

Encouraging the development and mobilization of quality housing research

Making an Impact with Community-Based Research: Bernie Pauly & Bruce Wallace

Lack of affordable housing and homelessness are key issues of concern to British Columbians. Recently, a survey of businesses identified that housing and homelessness were top provincial issues. Since 2006, Bernie Pauly and Bruce Wallace have worked collaboratively with community partners to undertake and mobilize research to better understand and develop evidence-based solutions to issues related to homelessness.

Housing First is an evidence-based best practice for ending homelessness, but it is difficult to directly and immediately house people in housing markets, like Victoria, where rental and social housing is unaffordable and unavailable. Starting in 2009, Pauly and Wallace led the initial development of a framework for monitoring key drivers of homelessness and responses to homelessness.

This has resulted in the community continuing to monitor these conditions annually. In collaboration with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness and Capital Regional District, this work continually highlighted the need for a substantial investment in housing. Recently, the CRD announced \$35 million for low income housing.



In housing markets like Victoria, interim or transitional housing often plays an important role in moving people into the housing market.

Together, Pauly and Wallace have evaluated solutions such as interim housing, and found that conflicting policies around substance use and harm reduction act as a barriers to those in need of housing. Pauly, along with a team at CARBC are evaluating innovative Housing First strategies for people with severe alcohol use and homelessness, known as managed alcohol programs. Wallace is leading work to better understand the implementation of harm reduction as part of Housing First responses.

Both individually and together, they are using community-based research strategies that actively engage communities in the work of developing solutions to address homelessness in BC communities and beyond.

(continued on page 4)

In This Issue

Making an Impact with CBR	1
Message from our Co-Chairs	2
Partner News	2-3
Student News	4

The Pacific Housing Research Network facilitates multi-sectoral research focused on housing affordability and sustainability, and fosters dialogue and collaboration among housing stakeholders across B.C. to encourage the effective application of research results to housing solutions.

Message from Our Co-Chairs

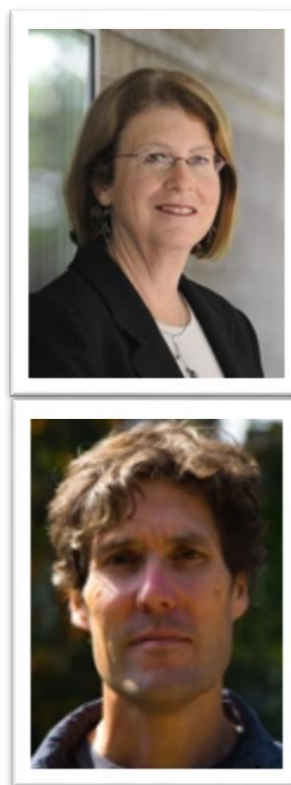
The Pacific Research Housing Network (PHRN) offers a unique opportunity for researchers based in post-secondary contexts to connect with researchers based in governmental and non-governmental organizations. We are united in our efforts to ensure that research is made available and to productively contribute to research addressing affordable and sustainable housing in BC.

Networks offer exceptional spaces for sharing good practices and here at PHRN we strive to ensure that researchers are aware of the efforts others within the network are making to address the complex housing issues in the province of BC.

In this issue, we find research focusing on the cost of accessibility features, the impact of community based approaches, and look at how affordable housing creates value in our communities.

We look forward to continuing our combined efforts and to welcoming many housing stakeholders to our annual Symposium in Richmond November 2016.

PHRN Co-chairs Penny Gurstein (UBC) and Bruce Wallace (UVic)



Partner News



BC Housing

Social Return on Investment for Affordable Housing

BC Housing has engaged the Constellation Consulting Group to conduct a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study. The purpose is to learn more about how investing in affordable housing creates value in our communities.

Four affordable housing developments owned and operated by non-profit housing societies in BC are participating. The SROI approach will tell the story of how change is created by affordable housing and how much social value is created for every dollar that is invested. Results will be presented at the BCNPHA Conference in November.

Evaluation of the Vulnerability Assessment Tool for Supportive Housing Applicants in BC

BC Housing and non-profit agencies operating supportive housing in Vancouver began using the Vulnerability Assessment Tool (VAT) in 2014.

They recognized a need for a common assessment tool to assess the eligibility and needs of supportive housing applicants. BC Housing has engaged PtH Housing First Inc. to determine to what extent the VAT has achieved its objectives for targeting vulnerable populations, efficiency, effectiveness, and consistency.

Several **Industry Research Projects** are in progress. For additional information, see www.hpo.bc.ca. These include:

- **Airtightness Guide for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings.** BC Housing in partnership with BC Hydro and the City of Vancouver will develop a guide for multi-unit buildings to address specific aspects of achieving verified, airtight building enclosure performance.
(continued on page 3)

PHRN Objectives:

1. To encourage the **sharing of findings** across researchers, knowledge users, and stakeholders.
2. To **support each other** in developing and conducting research.
3. To **leverage capacity** to find funding solutions for housing research and dissemination.
4. To **encourage students** to consider housing as an area of choice for their career.

Partner News (continued)

- Building Envelope Retrofit for Improved Durability and Energy Performance. BC Housing, in partnership with FPIInnovations, will study two buildings and examine insulation, cladding and roofing retrofits.
- Heat Recovery Ventilation Guide for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings. This is a new guide on HRV technologies for multi-unit buildings.

The BC Non-Profit Housing Association will be hosting their annual conference from November 20-23 at the Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel in Richmond BC.



BCNPHA's Annual Conference is the largest conference of its kind in Western Canada. It has also earned the reputation of being one of the 'must attend' forums in the affordable housing world. Bringing together key stakeholders in affordable housing from across British Columbia and Western Canada, the conference is your opportunity to connect directly with decision-makers, including policymakers, affordable housing providers, community leaders and the private-sectors, all in one place.



Cost of Accessibility Features in Newly-Constructed Modest Houses

The Research: With the aging of the population and increasing life expectancy, the construction of sustainable homes that change with occupants' needs could have benefits for residents and communities.

The majority of seniors express a preference for "aging in place". Adaptable housing could delay or eliminate the needs for older residents to relocate. A longer period of independent living would retain residents' established support services, maintain their existing social links and allow continued participation in the community.

Overview of the Project

- Five benchmark adaptable homes were designed, which could be modified over time based on the occupants' changing needs, without any major upgrades or costs.
- A list of 60 building features, based on the principles of accessibility, was used to create these accessible/adaptable floor plans.
- The cost of each added accessibility feature was estimated.
- The cost to construct each standard benchmark home, with and without accessibility features was estimated and validated using several sources and models.
- Costs were estimated for five Canadian cities and verified with the construction sector.

Key Findings

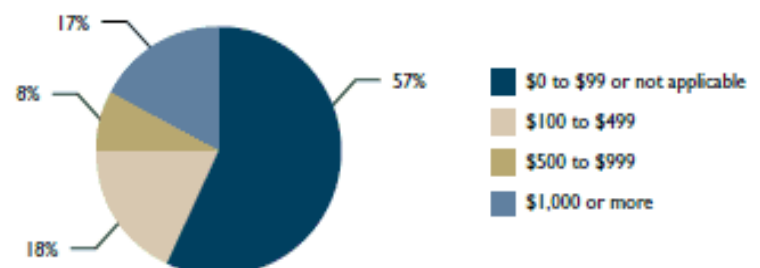
Cost of Individual Accessibility Features: The vast majority (75%) of accessibility features cost less than \$500, and more than half were no-cost or had negligible costs (see Figure 1). Features estimated to cost between \$500 and \$1,000 included kitchen cabinets with vertical storage for a future wall oven, an easily modifiable structure in the shower, and preparation for potential installation of an elevator.

The most costly features were those that impacted the layout of the building, for example, added floor space in the garage and manoeuvring area in the kitchen and bathrooms; protection against the elements above the entry; and a refuge in case of fire on a second floor balcony.

Find Out More

For more information about the incremental costs of adding accessibility features, download your free copy of this CMHC Research Report at www.cmhc.ca or call 1-800-668-2642.

Figure 1: Cost of Individual Accessibility Features



Making an Impact with CBR (continued)

In an article that they recently published, they call on researchers and academics to be engaged in community, not just engaged through research, but meaningfully engaged in working to end homelessness.

Through PHRN and other opportunities, researchers and academics can find common ground for collaborating on solutions to improve housing options and end homelessness.

Excerpt from the article:

“A CBR approach to program evaluation in the homeless sector has benefits when researchers are engaged in both community and activism to end homelessness...there is value in researchers' commitment to sustained participation in community...in addressing homelessness, there is a need to engage researchers to participate in this larger context of the community and social change.”

Wallace, B., Pauly, B., Perkin, K. & Ranfft, M. (2015). Shifting the evaluative gaze: Community-based program evaluation in the homeless sector. *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement*, 8(1), 43–58.

PHRN symposium updates

Take a look at the BCNPHA website for links to many of the interesting presentations, including the PHRN symposium presentations, that took place at the CLICK! Conference in November 2015:
<http://bcnpha.ca/conference-2015/>

Want to receive E-News updates from PHRN?

PHRN will bring you up-to-date news on housing research, student opportunities, upcoming events, and other resources!

Subscribe online at
<https://phrNBC.com/subscribe-to-our-e-news/>

Thank you to our partners!



BC Housing



CMHC SCHL



BCNPHA
BC Non-Profit Housing Association



University of Victoria

Student News

Opportunities for graduate student research funding, professional development, and travel internships are available through **MITACS**.

Find out more at
<http://www.mitacs.ca>

Emerging professionals receive discounted rates for registration to the annual **BCNPHA conference** (November 20-23 2016, Richmond BC). For more information, go to <http://bcnpha.ca/events/conference/>

Who is PHRN?


Our Steering Committee:

Penny Gurstein (UBC), Co-Chair
Bruce Wallace (UVic), Co-Chair
Elizabeth Tang (CMHC)
Nolan Beise (MITACS)
Bernie Pauly (UVic)
Jill Atkey (BCNPHA)
Carlos Teixeira (UBC Okanagan)
Cecile Lacombe (UVic)
Nathan Lauster (UBC)
Virginia Holden (Housing Policy Branch)
Deborah Kraus (BC Housing)
Tricia Roche (PHRN Co-ordinator)

Stay Connected with PHRN!



 phrn@uvic.ca

 [@researchphrn](https://twitter.com/researchphrn)

 www.phrNBC.com