

Realtors call for action on vacancy

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Winnipeg's record-low apartment vacancy rate isn't just putting the squeeze on renters, its also hurting home-buyers by driving up house prices, according to the association that represents local Realtors.

WinnipegREALTORS says the acute shortage of apartments -- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. recently pegged Winnipeg's overall vacancy rate at an all-time low of 0.8 per cent -- is forcing some renters to buy a home. That has led to increased competition and bidding wars, particularly for properties in the \$150,000 to \$250,000 price range, it says.

To draw attention to the problem, the association will be issuing a discussion paper later this month that looks at the circumstances that led to what it terms the rental market crisis, and raises possible solutions.

Mel Boisvert, chair of the WR task force that prepared the report, declined to say Wednesday what recommendations the association will be making.

But it has said that options worth considering are "softer" rent control guidelines, portable housing allowances for lower-income renters, and increased government subsidies and/or tax breaks for apartment developers.

For the full WFP story [click here](#).

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