities. Social programmes, including the provision or denial of housing, rations, and government allowances, acted as incentive and disincentive to encourage settlement¹¹. The plan had the desired effect of concentrating most of the Aboriginal populations in localities where government officials could administer their welfare, but for the most part, overly optimistic projections about employment were not met. High and chronic levels of welfare dependency ensued, and despite improvement in some areas, persist today.

The first housing assistance to Northern Indians comprised building materials, to assist in the construction of cabins requiring local materials to complete. These were not by any means kits. They consisted of items such as roofing material, nails, hinges and latches, doors, and other aids to local construction. The federal government felt no obligation to provide housing for the Métis, who were left to their own devices. The Inuit needed a different approach: prefabricated “matchbox” houses with oil stoves, assembled during the brief summer season by outside workers. The early prefab “welfare houses” units were soon being supplied in the localities where Indians were wanted to settle. These units – some of which are still in use – proved problematic:

Many Aboriginal residents were unused to life in a southern-design house and their lifestyles were often destructive to the structure. Prefabricated doors and windows failed to withstand the severe cold and needed frequent repair. Interior partitions designed for the southern, EuroCanadian nuclear family were intolerable in the intergenerational, extended family household. Often they were torn out with subsequent weakening of the structure. The oil stoves provided were sometimes sold in favour of a single wood stove. Wood stove or not, pots were constantly on the boil, and garments hung up to dry, creating high humidity which inadequate ventilation amplified to destructive levels. The frequent use of house materials for outbuildings such as smokehouses and shed made for inherently weak dwellings. Housing kits not infrequently went untouched for months or years. In these cases either the builder was in no rush, or he intended to build a log house and use only selected parts from the kit. Logs take a year or more to season. This infuriated bureaucrats and was often interpreted as absence of need and always as blatant disregard of building code standards. Delivery of additional kits to the community was sometimes halted as punishment or sanction. This reaction is less frequent but it still occurs under the territorial housing corporations. Perhaps the most difficult problem was - and is - lack of ownership. Tenants do not care for their dwellings as well as owners. Simply, EuroCanadian housing was found to be highly inadequate in the Northern Aboriginal context¹².

Changes in the 1950s, to the *Indian Act* and the *National Housing Act*, allowed Indians to apply for assistance from CMHC in the same way as other Canadians. Indian Affairs established its own housing programme to complement the CMHC programme. Banks would not provide Indians on reserves with mortgages because their houses were protected under the *Indian Act* against seizure. Regardless, most Indian housing was on plots of federal land – albeit not reserve land – and while not protected against seizure, banks remained unwilling to offer financing. This made federal loan guarantees and free housing materials essential to most families. By 1958, the Welfare Appropriation of Indian Affairs was assisting 77% of all Indian housing completions nationally.¹³

The Emergence of Territorial Housing Programmes

Indian Affairs introduced a comprehensive Indian and Eskimo Housing Programme in the early 60s, but it did not assume overall responsibility for Indian housing until several years later. By the mid-1960s, there were five main classes of housing assistance in the territories: (i) Indian Affairs' Indian and Eskimo Housing Programme; (ii) low-cost mortgage programmes; (iii) government employee housing programmes; (iv) *National Housing Act* loans; and (v) private financing and ownership, sometimes bank-assisted.

By the late 1960s, territorial low-cost housing programmes and CMHC's National Housing Act loans were proving essential to Non-Indian and Non-Inuit people not supplied with a government house. Few of these people had the constant income needed to obtain bank financing. The Yukon Government initiated, in 1967, the first comprehensive territorial housing programme. Its aim was to:

...alleviate the hardship and suffering in the poverty-stricken group of non-Indians. The purpose of this programme is to improve the present deplorable living conditions and endeavour to reduce the incidence of disease and social problems amongst this group of people. So long as the present serious housing problems and poor living conditions remain unsolved, the [Social Welfare] Department will be seriously hampered in its effort to provide effective social services and improve family life.¹⁴

During the 1960s in the NWT, the federal government appointed Local Housing Organisations to deliver housing programmes. An NWT Housing Council approved the first NWT Housing Corporation Ordinance in 1972, and over 60 Local Housing Organisations managed 3,080 housing units. The NWT Housing Corporation was created in 1974 as a territorial Crown corporation. Henceforth the Yukon and NWT Housing Corporations developed along broadly comparable lines. Their assistance grew from the initial rental and purchase programmes to include homeownership assistance; access; and expanded down payment assistance.

By the late 1960s, CMHC had become deeply involved in the territories with the construction of institutional facilities for children and seniors, assisting with delivery of Yukon low-income units, and providing loans direct to homeowners. In fact, CMHC was at the time almost the only provider of mortgages to the general population. Private mortgages were available in Whitehorse and Dawson but were difficult to obtain elsewhere in the Yukon. They were virtually unavailable

in the NWT. Moreover, banks wanted the dwelling insured, and insurance was and is not available in the many still-unincorporated settlements. Also in the late 1960s, CMHC was considering expanding beyond mortgage activities to deliver low-income housing directly or through agents. Experiments with provincial partners led, in 1974, to CMHC's Rural and Native Housing Programme (RNH), whose objective was to:

...assist Native and Non-Native households in 'core housing need' to in rural areas to obtain new or existing affordable, adequate, and suitable homeownership or rental housing. Households in 'core housing need' are those households who cannot afford to obtain adequate and suitable accommodation without paying more than 30 per cent of their income for housing.¹⁵

Apparently more than any other housing programme, RNH brought the term 'core housing need' - and CMHC's definition of it - into common usage. We shall later examine this concept in detail when we consider the housing supply today.

Housing Programmes in the North Today

The direct role of CMHC the North is greatly diminished today. The main players today are overwhelmingly the territorial housing corporations. The high cost of capital construction of modern, national-standard home made the importance of these corporations grow, although these corporations were even more dependent on contributions from CMHC than they are today. In the early 1990s, the unit capital cost of a single-family dwelling ranged from slightly over \$100,000 in the more accessible Yukon communities to \$240,000 in Pelly Bay, NWT, where all materials had to be flown in. Although the latter unit actually cost \$254,700 to build, its lifetime cost was \$845,000 according to the lifetime costing model^p imposed on CMHC by Treasury Board.¹⁶ This costing model meant that units were funded according to how CMHC had to contribute over their service lifetime. This had the effect of halving the number of units that would be otherwise allocated on the normal basis of capital outlay. This problem began to resolve itself when CMHC's assistance to the territorial housing corporations moved towards more general financial contributions.

The territories were relatively hard-hit when, in 1993, the federal government froze spending on social housing including stopping its off-reserve, Aboriginal-specific housing assistance. Excepting some locally funded projects, no new Aboriginal-specific housing has been built for non-reserve aboriginal households since 1993¹⁷. Notwithstanding this, off-reserve Aboriginal people in the territories continue to receive assistance through the general programmes of the territorial housing corporations.

^p Lifetime costing models usually assume a service lifetime of 15 or 20 years, but a dwelling can remain in actual service for many decades in increasingly dilapidated condition. This is especially evident in the Yukon where some dwellings are over a half-century old. As the climate becomes harsher – such as throughout Nunavut – problems such as wind desiccation and high interior humidity can reduce a new unit to unfit status within a decade. Housing shortages mean that units continue in occupation regardless of their run-down condition. It is therefore impossible to produce representative statistics on how long a Northern house lasts.

By 1999, when the NWT was divided to form Nunavut, the NWT Housing Corporation had built more than 6,000 houses, and renovated and assisted with many more. This is not to suggest that needs are being met; merely that the territorial corporations – especially in the former NWT – have been very active over their first three decades of existence. The housing corporations deliver their own programmes and, through multi-year funding agreements, they deliver CMHC’s programmes. Today, the support from CMHC is oriented towards improving the availability of safe, affordable housing. The intent here is not to catalogue the programmes offered by CMHC or by the territorial corporations. The point is that territorial residents deal with the territorial corporations – rather than with CMHC directly – in most matters of assisted housing today¹⁸.

Today the Nunavut Housing Corporation is responsible provides territorial assistance in Nunavut. The Inuit continue to protest that the termination of Inuit access to Aboriginal-specific housing assistance, over a decade ago, has greatly contributed to housing deficiencies in Nunavut. The Inuit Tapirisat Kanatami (ITK) states that simply assisting the Nunavut Housing Corporation, to deliver housing programmes to Nunavut residents generally, has severely disadvantaged the Inuit particularly those with low income in the more remote communities. The ITK continues to lobby the federal government to allow Inuit access to the housing support offered to reserve Indians¹⁹.

Finally, the Conservative Government’s Spring 2006 Budget has re-introduced federal contributions to off-reserve housing. To the Inuit and other off-reserve stakeholders, this appears to be a major victory. It remains to be seen how the trust fund for off-reserve Aboriginal housing will be allocated, or indeed whether the Nunavut Housing Corporation will be able to access a portion of these funds for general rather than Inuit-specific housing. These questions aside, it would appear that additional assistance to territorial off-reserve Aboriginals is now forthcoming.

The Jurisdictional Landscape

Special Legal Circumstances of the Territories

The federal-provincial jurisdictional demarcations – and disputes – regarding responsibility for homeless people are not exactly mirrored in the territorial context. Understanding the nature of territorial government jurisdiction is central to understanding some of the challenges faced in the funding and delivery of services to the territorial homeless.

The *British North America Act* (BNA Act) of 1867 does not explicitly state responsibility for homeless people.²⁰ Section 91 of the *BNA Act* assigns the federal government specific powers of national scope, principally: defence; criminal law; money; post office; international affairs; transport; taxation; and Peace, Order, and Good Government capability. Section 92 allows the provinces to create municipal governments; deal with local matters; and attend to hospitals, asylums, charities, and education. The courts have interpreted the latter to mean “social welfare” in general and “health care” in particular.

Federal responsibilities in respect of the health of Canada’s homelessness are unclear. The Constitution clearly divides powers relating to health care but not powers relating to health generally. Section 93 gives the provinces, not the federal government, responsibility for residual

powers other than those stated. This implies that homelessness is partially or completely provincial jurisdiction. This being said, in recent years the federal government has attempted to assist, without impinging on provincial and territorial sensitivities, mainly by fostering national approaches to health programmes and services for homeless people; and through research.

Housing is a “residual powers” matter in which the provinces have policy and programme jurisdiction, and the federal government may offer assistance that does not impinge on jurisdiction. Despite this demarcation, prior to 1970, virtually all housing policy in Canada was federal, and it had been largely federal since housing policies were introduced during the 1930s. Since then the balance of federal and P/T involvement has changed. The emergence and growth of P/T housing corporations, injections of P/T capital, and significant reductions in federal programme funding have changed the landscape. In 1992, the federal government tabled a constitutional proposal for federal withdrawal in various areas of provincial jurisdiction including housing. This was not accepted, but contractions in federal housing programmes followed²¹.

The territorial legislatures, as statutory creations of the federal Parliament,²² lack Constitutional legitimacy, although by long-established understanding, the federal government permits them to pass Section 92 type laws and generally behave as a province. This is delegated authority but territorial statutes are enforceable by the courts. The territories therefore have fiscal and administrative pseudo-jurisdiction in respect of social housing and other provincial-type programme areas that concern homeless people.

There is a perception, which appears common in the Territorial North, that the federal government has a more direct responsibility towards the territorial homeless than it has towards the provincial homeless. This may stem, in part, from the memory that direct federal administration of many territorial programmes and services was the norm until recent decades, and that the territorial councils were once comprised of Ottawa-based federal bureaucrats. Direct federal administration of territorial affairs was especially strong in the NWT, which until well after the Second World War lacked the strong municipal organisation that developed in the Yukon decades earlier. Yet the fact remains that the federal government devolved practically all of its province-like programme activities decades ago.

Notwithstanding this, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development administers the statutes that create the territorial governments, and the territorial Commissioners remain on the Departmental organisation chart below the Minister. This said, the reality is that the Commissioner and the Minister are very disinclined to speak on matters that concern the democratically elected territorial legislatures. These legislatures are understandably protective of the jurisdiction that they are allowed to exercise. If only for this reason of democratic tradition, it seems most unlikely that any federal government would attempt to address territorial homelessness in a direct, robust manner. The pattern has been set that the solutions must be territorial in conception and territorial in implementation.

The problem then comes down to money, not jurisdiction. The Nunavut, NWT, and Yukon governments (in that declining order) are exceptionally dependent on federal transfers for their basic functioning. They lack the ability to raise significant revenues. The territories share with the provinces the problem that Sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution assign the federal

government the greater taxation capability: direct and indirect taxation versus direct taxation only. The federal statutes, which create the territories, mimic this federal-provincial imbalance in revenue-generating ability. Secondly, the territories have weak tax bases from which to generate revenue. Thirdly, they experience a variety of acute and chronic financial difficulties in the face of limited federal transfers and exceptionally high costs of doing business. Ergo, although the territories exercise provincial-like powers, their weak economic positions mean a limited ability to implement robust measures to address the perplexing homelessness problems that they face. Under such circumstances, there is a tendency to look to federal coffers for assistance. Appeals for increases in the general transfers are ongoing, and periodically the various federal-territorial fiscal arrangements have been renegotiated.

Note that on 1 April 1999, the former the Northwest Territories (NWT) was split into a high Arctic territory (Nunavut or “NT”) and a western Arctic / sub-Arctic territory (the NWT as it now remains)²³. This changed the location of central government (Iqaluit is the Nunavut capital) but not the delegated nature of territorial authority. Note also that Nunavut is not an Inuit self-government zone. It is a territory like the others, with a public legislature and system of public municipalities. The Inuit control the political agenda by virtue of their strong demographic dominance.

Legal Situation of Aboriginal Territorial Residents

Responsibility for Programmes and Services

It is widely, wrongly imagined that the welfare of Aboriginal people is a federal responsibility. In fact, the provinces and territories deliver most programmes and services to Registered Indians who reside off-reserve, and on-reserve the federal government provides a minimum of support in the absence of provincial or territorial involvement. This rule also applies, with some aberration, in the three territories.

Section 91(24) of the *BNA Act* gives the federal Government responsibility for Indians and lands reserved for Indians. In respect of programmes and services including social housing and measures for the homeless, neither the Constitution nor case law provides a binding definition of the nature and the extent of this responsibility. It has long been federal policy that, in the absence of Indian-specific federal legislation in the programme areas, provincial jurisdiction applies, and therefore the provinces ought to provide all programmes and services to Indians on- and off-reserves. Four decades ago, the federal government proposed to transfer all of its Indian programmes and services to the provinces. This was unsuccessful and, for years, the federal government has funded a basic level of provincial type services on-reserve on the basis of policy rather than sense of legal obligation. No attempt has been made to mirror all of the programmes and services offered by the province, or territory, off-reserve. This situation has been described as an uneasy truce which is periodically broken, and which is constantly at risk of being settled, one way or another, by a high court judgement that would have profound economic implications²⁴.

Over a period of several decades, the federal government contracted its range off-reserve Aboriginal programmes and services to the point where the off-reserve realm is almost completely P/T fiscal responsibility. Today, the most significant one remaining is arguably the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Programme of Health Canada. This provides drugs, medical supplies, eyeglasses, patient transportation, and a few other medically necessary services to Registered Indians and Inuit regardless of residence. This programme is important to the many Territorial Indian and Inuit homeless.

Treaties provide the option of taking “treaty land entitlement” or reserve land. Yet there are only two small reserves in the NWT, although there are many Indian communities. One of the two reserves⁹ is the tiny Salt Plains Reserve #195 near Fort Smith, established in 1929 as a fishing reserve and in 1942 as an Indian Reserve. The other is Hay River Dene Reserve #1, established in 1971.²⁵ Federal policy on treaty land entitlement has long held that there is no federal obligation to pay for infrastructure, housing, and other services on new reserves. This explains why Salt Plains has not developed beyond a collection of fishing and hunting cabins. However, Hay River Dene Reserve is a reserve in the full sense, except that the territory, not federal departments, fund or deliver basic services including housing. This anomaly is explained by transfer agreements - most signed from the 1950s to the 1970s - by which the GNWT took over responsibility for programmes and services to Indians²⁶.

Conversely, most Yukon Indians have lived on reserves despite a lack of treaty. Orders-in-Council formally established the first five between 1900 and 1910, with a half-dozen more set aside by various instruments up to 1980. Scholars have generally described the federal government’s historical policy towards Yukon Indians as one of disinterest and occasional neglect. It can be summed up by the phrase “best left as Indians”²⁷. As in the provinces generally, these reserves are islands of federal land specifically set aside for their residents, and surrounded by a provincial / territorial realm.

No reserves exist in Nunavut, although during the 1920s the Inuit were briefly brought under the *Indian Act* with a view towards their civilisation and assimilation, until the impracticality of such a measure was realised²⁸. A 1939 Supreme Court ruling determined that “Eskimos” are legally Indians although the *Indian Act* does not apply²⁹. There are no Inuit-specific housing measures and almost no programmes and services specific to the Inuit. As is the case elsewhere in Canada, Metis residents of the three territories lack access to the programmes and services available to Registered Indians.

Each of the territories has a housing corporation whose main responsibility is subsidising or actually providing social housing and government housing. These public corporations serve the entire populations in the NWT and Nunavut, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal with little distinction. This is also true in the Yukon except on Yukon reserves, where CMHC has a more direct role as it has in the provinces.

⁹ In its “band profiles” and “community profiles”, INAC continues to list all 30 communities as “reserves” when in fact 28 are bands or settlements and not on reserve land. This reflects common usage rather than legal status of land ownership.

Financial Complications Related to Federal Lands

The vast majority of territorial land is federal land. In order for this land to be legally a “reserve”, it must be designated such by federal Order-in-Council and recorded in INAC’s Indian Lands Registry. Fifteen such designations have been made for the Yukon and two for the NWT. For over a century, the *Indian Act* has prohibited the seizure of the property of Indians on an Indian reserve. This makes it difficult for reserve Indians – and other people residing on reserves – from obtaining bank or other financing for building, repairing, or expanding their homes. As do reserve residents in the provinces, residents of territorial reserves face additional bureaucracy, delays, and occasionally refusals when seeking federal housing loan guarantees. There would be no loans from non-government sources without these guarantees.

Moreover, the general housing market does not operate in reserves, making it difficult to buy or sell a house there. People can own their house but not the land under it. Band members therefore must obtain a ticket to occupy a lot in order to build a house. Sometimes, for various reasons, obtaining financing or a lot is impossible, leading to a choice to relocate off the reserve.

Self-Government

Where a self-government agreement does *not* exist in the NWT or the Yukon, and the band is situated off-reserve, local governance is municipal under a territorial municipal government ordinance. The past 20 years have seen an accelerating pace of regional self-government in the Yukon and the NWT. These now adhere to the federal “Inherent Right Policy”³⁰ and reflect the existing Gwich’in, Sahtu and Inuvialuit land claim agreements templates³¹. The settlement of land claims is a precondition to the negotiation of a self-government regime. Various negotiations are progressing in the NWT, the achievement to date being the *Tlicho Land Claims and Self Government Act* (S.C., 2005, c. 1).

The self-government situation in the Yukon, based on existing reserves, is considerably more encompassing. The *Yukon First Nations Self-Government Act* (1994, c. 35) and the *First Nations (Yukon) Self-Government Act* (R.S.Y. chap. 90) recognise First Nation jurisdiction as described in the “Yukon First Nation Self-Government Agreement between the Government of Canada, the Government of the Yukon and the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations ratified by these First Nations on September 15, 1992”. These regions have a degree of lawmaking capability in a wide range of areas including housing, but to date they have not exercised these powers much in any areas. In the absence of exercising these powers, territorial statutes and regulations still apply.

An unknown, but apparently significant, number of urban territorial homeless are Aboriginal people who originate from the smaller communities. There is little that these communities can do to stem the out-migration that occurs when their abilities to house and employ their local populations are strictly limited. It is difficult to imagine how self-governing communities would be any better positioned to address these matters.

The municipalities experiencing homelessness problems are limited in their response by the nature of local governance. Consequently, they rely upon benevolent organisations (i.e.,

Salvation Army) to provide refuge and most of the support services that are not provided by territorial government departments. These organisations attempt to respect culture and tradition in the services they provide, a difficult challenge given their culturally diverse clientele.

Demographic Considerations

Population Growth

The territories occupy a vast land area but have, in total, barely a hundred thousand inhabitants. Their second demographic distinction is exceptionally high proportions of the population that are Aboriginal. Three quarters of Nunavut's residents are Aboriginal, and nearly all are Inuit. In the NWT, 44% of residents are Aboriginal, mostly North American Indian followed by Inuit and Métis. Only 21% of Yukon residents are Aboriginal, 90% of whom are North American Indian.

Total Populations and Aboriginal Populations of Canada and its Territories³²

	1 January 2006	October to December		Aboriginal Pop. 2001 Census	Aboriginal Pop. as % Total
		2004	2004		
		% Variation			
Canada	32,422,919	0.12	0.14	976,305	3%
Yukon	31,150	0.23	-0.27	6,545	21%
NWT	42,526	0.10	-1.02	18,725	44%
Nunavut	30,245	0.21	0.37	22,720	75%

The territorial populations are growing less rapidly than some might imagine, and the growth – especially in Nunavut – is mainly driven by high Aboriginal birth rates. The NWT's population has returned to growth after a rate decline in the 1990s. Major resource developments in the NWT (e.g., diamond mining and MacKenzie Valley petroleum) have attracted migrants from out-of-territory, but have not had the profound population impact that one might expect, when one takes the effect of high Aboriginal birth rates into account.

Population by Year, Canada and Territories, 2001 - 2005³³

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
	Persons (thousands) [†]				
Canada	31,021.3	31,372.6	31,669.2	31,974.4	32,270.5
YT	30.1	30.1	30.6	30.9	31.0
NWT	40.8	41.5	42.2	42.9	43.0
NT	28.1	28.7	29.2	29.7	30.0

[†] Note: The small population differences, between the graphs, reflect slightly different measurement approaches and measurement times. These are Census data and considered reasonably reliable nonetheless.

**Components of Population Growth (Canada, YT, NWT, NT)
1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005³⁴**

	Canada	YT	NWT	NT
Births	337,856	345	711	785
Deaths	234,645	164	171	138
Immigration	244,579	58	80	9
Emigration	35,866	12	17	12
Net temporary emigration	25,563	23	17	9
Returning emigrants	15,786	15	0	0
Net non-permanent residents	-6,003	-81	-28	-20
Net inter-provincial migration	...	-6	-427	-296

The Yukon population is stable, despite growth of the First Nation cohort, because deaths and especially out-migration are balancing influences. More people left the Yukon Territory than moved into it during the decade 1993-2003³⁵. Note that, unlike the NWT, the Yukon is not experiencing major new resource-related economic developments. The Yukon's medium growth population projection suggests that, in 2015, the total population will only have increased 4.4%³⁶.

Demography and Northern Homelessness

There are no credible estimates of the number of territorial homeless people. However, it is widely thought, with good reason, that the number of homeless people far exceeds the number of people with no fixed address who are accommodated in the emergency shelters. Systematic attempts to count the various categories of territorial homeless remain to be undertaken. We can say confidently that the 2001 Census occupancy rate data for the Territorial North are gross understatements, if only on grounds of known counts of shelter occupancy: Northwest Territories – 20; Yukon Territory -15; and Nunavut Territory – 5³⁷.

There are no credible statistics on the Aboriginal proportion of the territorial homeless populations, but anecdotal media reports and comments from informants suggest that Aboriginal representation in shelters is at least as great as Aboriginal representation in the overall population. Despite an absence of numerical data, it is fair to state from anecdotal reports that Aboriginal people comprise a visible and large part of the territorial homelessness problem in the larger centres, particularly in the four^s municipalities where shelters are located. Research shows that Aboriginal people typically account for a disproportionate number of homeless people in southern urban centres. For example - in Toronto, Aboriginal people comprise 25% of homeless people, but only 2% of the municipal population; approximately 72% of homeless men in some Winnipeg neighbourhoods are Aboriginal; and a study in Saskatoon determined that the majority of young people living on the street were Aboriginal³⁸. A credible writer estimates that

^s Iqaluit, Yellowknife, Inuvik, and Whitehorse.

Aboriginal people are over-represented in Canada's homeless population by a factor of about ten³⁹.

Analogue studies such as these lead one to presume that Aboriginal representation among the territorial urban homeless is very high. Most territorial news reports about homelessness, and especially about homeless individuals, indicate Aboriginal identity. These and other accounts also suggest that homeless people in remote communities are usually Aboriginal people.

There is a severe lack of data about origins and migration of the territorial homeless. We also lack data on the general movement of territorial residents between communities.

We do have a fair idea of the migration characteristics of the overall population. These data provide insight into causes and patterns of homelessness:

Population 5 Years and Over by Mobility Status, Canada and Territories, 2001⁴⁰

	Canada	YT	NWT	NT
Total	27,932,590	26,795	34,080	23,285
Non-movers	16,222,260	13,760	15,625	10,305
Movers	11,710,325	13,035	18,455	12,975
Non-migrants	6,251,590	7,285	9,965	8,460
Migrants	5,458,735	5,755	8,490	4,520
Internal migrants	4,482,775	5,320	7,975	4,410
Intra-provincial migrants	3,577,105	1,585	2,240	1,895
Inter-provincial migrants	905,665	3,740	5,740	2,515
External migrants	975,965	430	515	105

How does this relate to homelessness? The simple answer is that the territorial populations are extremely mobile, with very high rates of internal migration in particular. One presumes that a highly mobile population, with limited economic opportunities and insufficient supply of shelter, will have a high incidence of homelessness⁴¹. We also know that the mobility tendency of Aboriginal people can have numerous negative impacts upon the service agencies who attempt to provide these people with services, as well as negative impacts upon the clients themselves⁴². Observe from the table above that almost one half of NWT residents has moved, nearly one in five is an internal migrant, and one in seven comes from outside the territory. Figures such as these support, but do not confirm, anecdotal reports that shelters house a substantial proportion of persons from other locales.

In the territories, as in the provinces, there is a long-term migration from rural and isolated regions towards urban centres. Intra-territorial migration patterns – who moves from where – are imperfectly understood due to a shortage of data. The urbanisation trend is nonetheless evident from urban growth and rural decline, or from urban growth that is greater than rural growth. Urbanisation seems especially prevalent in the NWT. The share of the population living in small

communities has declined by about 10% from 1976 to 2004. Yellowknife's share grew from 28.6% to 44.5%. The percentage living in Inuvik fell about 7% over the same period, although Inuvik's population grew substantially⁴³.

Urbanisation is a less recent phenomenon in the Yukon, where 74% of the population live in and around the capital Whitehorse, and only one of 17 serviced communities is not on the road system. In Nunavut, the bulk of the population lives in small centres, and while Inuit migration to the capital Iqaluit is cited as a cause of many problems, credible migration statistics are unavailable.

Part of the explanation of the territorial homelessness problem would appear to be a high tendency towards mobility of the territorial populations. The Aboriginal populations appear to be the most nomadic of the groups. These peoples are historically nomadic within their traditional areas of occupation. Most of these people lived on the land – or in the Yukon, on and around reserves - except when they had reason to visit the trading posts or White settlements. Life in tents, bush cabins, and sod houses was the norm until vigorous federal programme initiatives discouraged nomadic life in favour of settlement living in the 1940s and 1950s. Yet these bands, communities, and individuals retained an ability and willingness to range over large areas while maintaining a home settlement. The reasons for travel remain the same: hunting and trapping, social contact, recreation, cultural reasons, finding seasonal or permanent work, obtaining supplies, and even obtaining liquor especially when the community of origin is 'dry'. Travel by air and road is common today, but so too is less expensive travel by boat and snowmobile. To many families and individuals, the prospect of a journey over the land of hundreds of kilometres, in challenging weather, is simply a fact of life.

One can only speculate about the extent that this predilection towards mobility is connected with homelessness. Nevertheless, it is a factor worthy of serious contemplation.

Geographic and Climatic Considerations

Geographic and Climatic Effects on Housing Supply

Transportation of Housing Materials

Most of the inhabited territorial regions have discontinuous or continuous "permafrost" or permanently frozen ground. In the far north, it is entirely continuous and up to 2,000 metres deep. Permafrost poses moderate to severe transport and engineering challenges in the construction of housing. Roads over permafrost must be heavily engineered at great expense, using large amounts of materials, or else the frozen underburden will thaw and the road surface will collapse. Consider, as illustration, the original Alaska Highway. The US Army Corps of Engineers hastily built this major artery during 1942. Removal of the protective surface, by heavy excavators, left areas of frozen mud and aggregates open to the warming effects of the sun and erosive effects of passing vehicles. During the first summer, much of the road became mire that only tracked vehicles could navigate. Most of the road had to be rebuilt over the next several

years.⁴⁴ The high cost of building stable gravel or asphalt roads is a major factor in the continued isolation of many communities, and a prime driver in the cost of most goods and services.

The Alaska Highway had a pivotal role in opening the NWT and Yukon to modern development. This road was improved over two decades until the last sections were paved. The Alaska Highway formed the trunk for other major roads to branch off, including a long, desolated stretch from Dawson YT, past the treeline, to Inuvik NWT. This all-weather road system, which links to the Alaskan seaport of Skagway, make most of Yukon's communities considerably better connected than their counterpart NWT communities. The fact that only one of Yukon's 17 communities is not on the road system moderates the problems of supplying building materials.

Road building in the NWT began in the winter of 1943, when a military tractor-train road was forced from Grimshaw, Alberta to Hay River. It was resurfaced and opened to civilian use after the War. The Great Slave Lake Railway reached Hay River in 1959. This town had already developed into a small port for the barges that supplied Great Slave Lake and communities along the MacKenzie up to Inuvik. Soon this railhead became the bulk storage and transshipment point for construction materials for the inland part of the territory up to Inuvik. Hay River is still where building resource developers and by merchants stockpile supplies for sale to the public. Hay River is where the NWT Housing Corporation assembles its housing shipments. As is the norm for social and government housing in the North, these shipments typically consist of complete housing kits.

Many of the NWT's small, isolated communities lack permanent road access due to the costs of overcoming permafrost. The NWT's all-season road system is little more than a paved road north from Alberta, through Hay River to Yellowknife, with a gravel-surface branch heading west to Fort Simpson and south to Fort Nelson, BC. This all-weather system has some branches, but many communities are connected only in winter via ice roads. Many communities have no road connection at all. Building materials often arrive in the summer by barge. These supplies are hastily assembled into basic structures, which can be heated, before the winter makes outdoor work too difficult. This annual rush creates practical problems, and costs escalate when summer deliveries are late or do not arrive. Weather, and late approval of funding, contributes to the occasional yearlong delay of housing construction.

The road situation in Nunavut is simple: Nunavut communities lack road connection with the outside and with each other. Ships and barges deliver housing materials, generally once or twice during the summer, and at extreme cost.

Influence of Severe Climate on Housing Design and Condition

For several decades most structures built with government funding, and to approved designs, have taken into account the problem of permafrost. Unless a home is built on rock (and some must be, an additional challenge), or supported on raised and possibly insulated posts, heat from the dwelling will gradually thaw the permafrost. The foundation will then sink, and the site may be rendered useless for further housing construction.

Prolonged deep cold, often below -30°C, requires expensive insulation and robust heating arrangements, although there are still some log homes in the YT and NWT with only a wood stove. The cold means keeping windows and doors shut for most of the year, making special ventilation necessary. Without this additional engineering, moisture builds up, leading to rot, mould, mildew, and damage from water film or puddles. Thus, the cold also has an influence on the quality of indoor air, especially when occupants smoke or the dwelling is crowded. Other aspects of harsh environment (e.g., wind, dryness of the air, and occasionally extreme variations in temperature in a year) conspire to reduce the life expectancy of housing units.

Heating oil is brought in under difficulty and at high cost. So too is the diesel fuel which powers most electricity generation. Small communities often have their own diesel generating station. It is periodically necessary to bring in specialised personnel for maintenance and upgrades. The transportation and local storage of bulk supplies of diesel fuel is challenging. Fuel costs therefore have a major impact on the affordability of housing. Heating subsidies are consequently more important to territorial home occupants than generally elsewhere.

Some homes below the treeline incorporate locally obtainable logs or sawn timber, and indeed, some people still inhabit old and rustic cabins. It is no longer a simple matter to harvest logs and build a house at low cost. Permits are usually required to harvest logs and new homes must meet statutory building code standards. Challenges such as these make for greater reliance on modern-type houses, which are usually better able to contend with the cold.

Influence of Severe Climate on Loss of Housing

There is no convincing evidence that loss of housing, in the territories, is more attributable to severe climates than elsewhere in Canada. Yet it is fair to make two general statements about climate and housing loss. First, territorial public housing authorities can be exceptionally reluctant to evict unruly or destructive tenants due to concerns over their survival under the weather. Some housing authorities have an unwritten policy towards tolerance, particularly when the winter is at its worst, while others will evict without mercy when rules are broken or rent is not paid. Evicted tenants sometimes end up in tents in the cold weather – tents of their own or supplied by sympathetic agencies. The NWT Legislature has discussed the difficulties that this engenders, as in this instance from 2001:

MLAs from both Hay River and Yellowknife said the government should regard as a wake-up signal the use of tents as homes for the homeless. "People cannot camp in Fred Henne Park [in Yellowknife] in December," said Great Slave MLA Bill Braden, adding the NWT Housing Corp. needs to look at ways of improving its public housing programmes. The same day, Monday, Hay River MLA Paul Delorey spoke of the plight of two of his constituents evicted from public housing in early December. The two people are currently living in tents at the Louise Falls Campgrounds, Delorey said, scraping to get by on \$32 per month each of social assistance. Delorey called on the government to implement measures to help people evicted from public housing. He said part of the problem is housing and social assistance are administered by two different departments.⁴⁵

Second, severe climate often exacerbates the difficulties that follow a house fire. Territorial homes do not seem to catch fire with greater statistical frequency than homes elsewhere. What is different is that, especially in winter and mainly in small communities, house fires tend to be catastrophic. The prospect of fire in the remote communities is particularly dreaded. Various factors, including dryness of housing materials and longer response time by volunteer fire fighters, often result in the dwelling burning to the ground. It can be very difficult to house a dislodged family when there is no vacancy rate and the waiting list for new units numbers in the dozens or higher. Fire-damaged housing can remain uninhabitable for an extended period until materials for the repairs arrive. This can mean up to a year when the materials arrive during a short window by barge, ship, or winter road.

The cold can drive homeless people to break into vacant units to sleep, eat, or 'party' (as alcohol consumption is commonly known in the North). Sometimes they start a fire for warmth. In December 2003, a homeless person appears to have broken into a vacant end unit of a six-unit row house, and intentionally or accidentally started a fire. The fire was extinguished but four neighbouring units had to be evacuated⁴⁶.

The tendency of fire to spread rapidly in dry and sometimes old tends to make fire marshals vigilant and intolerant of dangerous conditions, particularly in the case public accommodations. An illuminating example is the closing and evacuation of a hotel in Fort Smith, NWT, in December 2005 at the onset of winter. The fire marshal found no alarms in the hotel, and problems with the building's structure that could allow fire to spread rapidly. The 19 residents were temporarily housed in the gym of the local friendship centre. Social Services later arranged for one month of accommodation at other hotels and boarding homes. In this case, it was revealed that no municipal emergency plan was in place to deal with catastrophic loss of housing⁴⁷. It would appear that other communities still lack such plans.

Geographic and Climatic Effects on the Homeless

Based on descriptive reports, and in the absence of statistics, it appears clear that a significant proportion of homeless people are migrants from small, and often isolated, communities. The costs of travel, back and forth, are high and sometimes extreme. Lacking money for fares or the means to travel such as a boat, the destitute homeless find it extremely difficult to return to their community of origin. Stranded far from their families and support structures, and possibly in an unfamiliar cultural setting, homeless people can experience additional psychosocial stresses. Geography also means that the climate in the Territorial North is harsh and unforgiving. It is worth considering the unique impacts this has on homelessness and the homeless.

Usually, disregarding homeless people is not an option owing to the cold. The summer temperatures in the Yukon and the southern part of the NWT can be quite hot, so unless the weather turns inclement it is possible for persons to sleep outdoors with a sleeping bag or less. During the other three seasons it is essential to have some form of shelter. The low summer temperatures in Nunavut mean there are few days when 'sleeping rough' can be done without significant risk. It is essential to have shelter for at least ten months of the year. The mercury can approach minus 50° in Nunavut, while in the Yukon and NWT, minus 40° is common. There

is a particularly good chance that an intoxicated person will come to injury or death under such conditions.

The medical consequences of homelessness have been studied in detail in the provincial and foreign contexts⁴⁸, but little has been written on the medical impacts of extreme cold environments on the homeless. Canadian health authorities are accustomed to dealing with elevated prevalences of trench foot (immersion foot) and other walking-related injuries among homeless people in winter⁴⁹. Among the provincial homeless, death due to frostbite is common⁵⁰. Media reports indicate that territorial authorities and charities face an even greater challenge in mitigating and treating weather injuries – and medical complications resulting from weather - among the territorial homeless.

Studies of homelessness in Toronto and Edmonton suggest that Aboriginal people comprise a disproportionate number of homeless who sleep on the street rather than in shelters⁵¹. Anecdotal evidence, particularly media reports, suggest that this is also so in the Territorial North. Few would dispute that territorial residents – particularly Aboriginal people accustomed to the land – can be exceptionally tough and hardy. This is a statement about their historic skill at coping with adverse weather. It is by no means a suggestion that homelessness is less a problem for them. Homeless intra-territorial migrants sometimes set up tents and endure weather conditions which southerners would find impossible. Sometimes a tent encampment develops. Problems usually follow. Northerners rightly or wrongly attribute rowdiness, drunkenness, violence, and other social ills to these encampments. Persons taking offence to these encampments have attempted to drive away the occupants by actions which include repeatedly burning the tents down⁵².

Studies of the provincial homeless populations indicate that, while death is sometimes due to freezing, most deaths are the result of injury, substance abuse overdoses, and alcoholic liver disease, and other stresses⁵³. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that climate is a greater cause of death, or injury, among territorial homeless people. It is, however, abundantly clear that extraordinary measures are sometimes necessary to bring homeless people indoors so they will not die. These measures range from the invisible – such as residents bringing a person in overnight so he or she will not freeze – to the highly politicised.

The organised measures to shelter homeless people can be creative, but just as often, they can be frustrated by legal and other complications. For instance, in December 2003, while awaiting funds and a location for a shelter, advocates for homeless people in Inuvik proposed housing homeless people in vacant tents before the deep cold set in[†]. Concerns over legal liability stopped this initiative, leaving homeless people to occupy some of the tents on their own volition, burning fires at night to keep warm. The complications did not end there, as a stakeholder reported to the media:

(The) tents are so close together that all it would take is one spark and the whole yard could go up" ...the town first suggested putting the tents at the end of Navy Road, but that was too far from town. Then the old airstrip was proposed, but it was determined to be too close to town. The fire risk and location difficulties aside, one has to consider the people being sheltered. Inuvik's Turning Point on Kingmingya Road is the town's only emergency shelter, but the policy is that

[†] The extreme maximum winter temperature recorded at Inuvik is minus 56.7 degrees Celsius.

those under the influence of alcohol or drugs are restricted from bedding down at the facility. Simply plopping a tent down anywhere and expecting people who are inebriated to take care of themselves is not going to be enough, according to Edwards. Making sure the tenants have enough wood, or the capacity to get it, he added, is another factor, as is ensuring the location is easily accessible⁵⁴.

This is but one of many reports attesting to the challenges that extreme cold place upon sheltering homeless people in the Territorial North. Note also that tent encampments of (and for) homeless people are by no means unique to the North. The unique aspect of this tent occupancy in the North is that it occurs, on numerous occasions and in centres both large and small, in conditions of extreme cold.

Socio-Economic Considerations

Territorial Dependency on Federal Transfers

The ability of the territorial governments to address their exceptional homelessness challenges is constrained by their relatively economic positions. Compared with the provinces, the territories are extremely dependent on transfer payments from the federal government and extremely challenged to raise own-source revenue to apply to non-core activities. Core activities include housing programmes but not measures specifically to address homelessness.

The NWT leads in terms of economic independence, but still three quarters of its revenues are federal transfers. Until its recent economic boom, the NWT tended to be less independent than the Yukon. Nunavut has by far the greatest dependence on federal transfers and the least fiscal ability to address its non-core issues. Nunavut, with only 8.7% own-source revenue, remains deeply and chronically dependent on transfers. Nunavut's transfer revenues have increased significantly in recent years, causing its own-source contribution, when expressed as a percentage of the total, to drop⁵⁵. Three quarters of the transfer revenue is of the "general purpose" type. The remaining quarter is "specific purpose".

The territorial fiscal ability to address homelessness issues is mostly within the general-purpose type of transfer. This might seem to imply great flexibility to reassign priorities. In reality, maintaining a basic grid of expensive, essential programmes and services takes up the high percentage of non-conditional transfer funding. This leaves little for areas like homelessness – areas that arguably could be left to charities, or simply ignored.

For decades, the territorial governments have considered the transfer arrangements inadequate, and periodically new agreements are reached about the main formula transfer (or "annual grant" as it is often called). Territorial deficits are common, and when a surplus appears, the reason is often that money could not be spent in the year ending.

Territorial Transfer Revenue vs. Own Source Revenue, 2004/05⁵⁶

	YT	NWT	NT
	\$ Millions		
Total revenue	724	1,145	1,116
Own source revenue	124	288	97
	17.1%	25.2%	8.7%

Territorial Transfers by Category, 2004/05⁵⁷

	YT	NWT	NT
	\$ Millions		
General purpose transfers	496	716	788
Specific purpose transfers	103	142	231

Territorial Government Expenditures and Surplus / Deficit, 2004/05⁵⁸

	YT	NWT	NT
	\$ Millions		
Total expenditures	739	1,165	1,094
General government services	72	85	124
Protection of persons and property	65	88	67
Transportation and communication	111	94	36
Health	118	239	217
Social services	98	129	119
Education	124	236	204
Resource conservation and industrial development	71	104	62
Environment	11	4	15
Recreation and culture	24	12	17
Labour, employment and immigration	0	9	7
Housing	14	68	139
Regional planning and development	16	33	35
Research establishments
General purpose transfers	12	49	25
Debt charges	3	13	27
Surplus or deficit	-15	-20	22

Socio-Economic Trends

Yukon Socio-Economic Trends

Of the three territories, and in recent years, the Yukon's economy has been the most stable and the least dominated by public sector activity. In the absence of the type and scope of resource development activity that is occurring in the NWT, the Yukon's economic position is one of steady, natural, unspectacular growth⁵⁹. In 2001, public sector activity accounted for slightly under a quarter (22.1%) of nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and industries made up for the rest⁶⁰. The percentage of public administration has been declining slightly, but as in the other territories, one observes increasing privatisation of government functions.

Percentage of Territorial Populations Employed in Public Sector, 2005⁶¹

	Population (thousands)	Public employees	%
YT	31.0	5,189	17%
NWT	43.0	8,113	19%
NT	30.0	6,262	21%

The table above shows that very high percentages of the territorial populations are employed in the public sector. The importance of public sector employment is more evident considering that these percentages are of the total populations - not just the working age populations – and that many of the remaining working age adults are unemployed.

In the Yukon, unlike in the other territories, we do not see strong economic reasons for changes in homelessness problems or patterns. In the absence of migration data, and data about homeless persons and their needs, it is impossible to hypothesise much about trends in homelessness in the Yukon. We can fairly state that the Yukon's employment situation is far better than in the other territories.

The 2004 seasonally adjusted labour force was 16,100 with an unemployment rate of 5.8%⁶². This low rate is close to provincial norms. The unemployment rate on Yukon's reserves is uncertain, but probably higher. A variety of studies and consultations indicate that the Yukon has high levels of some social problems, particularly those related to poverty conditions, alcohol, and drugs⁶³. Yet reports suggest that the human side of the Yukon's overall socio-economic landscape is not as desperate as in the NWT or Nunavut. This is not to suggest that the Yukon situation is tolerable or acceptable.

A recent federal stakeholder study, comparing victim services in the three territories, paints a comparatively favourable picture of victims' services and some key indicators of social dysfunction:

Most respondents felt that, compared with other Canadian regions, particularly northern jurisdictions, the Yukon Territory has a well-developed continuum of professional services for

victimised people. They note the increasing variety of specialised services for victimised individuals, the effective partnerships between agencies, the growing ability of service providers to address long-term trauma issues and the high volume of work being done by all agencies offering services to victims. Some respondents believe they are seeing the results of these efforts in greater sobriety, increased community awareness and increasing participation in healing events, particularly those based on Aboriginal healing beliefs. Although there is no definitive way to prove it, it may be that lower rates of reported spousal assault, sexual assault and child abuse are the result of these services and interventions. However, all respondents believe that there are still gaps, barriers and needs in the area of service provision to victimised individuals, families and communities. These challenges, as reported by respondents, include limited community support, limited leadership support, resource shortfalls, information gaps, and the judicial system.⁶⁴

This does not allow one to conclude that the Yukon's socio-economic landscape makes homelessness an issue less challenging than supposed. What might be concluded is that the NWT and Nunavut face additional, or exacerbated, socio-economic pressures which compound the problems of homelessness.

NWT Socio-Economic Trends

The NWT has the only territorial economy that is growing sharply and transforming fundamentally⁶⁵. Since 1999, the NWT's economy has risen by a remarkable 69.0%. This is mostly due to diamond extraction and natural gas exploration and development. No less than \$1.5 billion was invested in oil and gas exploration between 1999 and 2004. Capital investment rose in 2004 by 45.6% and increased by about 36.4% in 2005. Capital investment in the NWT in 2005 was around \$1.1 billion more than 1999 levels.

There has been little change in tourism, fur sales, and the other land-based activities of great importance to the Aboriginal communities that do not directly benefit from these resource developments. This might seem to imply increased economic pressure to migrate in search of work, and with other challenges, to potentially fall into the homelessness trap. The actual situation is more complex. In 2004, the NWT's employment rate was 71.6% of the over-15 population, up from 70.3% in 2003 and markedly higher than historical rates. The employment rate for Aboriginal people was 50.6%, a great improvement over historical rates⁶⁶. During 2004/05, the employment rate declined in Yellowknife to 80.8% and *increased* in smaller NWT communities to 63.1%. Consider that the national employment rate in 2004 was 62.7%.

The resource boom has had a disproportionately positive impact on the small proportion of the population that is well educated. In 2004, university graduates had almost full employment (93.2%), while only 34.3% of persons with less than Grade 9 were employed. It is fair to state that that greatest barrier to employment in the NWT continues to be low education levels, especially among the most Aboriginal people from small communities. This imbalance is likely a factor in the high percentage of Aboriginal homeless in the major economic locales, but lacking research, this remains a supposition.

Yet despite the current resource boom, the public sector remains the dominant sector of the NWT's economy⁶⁷. In 2004, 38.3% of employment was in the areas of government

administration, health services, or education services. Mineral and petroleum development represented 8.7% of total employment (which nonetheless is five times the national average).

These recent economic trends tell us little that is concrete about the NWT's homelessness situation. What we can say is that a profound, unprecedented economic transformation is underway and that the positive impacts of this boom vary greatly and geographically. A strong urbanisation trend is underway and the population is a mobile one. Much of the NWT's population is educationally disadvantaged and challenged to find employment – or especially good employment – in the new economic landscape.

The GNWT's tabulations⁶⁸ indicate that average income in the NWT has increased by 25.8% since 1994. Continuing improvements in the labour market brought reduced reliance in income support to historic lows. Only 4.8% of the population were social assistance recipients in 2004 – a figure that compares favourably with provincial rates, and represents a substantial decline from 11.1% of in 1995. Most of these reductions are attributable to the smaller communities. About 4.4% of the population of regional centres were recipients while 2.6% of Yellowknife residents were recipients.

It is clear that the NWT's economic prosperity is neither uniformly enjoyed nor without social costs. In 2003, the NWT's violent crime rate increased for the second straight year to a high 67.3 crimes per 1,000 population. The violent crime rate was seven times the national rate and the property crime rate was 1.8 times the national rate. The number of violent crimes in 2003 increased in all types of communities. In Yellowknife 819 violent crimes occurred, compared with 698 violent crimes in Hay River, Inuvik and Fort Smith and 1,327 violent crimes in smaller NWT communities.

A large literature bears that the NWT, and the other territories, continue to experience high rates of social pathologies, in large measure a result of insufficient economic opportunity, cycles of rapid development, and clashing of cultures. Incarceration rate is a telling indicator of social unrest and one of special interest to persons dealing with the homeless. The 2003 national incarceration rate for adults is 130 per 100,000 population. In the North, the 2003 figures are much higher: NWT – 771; Nunavut – 518; and Yukon – 220⁶⁹.

A federal review of formal services in the NWT recently explored the nature and extent of formally structured social services available to victims of crime. The inventory of all territorial services, even those whose mandate is not specifically service to victims, identified 141 service providers from all 30 NWT communities, and 111 responses were received. This study reiterated vocal stakeholder concerns over intensifying social maladies, particularly ones thought related to the economic boom. This study also painted a stark picture of inadequate, inefficient, and sometimes insensitive programmes and services. Strong systemic pressures and prejudices were identified among community members and among some of the service providers. Blaming and shunning victims – including homeless people– and denying services were cited as significant obstacles⁷⁰.

These and other socio-economic changes certainly complicate, and probably worsen, the problem of homelessness in the NWT. Without further research, we can only appreciate that the homelessness situation is especially complex and without simple solutions.

Nunavut Socio-Economic Trends

Nunavut's economy remains locked in the grip of near-total dependence on government spending. Government services which are not delivered by territorial departments or agencies are usually delivered by private firms on behalf of territorial authorities. A recent, steady increase in the Nunavut Government's revenues reflects higher transfers rather than improved economic performance. One can best understand the socio-economic landscape in terms of progress that has *not* occurred over the last generation.

Inuit leaders embraced the 1988 investigation of Colin Irwin, to Health & Welfare Canada, dramatically entitled *Lords of the Arctic, Wards of the State*. The "Irwin Report" described grim conditions prevailing at the time, and painted a bleak future for Inuit society if the social welfare system continued on its present course. Irwin projected that most Inuit in 2025 would be second-generation wards of the state, living in Arctic welfare ghettos and plagued with extreme crime rates. Whites would remain in charge of higher management in the private and public sectors. The welfare state would have usurped control of care giving, and Inuit traditional culture would have largely collapsed.⁷¹ The GNWT attacked the document as "a collection of unsubstantiated opinion" and attempted, unsuccessfully, to have it suppressed.⁷² At the time, the national organisation representing the Inuit^u defended Irwin's predictions:

Colin Irwin paints a very gloomy picture of Inuit society and culture in the 21st Century. He may very well be right. His predictions should be sobering to all those well-meaning politicians and civil servants who, in the last 20 years or so, have constructed Canada's most enveloping social welfare system. The malaise facing Inuit today, which promises to get worse tomorrow, cannot be eradicated by existing social policies and programmes. Additional teachers, social workers, doctors, and public administrators, although welcome, will not forestall the future that Dr. Irwin fears. Yet the future, our future, is not predestined...Inuit seek a new and comprehensive social contract with Canada that will effectively integrate us and Nunavut into the Canadian body politic.⁷³

In fact, the creation of Nunavut has given Nunavut's Inuit control of administration and of priorities, but as indicated by extreme reliance on transfers, not a greater degree of economic independence or capacity to implement robust programme solutions to a range of serious and entrenched socio-economic problems. It is fair to state that Nunavut's socio-economic situation remains desperate, unchanged in some respects, and worse in others. The Inuit Centre (Ajunnginiq Centre) of the National Aboriginal Health Organisation (NAHO) describes the current situation thus⁷⁴:

- Mental health is a priority concern to Inuit.
- Extreme economic isolation - very few jobs and bleak career prospects.

^u Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, whose successor today is Inuit Tapirisat Kanatami.

- Exceptional geographic isolation and severe unemployment define many of the problems *and* the solutions.
- Youth are caught between two cultures and ways of life. Too many children conclude that each way is a dead end.
- Alarming rates of gas-sniffing, propane-sniffing, drugs and alcohol especially among children.
- Mental health related problems in Inuit communities reached extreme levels by the 1970s, soon after the Inuit had adopted a settlement-based lifestyle as a result of government interventions.
- When Inuit took up settlement-based life, jobs were promised but welfare dependency was the main outcome.
- Services, training, and resources are limited or non-existent, typically fragmented, and often difficult to access.
- The mental health initiatives that exist tend to be long-distance and dominated by non-Inuit.
- Medication is heavily relied on, partly because culture / language gaps often make therapy / counselling through an interpreter unproductive.
- These outsider-practitioners lack the cultural understanding and language for these initiatives to be effective. A serious problem!
- In the Inuit context, non-Inuit practitioners (especially southerners) are so far removed from the radically different Inuit lifestyle, culture, language, economy (etc) that their attempts to assist can be pointless or counter-productive.

The Conference Board of Canada, in a recent economic assessment for the Nunavut Government⁷⁵, used more measured terms to describe racially stratified levels of social welfare dependency and unemployment. The Conference Board of Canada observed that, in 1999, these were far in excess of the provinces and other territories⁷⁶.

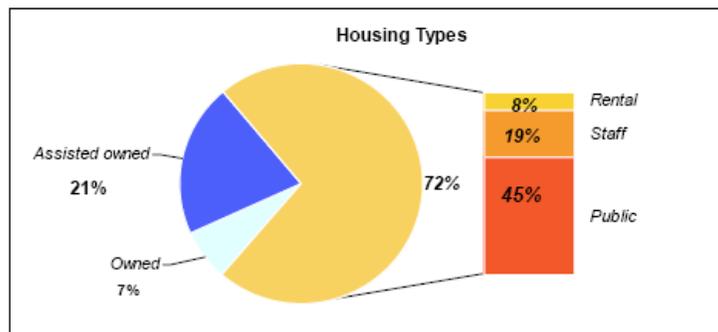
A federal study recently explored the nature and extent of formally structured social services available to victimised Nunavut residents⁷⁷. The researchers identified for contact 148 individual community-based services and 7 territorial service providers, in 26 communities. Ninety-one providers participated in the survey. The study concluded that, while there appears to be an array of social services in each Nunavut community, it would be wrong to assume that there are adequate, or that they provide any services at all to victimised people including the homeless. The study made strong statements not just that social problems are systemic and overwhelming, but that Nunavut's service infrastructure is generally seriously deficient in fundamental ways. The deficiencies often involve insufficient funding or support, but often also poor training, management, and inter-stakeholder co-ordination.

Supply and Condition of Housing

Nature of Territorial Home Occupancy

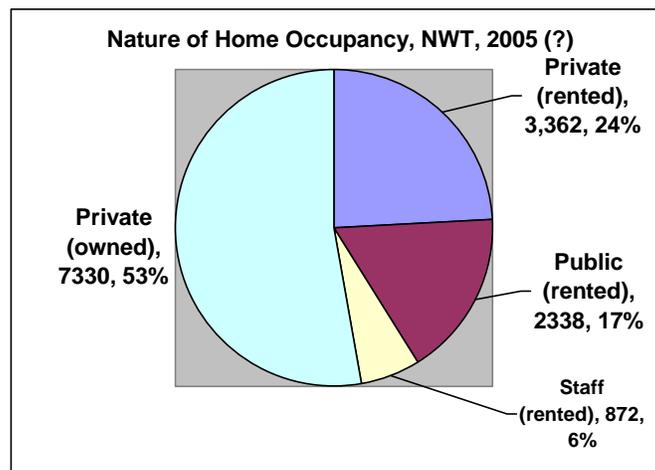
Three classes of housing exist in the territories as they do in the provinces: government staff housing, social (or public) housing, and private housing. However, the nature of home occupancy is, on the balance, fundamentally different in the territories, where the importance of public versus private housing is reversed compared with the South. Nunavut offers the extreme example:

Nature of Home Occupancy in Nunavut, 2005⁷⁸



Although there are no reserves to complicate financing, only 7% of dwellings in Nunavut are occupant-owned. Seventy percent of dwellings are social housing (45% of the total, with 99% occupation by Inuit), government staff houses, or rental units. Reliance on territorial government housing assistance, by all segments of the population, is extreme.

Nature of Home Occupancy, NWT, 2005 (?)⁷⁹



The situation in the NWT is not as extreme but is still heavily dependent on public housing programmes. In 2005, just over one-half of homes were privately owned and a quarter was rented from private owners. Social housing accounted for 17% and staff housing 6%. Comparable figures for the Yukon are unavailable, but it is clear that private ownership approaches, but does not meet, provincial levels. In 2005, there were 511 social housing units and 148 staff units⁸⁰.

Housing supply and affordability are not the only determinants of homelessness. However, in the territorial context where government housing units, government financing, and government subsidies are particularly important, territorial housing programmes occupy a pivotal role in the prevention of homelessness and repatriation of homeless people to permanent dwellings. It is fair to say that in Nunavut the importance of government assistance is extreme, in the NWT it is high, and in the Yukon it is significant. The role of federal housing programmes is extreme on Yukon's Indian reserves.

Nunavut has almost no housing market at all. The NWT has a recognisable housing market in the larger centres, while in the smaller communities, it can be impossible to buy or sell a house for a variety of reasons. A more southern type housing market prevails in the Yukon, where social housing and staff housing total only 659 units.

In all territories, the houses of government workers are typically superior to those of surrounding residents, especially in remote communities. This can be a source of social discontent among the mostly Aboriginal local residents, who are often compelled to live in crowded and/or dilapidated quarters.

As a rule, the territorial governments provide their employees with accommodation when they work outside the community of their present residence. This assistance usually comprises allocation of a rental unit or assistance to purchase a home. Obtaining a government job is lucrative if only because it can fast-track access to accommodation. Federal employment is also attractive for this reason, although transfers of many federal responsibilities to the territories have greatly decreased the number of federal jobs in the North, often in favour of analogous territorial government positions. Staff housing is sometimes also provided, or arranged for, by private firms operating in the North. This is an old practice dating from the early days of the Hudson's Bay Company. Guarantees of housing often accompany job offers. Such guarantees are usually made when workers are brought in to work on development projects such as diamond and petroleum extraction.

Loss of Housing – A Special Northern Challenge

A person can lose his or her housing for reasons including, and additional to, those that apply in the provinces. Inability to pay the rent or the mortgage is an important factor. Each of the territories recognises this and offers needs-tested subsidies or social assistance. The effect of this on preventing homelessness is unknown. What can be said is that, compared to the provinces, the territories generally offer more-robust measures to assist with rent. Assistance schemes are far more widely utilised in the territories than they are in the south.

A simple expression of crude affordability is the number of households paying less than 15% of income on rent or major housing payments. Other cut-offs are possible but this is a common indicator. The table below shows that almost a half of territorial homeowners pay under 15% of their total towards major payments – a similar level as nationally. However, the percentage of renters paying under 15% of income towards gross rent differs significantly: as isolation increases and the southern-type housing market forces diminish, paying the rent becomes much more affordable.

Owner Households and Tenant Households by Major Payments and Gross Rent as a Percentage of 15% of 2000 Household Income, by Territory⁸¹

	Canada	YT	NWT	NT
Owner's major payments	7,411,215	7,075	6,615	1,735
Less than 15% of household income	3,553,645	3,505	3,115	770
Percentage	47.9%	49.5%	47.1%	44.4%
Tenant's gross rent	3,868,115	3,520	5,710	5,435
Less than 15% of household income	843,430	985	2,690	3,780
Percentage	21.8%	28%	47.1%	69.5%

Data such as those above attest to the general view that the most challenging problem is insufficient supply of units, followed by other challenges including affordability.

A person who loses his or her job, when that job includes housing, can be in immediate and serious housing trouble. The former employee usually has a very short time to vacate the premises. It can be difficult or impossible to arrange for alternate accommodation on short notice. There may be options in the larger centres but possibly none in a small community. Migration is usually necessary unless local friends or family can temporarily assist.

Housing can be lost for other reasons. Depending on the local social housing policies or employer housing policies, the occupant of a social unit or a staff unit is often evicted if the unit is left vacant for a specified time. Particularly in a small community, loss of housing through fire can create an immediate homelessness situation with no better prospect than migration or boarding with a family.

Every community – and indeed each housing corporation - has its own waiting list for social housing and assisted housing. Often the allocation priorities are determined locally. What is universal is that persons having lost their accommodation, and newcomers to a community, start at the bottom of the list. This creates elevated risk of homelessness when a person migrates; the migrant loses his or her place on the local list and must re-apply at the destination. A person who arrives, with a job that has housing, is doubly disadvantaged if the employment terminates. Return to the community of origin may be impossible due to the cost of relocation or insufficient

housing there. To stay usually means renting – assuming there is a unit available – or starting at the bottom of the local list.

Housing Situation in Nunavut

Nunavut Housing Situation - Overview

The extreme dependency on federal transfers, of the Arctic region, became more apparent after the separation of Nunavut from the former NWT. The comparatively positive housing situation – and degree of economic self-sufficiency – of the MacKenzie region formerly skewed the picture so that the overall NWT appeared challenged but not in dire crisis. The Nunavut Department of Finance describes Nunavut's present housing situation in desperate terms:

By any measure, Nunavut's housing need is staggering. Public Housing Programme waiting lists continually exceed 1,000 families or about 3,800 persons; 3,000 homes are needed now to bring Nunavut on a par with the rest of Canada (or even with its territorial sisters); and, over the next ten years, a housing infrastructure investment of more than \$1.9 billion is necessary to meet existing and emerging requirements. These acute needs together constitute a severe housing crisis, and indeed, a crisis that is worsening daily as the population booms and existing stock ages⁸².

The Nunavut Housing Corporation (NHC) was created in the year 2000. It provides public and staff rental housing, home ownership programmes, renovation programmes, and related services to Nunavut residents. Much of the actual delivery to clients is through Local Housing Organisations. In addition to funding from CMHC, the NHC receives 11% of the territory's \$976,809,000 Budget for 2006/07, as well as limited incomes such as rental revenues⁸³.

Over its next five years, the NHC built about 430 public housing units and built or leased 160 staff housing units. It is estimated that, in the public housing area alone, construction must rise by an additional 273 units *annually* at a high unit cost of \$250,000. This is patently far beyond existing resources. The NHC is implementing drastic measures to mitigate the shortfall. This includes significantly raising the rents – to market levels - paid by Government of Nunavut employees over ten years. The previous staff housing policy was generous, especially in terms of rental ceilings by household income category, and one could argue that the new policy also has generous features⁸⁴. Nonetheless, the new policy represents belt-tightening – the intent of the new policy is to free up money for new constructions and refits, and to encourage the private sector take over management and supply of staff housing units.

Nunavut has practically no private sector housing market outside of several larger communities, and even there it is weak. One measure to address this is a new policy of concentrating on assisting Inuit (“Nunavummiut”) who are ready to assume the responsibilities of home ownership. Many Inuit are not ready. Far too many Inuit are inured to intergenerational welfare dependency, beset by social maladies, and accustomed to the government providing and maintaining their social accommodation.

The Nunavut Government is implementing two new programmes in 2006/07 with a view towards increasing the number of homeowners. Firstly, a Material Assistance Programme (MAP), based

on the popular Homeownership Assistance Programme formerly of the NWT Housing Corporation, will deliver complete, self-build housing kits to the high water mark in the community. The recipients must obtain bank financing for remaining costs such as contractors' fees, foundation work, site preparation, and so on. Secondly, a Seniors and Disabled Persons Preventative Maintenance Programme will provide a \$1,500 annual grant to cover necessary preventative and general maintenance. This is expected to improve the living conditions of seniors and disabled people, thus allowing them to remain in their homes longer while decreasing operating costs. This is an attempt to avoid the high social and dollar costs of institutional accommodation.

The Nunavut Government realised that these measures will not come close to meeting the overall needs. This territory has commenced on a 10-year strategic plan⁸⁵ that cannot be fully carried out without massive federal assistance. This assistance has not yet been guaranteed. The Nunavut Government has been outspoken in its demands that the federal government reinstate an Inuit-specific housing programme; recall that the Inuit lost access to direct federal assistance a decade ago. Nunavut's Finance Department states that this 10-year plan:

challenges the federal government to recognise its moral, constitutional and fiduciary responsibility to provide housing for Inuit. The proposal calls for a federal intervention to construct over 5,700 new public housing units over the next ten years. Additionally 1,000 existing units would receive retrofits. Currently planned for construction to commence in the summer of 2006, this proposal will dramatically change the delivery of housing solutions in Nunavut over the next ten years⁸⁶.

It appears, from the Spring 2006 federal Budget, that a substantial cash injection is forthcoming. The Budget confirms "up to \$300 million to provinces to address immediate pressures in off-reserve Aboriginal housing, and up to \$300 million to territories for affordable housing in the North"⁸⁷. It is presently unknown whether the off-reserve Aboriginal component will apply to the Nunavut Inuit, how the territorial component will be divided, or whether the territorial component is earmarked for the Nunavut Housing Corporation for general non-race-based programmes. This being said, there is reason to assume that Nunavut's housing situation will improve measurably over the next few years, with some positive effect in the problems associated with homelessness. It would be hasty to assume that this improvement, while probably measurable, will be sufficient.

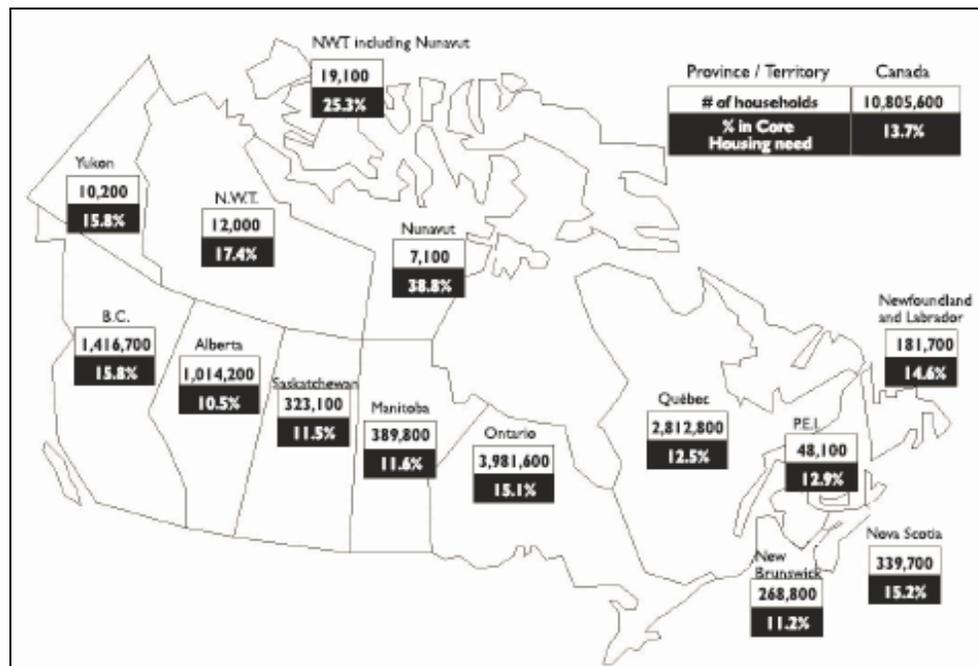
Nunavut Housing Situation – Description

Lacking a comprehensive housing survey such as now exists in the NWT, the Nunavut Government relies heavily on 2001 Census data and 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey data to plan, as well as to make its case for substantially greater federal funding. The Census and APS data are survey data, and by nature, are less reliable than actual counts. Nevertheless, it is fair to read from them patterns of gross housing deficiencies.

The APS uses the widely accepted definition of “crowding”^v wherein a unit with more than one person per principal room is considered “crowded”. The APS shows that 20% of the population in almost half of Nunavut’s 25 communities inhabit crowded homes. The highest rate in Nunavut is 43% (Kugaruuk), the lowest is 9% (Cambridge Bay), and the average is almost 19% versus about 5% for Canada. The distribution is strongly skewed towards the highest. Nunavut’s non-Aboriginals do not tend to live less-crowded quarters, but there are units of all types that are crowded, including staff houses and owned units. Nunavut’s Inuit face a 54% crowding rate, second in Canada only to the 68% facing the Inuit of Nunavik in Northern Quebec.

The average number of occupants in Nunavut’s social housing is 3.27 versus the national average of 2.39 per house⁸⁸. The 430 public housing units built since 2000 are even more crowded than the norm (3.8), while some units (16%) average over five occupants. Three percent of all of Nunavut’s units have eight or more occupants. These statistics are moderated by the inclusion of every dwelling, however small or large. Over 52% of all dwellings in Nunavut have more than five occupants. It also appears that the higher-density units tend to be the smallest in terms of floor area. The estimates of CMHC place core housing need^w in Nunavut at 38.8%, versus the national average of 15.7%:

Housing Core Need Estimates for Canada, its Provinces and Territories, 2001⁸⁹

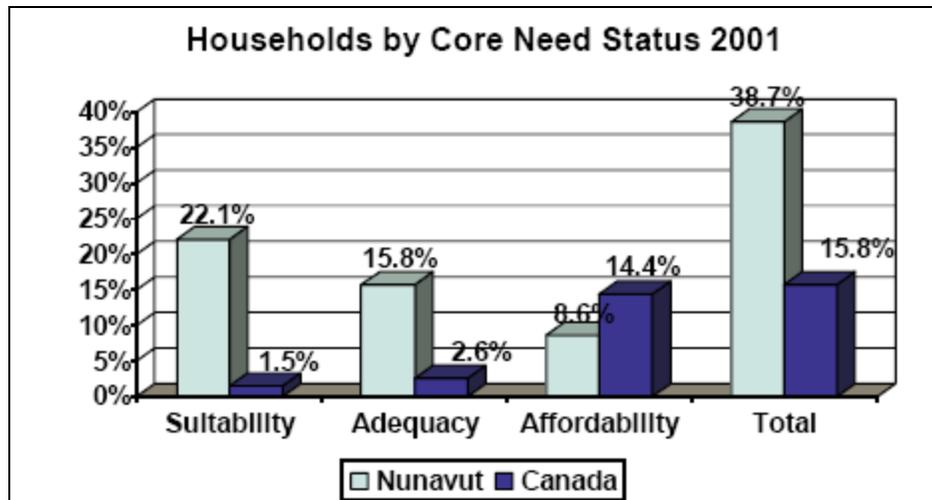


^v “Overcrowding”, which means the same, is sometimes used to emphasise an unacceptable level occupant density in homes.

^w “Adequate” means that the unit needs no major repairs. “Suitable” means that the unit is not crowded; viz., it meets the National Occupancy Standard of no more than two people per bedroom with parents eligible for a separate bedroom; adult occupants (+18) are eligible for a separate bedroom unless cohabitating as spouses; and dependents aged +5 are required to share a bedroom only with siblings of the same sex. “Affordable” refers to adequate, suitable quarters which can be obtained with an expenditure of no more than 30% of pre-tax household income. A household is in core need its members do not live in, and cannot access, housing that is acceptable by these benchmarks.

All private dwellings in Nunavut receive some type of housing subsidy⁹⁰. If these subsidies were eliminated or factored out, only the richest Nunavut residents would not experience affordability problems. In this scenario, the percentage of households in core need would rise from 38.7% to over 90%. The figure below shows the core need disparity, by component, for Nunavut and Canada for 2001.

Nunavut Households by Core Need Status, 2001⁹¹



Nunavut’s housing need trajectory is made steeper by the highest birth rate in Canada and one of the highest in the world. The population of Nunavut’s communities rose, on average, 8% in five years, between the 1996 Census and the 2001 Census, with increases in some communities up to 22%. One-half of Nunavut’s population growth occurred in Iqaluit, whose municipal population grew 24.1%⁹². The City of Iqaluit estimates that between 1,181 (low projection) and 2,243 new units (high projection) will be needed in Iqaluit alone by 2022⁹³.

Housing Situation in the NWT

NWT Housing Situation – Overview

While the housing situation in the NWT is beset with chronic difficulties and acute difficulties related to the economic boom, few would dispute that Nunavut’s housing situation is markedly graver. This statement is meant simply to contrast, not to understate or diminish needs.

The GNWT has a clearer idea of its territorial housing situation than the Nunavut Government. This is simply because the NWT Housing Corporation, while reduced after losing responsibility for Nunavut’s housing, has a record of accomplishment of three decades including an established research and analytical capability. The GNWT is able to attach precise numbers to its housing problems, whereas the Nunavut Government “feels” the problems more than it can measure them.

This is a merely a statement on statistical capacity, and in no way suggests that fewer statistics means lesser need. The better statistical situation in the NWT allows us to describe the NWT's housing situation in detail.

The GNWT's is assisted in its planning is assisted by a recent, and comprehensive, community survey of housing needs conducted by the NWT Housing Corporation and the NWT Bureau of Statistics⁹⁴. These surveys are repeated every four years. The 2004 survey counts 13,902 occupied dwellings in the territory. It is estimated that 4,015 households (29%) had some sort of housing problem and 2,260 households were in core need (16%). This percentage difference, between those with problems and those in core need, is attributed to the fact that households with housing problems - and sufficient income to solve their housing problems - are not considered to be in core need. The GNWT defines core need as households with at least one housing problem *and* total household income below a Core Need Income Threshold (CNIT). The GNWT's CNIT is an income limit for each community, represents the amount of income a household must have in order to afford the cost of owning and operating a home, or to rent in the private market without government assistance^x.

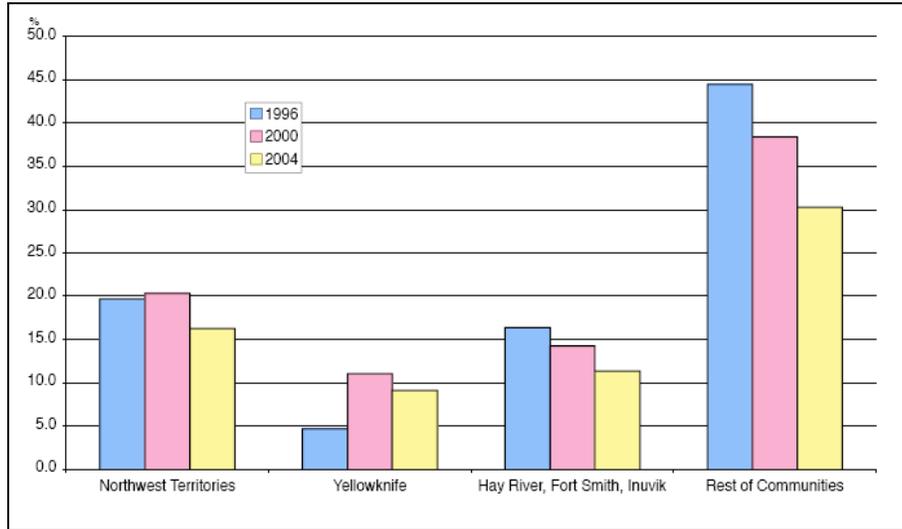
This cut-off, which in 2000 varied from \$31,500 to \$84,000 according to community and type of dwelling⁹⁵, represents an additional layer of filtering over the CMHC core need definition. The CMHC definition already factors income into the determination, by establishing a condition of un-affordability when more than 30% of a household's income goes towards shelter. Some might question the advisability of applying an additional filter, which has the effect of depressing the number of households in core need, when the simple CMHC determination is applied. The number of NWT households who would qualify as being in core need, under the simple definition, does not appear to have been published. The CNIT is not new in the NWT. It has been included in determining levels of core need for at least a decade.

The NWT survey shows 16% core need as opposed to the 17.4% estimated by CMHC based on 2001 Census data⁹⁶. The CNIT is a means to filter out, of the queue for territorial housing assistance, households considered reasonably able to manage on their own. For many years, the NWT Housing Corporation has used the CNIT when determining whether an applicant is eligible for social housing, not just whether a subsidy or other assistance is being sought. The CNIT is part of a continuing effort to bolster the housing market by focusing scarce government resources towards lower-income households⁹⁷.

This being said, the NWT Housing Corporation's 2004 survey shows a significant *decrease* in the number of households in core need between 2000 and 2004. In 2000, 2,726 households (20%) were found to be in core need, while in 2004 the number was 466 lower, giving a 2004 rate of 16% (4% decrease). Additionally, the incidence of core need decreased somewhat in 27 of the 34 communities. The ten-year trend is revealing (see chart below). Except in Yellowknife, the economic hub of the development boom, there has been a significant decrease in core need. This is especially evident in the smaller communities.

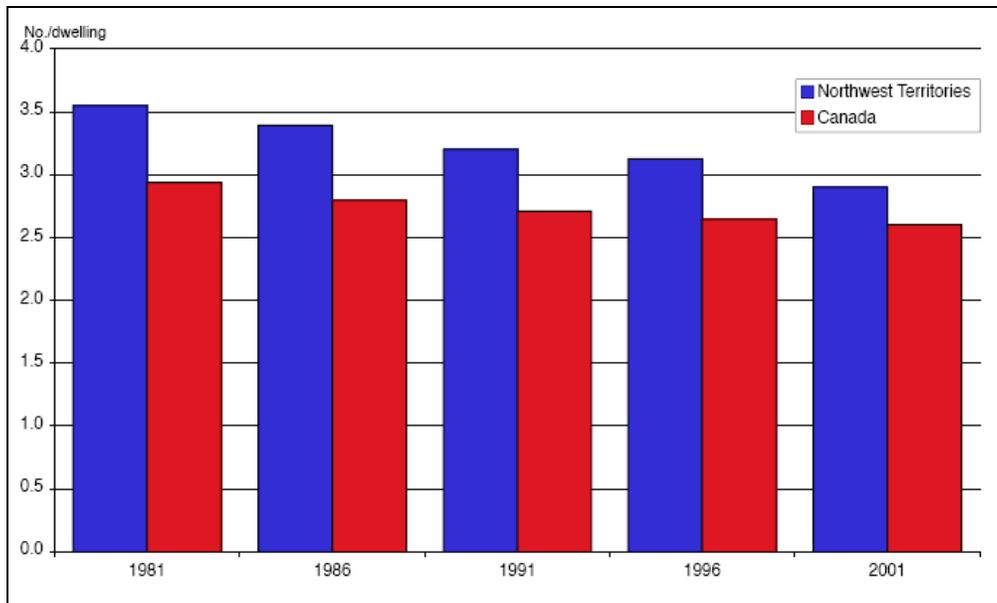
^x Variables considered in establishing that go into calculating the CNIT for each community are: building costs; land costs; taxes; electricity; heating; water and sewer; insurance premiums; and maintenance costs. Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, 1996. *Housing Needs Survey, 1996*. s. 2.1. Similar measures are used by the other Territories – and the provinces – in establishing eligibility for assistance.

Core Housing Need Considering CNIT, NWT, 1996 and 2004⁹⁸



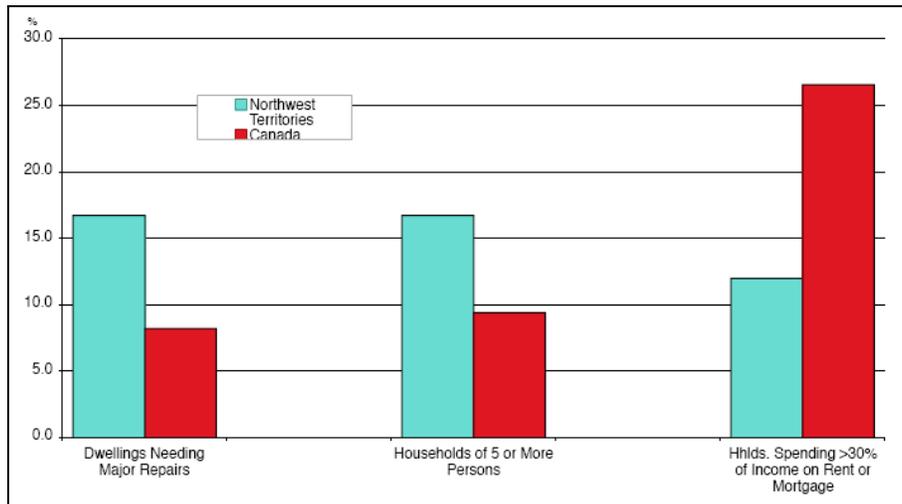
Let us now consider housing conditions in the NWT. The following graph shows that, since 1981, the number of persons per dwelling has been declining in a manner similar to the national trend. In 1981, the NWT had 0.7 more persons per dwelling. This has declined to about 0.3. One might contest this Census-based measure, but it is fair to say that the crude housing density in the NWT was not, and is not, grossly higher than the national average.

Average Persons per Dwelling, NWT and Canada, 1981-2001⁹⁹



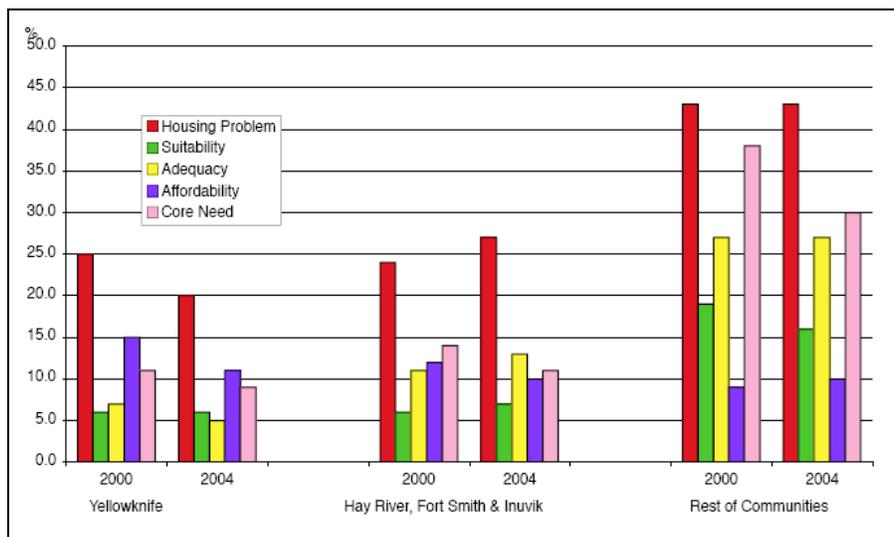
The crude densities may be roughly comparable but some other indicators differ dramatically. The percentage of dwellings in need of major repair is double in the NWT. The percentage of households with five or more persons is nearly double. The percentage of households spending over 30% of income on rent or mortgage is more than double.

Indicators of Housing Conditions, NWT and Canada, 2000¹⁰⁰



The following graph shows that, within the NWT, there are wide geographic variations in the condition of housing as measured by “major problem”, “suitability”, “adequacy”, “affordability”, and “core need” as measured using the CNIT.

Indicators of Housing Conditions, by Community Type, NWT, 2000 and 2004¹⁰¹



The available NWT housing statistics give a picture of the supply and condition of the housing stock, but they fail to do more than hint about the extent of territorial homelessness problems. Nonetheless, these housing statistics should be borne in mind when we describe the homelessness situation based on reports, and when we consider what the survey informants had to contribute.

A new development has the potential to improve the GNWT's financial capacity to address problems relating to homelessness. The 2006 federal Budget states that:

The MacKenzie gas project - a proposed \$7.5-billion natural gas field and pipeline development in the Northwest Territories - is currently engaged in public hearings; a regulatory decision is expected next year and natural gas could begin to flow as early as 2011. This unique basin-opening project is already impacting the economy of the Northwest Territories and, over the next 20 years, has the potential to transform the business and employment prospects of Northerners and Aboriginal communities. A project of this scale...will create social and economic pressures on Northern communities directly impacted by the construction and operation of the pipeline. In order to mitigate the negative socio-economic costs of the project, and in light of the significant federal royalty revenues to be generated by the project, the Government of Canada will establish a \$500-million fund. Over the next 10 years, this fund will be used to support initiatives from local communities to mitigate any negative socio-economic effects arising from the MacKenzie gas project.

This funding is conditional upon the gas project advancing according to milestones. Assuming that it does proceed – since some approvals have yet to be obtained - there will likely be an intense debate within the NWT on how the remedial funding should be applied. It seems unlikely that some, at least, would *not* go towards addressing housing deficiencies and providing services to the homeless. However, this would be a new development on top of the ones already causing social upheaval. There would be additional impacts upon an already dislocated socio-economic milieu. Furthermore, systematic research has found that developments of this type, in the context of northern and Aboriginal communities, tend to create markedly more socio-economic dislocation than the cost-benefit analyses of their promoters suggest¹⁰².

It appears that another wave of major socio-economic dislocation, this time coupled with targeted attempts to mitigate the negative impacts, is on its way. Whether this will worsen or mitigate the NWT's homelessness situation is a matter of speculation. It will, however, probably further complicate the NWT's homelessness situation.

Housing Situation in the Yukon

The Yukon's housing situation, while beset with challenges sometimes unlike and additional to those in the provinces, is the least desperate of the three territories.

The Yukon Housing Corporation was established in 1972, contemporaneously with its NWT counterpart, and five years after the first Yukon housing programme was introduced. It serves functions similar to its counterparts in the other territories:

- i. help Yukon residents obtain appropriate accommodation;
- ii. work with the housing industry to develop effective solutions to housing needs;
- iii. foster participation in the design, development, and delivery of housing programmes; and
- iv. administer the Government of Yukon staff housing and employee buy-back programmes.

Likewise, this Corporation is active in broadly comparable programme areas: home ownership; home repair and upgrade; industry partnering; education and training; staff housing; and social housing¹⁰³. Programme delivery is mostly co-ordinated through seven community housing associations (each in a town) and one housing authority (City of Whitehorse).

The 1986 Census suggested that the quality of housing in the Yukon was among the worst in Canada. Two decades of effort, mainly on the part of the housing corporation, have improved the situation considerably. The data available today paint a picture considerably less pessimistic than is the case in Nunavut and the NWT.

The main source of data is a collection of Community Housing Studies. This two-year project resulted in thirteen studies, one for each of the main municipal communities^y. Yukon reserves were not included. The Community Housing Study involved a comprehensive 30-page questionnaire, involving 600 variables¹⁰⁴. There appears to be no published overview report, but the Whitehorse community report is revealing because it concerns the largest community and makes Yukon-wide comparisons. None of the reports addresses the question of core need in a robust manner. Yet to do so may not be appropriate, as we shall shortly see.

The community studies use the National Occupancy Standard as a benchmark for measuring crowding, but they report only in terms of the number of bedrooms (nonetheless a valid indicator or crowding). The results for Whitehorse (where the Yukon's homeless shelter is situated) and for the Yukon are similar. Using the National Occupancy Standard, about 5% of Whitehorse households and 6% of Yukon households have insufficient bedrooms. While the Yukon-wide figure is marginally higher, most households both in Whitehorse and across the Yukon do not use other rooms as bedrooms¹⁰⁵. These are relatively low percentages for crowding.

More striking may be the Yukon Housing Corporation's 2004 assessment that the number of social housing units is expected to remain adequate unless unforeseen circumstances arise:

There is an ongoing need for the [social housing] programme and the need will continue into the future. *If the population remains as stable as predicted, there will be no need to increase the total number of housing units, although re-profiling of the housing stock may be necessary to meet changing client requirements^z*. The population is aging and there is an increasing trend to remain in the Yukon post retirement, therefore, additional units will be required to meet the needs of individuals with age-related mobility problems and other disabilities¹⁰⁶.

^y Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Carcross, Carmacks, Dawson City, Destruction Bay, Haines Junction, Marsh Lake, Mayo, Ross River, Teslin, Watson Lake, and Whitehorse.

^z Italics added.

Recall that the Yukon's socio-economic circumstances are unspectacular are predictable, and particularly, that there is no development boom of the sort that the NWT is experiencing¹⁰⁷. The Yukon is actually moving in the opposite direction, from a resource economy towards a service and tourism economy. The rate of territorial population growth is also very low. These factors are reflected in the Yukon's assessment of social housing programme need:

In looking back, there has always been a need for a programme related to low-income housing. However, the number of people in need and the type of accommodation required often changes with the economic and social climate. In reviewing the experience in Yukon and other jurisdictions, it is found that if the economy is healthy, about 6% to 7% of the population will be in need of social housing. In the communities outside of Whitehorse, the level of need is higher due to more limited economic opportunities. As the Yukon shifts to a more service and tourism oriented economy and away from mining and other sectors with higher paying jobs, the need for social housing may continue to grow¹⁰⁸.

The housing surveys indicate that affordability problems – spending over 30% of income on shelter - are less prevalent than in the other territories. The Whitehorse and Yukon wide results are similar: 10% of households and 8% of households respectively. The supply of housing in the Yukon might be more adequate, but the condition of the Yukon housing stock is generally deficient. Twenty-six percent of Whitehorse dwellings need major repairs versus 33% Yukon-wide. Twenty-four percent of Whitehorse dwellings are deficient in at least one of these areas: (smoke alarms, ventilation, clean water, sewage disposal service); in the Yukon as a whole, the deficiency rate is 29%. Furthermore, a high proportion of Whitehorse and Yukon households (13%) have at least one disabled occupant¹⁰⁹. The Yukon's poor housing condition attests to the aged nature of the full spectrum of types of stock. The graph below shows that much large numbers – and percentage - originate before 1960.

Occupied Private Dwellings by Construction Period, Canada and its Territories¹¹⁰.

	Canada	NT	YT	NWT
Total	11,562,975	7,175	11,365	12,565
1945 or before	1,661,640	20	370	95
1946-1960	1,819,730	120	1,030	530
1961-1970	1,833,295	930	1,505	1,815
1971-1980	2,460,455	1,565	3,345	3,545
1981-1985	1,001,665	1,000	1,260	1,865
1986-1990	1,079,070	1,035	1,190	1,975
1991-1995	887,255	1,330	1,525	1,860
1996-2001	819,865	1,180	1,145	890

In summary, the available data on housing supply and condition in the Yukon do *not* point to extreme housing-related pressures towards homelessness. In particular, the supply situation and

crowding situations are more positive than in the other territories. The condition of the overall Yukon housing stock, however, is poor and a sizeable proportion of Yukoners live in difficult conditions. These considerations do not detract from the problems of homelessness that are experienced in the Yukon. What they do is to suggest that other factors – such as perhaps family violence – may be stronger determinants of homelessness. This is a question worthy of further research.

Housing Supply in Territorial Reserve Communities

Nunavut has no reserves while the NWT has one inhabited reserve. Statistics about the housing needs on this small reserve are unavailable. Conversely, most of the Yukon's Registered Indian population lives on reserves, where CMHC and INAC programmes are in effect and the territorial housing corporation has little role.

There is a compelling, if not abundant, literature attesting to extremely unsatisfactory housing conditions among most of the Registered Indian population on- and off-reserves. Two decades ago, the 1985 Neilson Task Force Report noted that on-reserve housing was still the poorest in Canada, with 25% of units needing major repairs and a third being crowded. In 1992, the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs reported that just half of the 70,000 on-reserve units were fit to inhabit. The Auditor General noted in 2003 that 44% of units needed renovations.¹¹¹ The most recent, and interesting, data on First Nations (FN) housing come from the 2002/03 First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey (a.k.a. "RHS")¹¹²:

The Nature of Home Occupancy. The 2001 Census reports that over 65% of Canadian families own their home. Most of the rest rent their accommodation. Social housing plays a minor role. This is reversed in the FN context: 61.9% of on-reserve families live in band-owned housing which is analogous to social housing. Of First Nations situated in the provinces, 74.1% of under-\$10,000 households are thus in social housing, as are 64.4% of under \$30,000 households. Over half (57.2%) of households reporting \$30,000 to \$79,999 income live in band houses, and 39.5% of the (few) over-\$80,000 households also live in band houses. These figures – radically different from the general population - are explained by factors like: extreme poverty; banks not giving on-reserve mortgages without a federal guarantee; and sometimes-prohibitive geography related construction costs.

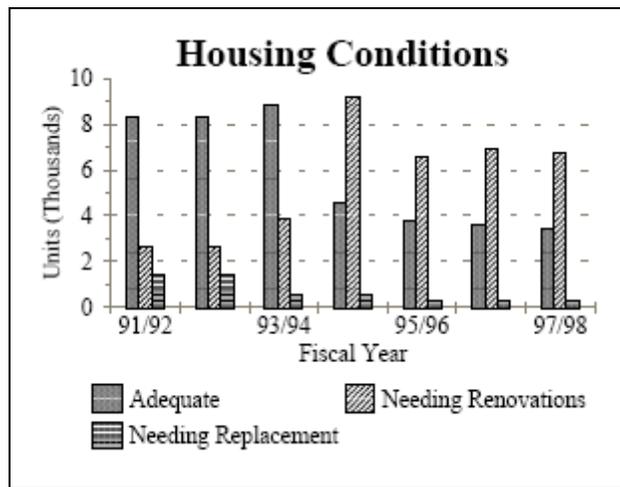
Physical Condition of Housing. One third (33.6%) of FN homes need major repairs, up from the one quarter figure cited in 1985 by the Neilson Task Force. Another third (31.7%) need minor repairs. These are higher rates for necessary repairs than the Auditor General's 2003 estimates. First Nations adults are pessimistic about progress in improving the quality of their housing: 40.3% report there has been 'no progress'; 46.2% report 'some progress'; and only 13.5% report 'good progress'.

Housing Supply and Occupant Density. The mean room density rate in FN communities is 0.76 persons per room, almost double the national rate of 0.4 persons per room. The average Canadian house has 2.6 occupants while the average FN house has 4.2 occupants; 17.2% of FN houses meet the accepted definition of "overcrowded" (i.e., they exceed 1 person per room). The occupant density in the FN context appears to be increasing, while in the general population it has declined over two decades. The highest number of occupants recorded is 18 persons.

Unfortunately, for the purposes of this Report, the RHS has a policy of not reporting results by province or territory. Nevertheless, we can reasonably assume that the on-reserve housing situation in the Yukon is broadly reflective of the national picture.

The immediate question is to what extent the housing situation on Yukon’s reserves is a pressure towards homelessness on-reserve or off-reserve. The simple answer is that very few data are publicly available, and that, judging by the Auditor General’s 2003 report on First Nations housing, sufficient data exist nowhere or else they are unreliable. An INAC publication from 2000 provides a somewhat dated picture of housing conditions on Yukon reserves:

Housing Conditions on Yukon Indian Reserves, 1991/92 to 1997/98¹¹³



It would seem from this that the condition of stock was deteriorating rapidly, a situation hardly uncommon according to the 2003 report of the Auditor General. A continuation of this downward trend may have occurred subsequently, judging from there have been no exceptional investments in on-reserve housing in recent years.

Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Territorial Homeless People

Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Homeless People in Nunavut

Having contemplated the housing situation, the reader may conclude that the housing-related pressures towards homelessness in Nunavut are extremely high. Indeed they are, by the reckoning of various stakeholders, including the Nunavut Government, which states:

Nunavut's profound housing challenges are situated in a remote, Arctic environment where, for many months of the year, flesh freezes in seconds, not minutes. Absolute homelessness *per force* does not exist in the territory. Instead, Nunavut's "hidden homeless" sleep in shifts within already overcrowded homes, homes that average less than 1,000 square feet in size and that offer living space cramped by potable water tanks, washers/dryers, furnaces and hot water makers. In a territory that represents more than one-fifth of Canada's land mass, suitable, adequate living space is a scarce resource rather than a basic right¹¹⁴.

The Nunavut Government is acutely aware of the problem of invisible homelessness, and compared with other jurisdictions generally, admits the existence of this problem in high-level public policy documents. It sees "the lack of adequate housing" as the principal cause of specific social problems including invisible homelessness, domestic violence, and crowded homes. It notes that, without adequate housing, it is unable to recruit and retain qualified staff to deliver justice programmes¹¹⁵. Thus, the housing situation promotes homelessness and frustrates efforts to relieve or remedy these pressures towards homelessness.

Unlike some jurisdictions where homelessness lacks specific programmes and budgets, the Nunavut Government is taking a direct approach in confronting homelessness and problems related to homelessness. The Department of Education has responsibility to establish a Homelessness Secretariat. This will provide financial contributions to agencies for providing programmes and services for Nunavut's homeless. Guidelines for the functioning of this Homelessness Secretariat have been established. These include guidelines for a review committee to consider applications guidelines for determining eligibility for funding¹¹⁶. However, the initiative has not commenced full operation, and not all of the necessary funding has been allocated yet.

Another aspect of the Nunavut Government's approach to homelessness is administrative change rather than financial investment: creating a closer linkage for housing solutions, using the "continuum of care" model with a special emphasis on homelessness and overcrowding¹¹⁷. The Department of Health and Social Services provides a range of counselling services, respite services, and counselling services for adults with various needs. These needs are related to intellectual, physical or emotional challenges, addictions, violence, homelessness, criminality, and poor parenting skills¹¹⁸. Generally, these are all considered causes or consequences of homelessness.

There is reason to believe that the relatively late realisation, that Nunavut homelessness cannot be ignored, is because homelessness in Nunavut is a new phenomenon which has been hidden from

sight more than, perhaps, in the South. The following statement made in 2002, in the Legislature, received applause:

Traditionally homelessness was never a problem in our communities. It is a recent problem that only now are we beginning to recognise. In Nunavut homelessness is hidden from view in the form of severe overcrowding¹¹⁹.

The present territorial government's resolve in addressing the homelessness situation in Nunavut appears to be a recent about-turn after largely ignoring the matter. Until recently, dealing with homeless people was left to sympathetic homeowners (or renters), the men's emergency shelter in Iqaluit (which now has two beds for women), and the Wellness Centre in Cambridge Bay provides a crisis shelter for emergencies, and both women and men are accepted. There are two other shelters for women (Cape Dorset and Iqaluit) who may be homeless or temporarily displaced, but victims of abuse¹²⁰.

Volunteers started the apparently first Iqaluit Emergency Shelter about 1989. The initial enthusiasm fell off quickly. Volunteers left the shelter society's board of directors until ultimately just two remained to keep the shelter operating. The funding was inadequate. Soon the building could not be properly maintained. Consequently, the Iqaluit shelter closed its doors in the summer of 1999. The Illitiit Society, with support from volunteers and the NWT Housing Corporation, started a new shelter known as the Oqota Emergency Shelter. This society also suffered from loss of enthusiasm, and lost board members, although the shelter's clientele grew steadily¹²¹.

This small shelter was reported to have housed thousands of homeless people and transients. In 2002 it had to turn away many people seeking shelter. A \$30,000 debt was accrued by 1995¹²². In April 2005, the Salvation Army took over management of Oqota Shelter. The chairperson of the Society said that most of the property inside the shelter would be donated to the Salvation Army. The new manager stated that finding a new location for the shelter was a priority; clients could barely squeeze between the rows of 14 beds¹²³.

Media reports provide insight about the reasons for homelessness of the clientele as well as alleged apathy of the government and citizenry¹²⁴:

When we asked the clients of the Oqota Emergency Shelter why they were homeless, these were the most common reasons given: the high cost of rent; unemployment; substance-abuse problems; family problems; and outstanding debts with the local Housing Corporation. People who are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs are not allowed to stay at homeless shelter, but we do know that some of the clients spend whatever money they have on alcohol and drugs. As a result of their addictions, they end up unemployable, destitute and homeless. There are many other homeless people in Iqaluit, who stay with relatives in overcrowded homes. We have not listened to their answers, but likely, their reasons would be very similar.

[in 1999:] If the community of Iqaluit is to maintain an emergency shelter over the longer term, core funding must be provided by the territorial government for this purpose. Inconsistent short-term funding from different sources is a nightmare to manage, particularly for a non-profit organization that already has trouble finding volunteers. The supervision and delivery of services at the Oqota shelter currently costs approximately \$17,500 per month. The Baffin Regional Health

and Social Services Board contributes \$5,500 per month, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment contributes \$4,500 per month, but we are left \$7,500 short of actual operating costs.

Many residents of Iqaluit are sympathetic to the issue of homelessness. Everybody knows of the high cost of rent and the shortage of housing. Few, however, understand the true extent, nature and underlying causes of homelessness, and this I think prevents ordinary residents from taking steps to solve the problem.

The Salvation Army, following its 2005 takeover of Oqota Shelter, soon began speaking out with some credibility about the homelessness situation. This included a plea for a shelter for homeless women. A media report stated about the new debate:

The only homeless shelter in Iqaluit is the Oqota Shelter, and its 14 beds are full every night. It's for men only. The Salvation Army took over the shelter four months ago. Garry Jones, the Salvation Army officer in Iqaluit, knows there is a need for a women's shelter. "As the city grows, there will be even more of a need," he said. Jones has turned away three people a night for the last week from the shelter, but thinks the figure could be higher. He explained that once the word that the shelter is full hits the street, people don't bother to try. "I'm really worried about the winter..."

"A shelter for women is needed very badly. Women are going to be in danger if they have no place to go," said Rhoda Ungaliq, a board member of the Qillitt Status of Women Council. Ungaliq thinks the Oqota shelter should open beds for women. "I don't know why they aren't doing that," she said.

The only other shelter in Iqaluit is the Qimaavik victim's services. They house 10 women and children who have been victims of violence. Homeless women who have not been abused do not qualify. "They (Qimaavik) used to have two beds for homeless people, but they won't take them any more," explained Ungaliq.

The Iqaluit Housing Authority (IHA) handles government subsidised housing in Iqaluit. The waiting list is three years. To qualify for housing, you must live in Iqaluit for a year if you are a resident of Nunavut. It takes two years to apply if you hail from outside the territory. You also have to be in good standing with housing associations in the territory.

The tenants are charged rent according to their income, and in many cases pay half of what a commercial landlord would charge. There are 436 homes in Iqaluit covered by the association, but Spring said it needs at least 90 more. Evictions - eight to 10 a year - and deaths free up some units. One of the easiest ways to get a home in Iqaluit is to work for the government. Every government employee qualifies for staff housing.¹²⁵

The Salvation Army's campaign to improve shelter facilities had some positive effect, despite resistance from community members and council members:

Iqaluit city council has approved a plan to move the community's homeless shelter to the Lower Base area, despite the concerns of local residents. It was a close vote at Tuesday night's meeting, with four councillors voting for the proposal and three against. Residents had opposed the Salvation Army's plan to move the shelter, saying it would hurt their property values, and reduce the safety of their neighbourhood. But Mayor Elisapee Sheutiapik appealed to plan's opponents Wednesday, asking them to be more understanding.

The new shelter in what's known as Building 778 can house 20 beds. A Salvation Army spokesperson says he's not sure when the new shelter will open its doors. Gary Jones says he's confident the shelter and its residents will put the concerns of the neighbours to rest. "It's hard feelings on the homeowners there, I understand that, I hear them, I really do, and my concern is I'm hoping I can show they're good people and they're willing to take care of their area too," he says.¹²⁶

To date there has been minimal change in the services available to assist Nunavut's homeless. Media reports continue to describe desperate homelessness situations and sometimes suggest that no organisation can, or wants to, help:

A woman in Iqaluit who's had to resort to sleeping in an abandoned car for shelter is planning a protest to raise awareness about homelessness in the community. Pudloo Chouinard, who's originally from Arctic Bay, says she has tried just about everything to get a home since she moved to the territory's capital four years ago. When she arrived she lived with her boyfriend, but after he left town, she had nowhere to stay. Chouinard has been homeless since.

Recently she slept in an abandoned car for two nights, even though temperatures had dropped to -50C. Chouinard says she has applied for public housing but she's at the bottom of a long waiting list, because she is single and has no children. Social workers and Nunavut Tunngavik, the territory's land claim organization, haven't been able to help either. There's a homeless shelter for men in Iqaluit, but no facility for women. The women's shelter can occasionally take in homeless women, but its first priority is to help women in abusive situations. Chouinard wants all levels of government, Inuit organizations, and the public to know how difficult it is for a person to be homeless, especially in the Arctic.¹²⁷

A 2003 study of victim services in the Territorial North, conducted for the federal Department of Justice, gave a highly critical assessment of the system of service providers in Nunavut dealing with victims. These providers are frequently the same as those who interface with homeless people, and sometimes homelessness is a result of victimisation. This study identified serious and sensitive obstacles, towards assisting victims, which result from Inuit social norms. It would be wrong to assume that these difficult-to-discuss challenges apply equally in the context of general homelessness. However, they do suggest the existence of entrenched societal patterns of stigma, rejection, and worse. In the event that these patterns - such as apathy - are connected with social responses to homelessness, it is worth quoting from the Justice Department report at length:

Traditional Inuit approaches to victimisation and contemporary informal services available to victimised individuals in Nunavut were investigated through an extensive consultation process and formed another branch of the research process. Respondents described a variety of traditional approaches to victimised individuals and include the expectation that women and girls, usually in arranged marriages, remain silent about the abuse they were suffering and try harder to obey and please their husbands, the avoidance of outright confrontation with violent individuals in an attempt to keep them calmer and maintain an atmosphere of respect within the group, travelling to another camp to seek safety, as well as subtle and/or direct counselling of the offending individual by elders, while avoiding shame and embarrassment to the person. Traditional approaches in Nunavut also included retaliation, sometimes after years, by the family of the victimised

individual, and gossiping about both victims and offenders in an attempt to control violence in the group and ease the tension that arose from disruptive behaviour.

Through the consultations, respondents also identified contemporary informal approaches to victimization. The less constructive approaches include denial that there is a problem with interpersonal violence, keeping personal victimization experiences secret, focusing on keeping the family physically together at all costs, believing that victimised persons deserve the abuse they receive because of a personal shortcoming, using chemical and process addictions (behavioural addictions such as gambling), violent behaviour, criminal activity and suicide to cope with feelings of fear, rage and shame, and developing a range of post traumatic stress symptoms.¹²⁸

It would be wrong to assume, from the above, that Inuit lack sympathy for the homeless. The Pauktuutit (Inuit Women's) Society's publication *Inuit Healing in Contemporary Inuit Society* (2004)¹²⁹ provides stark examples of the plight of Inuit homeless and the strength of those attempting to help. Furthermore, Inuit households often grant shelter to desperate homeless people whose alternative is possible death in the cold.

An abundant literature testifies to extraordinary levels of social pathologies in Nunavut. Substance abuse, person-abuse, battering, and neglect are far too common if not endemic¹³⁰. Pathologies such as these are associated with homelessness in various jurisdictions and contexts. In the case of Nunavut, we lack sufficient data to make these correlations although there is no shortage of anecdotal evidence.

Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Homeless People in the NWT

NWT Homelessness – Overview

Earlier in this Report, we examined the socio-economic dislocations resulting from the present, unprecedented, resource-driven economic boon in the NWT. Those facts need no repeating here, but they form the backdrop of the NWT's current homelessness patterns. They also set the character of homelessness in the NWT – at least partially – apart from the character of homelessness in the other two territories.

Let us now consider what we know of the 'big picture'. First, public consultations and impact assessments of mega-developments, in the NWT, are beginning to recognise that housing supply problems exacerbate homelessness as development progresses. Stakeholders, concerned about new developments creating more homelessness, are now recommending transition shelters for homeless people¹³¹. Second, the GNWT is the first of the territories to produce a report, with recommendations, on homelessness. It focuses on people who are living on the street. This GNWT report provides a balanced, objective assessment of the homelessness situation as far as the limited data allow. It also reviews the factors presumed to be causing homelessness, with an emphasis on non-availability of social housing.

The GNWT report is particularly useful for providing estimates of homeless population. The Salvation Army reports an average of 45 men in its Yellowknife shelter at any time of the year, and that the number has tripled since 1999. The Centre for Northern Families in Yellowknife

provides shelter for single women. It reports an average of 25-30 women per night. From Inuvik it is reported that there are 5-10 homeless single men and women at any time of the year. The population of permanent homeless people in Hay River is reported to be small: six or fewer. There are also transients briefly stranded on their way to Yellowknife to seek employment. Hay River has emergency and transitional shelter measures co-ordinated through Social Services (although no regular shelter for the homeless). Tuktoyaktuk and Fort Smith both have emergency shelters for women and children only. There are no emergency or transitional shelter options in any of the smaller communities¹³².

Note that the Inuvik and Yellowknife estimates – which total about 85 persons – do not include persons not taking shelter in facilities. Additional people squat, or occupy tents or hutments, singly or in groups. Some may be transients with a fixed address, but others – many perhaps – have no other place to call home. The range of agencies and organisations that assist homeless people is much larger. The main problem appears to be a scarcity of actual accommodation – insufficient beds insufficiently distributed.

The federal Justice Department’s major study of victim services in the three territories sheds some light on public attitudes towards persons in crisis and shelters particularly:

Contemporary informal approaches to victimisation incorporate both positive and less constructive approaches. The less constructive approaches reflect a general lack of community support for the victim through shunning, blaming and shaming the victim. In addition, some respondents indicated that support and assistance given to victims is dependent on their place within the community power hierarchy. That is, victimised individuals belonging to the least powerful families are more likely to be blamed, shunned and intimidated than victims belonging to the more powerful families in communities. In addition, respondents noted that shelters and other victim focussed programmes are often accused of “breaking up families” and attempts to start new shelters or programmes are often strongly opposed by powerful community members. Some respondents note also that the victim, when they do access the service, can be turned away.

Respondents also spoke about some positive contemporary approaches to victimisation. In smaller communities, where the victim is pressured to drop charges, or is otherwise threatened, victim supporters assist the victim to move permanently to a larger town in the region, saving them from the harassment of the community and the perpetrator’s family. This also allows them greater access to services such as counselling, housing, employment and education.

Respondents also noted that they are seeing a shift in attitude in the larger centres (Yellowknife, Hay River, Inuvik, Fort Smith and Fort Simpson), one that emphasises support to victims. Women’s shelters, and other victim service providers, have come together to raise public awareness at the local level and have started some support groups for abused women. In some towns, people are volunteering to work with programmes which assist victimised community members. There are more conferences and workshops on victim issues, and the territorial government recently held a major conference on the social conditions in the NWT (the “Social Agenda Conference” held in Hay River in June 2001).¹³³

Note that the Justice Department study also observes that some attitudes are changing in a positive direction.

Let us now consider homelessness in the larger and most economically impacted centres of Inuvik and Yellowknife. It is appropriate for us to consider them separately, although as it will be seen, the conditions and challenges concerning are for the most part shared.

Homelessness in Inuvik

Emergency assistance to the destitute and homeless, that Social Services could not provide, was initially seasonal assistance on an ad hoc basis, provided by charities. For instance, in May 1997:

Gerald Falk smiles wide as he spoons a bowl of caribou soup and reaches for a plate of steaming bannock, Tuesday morning. As minister of the Inuvik Christian Assembly and a resident of Inuvik for the last 30 years, Falk is a valued member of the community. Every Tuesday morning, some of the town's homeless and other needy people are greeted by that smile and bowl of soup. For the last three months, Falk and his congregation have been serving free lunches to needy people every Tuesday. Every Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., the church has been serving caribou soup, bannock and other tasty goods to people in need. The lunches usually attract more than 20 people, said Falk.¹³⁴

Note the reference to homelessness before the current economic boom had begun. The Turning Point shelter has been providing off-and-on emergency accommodation in Inuvik for about a decade. At first, this assistance was also seasonal – in the winter – because the main business was counselling. Other volunteer initiatives in Inuvik operated sporadically:

Those who are scraping by in Inuvik will soon have somewhere to turn with a soup kitchen and second-hand store set to open Sept. 1. Town council passed a proposal for the Slim Pickings multi-faceted community centre at their June 24 meeting, ensuring \$34,000 for a building as an in-kind contribution in return for the centre installing a boiler. Slim Pickings staff will train people with special needs to help them find jobs mending, laundering, sorting, displaying and pricing clothes....

"There's been an increase in people who live on the street," said department of Health and Social Services area supervisor Sandra Mayers who has lived in Inuvik since 1994 and before that in 1987 and 1988. "I wouldn't say there's a large increase but it's steady"...

The only homeless shelter in Inuvik is at Turning Point for about two weeks around Christmas time. Turning Point is an amalgamated drug and alcohol counselling centre and a halfway house for inmates. "A lot of people do have a place to stay but they want a place that is alcohol free for the holidays" ...¹³⁵

By 1997, homelessness appears to have become a well-established feature of Inuvik, although perhaps people camping in tents were not at that time viewed as homeless:

It's known by residents as Squatters Row. In the brush next to Duck Lake Road, a group of men have been camping in tents for more than 20 years now. Squatters Row is a community within a community. It's a place where homeless men, many evicted from public housing and all suffering from alcohol abuse, live quiet, if uncomfortable lives. Not many people thought to question their residency here until earlier this month, when a developer's plans to put a walking trail through the camp forced local officials to consider the issue.

... "people have told me they don't feel safe having their kids walk on the trail" ... "There's no reason that people should have to live like that," Patterson told council. "It's time to take our heads out of the sand and do something there ... now is as good a time as any" ... "But if we clear them out down there, where are they going to go?"

Michael Coyen was chief of Tsiigehtchic for one year during the 1980s, and has been a resident of Squatters Row on and off for the last 25 years. He told the Drum this week that he and other squatters would like help to find housing in town. "It's hard to get a house," said Coyen, who has been evicted from public housing in the past. "I don't mind living out there in the summer, but it's too cold to live in a tent in winter."¹³⁶

It appears that local land development and the prospect of major oil and gas activities, not simply goodwill, were the main factors in stimulating a more organised, more robust approach to homelessness. Acting in haste before winter descended, in 2000, Town Council approved land for two duplexes for homeless residents.

If approved, the duplexes are to be funded by the Housing Corp. and administered by the Nihtat Gwich'in Council. The units are for those who have been evicted from private or public housing. "On record there's seven families being affected," Allen said after the meeting. He pointed out that communities across the country are having to deal with homelessness, and that it is important to start addressing the situation here quickly, with renewed interest in oil and gas exploration in the area. "Anytime you have a large migration to a central location, a central community like Inuvik, you're going to have more input and more demand for housing. It's a natural occurrence."¹³⁷

Homelessness persisted, as did the now-annual Christmas time initiative to offer shelter. Each year was a new struggle to raise enough money for two weeks of shelter accommodation:

Plans are under way for the annual Safe House programme. The program, which provides a haven for those wishing to escape from alcohol and drugs, will begin shortly before Christmas and end just after New Year's... Last year's event cost about \$12,000. Lindsay said this year's event will probably cost less, as the programme will likely be run out of Turning Point, the treatment facility run by the Inuvik Alcohol Committee... "We have no programme really going on there, other than just the day program," Lindsay said. "We can house up to 12 people there. Last year we were at the college and we used some of their rooms, but by doing that it cost us money because we put an extra night person on security over there to make sure nobody was sneaking in whisky or whatever," he said. "We'll have full time staff on at Turning Point for that two-week period. We'll have somebody there right around the clock."¹³⁸

The first oil and gas exploration camps were established around Inuvik in 2000. Major social impacts began to be felt immediately. Migration and increased social ills resulted, in January 2002, in the Turning Point becoming a 10-bed, year-round shelter:

Although there are no official statistics, those in human resources estimate that the unemployment rate is close to zero -- or at least at its lowest level in memory. "The feeling we have right now is there's a lot of pressure, even on the jobs in town," says Gregg Hill, regional manager of the territorial income support programme. "There seem to be very few people looking for jobs." Hill says his caseloads for income support have been down about 30 per cent from last year at the

same time. In 2001, caseloads were already lower than in 2000. He says there are currently about 150 people on income support, while a few years ago that number was closer to 400.

At Inuvik's Human Resources Development Canada office...agrees there are plenty of jobs around, she advises caution to those thinking about coming to Inuvik...She says often, job seekers are not be prepared for the weeks it might take to secure employment.

"We tell people, don't come up unless you've already got a job. The cost of living is high, there's no hostel, and the fact is, there's a limited number of jobs, especially for unskilled labour."

Some of those who were unprepared for a longer job search end up at the newly opened Turning Point homeless shelter...The 10-bed shelter where Blair is staying was opened as a pilot project in January by the Inuvik Alcohol Committee, to respond to what they say is a growing problem. Derek Lindsay, the chair of the committee, says there are also other side-effects of the boom, even for people who do find jobs. He says alcohol and drug abuse increases with all the new money floating around. "It's disposable money and they don't know what to do about it," Lindsay says. At a time when Turning Point is in need of dedicated workers, Lindsay says the boom has made it difficult to hire staff.¹³⁹

Support for homelessness initiatives appears to have never been high or uniform among Inuvik's residents. Turning Point ran on a shoestring, always in financial peril. An example of differing priorities is this proposal from January 2003:

Residents are barking at town administrators for proposing to spend \$200,000 on a new home for stray dogs. "How about these homeless people, for God's sake," said one female resident who did not wish to be identified. "They're starving, they have nowhere to sleep. They should be taken care of before dogs," she protested. "Just kill them! They're not human!" The Town of Inuvik has earmarked \$200,000 for the construction of a new dog pound, complete with steel walls, insulation and water and sewage service.¹⁴⁰

While homelessness in Inuvik was topical during territorial election campaigning in November 2003, there seems to have been more interest in establishing a proper drug and alcohol treatment facility than simply offering beds¹⁴¹. Like many homeless shelters elsewhere, Turning Point did not accept people under the influence of drugs and alcohol, which was causing people seeking accommodation to be turned away in the dead of winter:

In 2004 it was reported that Inuvik's emergency shelter, with 11 beds for males and three for females, has no vacancies: "An expanded shelter for homeless people is absolutely needed in Inuvik," said Robert Orr, Turning Point's alcohol and drug counsellor. However, as the shelter does not accept people under the influence of drugs or alcohol, Orr says it cannot adequately address the full scope of Inuvik's homelessness problem... "We just aren't equipped to deal with those who aren't [sober]." Formerly, Turning Point was a drop-in facility. But due to the current demand...[it] only accepts referrals from Education Culture and Employment because the shelter doesn't have enough space. Once accepted into the shelter, Orr says he and other staff do "anything they possibly can" to help those under its roof find work and more permanent lodgings.

Inuvik's Interagency Committee has spearheaded the movement to establish a shelter to better meet the needs of the town's homeless population. Last November, the committee released the report Homelessness in Inuvik...it identified what Mero calls the "overlap," whereby substance abuse, mental health issues, those going through the criminal justice system and family violence contribute to the overall homeless numbers in town. While the report provides no specific

numbers, it does highlight Inuvik's shortfall in meeting an increasing demand for housing. However, Mero said, making housing more available is not going to tackle this multi-layered issue.¹⁴²

Accounts of long-term homelessness were now appearing in the press. These appear to have been educational, in so far as some Inuvik residents seemed to imagine that homelessness was a new phenomenon. These new accounts often described great suffering in the harsh climate:

Frank (not his real name) lived on the streets of Inuvik. A homeless alcoholic for nearly two decades, the 44-year-old is hoping to turn his life around. Frank is also hoping that by sharing his story, it might help his plight and that of others, whom he calls "regulars," living hand-to-mouth on the streets of this community....With the North's short summers, most of Frank's life as a homeless man in Inuvik has been spent freezing countless nights away under Sir Alexander MacKenzie school, The Mad Trapper and inside utilidors. Lately, Frank says he and the other regulars have been finding shelter inside empty barge containers. "It's worse than shivering," he said, describing what it's like trying to stay alive when the temperatures plummet into the - 40 region. "When the morning comes we go to places like the post office to get warm." Now that Frank is trying to turn his life around and stay off booze, the Turning Point, a transitional shelter whose policy is not to offer beds to those under the influence, is where he spends his evenings.¹⁴³

Stories such as these did not, however, do much to make residents, local government, or territorial government more inclined to pay money towards housing the local homeless population. Turning Point was in financial crisis in early 2005:

The mood at Turning Point emergency shelter last Thursday was sombre as word spread that the doors of the 12-bed facility would close for good this week. It's hard to imagine this place shutting down," said resident John Dixon, who has lived at the Kingmingya Road shelter since November 2004. I've got nowhere to go right now and because of surgery (on my leg) I can't get around all that well to pitch my tent." Dixon is one of eight current residents who will be looking for another place to live as of March 31, now that Turning Point's primary funder, Education, Culture and Employment, has made the decision to discontinue its support.

"It's really grim to be evicted from a homeless shelter, that's really scraping the bottom of the barrel," said Alunik, who has lived at Turning Point for about a year. "The night before I got here I spent in the drunk tank. Turning Point has kept me sober since then." Both Alunik and Dixon are on the Inuvik Housing Authority's list for subsidised accommodations, however, as they are single their chances of getting a roof over their heads any time soon are slim.¹⁴⁴

Funding agencies typically will not advance further money to an agency whose audit shows a highly negative financial position. A pattern was developing in the North whereby another organisation had to step in to run a homeless shelter in financial or management crisis - in this case the Band Council. This example illustrates the "hot potato" nature of shelter responsibility in the NWT:

Inuvik's homeless will not be forced out onto the streets this week after all. A temporary extension of services has been granted for Turning Point, the town's only homeless shelter which was slated to close March 31. "We have secured a contribution agreement to cover off the costs from now until the end of June," said John Alexander, band administrator for the Nihtat Gwich'in Council, which will take over administration of the shelter. Although the organization sees its

involvement as temporary, it has set out three goals for the shelter. "Our first goal right now is primarily to keep the doors open," said Alexander. The NGC also hopes to offer more programmes to the clients and develop a long-term plan to give the shelter a sustainable future before handing it over to another group to run...

The Town of Inuvik will continue to provide the building and land free of charge and will also contribute \$1,000-\$1,200 a month for utilities, said Mayor Peter Clarkson. "This will be the first time we've actually made a financial contribution," he noted. A regional Inuvialuit group also plans to help out.

Now that a legal entity with an accountable board has taken over responsibility for the operation, the department of Education Culture and Employment (ECE) has agreed to renew funding to the shelter. Last year ECE provided about \$65,000 to help run the facility, although the annual costs top \$180,000. Alexander declined to comment on how much he expects to receive from ECE, but said he does not expect to run a deficit. Turning Point has amassed a \$100,000 debt over the last few years...¹⁴⁵

Turning Point continues to operate with minimal and uncertain funding, with a client population as large, or larger, than before.

Homelessness in Yellowknife

We have considered what the limited data tell us of the demographic, socio-economic, housing supply, and other pressures tell us about the causes of homelessness in Yellowknife. A research report prepared for Status of Women Canada provides a good overview of how Yellowknife's homelessness situation actually manifests itself:

Homeless youth in Yellowknife often couch surf, stay up all night in coffee shops, sleep over warm grates, in stairwells or in bank machine entryways. Young women also trade sex for accommodation. Drug use and teenage pregnancy are both common.

The housing situation in Yellowknife appears to be worse than most cities in the southern parts of Canada, and the weather is unquestionably harsher. Informants spoke of houses with no plumbing, no heat, one-room houses with large extended families living in them, trailer camps and shacks on the outskirts of town, and very high rents. Yellowknife is now experiencing an economic boom due to the expansion of diamond mining. As a result, it is expected that rents will rise even higher as the boom continues. Homeless young women generally share accommodation with friends or family members, or find men who will provide housing in return for a sexual relationship.

The vast majority of homeless youth and adults in Yellowknife are Aboriginal. Our informants outlined a range of issues that affect homelessness among Aboriginal youth. The lingering effects of residential schooling include poor self-esteem, lack of parenting ability, dependency, poor relationship skills and detachment from cultural tradition. The Aboriginal community struggles with problems of alcohol and drug abuse, gambling, family violence and child sexual abuse. Most service providers and foster parents are White, while service users and foster children are predominantly Aboriginal. There are very high rates of child placement, and many children run away from their foster homes. The admission-into-care rate is exceptionally high. Of all children served by the child welfare system, 62% are taken into care in the Northwest Territories. The rate

is 6% in Ontario (Child Welfare League 2000). Not surprisingly, the relationship between the child welfare system and the Aboriginal community is often adversarial.

In spite of many affirmative action policies, discrimination against Aboriginal people is still strong. And when policies related to Aboriginal self-governance are put into place, they tend to be gender blind. Hence, women cannot always get help from traditional structures in situations of family violence, and many of them leave their home communities to access services in the city. Although Yellowknife has a population of only 17,000, it serves people from all over the Northwest Territories, and in the last few years there has been more migration from small communities. Some people come from dry communities, but end up abusing alcohol or drugs in the city. People unaccustomed to an urban setting are unaware of the services available or the "rules." (For example, when people from outlying areas stay in the apartment of a relative or friend in town, the friend or relative can be evicted for overcrowding.) As a result some end up on the street.¹⁴⁶

Furthermore, there are accounts that Yellowknife's housing shortage is driving workers without accommodation into the shelters. This account is from 2001:

It's become increasingly evident that the face of homelessness in Yellowknife has changed. No longer are we just talking about out-of-work, down-and-out sorts who wander the streets unemployed and desperate. In today's Yellowknife, the problem is a lack of places to live. We have executives making \$50,000-plus a year who live from couch to couch for months at a time waiting for an apartment. Further, because of the lack of rent controls, those who are lucky enough to have rental units are barely making it from paycheque to paycheque because of the climbing rents. This is not only worrisome for those who come up here to work but it is starting to affect the school system. Teachers, all set to sign on the dotted line, are thinking twice about moving here. Their reason is simple: it's too expensive. With the women's centre, which has eight beds, currently taking in up to 25 women on any given night, and the Salvation Army bursting at the seams with workers who have nowhere to live, the problem is clear.¹⁴⁷

Today Yellowknife has a Homeless Coalition and a variety of government and NGO players in assisting the homeless. The range is similar to that of Inuvik, but the municipality, and the homelessness problem, are much bigger.

For a number of years the Salvation Army has operated a relatively large Men's Emergency Shelter. This shelter is the Salvation Army's co-ordinating centre for its territorial homelessness support. This shelter currently has 44 beds in four rooms. It functions year-round and offers two hot meals daily, while a soup kitchen is open to anyone who needs it. Men staying at the shelter can participate in workshops given by caseworkers on various topics. The Salvation Army also operates a Withdrawal Management Services Programmes. This offers a 5-6 bed residential service for the entire territory, with an average stay is 5-10 days to a maximum of 14 days.

Yellowknife has one of the five shelters for abused women in the NWT; others exist at Hay River, Fort Smith, Inuvik, and Tuktoyaktuk. Yellowknife's Alison McAteer House provides a home for women and children who are experiencing violence. Women and children can obtain counselling and other support. The maximum length of stay is six weeks. As with such shelters generally, an abused woman unable to find alternative accommodation afterwards is at risk of homelessness. However, there are no reported cases of Social Services failing to arrange for accommodation when children are involved, unless the children have been placed in custody.

Here is an illustration from 2001 of the continuum between women's shelters, the machinery of Social Services, and homelessness among women in the NWT:

A Fort McPherson woman who went to Yellowknife to take a trauma and healing course says she came back feeling more traumatised than ever. [She] says she went to Yellowknife on a social worker's referral to take the course offered by the Yellowknife Women's Centre. When she got there, no one at the centre was aware of her referral, and she was informed she would have to wait for two months to get into the course. Mitchell says she gave up her house and job as a Gwich'in announcer for CBC in Inuvik to take the seminar... Instead, she had to stay at the women's shelter, where she says she was subjected to harassment by the staff, who threatened to take away her two-year-old daughter... "I didn't know they write reports on you everyday, watching your every mood," [she]. "I thought it would be okay to vent some of my issues there, but I felt it was being used against me." At the end of September [she] says she was pressured to leave the women's shelter, so she got an unfurnished apartment, but because she was ineligible for income support, she found she was soon running out of money. She says she got by with help from friends and groceries from the food bank.

[She] was still on the waiting list for the programme by the middle of November, when she decided to return home after a confrontation with the women's shelter staff. "They did an assessment and they said I was stressed out and that I was going to be referred to a mental health centre. The women's centre said I needed to be hospitalised and they wanted to know if I would sign over [her daughter] while I went to the hospital." "I said, 'No, the stress is coming from the fact, I have no income, I've taken time off work.'" [She] says the situation was finally straightened out when a different social worker heard her story and allowed her to leave Yellowknife with her return ticket. "I feel safer out of the Yellowknife jurisdiction," [she] "It just seemed like I was stereotyped right away. Ever since I reached out, it's been one threat after another, to have my child apprehended."¹⁴⁸

Over the years the system of shelters in Yellowknife has received great praise but also stinging criticism: the above quotation should *not* be taken as a criticism, but as an illustration of challenges. A small shelter for homeless women does operate today. This is the Centre for Northern Families, supported by the Yellowknife Women's Society. It provides shelter to single women who are homeless; to sexually assaulted women in crisis; to battered women unable to access the usual shelter because it is full; and to women with psychiatric or emotional disorders.

One of the more perplexing challenges was what to do with homeless youth, since shelters invariably had an age threshold. The following from 1998 illustrates the problem, and that not all of the NWT's homeless youth want welfare or are habitually intoxicated:

Scrapes cover 18-year-old Brian Lamb's torso. Wearing a white undershirt and jeans, with a red handkerchief hanging from his right pocket, a homeless teen struggles to find a shirt as he balances on a ladder in a friend's closet. "I have no desire to get a job," says the short-cropped bleach blond with multiple earrings. "That's one thing I share with a lot of street kids..." Though there is the Side Door drop-in centre to hang out during the day, there are no beds in Yellowknife for those under 18 to crash. The Salvation Army requires single transients vying for its 17 beds to be at least 18 years old. Even for its two dorms for men and one dorm for women, only adults are allowed... Lamb says he gets by through care packages from his not-quite-estranged parents and the generosity of friends who let him stay on the couch. Sometimes he cleans house for friends in exchange, he says. He is not on welfare and says he would not want to sponge off the

government, despite his reliance on friends. Lamb abstains from drugs but knows many others fall into that trap.¹⁴⁹

A shelter for Yellowknife's street youth was opened seven years later. This only assists youth aged over 16 because, as in most jurisdictions, child welfare legislation requires that children under 16 must be taken into protective custody:

When home is an uninviting place for youth to return to at the end of the evening, a welcome sign now hangs like a beacon on the SideDoor Youth Centre. The new Living Room programme at the centre is designed to provide an emergency overnight haven on Friday and Saturday nights for youth between the ages of 16-19, says Ryan Peters, executive director of SideDoor... The programme will provide youth with a snack, hot shower, a warm continental breakfast and also counselling from trained outreach workers, he said, adding that the programme is an overnight haven, not a long-term shelter. "The programme has also come from talk amongst the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition... There is room for almost 20 youth, he said, adding that while no one yet has used the service, now in its second week, a need has been identified... "There is homelessness that is forced on youth and there is homelessness that is chosen. "We're looking to service the youth who are not feeling safe at home," Peters said.¹⁵⁰

Particularly since the MacKenzie valley pipeline project recommenced after a two-decade delay, there have been various calls for transition houses for the homeless. There remains the problem that the regular shelters are geared towards emergency shelter for sober people, not shelter and structured assistance towards social re-integration of persons with substance abuse problems:

Why doesn't Yellowknife have a transition house for homeless people? There is one in Ndilo and another in Dettah but not in Yellowknife. A transition house is a place for people to get back on their feet and into the job force. It's a place where they pay rent and save money to turn their lives around.

There was almost one in Yellowknife. Last year, the Yellowknife Homelessness Coalition had a free house drop in its lap, so to speak. A house was made available by the government, but the coalition has to find another solution because people in the neighbourhood were concerned with having eight men living in one house. The coalition is left with no house, only the money from the sale of the house.

But with a lack of housing available and people discriminating against homeless people by crying "not in my backyard," there aren't many options available. Until people who are down on their luck get their fair shake, emergency shelters around the city will remain full. It's time for Yellowknifers to realise that having 30 women sleeping on couches and mats on the floor at the Yellowknife Women's Centre isn't the answer. As the Salvation Army's Karen Hoeft said: "It's time for Yellowknife to recognise that people have the right to live."¹⁵¹

The forgoing gives an anecdotal snapshot, and not by any means a complete picture, of the homelessness situation in Yellowknife.

Programmes, Services, and Facilities for Homeless People in the Yukon

The following main points, about homelessness pressures in the Yukon, are apparent from our examination of factors such as demography, socio-economic conditions, housing supply, and so on:

- The Yukon's economy is changing from a resource-based economy to a service-based economy; the economic mega-development of the sort occurring in the NWT is absent in the Yukon.
- The population is relatively stable compared with the other territories, and with a very low growth rate.
- Compared to the other territories, migration and especially urbanisation are small.
- There is no severe housing supply problem to the extent that is observable in the NWT and Yukon, although on the Yukon's reserves, the housing conditions (and economic opportunities) appear very poor.
- At least some of the social pathologies, which are so problematic in the other territories, appear less prevalent in the Yukon.

This does not suggest that homelessness is less of a challenge in the Yukon. All it suggests is that the landscape is quite different from in the other territories, and closer to a provincial landscape.

A new stakeholder coalition, the Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness, developed a Whitehorse Community Plan that received federal funding in 2001:

Funding in the amount of \$886,820, to help homeless persons, including youth at risk, will be provided to Whitehorse through the Government of Canada's Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), under the National Homelessness Initiative (NHI). A further \$300,000 of funding to address Aboriginal homelessness will also be provided, under the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) of the NHI...

The Whitehorse Community Plan was developed by the broadly based Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness to facilitate local, sustainable solutions to homelessness. Through research and community consultation, the Planning Group identified five population segments most at risk of being homeless and developed a comprehensive action plan to address their diverse needs. The Group is seeking proposals now that the Community Plan has been approved.

"The Whitehorse Community Plan on Homelessness identifies our priorities for action around homelessness," explained Ross Findlater, Chair of the Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness. "The Planning Group is in the process of seeking proposals from agencies and organizations that will take these priorities and turn them into activities meeting the needs of people who are homeless in our community." The Whitehorse Planning Group on Homelessness has begun the process to request proposals. This process is the next step towards deciding how the homelessness funding, totalling \$1,186,820, will be spent to help provide services to respond to the priorities identified in the Community Plan.¹⁵²

It is impossible to comment further on the direct benefits of this initiative until its evaluation is completed. It can be stated, however, that it did not provide the delivery agencies with full relief from funding pressures. As in the other territories, the main player in dealing with homelessness in the Yukon is the Salvation Army. It operates a small shelter in Whitehorse with ten beds in three rooms. Also provided are a Meal and Drop-in Centre and a Family Care Centre, which provide various supports for persons on the socio-economic periphery. Obtaining donations or government funding very difficult from the start, and in 2003 the shelter was in grave risk of closure:

Whitehorse's only homeless shelter might have to shut down. The Salvation Army has just over 30 days to find about \$100,000. If they don't, they say they'll have to close the downtown facility. Dale, a homeless person who collects spare change at a local mall, says he hopes everything gets worked out before the end of September. "I have a tent underneath the hill. But it's getting kind of cold now," he says...The Salvation Army shelter has been plagued with funding problems almost since it opened in the winter. Last April the cash-strapped organisation also faced closure. At the time, the Yukon territorial government stepped in and gave it enough money for six months. The Salvation Army hoped this would be enough to keep the operation running until it could access a federal government homelessness fund. But Army Captain Robert Sesford says those dollars aren't available yet.¹⁵³

Another player is Mary House in Whitehorse, operated by the local Rotary Club as a safe home to provide warmth and hot meals to the Yukon's homeless. It is supported by community donations, and it is staffed by volunteers from the Yukon's Catholic community. Whitehorse also has Kaushee's Place Yukon Women's Transition Home. This provides shelter, support, and advocacy to women and their children who have experienced abuse. They can stay up to 30 days free of charge. It also has a Second Stage Housing Programme for women and children who are in need of secure housing for a period of up to six months.

A modest shelter, operated by the Dawson Shelter Society, also exists in Dawson City. This is a temporary shelter strictly for women in need. Note that Dawson City is in *bona fide* governance crisis following the Yukon Government placing the City in trusteeship, under its *Municipal Act*, on grounds that it had failed to act as a responsible government. The City remains under an appointed administrator although elections for a restored council are proceeding. This crisis seems to have had a significant effect in disrupting, or complicating, the efforts of local stakeholders in dealing with homelessness problems and generally providing benevolent services.

The researcher investigating homelessness in the Yukon is struck by the infrequent mention of homelessness in territorial, municipal, or media reports. The topic is also of low interest in the Yukon legislature. This may, or may not, suggest a low level of public interest in the Yukon. This does not mean that homelessness is not a problem, and indeed, until their recent awakening, the Government and public in Nunavut were inclined to turn a blind eye.

Appendix D – Rankings of Documents

Territory	Group	Not aware	Have read				Have not read		
			Very useful	Useful	Of interest	Not useful	No value	Could not find a copy	No time
Yukon	3	x					No responses. After the fact this was determined to be a valueless input because someone not having read a document could not comment on a document's value.		
	2		10 62 64 68	8 31	59 69				
	1			62 64	56				
	1 2	x (except Yukon)							
	2		62 64						
	2		64	62	7 13 69				
	4		64 67	62					
NWT	1	x							
	1		35						
	3	x							
	2			22 27	8 10 13 18 20			62 64	25 29
	2	x							
	4	x							
	1	x							
	3	x							
	4	x							
	3	x not sure							
	2	x							
	2		35	27 28 29	9		4 10	4 10	
	3					29, 45			
Nunavut	3	x							
	3	x							
	3	x							
	4	x							
	4	x							

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This Bibliography contains full citations for references made in the Endnotes, excepting references made in the Endnotes to legislation and annual reports of departments and agencies. The Endnotes provide full citations for media reports and Hansard citations.

The list of documents consulted, during preparation of this Report, is too long for full reproduction here. All of the documents identified in the das Gupta HRSDC paper were consulted, as were the “serial” documents identified in the questionnaires and listed in Appendix B of this Report.

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Endnotes

¹ Beavis et al. (1997).

² St. Denis (1997); Kowalsky (1996); Pidgeon and Hardy Cox (2002); Weber-Pillwax (2001); National Aboriginal Health Organisation (2003a; 2003b; 2004(?))

³ Nunavut Government (2006a). Section L.

⁴ A Yellowknife consulting company, Genesis Group, was engaged to identify and contact informants in the NWT. This firm was completing a study on crime prevention in Yellowknife, during which they interviewed homeless street people, government officials, and charity workers. They had also recently completed a tour of NWT communities to conduct interviews about jobs and training in respect of the new Northern Pipeline. A consultant living in Whitehorse was hired for a similar function, and although compelled to withdraw for personal reasons, considerable effort to make contact occurred then and subsequent. Assistance from various people was sought in Nunavut, including the operators of Iqaluit's shelter, senior members of the Nunavut Government, and the staff of Nunavut Tungavik Inc. Moreover, a consultant in Baker Lake was engaged to assist with the more remote communities, and to advise on how to proceed generally.

⁵ "Montreal centre aids Inuit". Montreal - CBC News. 21 December 2005.

⁶ General references for this Section are: Webster (1993a; 1993b); Torrie et al (2005a; 2005b); Rea (1968).

⁷ Coates (1991).

⁸ Diabaldo (1985).

⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁰ The general reference used here, for the historical development of federal housing programmes, and the only reference for the following three paragraphs is Library of Parliament (2001).

¹¹ For a detailed account of the settlement scheme and its socio-economic consequences see Webster (1993b). Rea (1968) provides a good background to the development of government programmes and the context of the settlement scheme.

¹² Webster (1993a).

¹³ Government of Canada (1958(?)). p. 16.

¹⁴ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Yukon Territory, 1968.* p. 43.

¹⁵ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (1990:3).

¹⁶ "Selected 1991 Costing Information, RNH (Per Unit)". From C.M.H.C. 1991 year end commitment data. Provided to the Clerk of the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs by C.M.H.C., supplementary to the brief presented on behalf of C.M.H.C. by Lawrence Gladue, Director of Programs, on 26 March 1992. The breakdown for Pelly Bay is: capital (240,000), expenses (14,700), revenues (2,800), interest (11.25%), and average lifetime unit cost (845,000).

¹⁷ National Aboriginal Housing Association (1994).

¹⁸ For a better picture of CMHC's current Northern role, see: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation *Annual Report, 2003/04.*

¹⁹ Interview with Whit Fraser, Chief Executive Officer of the ITK, 25 April 2006.

²⁰ Incorporated into the *Constitution Act* (1982).

²¹ A balanced discussion on the federal role in housing is found in Library of Parliament (2001).

²² The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development administers the three statutes that allow the Territorial councils to govern: Northwest Territories Act (R.S.C., 1985, c. N-27); *Nunavut Act* (S.C., 1993, c. 28); and *Yukon Act* (S.C., 1997, c. 28; S.C., 2002, c. 7).

²³ The boundaries were established in 1993 when the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement Act* (1993, c. 29) received Royal Assent. The same year, the *Nunavut Act* (1993, c. 28) was passed, authorising the re-organisation of the former NWT.

²⁴ For detailed discussions of the jurisdictional disputes and the fiscal landscape in respect of programmes and services to Aboriginal people, see: Webster (2005) and Webster (1995).

²⁵ P.C. 8761 of 11 November 1941 converted Salt Plains from a fishing reserve to an Indian Reserve outside of treaty land quantum. P.C. 1974-387 of 26 February 1974 established Hay River Reserve #1 within land quantum.

²⁶ The history of these transfers is described by Webster (1993b).

²⁷ Coates (1991).

²⁸ For a discussion of this transfer see Webster (1993a).

²⁹ S.C.R. 1939. re: Eskimos. Quebec won this case, with costs, when it protested that federal cessation of relief payments to destitute Inuit in northern Quebec was unlawful on grounds that Inuit are legally Indians, and this their welfare is federal responsibility.

³⁰ Federal Inherent Right of Self-Government Policy: http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/sg/plcy_e.html; GNWT, 2005. *Aboriginal Government in the Northwest Territories: Understanding Self-Government* at: <http://www.gov.nt.ca/publications/asg/pdfs/unde.pdf>. See also the GNWT's Aboriginal Land Claims Policy 11.51 at: [http://www.gov.nt.ca/publications/policies/executive/Aboriginal_Land_Claims_\(11.51\).pdf](http://www.gov.nt.ca/publications/policies/executive/Aboriginal_Land_Claims_(11.51).pdf). All accessed 10 May 2006.

³¹ *Gwich'in Land Claim Settlement Act* (1992, c. 53); *Western Arctic (Inuvialuit) Claims Settlement Act* (1984, c. 24); *Sahtu Dene and Metis Land Claim Settlement Act* (1994, c. 27).

³² 2006 data from *The Daily*, Statistics Canada, 28 March 2006. Other data from 2001 Census.

³³ CANSIM table 051-0001.

³⁴ CANSIM table 051-0004.

³⁵ *Yukon Migration Patterns, 1993-2003*. Information Sheet No. 77.04-2004.12. Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2004.

³⁶ *Population Projections to 2015*. Information Sheet No. 66.09 - 2005.07. Yukon Bureau of Statistics, 2005. The median projection also suggests that the number of aboriginal people in the Yukon would increase by 5.2% and the number of non-aboriginal people would increase by 4.2%. These rates are low compared with the other Territories.

³⁷ 2001 Census. *Shelter Occupancy Rates*, March 2001. Consists of homeless shelters, halfway houses, and emergency lodgings for abused spouses and their children on one day in March 2001.

³⁸ For an overview of this over-representation, and references for these studies, see: Library of Parliament (1999a).

³⁹ Hwang (2001).

⁴⁰ 2001 Census.

⁴¹ This research question is only beginning to be addressed. See: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2001).

⁴² e.g., Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2002), *Research Highlight – Effects of Urban Aboriginal Residential Mobility*. This CMHC study asked the question: What is the impact of mobility on agencies providing services? The conclusions included: “High mobility can have many negative effects for service agencies. These include difficulties in tracking their clients, estimating current and future demand for the services they provide, and preparing appropriate policies, business plans and budgets. High mobility can often remove Aboriginal clients from the agencies’ service catchment areas. This can affect the agencies’ ability to deliver services and their cost efficiency in service provision. It can also minimise the quality of the services, and prevent the maintenance of a continuum of care. The results High mobility can also result in changing needs for services, as the number of clients can increase or decrease, and this can result in fluctuating budgets. Community agencies delivering education, health, as well as family, social and community services can also find it hard to maintain adequate service delivery. Urban Aboriginal mobility can also impair social service agencies’ ability to maintain contact with their clients. It can increase the agencies’ paperwork and need for referrals, and create difficulties for their personnel as they have to adjust frequently to fluctuating numbers of clients. High mobility can also threaten some social service agencies with closure and add costs for housing agencies, which might have to spend more to advertise and prepare dwelling units for new tenants more often.

⁴³ Government of the Northwest Territories (2005a). See Figure 1.3, “Population Share by Community Type, Northwest Territories, 1976-2004”, and descriptions.

⁴⁴ See Cohen (1979; 1981; 1988); Coates and Morrison (1992).

⁴⁵ “At the Legislature – Tent cities.” Yellowknife – Northern News Services. 27 July 2001.

⁴⁶ “Arson sparks evacuation of Inuvik row houses”. Lynn Lau, Northern News Services, Inuvik, 23 December 2002.

⁴⁷ “Lack of emergency shelter shocks Ft. Smith social workers.” CBC News, 9 December 2005.

⁴⁸ For a good overview of medical implications see Hwang (2001).

⁴⁹ e.g., Crowe and Hardill (1993:21-24).

⁵⁰ Tanaka and Tokudome (1993).

⁵¹ e.g.: Golden et al. (1999); Edmonton Homelessness Count Committee (2000(?)).

⁵² “Homeless man's tent burned to ground”. Jason Unrau, Northern News Services. Inuvik, 24 September 2004.

⁵³ e.g., see Canadian Public Health Association (1998) and Library of Parliament (1999b).

⁵⁴ “Lots of ideas, no solutions”. Jason Unrau, Northern News Services. Inuvik, 3 December 2004.

⁵⁵ Nunavut’s 2002/03 total revenues were \$834,133,000. Only 10% of this amount (\$84,908,000) was self-generated. The remaining 90% (\$749,225) was federal transfers. The total has been gradually increasing, but the balance of source revenue barely changes. E.g., see Nunavut Government (2004).

⁵⁶ CANSIM Table 385-0002.

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- ⁵⁷ CANSIM Table 385-0002.
- ⁵⁸ CANSIM Table 385-0002.
- ⁵⁹ Yukon Government (2006).
- ⁶⁰ Yukon Government (2005a).
- ⁶¹ Population data from CANSIM table 051-0001; employment data from CANSIM table 183-0002.
- ⁶² Yukon Government (2005b).
- ⁶³ e.g., Yukon Women's Directorate (1999; 2003); Devries and Nordling (1989).
- ⁶⁴ Mary Beth Levan Kalemi Consultants (2003).
- ⁶⁵ This discussion on recent NWT economic performance is mainly based on Government of the Northwest Territories (2005a).
- ⁶⁶ See Webster (1993a; 1993b) for a picture of the development of systemic, severe unemployment among the Territorial Aboriginal populations.
- ⁶⁷ e.g., see: Government of the Northwest Territories (2005a).
- ⁶⁸ e.g., see: Figure 6.2 (Share of Gross Domestic Product, by Industry, Northwest Territories, 1999 and 2004), in Government of the Northwest territories (2005a).
- ⁶⁹ Adult correctional services, average counts of offenders in provincial, territorial and federal programmes. CANSIM tables, Statistics Canada.
- ⁷⁰ Mary Beth Levan Kalemi Consultants (2003).
- ⁷¹ Irwin (1988;1989).
- ⁷² The controversy over the Irwin report is covered by a special issue of *Northern Perspectives*, 17(1), January-March 1989.
- ⁷³ *ibid.*, See the reaction of the Tungavik Federation of Nunavut, "Inuit Response," pp. 15-16.
- ⁷⁴ National Aboriginal Health Organisation (2005a; 2005b).
- ⁷⁵ Conference Board of Canada, 2002.
- ⁷⁶ *ibid.* The Conference Board produced corrected estimates suggesting that Inuit unemployment was 35.8% compared to 3.3% non-Inuit unemployment in 1999. Inuit aged 15-24 averaged 48.1% unemployment. Many would consider these estimate conservative.
- ⁷⁷ Mary Beth Levan Kalemi Consultants (2003).
- ⁷⁸ *Nunavut Household Survey*, c.f. Nunavut Government (2006a).
- ⁷⁹ Data from NWT (2006(?)).
- ⁸⁰ Yukon Housing Corporation (2006).
- ⁸¹ 2001 Census.
- ⁸² Nunavut Government (2006a). Section L. This is also the general source for the following three paragraphs.
- ⁸³ Nunavut Government (2006b).
- ⁸⁴ Rental ceilings are established on a case-by-case basis and are determined by the applicants' combined household income. They are based on the following categories: 1 - Households earning less than \$90,000 – Base rent will not exceed 20% of income; 2 - Households earning between \$90,000 and \$110,000 – Base rent will not exceed 25% of income; and 3 - Households earning above \$110,000 – Base rent will not exceed 30% of income. See Government of Nunavut Staff Housing Policy, August 2005.
- ⁸⁵ Nunavut Housing Corporation and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (2005).
- ⁸⁶ Nunavut Government (2006b).
- ⁸⁷ Nunavut Government (2006c:16).
- ⁸⁸ Except when indicated otherwise, the general reference for the remainder of this section on housing conditions in Nunavut is Nunavut Government (2006a), Section L.
- ⁸⁹ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2004).
- ⁹⁰ These range from a small subsidy for electricity and fuel in the case of high-income households, to staff housing rent/household subsidies, home ownership down payment, and/or home repair assistance in the case of mid-income households, to rent and mortgage geared to income with virtually all the utilities paid. Nunavut Government (2006a). Section L.
- ⁹¹ Nunavut Government (2006b).
- ⁹² For a picture of growth trajectory in Iqaluit, see Marshall Macklin Monaghan John Laird Associates (2005).
- ⁹³ City of Iqaluit, 2003. "City of Iqaluit General Plan, By-Law 571, June 2003".
- ⁹⁴ NWT Housing Corporation and NWT Bureau of Statistics (2004).
- ⁹⁵ NWT Housing Corporation (2000). Table C-1.
- ⁹⁶ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2004).

- ⁹⁷ This is apparent from a review of the NWT Housing Corporation's *Annual Report* for 2004, 2003, 2002, 2000, 1999, 1998, and 1997.
- ⁹⁸ NWT Housing Corporation and NWT Bureau of Statistics (2004).
- ⁹⁹ Government of the Northwest Territories (2005a).
- ¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*
- ¹⁰¹ *ibid.*
- ¹⁰² See the comprehensive literature review chapter in Torrie et. al (2006a).
- ¹⁰³ *Yukon Housing Corporation Annual Report, 2004/05.*
- ¹⁰⁴ Each community housing report considers: dwelling adequacy; energy efficiency of the dwelling; state of repair of the dwelling; presence or absence of basic facilities in the dwelling; need for health and safety considerations in the dwelling including running water, electricity, heat, and smoke alarms; desire of the occupants to improve the dwelling; whether the occupants pay 30 percent of their gross income for shelter costs; number of bedrooms in the dwelling; ease of access for the disabled and elderly; reasons for renting; seniors and elders needs; and dwelling suitability. See: Yukon Housing Corporation (2002).
- ¹⁰⁵ Yukon Housing Corporation (2000).
- ¹⁰⁶ Yukon Housing Corporation (2004). Section 5 – Conclusions.
- ¹⁰⁷ i.e., see Government of Canada (2005a).
- ¹⁰⁸ Yukon Housing Corporation (2004). Section 4.1.2. – Programme Need.
- ¹⁰⁹ *ibid.* Various sections.
- ¹¹⁰ Compilation from Census data.
- ¹¹¹ e.g., Government of Canada (1985; 2003a; 2003b; 2005b).
- ¹¹² First Nations Regional Longitudinal Health Survey / National Aboriginal Health Organisation (2005). Executive Summary.
- ¹¹³ Government of Canada (2000).
- ¹¹⁴ Nunavut Government (2006a), Section L.
- ¹¹⁵ *ibid.* Section E.
- ¹¹⁶ *ibid.* Section G.
- ¹¹⁷ *ibid.* Section L.
- ¹¹⁸ *ibid.* Section H.
- ¹¹⁹ *Nunavut Hansard*, 27 February 2002. Hunter Tootoo - Member's Statement 449 - 1(5): Homelessness in Nunavut.
- ¹²⁰ Tukkuvik Women's Shelter in Cape Dorset is a community-based service that provides Inuktitut language support including safe shelter and counselling to women and children who are in crisis. Qimaavik Transition House in Iqaluit Inuit and Inuktitut crisis response at any time, day or night, to women. Qimaavik operates both crisis shelters and a longer term transition programme to support women moving into independent living. Pauktuutit (2004a).
- ¹²¹ "Homeless in Iqaluit: the people no one cares for". Markus Wilke, Nunatsiaq News. 18 June 1999.
- ¹²² "Iqaluit homeless shelter bursting at seams".
<http://north.cbc.ca/template/servlet/View?filename=ja03oqotashelt01032003>. Summary located 24 April 2006 but link inaccessible.
- ¹²³ Northern News Services, Iqaluit. 18 April 2005.
- ¹²⁴ "Homeless in Iqaluit: the people no one cares for". Markus Wilke, Nunatsiaq News. 18 June 1999.
- ¹²⁵ "Homeless in Iqaluit". Iqaluit - Northern News Services. 1 August 2005.
- ¹²⁶ "Homeless shelter expansion gets council OK." Iqaluit – CBC News. 15 June 2005.
- ¹²⁷ "Homeless woman plans Iqaluit protest". Iqaluit - CBC News. 3 February 2006.
- ¹²⁸ Mary Beth Levan Kalemi Consultants (2003). Executive Summary.
- ¹²⁹ Pauktuutit (2004c).
- ¹³⁰ e.g., Pauktuutit Inuit Women's Association (2001; 2003; 2004(?); 2004a; 2004b; 2005a).
- ¹³¹ e.g., Government of the Northwest Territories (2005b), *Deh Cho Regional Workshop on the Social Impacts of the MacKenzie Valley Gas Project*. An NWT Housing Corporation representative acknowledged that "current supply will not meet the demand and may lead to crowding, transience (couch surfers), and homelessness". p. 4.
- ¹³² Government of the Northwest Territories (2005c).
- ¹³³ Mary Beth Levan Kalemi Consultants (2003). NWT Findings.
- ¹³⁴ "Soup for the needy - Christian Assembly minister helps with soup kitchen every week". Inuvik - Northern News Services. 2 May 1997.
- ¹³⁵ "Slim Pickings for those in need." Inuvik - Northern News Services. 10 July 1998.

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- ¹³⁶ Squatters take front stage - Men want housing to get away from life in tent. Inuvik – Northern News Services. 29 August 1997.
- ¹³⁷ “Waiting for approval - Location picked for duplexes for homeless”. Inuvik - Northern News Services. 6 October 2000.
- ¹³⁸ “Offering people holiday sanctuary - Safe House program running once again.” Inuvik – Northern News Services. 30 November 2001.
- ¹³⁹ “Inuvik's big boom - The ups and downs, pros and cons of the latest wave of oil and gas activity to hit the Delta”. Yellowknife – Northern News Services. 25 February 2002.
- ¹⁴⁰ “Going to the dogs - Residents outraged at proposed \$200,000 dog pound”. Inuvik - Northern News Services. 17 January 2003.
- ¹⁴¹ e.g., “MLA hopefuls speak”. Inuvik - Northern News Services. 21 November 2003. “Positioning Inuvik for the pipeline boom, dealing with homelessness and substance abuse, and education topped Twin Lakes voters' agenda at the all-candidates forum Monday evening at Ingamo Hall...As for the social implications of the pipeline, questioning turned to the problem of drug and alcohol abuse in the community. Both Smith and Wood said they wanted to see a drug and alcohol treatment centre built in Inuvik.”
- ¹⁴² “Without shelter”. Inuvik – Northern News Services. 5 March 2004.
- ¹⁴³ “Life on the street”. Inuvik – Northern News Services. 8 April 2005.
- ¹⁴⁴ “Shelter closes its doors”. Yellowknife – Northern News Services. 1 April 2005.
- ¹⁴⁵ “Shelter rescued”. Inuvik – Northern News Services. 5 March 2005.
- ¹⁴⁶ Government of Canada (2002). Section 1.1.1.1.1 – Young Homeless Women in Yellowknife.
- ¹⁴⁷ “Down and out in Yellowknife”. Yellowknife - Northern News Service. 30 November 2001.
- ¹⁴⁸ “Yellowknife Women's Centre under fire - Fort McPherson woman says she was stranded in capital while embroiled in dispute.” Yellowknife – Northern News Services. 21 December 2001.
- ¹⁴⁹ “Area shelters adults only - Teen survives without work or government aid”. Yellowknife - Northern News Services. 4 February 1998.
- ¹⁵⁰ “Safe haven in the dark.” Yellowknife - Northern News Services. 9 March 2005.
- ¹⁵¹ “Right to live”. Yellowknife - Northern News Service. 10 December 2004.
- ¹⁵² “Homeless and those at risk to benefit from Whitehorse Community Plan”. HRSDC News Release. 16 November 2001.
- ¹⁵³ “Sally Ann shelter faces closure”. Whitehorse – CBC News. 26 August 2003.