



HEY NEIGHBOUR!

Exploring sociability in
multi-unit buildings across
Vancouver

 CITY OF
VANCOUVER

**HOUSING
VANCOUVER**

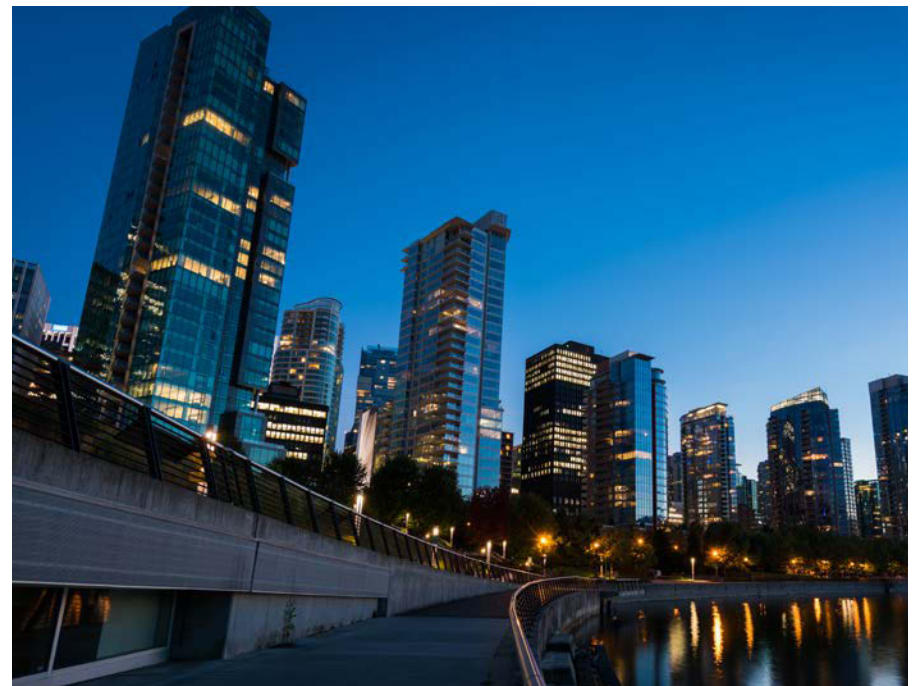
Healthy City
Strategy

Introduction

Vancouver's population is rapidly growing with an influx of new immigrants, refugees and people from other places in Canada. The Vancouver Foundation's 2012 Connections and Engagement survey identified that loneliness, disconnection and isolation were top issues impacting Vancouverites. This is experienced by both new immigrants and long-time Vancouverites including the elderly. The My Health My Community 2014 survey also showed that only 50% of Vancouver's adult population have more than four people in their social circle to rely on in times of need, and only 54% felt a sense of community. The rise of housing prices across the metro region, outpacing local incomes, is creating a crisis situation for households across the spectrum, which is likely contributing to the feeling of disconnection amongst Vancouver residents. Homelessness continues to rise - seniors, indigenous households, and youth are facing an increasing risk of homelessness. Low- and moderate- income households are also struggling to find secure housing in the city, and unsure of how to stay in Vancouver long-term. During this challenging time, the City, residents and our community partners are eager to better understand the links between sociability, individual and household well-being, and the design and operation of local housing.

The City of Vancouver's mission is to create a great city of communities that cares about our people, our environment, and our opportunities to live, work, and prosper. Two key initiatives driving to meet this goal are the on-going implementation of a Healthy City Strategy and the current development of a new *Housing Vancouver* Strategy. The City's Healthy City Strategy includes goals of "Cultivating Connections", "Being and Feeling Safe and Included", and "A Home for Everyone". *Housing Vancouver* will be the City's new 10-year strategy to improve housing affordability by creating the right types of homes to meet the needs of the people who live and work in Vancouver. The Hey Neighbour! Projects bring together city staff, residents, housing developers of various types, designers and academics to examine the impact of design and social programming to improve the sociability of multi-unit housing through a case study of friendly buildings in Vancouver.

Loneliness and isolation is becoming a global epidemic. Perhaps the greatest irony - and tragedy - of modernity is that despite the "technological revolution," we have never been so disconnected. More Canadians than ever live alone, and almost one-quarter describe themselves as lonely. Loneliness has been linked to depression, anxiety, interpersonal hostility, vulnerability to health problems, and even to suicide.



What we know

Who lives in Vancouver and how they live has changed and is changing. According to the 2016 census, the city's population grew by 4.6% since 2011, yet the proportion of families living in Vancouver has declined by 2%. The percentage of one-person households is at its peak (28%) and has been steadily increasing over the past decade. Roughly 60% of the city's housing stock is comprised of apartments and strata condominiums, and twice as many people live in multi-family buildings as opposed to single-family homes. Vancouver's households are almost evenly distributed between renters and owners.



The Connections and Engagement survey showed that neighbourly connections among residents vary with building types and their tenure. Less than 50% of respondents living in apartments were likely to chat with their neighbours; 43% of respondents said that they do not know the name of at least two of their neighbours, and 77% have never done simple favours for their neighbors. Fewer renters expressed a strong sense of belonging to their neighbourhood than owners (65% compared to 75% of owners). They were also less likely to know the name of their neighbours and have chatted with them. Striving to create a more resilient, healthy city for all and support the delivery of the right supply of housing, the City of Vancouver is forming partnerships and implementing interventions to build a stronger urban community for our residents.

Learning from the field

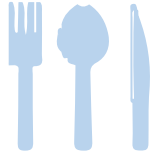
In the summer of 2017, 16 buildings - identified as friendly by their residents - were visited. A number of the building residents as well as several property/resident managers were interviewed. Here is an overview:

- Of the buildings studied 56% were low-rise, 25% were medium-rise and 19% were high-rise. Average number of units was 100.
- Average age of the buildings was 19 years old with a density of 2.5 FSR.
- Most of the multi-family buildings were located in East Vancouver, with a few in Downtown and South Vancouver, and one in North Vancouver.
- Average walkability score was 93 and transit score 82.
- Seven buildings were strata, owner occupied, with rentals allowed with some level of restriction. Three were rentals, and two were leases with a mix of owners and renters, both without an official strata council. Two cohousing complexes and two co-ops were also included.

This study showed that a combination of design and programming factors are needed to achieve social connectedness among neighbours. The following infographics shows the most common features found in the buildings, and the case study profiles provide more detail on each of the buildings and how the various elements contributed to increased sociability for their residents.



Common Design Features



52%

Shared Kitchen
Four buildings with large shared kitchens



76%

Amenity/
Party Room
Mainly on ground floor, some on rooftop



58%

Rooftop Patio/
BBQ Area



100%

Balconies



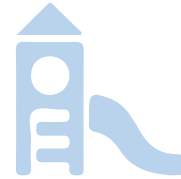
35%

Lobby/
Bulletin Boards



65%

Courtyard
Mostly used by families and kids



59%

Playground
Half in courtyards, half on rooftop or mid-floors



41%

Shared
Supply Room
Sharing of kitchenware, toys, books, etc.



35%

Mixed Use



41%

Shared Laundry
Less than half also had in-suite laundry



29%

Workspace/
Workshop



58%

Community
Garden
Four communal gardens, six assigned plots

Common Programs, Policies or Culture



100%

Social
Events

From once a year to weekly



59%

Resident Managers

*Four identified as key
players in making
connections*



100%

Communication
Methods

*From elevator notices
to Facebook pages*



64%

Resident Champions

*Passionate individual
or group of residents*



100%

Community
Mindset

Within all buildings



88%

Pets

*Significant community
connectors*



76%

Similar
Demographic

Large portion of families or seniors

Low-Rise Case Study

DISTRICT MAIN

Riley Park, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 4453 Main St, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer and Building Manager:** Kevington Building Corp.
- **Year Built:** 2008
- **Ownership Model:** Rental
- **Area:** 3,020 m²
- **Zoning: C-2:** Commercial
- **Number of Floors:** 3 (Height: 13.57 m)
- **Units:** 79
- **Unit Type:** 1 and 2 Bedroom
- **Communication Method:** Facebook; TV screens; Company web portal
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Large lobby with TV and large table; Meeting room with small kitchen; Front desk; Garden with orchards seating, BBQ and fireplace; Gym; Car sharing spots; Sharing closet; Wine-rack
- **Community Amenities:** Close to Main street shopping area, public transit, Queen Elizabeth Park and Hillcrest Community Center
- **Demographics:** Singles; Couples; Families
- **Walkability Score:** 94

Description

Located on one of Vancouver's "coolest" streets, District Main provides a unique home for its residents. It is built and managed by Kevington Building Corp, a family-owned business, that promotes sense of community and social connectivity in all of their developments. Stemmed from their founder, Joe Khalifa's strong belief in community building, District Main has full-time staff that plan and organize social events, plant fruits and vegetables in the communal garden and even make wine from the grapes planted that is then shared with residents.



Before building a new building in a neighbourhood, Kevington group engages with the residents and the local BIA to understand the needs with the community, and builds their property catering towards existing needs. For instance, their District Main building is a mixed-use residential with a large grocery store and multiple other businesses. They also invite businesses to participate and to contribute.

The lobby is used for events and their occasional coffee and pastry offerings. Residents are greeted by the community concierge or the security staff who work after hours. Kevington Building Corp donates some of their recycling and gives away the additional wine to the Boys and Girls Club of Vancouver. Kevington consists of a small, dedicated and skilled group of staff that put on different hats and attend to their buildings. When reviewing new tenant applications they also make sure to accept people who fit in building's culture.

"There is nothing we cannot do, only things we choose not to."

Design

- Welcoming, well-lit lobby and a dining table
- 24 orchard trees and large garden
- Sharing closet for residents (camping equipment, books, etc.)
- TV screens on each floor (for internal communication)
- BBQ and comfortable seating area in the garden
- Car sharing spots at the building (Modo)
- Mixed use residential with businesses on ground level



Lobby



Garden with orchards



Meeting room and kitchen

Programs, Policies, Culture

Kevington Building Corp. has created the following initiatives for the building:

- Full-time on-site community concierge and 24/7 security staff
- Harvesting fruits, making wine and sharing the produce with residents
- Skill building workshops - sponsored by local businesses
- Frequent social events such as theme parties and residents mix & mingles
- Facebook page where all event photos are posted and shared
- Residents satisfaction survey



Kevington staff always on site



Holiday Art Show with residents and staff



Canada Day event

Low-Rise Case Study

QUAYSIDE VILLAGE

Lower Lonsdale, North Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 510 Chesterfield Ave, North Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Self developed by residents, CDC Cohousing was the Project Manager
- **Architect:** The Courtyard Groups
- **Year Built:** 1998
- **Ownership Model:** Cohousing
- **Number of Floors:** 4
- **Building Typology:** Low density
- **Units:** 18 owned units (four are 20% below market), 1 rental unit, 1 commercial unit
- **Unit Type:** Studio, 1 and 2 Bedroom units; 2 and 3 Bedroom townhouses
- **Communication Method:** Bulletin boards and Google Group
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Multiple garden plots; Rooftop garden; Shared kitchen; Dining area; Movie lounge; Shared laundry; Guest room; Furnished lobby and fireplace; Meditation room; Compost area; Bike room
- **Community Amenities:** Walkable neighbourhood; Close to bus stops, SeaBus, local market, parks, schools, and North Shore Neighbourhood House
- **Demographics:** Retirees; Couples; Families with kids and teenagers
- **Walkability Score:** 93
- **Winner of Silver Georgie Award for Best Low-Rise Development**

Description

Quayside Village is one of the oldest cohousing models built in Vancouver. Located on a quiet residential street and minutes from the Sea Bus, it has beautiful views of the mountains and large gardens. It has a tight knit community and many of the original owners still live there. Their



Common House is used for many private and public events. The rooftop meditation room has also been used for business use over the years. One of the unique features of Quayside Village is their complex yet organized and very effective recycling facility, which is led by a resident who is passionate about recycling. There are no high security entrances or fobs to enter each floor, but residents stated that they feel safe and secure because they know each other and keep an eye on the whole building.

All owners sit on the strata council and self-select themselves to different committees such as finance, community thriving, gardening, and maintenance. Although units have their own kitchen, residents have a cooking schedule and share many meals together. Everyone knows the kids and parents feel supported as their neighbours keep an eye on their children when they play in the courtyard or the play area.

"My unit is not my only home, the whole village is."

Design

- Central courtyard visible from units on all floors
- Townhouses that open to the courtyard
- Large shared external corridors and garden beds
- Spacious Common House with a communal kitchen
- Collective input from residents on building design
- Unique suites with different sizes
- Access to garage only through main lobby and outdoor stairs



Central courtyard



Common House and kitchen



Rooftop garden and meditation room

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Sharing program for supplies such as books and toys
- Inclusive decision-making process (all residents sit on strata)
- Using their shared spaces for internal events as well as community classes
- Informal co-caring (residents are aware of each other's health conditions)
- Allowing residents to use common areas for their running their businesses
- Utilizing residents' passion to create champions in different areas



Furnished lobby and fireplace



Recycling room



Toy and book sharing

Low-Rise Case Study

VANCOUVER COHOUSING

Kensington-Cedar Cottage, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 1733 E 33rd Ave, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Vancouver CoHousing
- **Architect:** Ankenman Marchand
- **Year Built:** 2016
- **Ownership Model:** Cohousing
- **Area:** 2,694 m²
- **Zoning:** CD-1
- **Number of Floors:** 3
- **Units:** 31
- **Unit Type:** Studio, 1, 2 and 3 Bedroom
- **Communication Method:** Bulletin boards; Printed calendars; Email lists; Bazinga
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Common dining area; Large communal kitchen; Playroom; Sharing room; Yoga Studio; Courtyard; Playground; Shared laundry; Workspace; Playground Communal Garden; 2 Electric car chargers; 2 guest rooms, First community-owned solar energy producer
- **Community Amenities:** Close to Victoria Drive, Kensington Park, Skytrain
- **Demographics:** Families with kids; Seniors
- **Walkability Score:** 89

Description

Vancouver Cohousing is the first cohousing development in Vancouver. Like-minded residents came together about eight years ago to design and build their future residence together. It consists of 31 privately owned homes and 2 rentals, plus extensive common areas. Each unit is uniquely designed and most of them have a small private patio. Currently a mix



of families and seniors live in this close-knit neighbourhood and manage their property collectively. They have multiple committees and meet regularly to solve problems and develop policies for the community.

Residents take part in communal activities such as common meal preparation and clean-up (3-4 times a week), and have multiple committees such as maintenance, landscaping, social and external. They hold work parties every season to accomplish some of the major work on the complex.

A yoga studio is located in the Common House where local providers host classes for a small fee.

Cohousing residents are hoping to connect with their neighbours by opening up the classes to the larger community.

“ Through the development process, we built a lot of relationships among ourselves.”

Design

- Multiple gathering spaces: Common House, dining area, large kitchen
- Units with private outdoor space as well as communal outdoor space
- Shared supply room, laundry room, workspace, and playroom
- Supplies/donations room where neighbours leave their unused items
- Large courtyard viewable by residents where children play safely



Central courtyard



Common gardens



*Common House ,
kitchen and dining area*

Programs, Policies, Culture

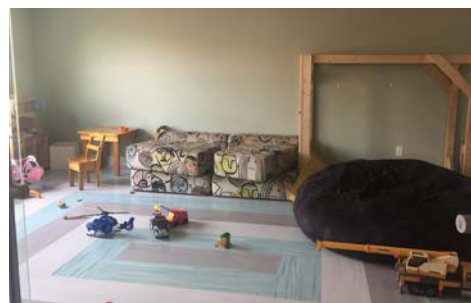
- Going through the design and development process with fellow neighbours - led to strong connections and great sense of accomplishment collectively
- Multiple accountability measures to have committees do their job (regular monthly meetings, using email lists as well as printed calendars)
- Work parties that helps foster community building
- Commitment to cohousing culture and acceptance that everyone might not agree but can work together
- Consensus building method used for decision making



Calendar and task lists



*Design that was
developed by residents*



*Children playroom with
toys*

Low-Rise Case Study

FALSE CREEK CO-OP

Fairview, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 711 Millyard, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Frank Stanzl
- **Architect:** Richard Henriquez
- **Year Built:** 1976
- **Ownership Model:** Co-op
- **Area:** 7,294 m² (FSR: ~ 1)
- **Zoning:** FCCDD - Comprehensive Development
- **Number of Floors:** 2 (Height: 14.12 m)
- **Units:** 170 (24 apartments and 146 townhouses)
- **Unit Type:** 1, 2 Bedroom units ; 2, 3, 4 Bedroom townhouses
- **Communication Method:** Monthly newsletter; Bulletin boards; Strata web portal; Email lists
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Common room; Pool table; Office; Boardroom; Woodworking and wine-making room; Garden; Rooftop patios
- **Community Amenities:** Proximity to Seawall, Charleson Dog Park, False Creek Elementary School and playground, Walking distance to Granville Island and community garden
- **Demographics:** Couples; Families with kids and teenagers; Many Seniors
- **Walkability Score:** 75

Description

Built about 40 years ago, False Creek Co-op is one of the oldest Co-ops in Vancouver, and showcases many best practices in community building. Members collectively own the Co-op by paying monthly housing charges as well as a one-time share purchase. Units open to a long walkway/courtyard. This semi-private space allows for resident to keep an eye on



the children while gardening and socializing.

The Co-op is run through various committees and also has full-time administrative staff on-site. False Creek Co-op does not rely on a federal breakeven/subsidy and is able to achieve affordability through an internal breakeven model.

They have a low turnover rate with 5-6 units per year. Their membership committee is open to accepting young families to balance the aging population of the Co-op. A monthly newsletter gets distributed door to door that includes an events calendar, school information, introductions of new members, and different initiatives in the Co-op and the larger community. Members respect their fellow neighbours by balancing socialization and staying private.

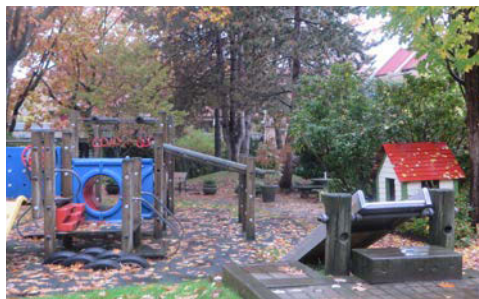
"The structure of the committees is key to the success of the Co-op."

Design

- Large private decks and garden plots at each unit
- Dog park, school and playground on-site
- Multiple gathering and working spaces including large boardroom for residents and open to larger community
- Woodworking and wine-making rooms
- Semi-private walkway and courtyard
- Rooftop patios



Patios and decks



Playground



Semi-private courtyard

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Orientation session for new members
- Monthly newsletter and bulletin boards
- Social events such as the Annual Summer BBQ
- Multiple committees including board of directors, finance, membership, internal/ external building maintenance, and grounds/gardening
- Ensuring security of tenure (non-subsidy model supported by residents' variety of incomes)



Bulletin boards



Work party by gardening committee



Summer picnic

Low-Rise Case Study

BRIX I

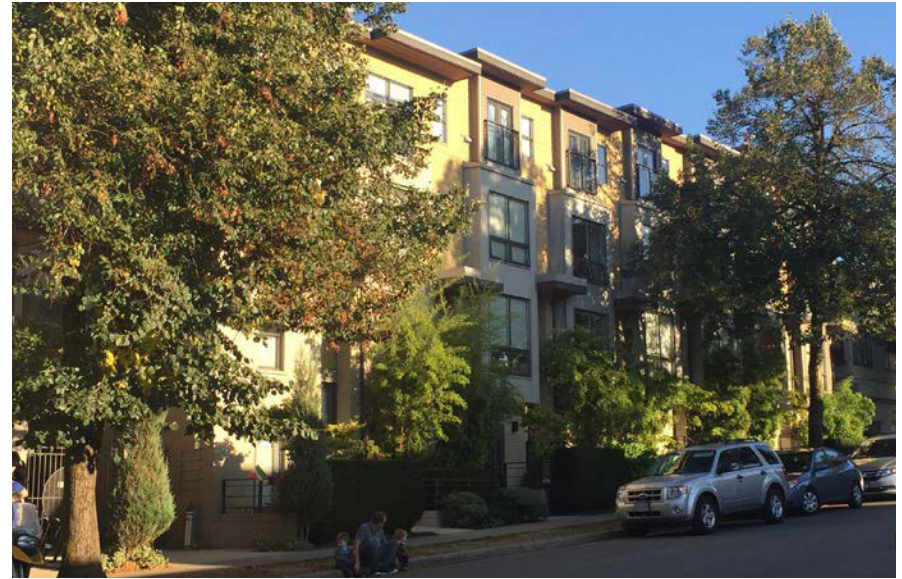
Kensington-Cedar Cottage, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 3750 Commercial St, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Pacific Rim Developers
- **Year Built:** 2006
- **Ownership Model:** Strata
- **Area:** 2,523 m² (FSR: 1.3)
- **Zoning:** MC-1: Industrial
- **Number of Floors:** 4
- **Units:** 38
- **Unit Type:** 2 Bedroom and Den
- **Communication Method:** Strata mailing list; Facebook page for parents in 3 adjacent townhouses
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Balconies; Small communal garden with individual plots; Walkway and courtyard; Book-sharing tree
- **Community Amenities:** Walking distance to Trout Lake Park and Community Center; Lord Selkirk Elementary; Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House; Close to Commercial Drive shopping area
- **Demographics:** Couples; Seniors; Mostly families with young kids
- **Walkability Score:** 91

Description

Brix I is the first of two townhouse developments in the former industrial lands on Stainsbury and Commercial Street. This area includes a few other townhouses with similar demographics, which have led to a successful integration of neighbours. Parents know each other and kids play together on the street, or in the courtyards within their building. Many kids go to the same school and play at the same park. People shop at the weekly farmers market and do each other small favours.



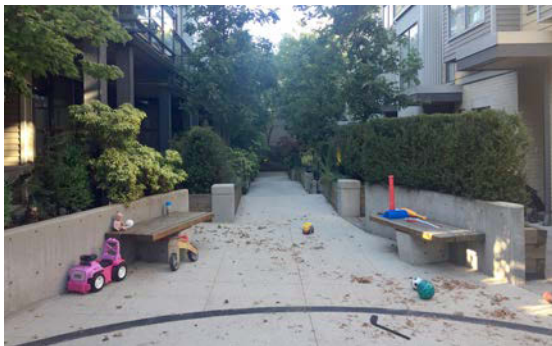
There are also many small businesses whose owners live and work in the neighbourhood.

Residents of the Brix I and their neighbours hold annual block parties as well as many family-oriented events such as Halloween and Easter. They were able to access funding from the Neighbourhood Small Grants program for the block parties and got sponsorship from local realtors and small businesses for their other events.

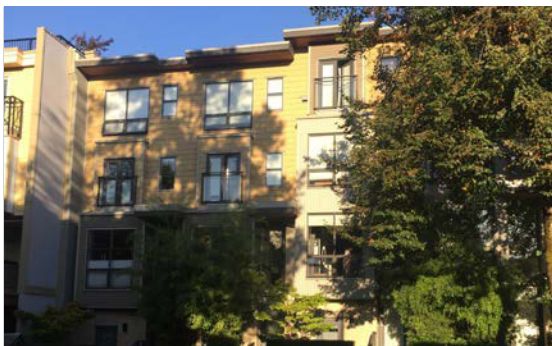
"It has that village feeling that we don't usually get in Vancouver. I walk up the street, say hi to the people next-door, get a haircut at my neighbour's salon, and we organize large parties together."

Design

- Courtyard
- Orientation of units (facing into walkway and courtyard with aligned balconies)
- Large windows (helps residents see the streets and their neighbours)
- Family-oriented neighbourhood
- Community garden and school close by



Courtyard and play area



Large windows

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Bulletin boards where strata council posts notifications
- Many events for kids such as trick-or-treating and pumpkin carving at Halloween
- Annual block parties
- Book-sharing program
- Parents Facebook group, neighbours exchanging phone numbers



Bulletin board close to elevator



Book-sharing tree

Low-Rise Case Study

THE WORKS

Kensington-Cedar Cottage, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 1899 Stainsbury Avenue, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Homeward Bound Development Inc.
- **Year Built:** 2008
- **Ownership Model:** Strata
- **Area:** 3,413 m²
- **Zoning:** MC-1: Industrial
- **Number of Floors:** 4 (Height: 11.47 m)
- **Units:** 50
- **Unit Type:** 2 and 3 Bedroom
- **Communication Method:** Strata mailing lists; Google and WhatsApp groups for residents
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Courtyard; Playground; Greenspace; Patios
- **Community Amenities:** Walking distance to Trout Lake Park and Community Center, Lord Selkirk Elementary, Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House; Close to Commercial Drive shopping area
- **Demographics:** Couples; Families with kids; Some seniors
- **Walkability Score:** 89

Description

The Works is a large townhouse development close to Brix I off of Commercial Street. It consists of three sections coming together in a triangle with a green courtyard and play area in the middle. One and two bedroom townhouses are on the ground-level with their entrances out to the street and their balconies/patios in the courtyard. The multi-story three bedroom townhouses open to the courtyard.

Almost 80% of the residents have young children and a few parents

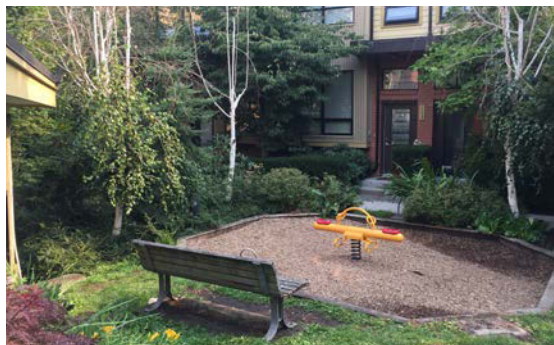


play a catalyst role in connecting the neighbours. Mothers have created a WhatsApp group that brings them together for play dates or social gatherings. This group has now opened up to all residents. Everyone knows the kids and keep an eye for them. They hold block parties with their neighbouring buildings and an annual Easter Egg hunt with more than 40 kids participating.

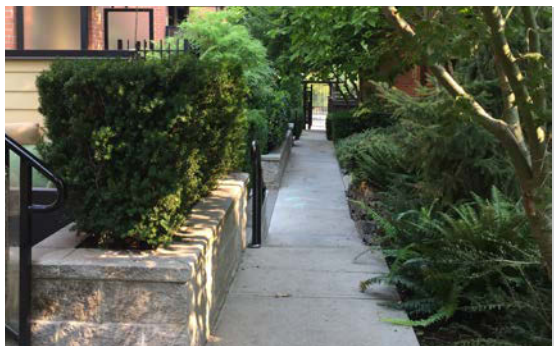
"Everyone knows the kids and will stop them if they are doing something wrong."

Design

- Courtyard
- Greenspace
- Orientation of units (doors and balconies facing the courtyard)
- Play area
- Family-oriented neighbourhood
- Community garden and school close by



Courtyard and play area



Access to courtyard from most units

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Residents' Google and WhatsApp groups
- Parents organizing events such as pizza night and girls night
- Many events for kids such as the Easter egg hunt and Halloween
- Book club
- Neighbourhood watch group
- Neighbourhood block parties and cleanup with other local strata through *Keep Vancouver Spectacular*



Neighbourhood block party



Social events in the courtyard

ATHLETE'S VILLAGE HOUSING CO-OP

Mount Pleasant, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 151 West 1st Ave, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Millennium Development Group
- **Architect:** GBL Architects Inc.
- **Year Built:** 2010
- **Ownership Model:** Co-op
- **Area:** 5,992 m² (FSR: ~ 4.8)
- **Zoning:** CD-1
- **Number of Floors:** 4 (Height: 20 m)
- **Units:** 84 (25% units below market)
- **Unit Type:** 1, 2 and 3 Bedroom
- **Communication Method:** Multiple Facebook pages; Member email list; Bulletin boards
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Rooftop garden with apiary and fruit orchard; Courtyard and playground; Large lobby with seating area; Amenity room and kitchen; 2 family home daycares on-site (15 spaces total); 2 parking spots for shared cars (Modo); 150 bikes; Area for electric and motor scooters
- **Community Amenities:** At Olympic Village close to waterfront, Easy access to shopping areas, bars, playground and Creekside Community Center
- **Demographics:** Couples; Mostly families with young kids; Seniors
- **Walkability Score:** 95

Description

Athlete's Village Co-op is the newest Co-op built in of Vancouver. It is managed by its Board, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHFBC)



and the City of Vancouver. The building is U-shaped with a large semi-private courtyard/ playground in the middle and rooftop gardens on both sides. Victory Gardens, a local urban farming co-operative, uses their rooftop garden for their gardening school, and they work with Hives for Humanity to keep beehives in their garden. It is a LEED Gold building located on City-owned land and financed by Vancity. It uses the Southeast False Creek Neighbourhood Energy Utility. They have a range of accessible units in different sizes that allow for multi-generational families to live in.

Vancity has provided them with a Security of Tenure Grant that allows them to balance their year-end finances while providing flexibility for units to pay their housing charges. What is unique about this Co-op is that professional maintenance and management is a requirement of their operating agreement with the City. A Co-op manager works onsite full-time and manages the contractors while working with the Board. Having professional management also allows the volunteer Board to focus on governance issues and the members to focus on community building. Some additional benefits to having professional management include prompt member service, a stable membership, and less conflict between members and the Board.

Design

- Semi-private courtyard and playground in the middle of the development
- Wide walkways and large balconies facing the courtyard
- Common laundry room
- Rooftop garden and beehives
- Multipurpose room used for children's play, yoga classes, book club
- Shared kitchen
- Two non-profit childcare centers



Central courtyard and playground



Rooftop garden



Shared kitchen

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Committees for: events, bike, bulk-buying, gardening, emergency prep
- Over 100 social activities hosted at the co-op each year which include: weekly storytime, monthly cookie socials, annual Open Door tour, solstice lantern night, Pride celebration, children's clothing and toy exchanges and more
- Multiple Facebook pages created by residents including a buy/sell group
- Book-sharing club initiated by librarians who live in the Co-op (they also borrow books from VSB)
- AGM, and a second general members meeting each year followed by a social



AGM



Bulletin boards above mailboxes



Book-sharing club

Low-Rise Case Study

SIXTEEN WILLOWS

South Cambie, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 789 West 16th Ave, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** United Properties
- **Year Built:** 1995
- **Ownership Model:** Strata
- **Area:** 3,381 m² (FSR: 1.6)
- **Zoning:** CD-1
- **Number of Floors:** 4 (Height: 11.87 m)
- **Units:** 76
- **Unit Type:** 1, 2 Bedroom (76 units); 2, 3 Bedroom townhouses (30 units); 9 Commercial
- **Communication Method:** Bulletin board; Strata email list
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Courtyard; Patios and Balconies; Sharing (Rid) room; Bakery
- **Community Amenities:** Close to Heather Park, Vancouver General Hospital, other local businesses, Edith Cavell Elementary School, Eric Hamber High School, Cambie Corridor, South Granville shopping area and many restaurants
- **Demographics:** Singles; Couples; Families
- **Walkability Score:** 91

Description

Sixteen Willows is a unique development of townhouses and condos along 16th Avenue. Expanding to about half of the city block, it is a home to a local bakery and many families. The courtyard in the middle of the development is where most residents gather on a daily basis and pass by to enter/exit the building. Adults sit on the shaded benches, kids play and draw on the concrete floor, and pet-owners take pets for a walk. The



sense of community is visible as neighbours chat with each other while watching their kids or gardening in their front patios.

There are notices on bulletin boards and the elevator, which has also been identified as a meeting area for neighbours. All units can see the courtyard either directly from their units or the walkway. In addition, they have a sharing room called "Rid room" where residents leave their unwanted items that other neighbours can take.

"You get an item that was really useful in the Rid room, and you know it belonged to a neighbour... and as a result are just thankful and nice to all your neighbours."

Design

- Private central courtyard with benches and trees
- Configuration of units and location of entrances/exits/mailboxes
- Mixed-use with commercial spaces such as a bakery
- Range of condos and townhouses
- Wide walkway



Courtyard



Bakery on the ground level

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Strata events and supportive of initiatives
- Block parties, summer BBQ in the back alley
- Rid room – sharing room where neighbours leave their unwanted stuff and others can take them
- Bulletin boards and notices in elevator



"Rid" room



Block parties held in the back alley

Low-Rise Case Study

MAINSPEACE LOFTS

Strathcona, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 350 East 2nd, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Pemcor Development Corporation
- **Year Built:** 1995
- **Ownership Model:** Strata
- **Area:** 3,491 m² (FSR: 2.8)
- **Zoning:** IC-3: Light Industrial
- **Number of Floors:** 4 (Height: 17.88 m)
- **Units:** 124
- **Unit Type:** Studio
- **Communication Method:** Facebook page; Bulletin boards
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Rooftop deck with some gardening plot; Patios; Large walkways and corridors; Gallery room
- **Community Amenities:** Close to Main Street shopping area, Science World, Dude Chilling Park
- **Demographics:** Couples; Few families
- **Walkability Score:** 96

Description

The Mainspace building is a Strata live/work development located on the light industrial lands close to 2nd Ave. Many of the original tenants were artists and photographers. There are still many people in the building who are creative professionals. There are storefronts on the ground level of the building with a large dance studio and the Grunt Gallery. Residents are allowed to customize their unit doors, which helps them learn about each other, and those with families to connect.



Units on the top floor are connected through a wide outdoor corridor. All the unit doors open to the corridor and neighbours even put out their patio furniture there. Residents pass each other daily and host social gatherings on this walkway. Strata council hosts annual events such as yard sales, and people get to attend the Art shows at the gallery on the main floor. Units are large and flexible which allow residents to create their own bedroom/s if they need.

"We share many things with our neighbours. We don't have kids but interact with theirs. Everyone is very friendly."

Design

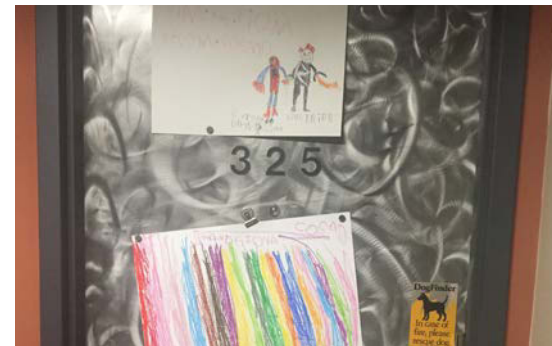
- Rooftop with garden planters
- Elevator that opens to the rooftop patio
- Wide corridor/ walkway (partially covered)
- Various businesses and art gallery on site
- Shared laundry



Storefronts

Programs, Policies, Culture

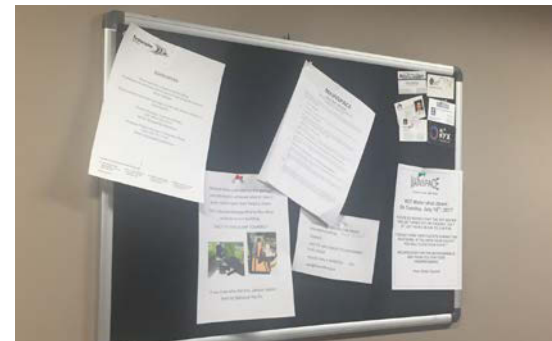
- Strata events
- Bulletin boards on each floor
- Facebook page
- Allowing residents to customize their front doors



Front doors



Top floor corridor



Bulletin boards close to elevator

Mid-Rise Case Study

THE ARTISTE

Mount Pleasant, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 2050 Scotia, Vancouver, BC
- **Developers:** ARAGON Developers
- **Year Built:** 1998
- **Ownership Model:** Strata (100% Leased)
- **Area:** 5,031 m² (FSR: 2.3)
- **Zoning:** IC-3 Light Industrial
- **Number of Floors:** 5 (Height: 18.66 m)
- **Units:** 201
- **Unit Type:** Studio lofts; 1 Bedroom
- **Communication Method:** Resident manager's email list
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Gallery room; Woodworking and paint workshop; Courtyard garden
- **Community Amenities:** Close to Main St shopping area, Science World, public transit, Dude Chilling Park, Emily Carr University
- **Demographics:** Adults; Singles; Couples; Families
- **Walkability Score:** 98

Description

Artiste building is a live/work rental building with two resident Community Managers. The Managers oversee operational and maintenance concerns and they also have experience in leadership, conflict management and communication.

Tim and Mark Hiltz started working at the Artiste in 2013 and overcame many incidents in the building by cultivating friendly connections with the renters and when warranted, engaging the residents in decision making and conflict resolution. They promote values aimed at ensuring a



comfortable home and access to green space for residents and their pets, exhibited through their management styles.

Encouraging the artistic and entrepreneurial community contributes to social cohesion within The Artiste community. Knowing the passion and interest of the residents has allowed the community managers to put their passion and experience towards community building.

There are over 65 dogs in the building and the managers believe that pets enhance social connection between neighbours. A resident committee was formed to collectively rebuild a storage space in the basement and make a wood and paint workshop that many residents use. It has contributed to new friendships and enhanced community connections.

The management office was expanded to create a large gallery available to tenants to host art installations or events. The building also hosts many annual events and fundraisers and managers sometimes use these events to invite future residents to meet their neighbours.

"I was just a tenant before, now I feel part of a community."

Design

- Galley room with a small kitchen and dishware
- Court yard
- Large suites with work space
- Woodworking and paint workshop
- Independent theater attached to the building
- Shared laundry



Building amenity room and gallery



Woodworking and paint workshop



Live/work suite

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Two community-minded resident community managers equipped with strong conflict management and communication skills
- Selecting tenants that fit in the building culture
- Hosting re-occurring social events such as solstice parties, fund raisers etc.
- Installing agency in residents to take on initiatives
- Encouraging residents to share their artistic interests and businesses
- Bulletin boards in the lobby



Community manager



Lobby displaying local artist painting



Bulletin board with resident's business information

Mid-Rise Case Study

3333 MAIN

Riley Park, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 3333 Main St, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Bastion Development
- **Architect:** DIALOG
- **Year Built:** 2012
- **Ownership Model:** Strata
- **Area:** 3,893 m²
- **Zoning:** CD-1
- **Number of Floors:** 5
- **Units:** 98
- **Unit Type:** Studio; 1, 2, 3 Bedroom units and townhouses
- **Communication Method:** Facebook
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Shared garden; Amenity room (Club House); Bike room; Storage; Balconies
- **Community Amenities:** Walkable neighbourhood; Close to Main St shopping area, multiple parks with playgrounds, schools and transit
- **Demographics:** Singles; Couples; Families with kids; Elderly
- **Walkability Score:** 94

Description

Situated on Main street between 17th and 18th avenues, 3333 Main building expands over a full city block with commercial stores at grade. This site used to house Palm Daisy, and the art installation in front of the building reflects this history. Most tenants are owners with about 20% rentals. The size and variety of the units has attracted many families to this development.

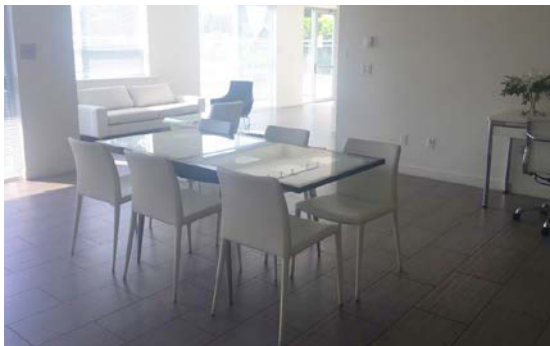


Residents use a Facebook page to communicate to each other as well as their strata council. They initiated the creation of a garden committee and a bike storage/ repair committee. Strata is supportive of the committees and hosts an annual Christmas party. Building's Club House is suitable for hosting social events and leads to a small playground and the community garden. The design leads to interaction of neighbours as they use any of these spaces. The community garden has 20 plots that are assigned in two-year terms. It plays a key role in connecting residents.

"I met most of my neighbours at the garden. We talk and share produce. We even take care of each other's plots when people are away."

Design

- Community garden (20 plots that are assigned for a 2-year term)
- Balconies facing the garden
- Club House with furniture
- Small play area for kids accessible through the Club House
- Elevator in the middle



Club House

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Christmas party organized by strata
- Garden and bike committees
- Block parties that bring multiple building residents together
- Creative and interactive art in front of the building



Garden committee



Balconies facing the garden



Art installation

Mid-Rise Case Study

THE SOCIAL

Mount Pleasant, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 2321 Scotia St, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Onni
- **Property Manager:** Rancho Management Services
- **Year Built:** 2011
- **Ownership Model:** Strata/Condominiums
- **Area:** 3,545 m²
- **Zoning:** C-3A: Commercial
- **Number of Floors:** 9
- **Units:** 125
- **Unit Type:** Studio, 1,2, 3 Bedroom; 14 Townhouses
- **Communication Method:** Bulletin board; Elevator notices; iMessage group
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Gym; Rooftop garden plots and playground; Amenity room and small kitchen; Lobby; Patios and balconies; Storage; Guest suites; BBQ area and furniture
- **Community Amenities:** Steps from Mount Pleasant Community Center, Guelph Park, Mount Pleasant Elementary, Main and Kingsway shopping area, and a farmers market
- **Demographics:** Single, Couples, Many families
- **Walkability Score:** 99

Description

The Social is a family-oriented mid-rise off Kingsway Ave and adjacent to the Mount Pleasant Community Center. It consists of townhouses on the ground floor and condos above. The townhouses open to the street and have large patios. This has helped families living on the ground floor running into each other and connecting. However, the sociability



is not limited to the townhouses; residents are proactive in getting to know each other and have initiated many social activities. A group of the mothers in the complex started an iMessage group to organize playdates, kids' events and one person has started decorating parties where residents come together to put up a Christmas tree and Halloween decorations in the lobby.

The building has a rooftop garden, playground, small amenity room as well as some gardening plots. Residents transformed the landscaping area on the roof to gardening plots. Each year strata council holds an annual social BBQ on the roof and sources the food from local shops. Many residents, especially those without children, meet each other at this social. The building is secured, and the residents are only able to access their units with a fob. Since many families became friends, strata worked with the building manager to allow them to have access to different floors where their friends lived.

“We call ourselves the Socialites; many of our kids know each other for more than five years.”

Design

- Rooftop garden, BBQ and seating area with adjacent washroom
- Playground
- Townhouses opening to the street
- Proximity to community amenities, farmers market, schools, parks



Rooftop garden and playground



Townhouses

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Strata funded annual social BBQ
- Social events: Easter egg hunt, Christmas tree decoration, Halloween pumpkin carving
- Multiple communication channels such as an iMessage chat group and elevator notices
- Allowing neighbours to access other floors where their friends live



Social events



Proximity to community amenities

Mid-Rise Case Study

MARTINIQUE

West End, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 1100 Harwood St, Vancouver, BC
- **Year Built:** 1966
- **Ownership Model:** Leasehold (non-strata)
- **Area:** 1,479 m² (FSR: 2.5)
- **Zoning:** RM-5A: Multiple-Family Dwelling
- **Number of Floors:** 12 (Height: 36.3 m)
- **Units:** 96
- **Unit Type:** Studio; 1 Bedroom
- **Communication Method:** Posters and elevator notices; Small groups exchanging contact information
- **Pets:** Not Allowed
- **Amenities:** Rooftop pool and BBQ area; Lobby; Balconies
- **Community Amenities:** Close to Beach Ave, Seawall, Vancouver Aquatic Center, Dave Street shopping area, Saint Paul's Hospital
- **Demographics:** Singles; Couples; Few families
- **Walkability Score:** 96

Description

Martinique is a leasehold property with a mix of owner occupied and rental units. A rooftop pool and BBQ area brings residents together as they host social events. People know each other and watch out for the elderly in the building. Doing small favors such as picking up the mail or walking your neighbour's dog are common.



Residents are the main drivers of connectivity in the Martinique. A few residents take lead and host social events such as Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners. They post notes on elevators and on each floor, and open their doors to their neighbours to share meals. One resident shares his large collection of decorative supplies with the building and brings people together to decorate the lobby.

“When I am hosting, my door is always open. People can come in anytime and have a glass of wine with us.”

Design

- Rooftop pool and seating
- BBQ area
- Welcoming lobby
- Paintings in hallways



Rooftop pool

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Resident-led events with some support by the building manager. This includes dinner parties, decorating parties, and summer BBQ
- Occasional coffee and baked goods at the lobby
- Seasonal gatherings



Passionate resident

High-Rise Case Study

THE JAMES

Mount Pleasant, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 288 W 1st Ave, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Cressey/Citta Group
- **Property Manager:** First Services
- **Year Built:** 2012
- **Ownership Model:** Strata
- **Area:** 3,248 m²
- **Zoning:** CD-1
- **Number of Floors:** 13
- **Units:** 155
- **Unit Type:** 1, 2 Bedroom and Den
- **Communication Method:** Committee email lists; Social calendar; Posters and sign-up sheets; Facebook and Instagram
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Lobby with furniture; Rooftop community garden and play area; Amenity/party room; Kitchen; Gym; Sauna; Balconies
- **Community Amenities:** Proximity to Seawall, Hinge Park and Playground, Olympic Village Dog Park, Southeast False Creek Community Garden, Olympic Village commercial area; Walking distance to Skytrain
- **Demographics:** Mostly Couples; Some families; Seniors
- **Walkability Score:** 95

Description

The James building is a new high-rise in Olympic Village with breathtaking views from its rooftop garden. It is not just the views that are impressive, but the scene of the neighbours working in the garden together and sharing the produce. Two residents, Carlson and Matt, who are passionate about community building and agriculture, transformed



their rooftop garden to a communal garden where residents plant and harvest together. They worked with their strata council to educate their neighbours about their different gardening options, and residents chose the communal model. Later they got permission to set up an irrigation system for the garden as well.

Their garden committee was able to get funding from The Neighbourhood Small Grants (Vancouver Foundation), Greenest City Grants (City of Vancouver), and their members yearly contributions of \$25 to purchase tools, compost bin, and a rain barrel. Some equipment was also donated by generous residents. Using other funding sources, they bought kitchenware which allows them to host dinner parties at the amenity room next to the garden.

“The next thing you know, we were making plans outside of gardening. We were planning social gatherings together, going for drinks, hanging out at the beach.”

Design

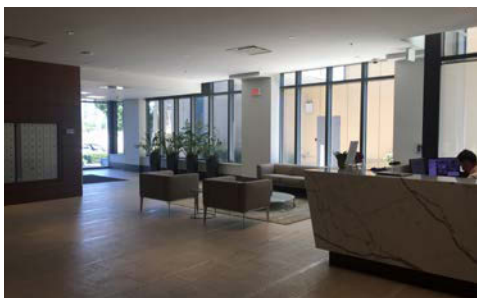
- Large rooftop community garden
- Amenity room with tables and chairs
- Kitchen supplies
- Rooftop playground
- Lobby with seating area



Community garden



Shared kitchen



Lobby

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Passionate and proactive residents
- Supportive strata council
- Different communication methods: email lists, events calendar, social media
- A garden committee that runs social events
- Grants from local non-profit organizations and the local government



Passionate residents



Gardening equipment



Sharing garden produce

BLUESKY CHINATOWN

Strathcona, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 183 E Georgia, St, Vancouver, BC
- **Developer:** Bosa BlueSky Properties Inc.
- **Property Manager:** Zoran Simic
- **Year Built:** 2016
- **Ownership Model:** Rental
- **Area:** 1,476 m² (FSR: 9.29)
- **Zoning:** CD-1
- **Number of Floors:** 15 (Height: 45.72 m)
- **Units:** 191
- **Unit Type:** Studio, 1 and 2 Bedroom
- **Communication Method:** Email list
- **Pets:** Allowed
- **Amenities:** Lobby; Amenity room and kitchen; Work area; Garden; Gym; Bike rental; Pet and bike wash; Wood processing workshop; Grocery store and coffee shop
- **Community Amenities:** Close to Chinatown, shops on Main St, Andy Livingston Park
- **Demographics:** Singles; Families; Mostly couples
- **Walkability Score:** 99

Description

Developed just over a year ago, Bluesky Chinatown is a rental high-rise in the heart of Vancouver and adjacent to historic Chinatown. BlueSky is an extension of the Bosa Properties. Thoughtful design and amenities of the building, as well as its 24-hour on-site staff, makes a well-connected building. The amenity rooms include a bike rental program,



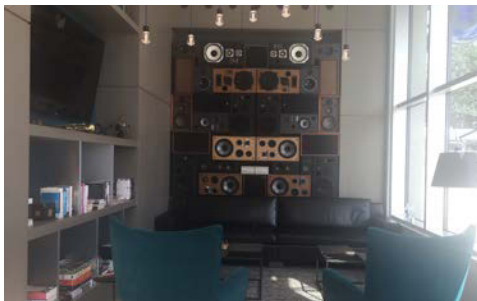
wood processing workshop, bike and pet wash room which encourages connections around pets and similar interests.

All these amenities are located at different levels of the residential parking. Full-time managers manage this facility, and residents can access the lobby and work area as they wish. The developer also works with the building manager to host a few social events a year. The coffee shop/ grocery on the ground floor is a place where residents connect and catch up on the daily news.

“For a single person, it can get really lonely. We need to animate the spaces. Otherwise, they sit empty.”

Design

- Bright, welcoming and open-space lobby
- Outdoor lounge, amenity room and kitchen
- Computer lounge/work area
- Garden with individual plots
- Pet/bike wash room
- Wood processing workshop
- Mixed-use development with a grocery store at grade



Lobby



Garden



Outdoor lounge

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Strata events: patio mixer, Christmas party
- Friendly resident managers and security staff
- Building subscription to daily newspaper
- Resident satisfaction/feedback survey
- Bike rental program



Bike and pet wash room



Tools and wood processing room



Bike rental program

High-Rise Case Study

EMERALD TERRACE

Downtown, Vancouver

Building Information

- **Address:** 2045 Nelson St, Vancouver, BC
- **Property Manager:** Hollyburn Properties
- **Year Built:** 1965
- **Ownership Model:** Rental
- **Area:** 2,178m²
- **Zoning:** RM-5B: Multiple Family Dwelling
- **Number of Floors:** 15 (Height: 48.54 m)
- **Units:** 84
- **Unit Type:** 1 and 2 Bedroom
- **Communication Method:** Email newsletters; Bulletin boards; Elevator notice boards
- **Pets:** Not Allowed
- **Amenities:** Gym; Sauna; Resident lounge; Outdoor patio area; On-site resident managers; Free Wifi in common areas; Laundry facility; On-site security
- **Community Amenities:** Located on a quiet tree-lined street; Minutes from English Bay, playground, schools and transit
- **Demographics:** Families; Couples; Seniors; Young Professionals
- **Walkability Score:** 92
- **Certified** by Rental Building Program

Description

Friendly residents and a pair of effective and passionate resident managers are what make Emerald Terrace a connected and friendly place to live. Trevor and Bart have been living and working at Emerald Terrace for the past five years; they know all the residents at their building and



in some cases their extended families. Residents know their neighbours and new residents are introduced to others by the resident managers. There is a strong sense of trust between the resident managers and the tenants which is a result of mutual respect and accountability that's been developed over time. Bart has transformed their large outdoor area into a beautiful garden and raised garden beds for seasonal vegetables. In many occasions, resident managers use the produce to cook meals and share with their neighbours. They recently converted the indoor pool to an amenity space that would better serve the residents.

Emerald Terrace is owned and operated by Hollyburn Properties Limited, a forty year-old family-owned business . They manage their buildings via an in-house team of property managers, resident managers, landscape and building maintenance team. Hollyburn encourages many sustainability initiatives and partners with locals organizations to support community initiatives.

“You need to treat people the same way you like to be treated; The residents are my family, we never jeopardize their trust.”

Design

- Garden with vegetable plots and seating area
- Welcoming lobby with furniture, soft music
- Newly built community/amenity room and kitchen
- Accessible design for seniors
- Handy dart drive aisle



Garden



Lobby

Programs, Policies, Culture

- Two dedicated and compassionate resident managers
- Resident manager training program and supportive property managers
- 48-hour response policy to repair requests
- Social events such as Hollyburn BBQ, Christmas gathering , decoration contests, Covenant House backpack program as well as seasonal community activities and fund raisers
- Notice boards, streamlined communications from Hollyburn. Value added partner discounts from residents from local businesses



Resident managers and residents



Newly built lounge

Conclusion

A built environment that works

Our examination of the hard infrastructure and architectural elements of the buildings revealed that having multiple gathering spaces with access to nature, exterior corridors and wide walkways, community gardens, private/ semi-private central courtyards, and playgrounds are key design elements in increasing sociability. Creating intentional spaces such as shared rooms, pet wash or bike wash areas, and workshops where people can work on hobbies, share and learn from each other also proved effective. There were a few prevalent building forms among these case studies that indicate building horizontal density, with a larger number of units spread horizontally, could help with increased connectivity. The Happy City's Happy Homes toolkit further recommends that no more than 12 households share a semi-private space. Having townhouses as part of mid- to high-rise developments allows for a more ground-oriented experience as well as larger units for families. The presence of a local business or public destination at the ground level was also noted as a positive connector for residents.

Sociability was higher in developments that were situated in walkable neighbourhoods with excellent access to transit and community amenities. A substantial part of improving health and well-being of cities is creating communities where everyone can thrive. This includes creating public spaces that cultivate physical and social conditions that are critical to making healthier communities for all. There is also a large opportunity to bring life to places between the buildings; life does not exist in an "island," and the presence of green space and other amenities outside the building is critical.

The role of social infrastructure

It's important to recognize that relying solely on architectural design elements did not result in the creation of a strong sense of community

belonging within the buildings. Soft infrastructure such as social programs/events, resident champions, and skilled building managers, as well as supportive strata councils, were vital pieces in activating these spaces. A major finding from this research showed that having resident managers who are narrowly focused on maintenance will not yield stronger connections in the building; skilled individuals with conflict management and people skills are needed to build a strong and friendly community in a building.

Strata councils, co-op boards, and rental management companies can facilitate social connections through policies or practices that enable longer-term, secure renting. Strata councils and rental building property managers can play a facilitator role by welcoming new residents, bringing community members across tenures together, and encouraging a



sense of belonging and responsibility amongst all residents. Effective communication played a major role in letting residents know about initiatives and events in their building, and learning about their fellow neighbours. The building managers of most buildings used list-serves to communicate with residents, and neighbours used bulletin boards or social media and mobile messaging to socialize and organize events.

Community building takes real effort, and is not without its challenges; realistically, conflicts will arise when people live in close proximity to each other. Not all residents of a building will get along, and not everyone will be actively participating in community building. Expectations need to be adjusted to reflect this reality. Energy can best be spent focusing on those who are motivated to participate, and in encouraging with a gentle nudge those who might be inclined to. Few residents like to socialize at all times. The design of the building should allow for residents to stay private when needed, and neighbours should remain aware of this when it comes to social interactions.

From the perspective of resilience, creating an atmosphere of mutual support – if not friendship – in a building is important. Communities with higher levels of neighbourliness and strong social networks are more resilient – that is, they are better at withstanding, adapting to, and recovering from change, stresses, or disturbances. Past disastrous events have shown that the most significant sources of help before, during, and after the emergency were reported to be friends, family, and neighbours. In an extreme event, municipal resources will be stretched and communities will need to draw upon the resources of their personal networks to “weather the storm.”

From increasing the health and resilience of our residents to supporting greater joy, friendship and livability within buildings, striving to create more sociable multi-family homes in Vancouver is important. In order to get there, we need to strengthen our partnerships - bringing developers, designers, property management companies, and policy-makers together with residents to learn and grow together. Hey Neighbour is one step in

this direction, and we look forward to continuing the journey with you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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