Friendly and Financially Viable?

The Case of Social Connectedness in High Density Living in Vancouver, BC.

Report prepared at the request of the City of Vancouver, in partial fulfilment of Geography 419: Research in Environmental Geography, for Dr. David Brownstein.

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Executive Summary

This report explores the benefits that social connectedness between residents of high-density communities has for developers and property managers in Vancouver, BC through the use of seven expert interviews. The following conclusions are generated:

I. Social connectedness does promote longer tenancy, which is beneficial for a building's bottom line in the short term. But, if a tenant is a renter, their annual rent increase is capped at 2.9%, meaning that if they stay in the same unit for multiple years their rent will eventually be below market value given Vancouver's competitive housing market.

II. A building's sense of community and belonging impacts how it is managed. By and large, more socially connected buildings are easier to manage: they see less crime and vandalism, and residents demonstrate stewardship over shared spaces. But, residents are also more likely to ask for more amenities, reflecting a sense of entitlement.

III. Buildings that promote social connectedness for the sake of building community do so at their own cost because they care, and this type of programming does not create a strong financial return.

IV. Social connections and friendliness are not considered "Selling Features". Property managers and developers assume that buyers and renters are more attracted to physical amenities than the idea of a strong community.

V. Amenity usage varies widely; some amenities rank extremely low on cost yet are very effective at building community (eg. candy jar, free coffee), while other amenities are high in cost, yet poor at building community (eg. pool).

VI. All developers and property managers were fond of the use of fobs, for their security purposes. Property managers and developers assume that fobs help to make residents feel more at ease, because they promote a safe environment.

VII. The City could offer various incentives to developers to promote physical design features that build communities. The most popular incentives were density or unit increases, and tax abatements.

I have drafted five recommendations for the City of Vancouver:

I. Develop mandatory municipal guidelines for developers based off of best practices in social connectedness.

II. Develop a one-time only grant program to kick-start social programming in already existing buildings.

III. Host peer-to-peer workshops for property managers to advance knowledge sharing, and to equip property managers with the tools and expertise needed to build community within their buildings.

IV. Create a set methodology to measure social connectedness, so that the City can compare the strength of community in a residential building.

V. Conduct future research comparing Vancouver's social isolation crisis to that of other *gateway cities*, such as Sydney or San Francisco. These cities have similar demographics, size, density and land-use to Vancouver.

Introduction

The City of Vancouver's *Healthy City Strategy* (2014) is comprised of thirteen long-term goals to increase wellbeing within the city, and this study pays particular attention to Goal Seven: Cultivating Connections. The original goal of this study was to quantify the benefits of social connectedness for the development industry in having a more socially connected residential building, but this was out of scope given the small scale and timeline of this research. The research shifted towards a qualitative exploration of property management and development experiences with social connectedness, pinpointing where they find value or financial burden in building community.

Social scientists and urbanists alike have mixed feelings on high-density living, and the impacts such dwellings have on the environment and their residents. The arguments in favour of high-density living conclude that it is good for enhancing urban diversity (Jacobs, 1961) and is more sustainable than urban sprawl because it decreases the time spent commuting and consumes less energy per person (Condon, 2010; Wood, 2007; Gifford, 2007). Those in opposition find that high-density dwellings have a high correlation to residents diagnosed with neurosis such as depression and schizophrenia (Cacioppo *et al*, 2011), and that residents often feel claustrophobic and alone at the same time (Montgomery, 2013). This leads to neighbours not knowing one another's name (Vancouver Foundation, 2012), feeling insecure and unsafe (Gifford, 2007), and communities that are less resilient in the face of environmental disasters (Aldrich, 2012; Foth and Sanders, 2005; Pelling, 2003). Some architects, social scientists and urbanists have been studying how high-density living can be improved so that residents feel more at ease and connected to one another while maintaining the smaller ecological footprint that their multi-unit dwellings allow (CF Møller, 2014; Cho and Lee, 2011; Huang, 2006).

Almost all literature agrees that high-density dwellings make their residents feel alone and crowded at the same time, which has a negative effect on the over-all wellbeing of residents. The exception to this is residents who own their property and live in a residential tower out of choice, not necessity (Gifford, 2007). The idea being that many people who live in a building out of necessity likely constrained by financial means, feeling *forced* to live in their building as opposed to having a desire to live there. Whereas those who choose to live in a residential tower likely choose to do so over another form of housing; it is their preference, not their prescription. In what follows, I will explore literature pertaining to social connectedness and high-density living, followed by an in-depth summary of my methods and results. I conclude this paper with clear recommendations the City of Vancouver can use to help manage this issue.

Literature Review

High-Density Living

Why do people live in residential towers? What services do they offer to individuals, communities and municipalities? It is imperative to understand why people live in these settings, before we address how we can improve their design and lived experience. The very definition of a high-rise building is a contested term; scholars and architects are unable to create a consistent measure of what qualifies as "high". Most scholars define high-density residential towers as buildings which are between ten and thirty stories (Condon, 2010; Wener, 2006), although many buildings soar well above fifty stories. Condon (2010) uses Vancouver as a site for multiple case studies, making his work crucial to this study. It is important to define a range in stories because the environmental impact of a tower varies significantly from that of a single-family home or a mid-rise complex (between four and nine stories). While mid-rise multi-unit dwellings are often deemed to have the lowest impact on the environment, in terms of greenhouse gases emitted per square foot, high-rise towers are still considered better than the single-family home (Condon, 2010).

In North America, most high-rise buildings were built after the Second World War, following technological advances, and with the creation of elevators and centralized heating and air-conditioning, masses of people moved into towers (Wright, 1981). As urbanization continued to increase throughout the twentieth and twenty-first century, urban areas have been tasked to house more and more people. In cities such as Vancouver, where the municipality is confined due to topography, towers became the clear way to increase population density, whereas other municipalities, such as Calgary, expanded outwards, creating suburbs. Between 1990 and 2000, the residential population of Vancouver's downtown neighbourhood jumped from forty thousand to eighty thousand, doubling in ten years (Condon, 2010). In many cases today, Vancouver's expensive housing market is another reason why so many residents reside in towers: with smaller surface areas than an average home, multi-unit dwellings tend to be cheaper than owning a home or townhouse (Marit, 2013). This is an increasingly popular option for singles or couples without children (Myers and Pitkin, 2009).

The popularity of the high-rise tower can be seen in many Vancouver neighbourhoods, primarily Yaletown, Downtown, and the West End, with towers scattered throughout Kitsilano, and along major corridors such as Broadway. According to a recent survey, Vancouver is home to over 680 "skyscrapers" (SkyscraperPage, 2016). In Vancouver, building towers allows for the city to grow in population without expanding geographically, offers more affordable housing, enhance neighbourhood diversity, and houses people in a sustainable manner. It is also a means to respond to the growing demographic of people (mostly singles and couples without

children), who prefer to live in the heart of urban areas as opposed to their outskirts (Myers and Pitkin, 2009).

High-Rises and Wellbeing

World-wide studies have shown that high-density living has strong correlations with social isolation and loneliness (Bouzarovski, 2011; Gifford, 2007; Glaeser and Sacerdote, 2000; Halpern, 1995). David Halpern's *Mental Health and the Built Environment* (1995) began the discussion by using case studies from the US and UK to demonstrate how the built environment affects the quality of relationships between people. Further, entire studies have been conducted on the consequences of living in a high-rise building (Gifford, 2007), finding that this type of living is correlated to weaker childhood development, that social relations are weaker and more impersonal, that crime and fear of crime are higher, and that they potentially contribute to some suicides. It is to be noted that these scenarios are predominately found in individuals who live in high-rise buildings out of necessity, not out of choice (Gifford, 2007). The case for increased instances of crime is interesting, because it suggests that a better connected building may reduce crime, and therefore be less costly for developers and property managers to upkeep.While this research indicates high-density buildings does see more criminal action than lower densities, we can not assume this will diminish with a stronger sense of community. Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) also accounts for the changing social dynamic of 'community' in America, highlighting the negative implications this can have for civic engagement and democracy. Both Halpern (1995) and Gifford (2007) make critical arguments about the lived experience in residential towers and serve as pivotal research for my thesis.

A study in Nashville (Husaini *et al*, 1991) found that high-rise buildings had higher incidences of depression, schizophrenia and phobias, primarily in low-income residents. But, in this study the demographic living in high-rises was considered to be lower-income African Americans who were poorer, less educated, and reported more medical problems, thus conclusions are hard to draw because these difficult life circumstances naturally make residents less happy (Montgomery, 2013; Husaini *et al*, 1991).

Focusing on Vancouver, in 2012, the Vancouver Foundation's report on Connections and Engagement found that multi-unit dwellings have particularly low community engagement and weak social connections. Their study found that the percentage of people who *never* chat with a neighbour in an apartment building (15%) is double that of those who live in townhouses or single-detached homes (7%). Further, 43% of apartment dwellers in Vancouver do not know the name of at least two of their neighbours. Considering that roughly 15% of Vancouverites live in high-rise buildings (Moore, 2012), this study implies the need to improve the lived experience of multi-unit dwellers. One particular area of interest is the role that heightened security plays in

inhibiting interactions between residents. There is little literature that examines how technology such as 'fobs[1]' or limited access to other floors impacts a resident's ability to connect with their neighbours.

Methods for Measuring Social Connectedness

Social Connectedness is an incredibly difficult metric to measure, and scholars and planners alike find it difficult to choose a singular measure. Some scholars focus on social trust, while others emphasize the geographic proximity of close friends and family, and strength of relationships with neighbours. A study on social trust in Toronto found that people underestimate their neighbours kindness; the experiment asked how likely it would be if a person returned a lost wallet to them in their neighbourhood, and residents reported around 25% likelihood (Helliwell, John and Shun Wang, 2010). The actual rate of return for the downtown area was 80%; the authors suggest that the perceived lack of trust, often found in downtown areas had a role in their low estimates (Helliwell, John and Shun Wang, 2010). The Vancouver Foundation (2012) asked participants questions such as "Do you know the first name of at least two neighbours?" or "Do you feel welcome in the neighbourhood and like you belong here?" to measure social connectedness. The wallet method demonstrates the discrepancy between reality and perception with regards to social trust, while the question and survey method only speaks to individual perception.

An area for concern in most literature was mentioned above in the case study of Nashville, where other life circumstances enhance the negative impacts of high density multi-unit dwelling (Husaini *et al*, 1991). Gifford (2007) highlights that most methods in this subject area are tempered by moderating factors, and it is extremely difficult to hold for other factors. I did not encounter any articles that spoke directly to property managers or developers about the role they play in social connections.

Resiliency and Social Connectedness

Pulling this research together, we know that an increased number of people live in cities, and that in Vancouver, there is an abundance of people living in high-rise multi-unit dwellings. We also know that those living in multi-unit dwellings have weaker ties to their neighbours and are more likely to experience social isolation. These weak connections mean that during times of crisis (earthquakes, fires, power outages, etc.) they are less resilient than better connected communities (Aldrich, 2012; Foth and Sanders, 2005; Pelling, 2003). In many instances,

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[1] A 'fob' is a technology used within buildings, similar to a key, that regulates who can access which part of a building (in residential buildings it warrants access to personal units, amenity rooms, certain floors, roof tops, etc).

community support helps individuals rebound from traumatic experiences such as loss of work, relationship and family troubles, loss of a loved one (Montgomery, 2013), so building connections with neighbours not only improves the community's resiliency, but also that of the individual.

Research and Methods

Because we already know that socially connected buildings benefit their residents in terms of mental wellbeing and resiliency (Montgomery, 2013; Gifford, 2007; Halpern, 1995), this study will focus on what benefits there may be for property managers and developers. I focused my research on high-density residential buildings in Vancouver, interviewing seven people who work as either a property manager or developer. The buildings ranged from being mid-density to high-density, and strata (unit-owned) or rental, allowing me compare how these attributes affect the socio-environment of the building. It is important to acknowledge that the lived experience and demographics varies between building types (Gifford, 2007).

I interviewed two property managers, four developers, and one property management and development firm to better understand their connection to social sustainability and how their buildings or programming promote or negate community.

Name*, Role	Affiliation
Building Manger A	High-Density residential tower in Downtown, Vancouver.
Lolly Bennett, Property Manager	District Main, low-rise residential building in Mount Pleasant, Vancouver
Developer A	Rental Residential Developer, Lower Mainland
Developer B	Residential Developer, Lower Mainland
Developer C	Nationwide Development and Property Management Firm
Jon Khalifa, Developer	Kevingoton Build Corp., mid-high rise residential rental developer, Lower Mainland
Jonathon Meads, Developer	Concert Properties, national developer mid-high rise residential buildings

* Some interviewees requested to remain anonymous.

I identified each of these contacts by being connected through Keltie Craig, my contact at the City of Vancouver, or by identifying them myself and sending them a research invitation via email. Before each interview I gathered basic information about their buildings such as the number of units and stories, confirming these details at the time of the interview. Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 minutes, with a different set of questions for developers and

property managers (Appendix. 1). The reason for this is because developers are able to impact the built form and design of a building, whereas property managers handle more interpersonal matters between residents. The interviews were not recorded, and I only produced hand-written notes.

The interviews addressed two main themes: the building characteristics and financial logistics, with four additional questions if the interviewee was a developer. The first theme on building characteristics was to get a sense for whether or not the building has facilities or social programming geared towards creating a strong community, and whether or not this is successful. The second theme on logistics focused on how a socially connected building might have benefits for the property managers and developers and looked at rates of turnover, vandalism, and the cost of finding new tenants. This section also expanded to include questions about security protocols and the use of 'fobs'.

The questions that were only asked of developers focus on three main themes: building design, prospective municipal incentives, and marketing tactics. This was to help identify how the built form might be altered to promote social connections and what incentives the City of Vancouver can offer to entice developers to make these changes (ie. advanced permitting, extra stories, etc.). Lastly, I wanted to better understand how developers market their properties; given Vancouver's "hot" real-estate market.

Results

My research began with questions to assess how property managers and developers understood social connectedness within the context of their building or buildings. Every respondent agreed that a strong sense of community meant residents would respond better in the event of an emergency, whether on an individual level or wide-scale collective level. Further, all interviewees agreed that property managers have the capacity to support social connections in their role. All respondents except one indicated that they could support residents if there was interest in hosting a building-wide event; the one developer who disagreed with this statement said he did not have input into how their buildings are run once the strata council had been elected, thus it would be up to the strata council to support resident initiatives. All Properties included at least one feature or amenity that promotes social connectedness, although 6/7 interviewees offered residents multiple amenities in their properties. Thus, I have organized my major findings into the following seven themes: tenancy and turnover, building management, financial costs, selling features, amenities, security, and municipal incentives.

Tenancy and Turnover

All developers and property managers noted that while social connectedness does encourage longer tenancy and less turnover from residents, at times this can be beneficial and at other times detrimental for a building's bottom line. Costs from turnover include renovating or repairing units for new occupants, advertising vacancy, and loss of profit during this time of vacancy. The developers and property managers emphasized that at most, units are usually empty for a month between occupants. Interviewees noted that long tenancy can hurt their bottom line in the long run because the provincial government limits landlords from increasing rent by more than 2.9% annually (Province of British Columbia, 2016). This implies that tenants who stay for multiple years will likely pay rents which are well below market value.

Building Management

Three of the interviewees agreed that socially connected buildings were easier to manage. In two interviews, developers noted that socially connected residents were more likely to exude a 'sense of entitlement,' and they become more vocal about their complaints, making it more difficult to manage the building while maintaining a sense of community. Two developers remained neutral, noting that they are not heavily involved in the management process.

By and large, when a building is more socially connected, there is less crime and residents take better care of communal spaces. Embodying this, Building Manager A emphasized that after designing programming to increase building connections, residents began to take better care of the physical space and one another, making his job easier; he even went as far was saying that the building "began to self-manage." It appears that socially connected buildings are easier to manage up until a certain threshold; when residents feel connected to their building, its manager, and their neighbours they begin to ask more from one another, which can be too demanding or outside of the property manager's "role". But, complementing this, Building Manager A and Lolly Bennett both emphasized that they felt more connected to their job and felt a stronger sense of purpose in the work they did everyday, and that they wouldn't choose to do their job differently.

Financial Costs

Buildings that are very progressive in this domain emphasize that it is not a fiscal profiting endeavour, and that their programming and efforts are at their own cost. District Main specifically has a monthly budget of $1000 to spend on initiatives for residents, including weekly coffee, building parties, treats in the lobby and *much* more; although on the average month this budget is rarely spent in its entirety. Another building in Vancouver's Downtown peninsula noted

that their strata council provides the funding for community-building initiatives such as seasonal parties; each of these events cost approximately $1000-$2000.

Despite the amenities not being financially beneficial, Jonathon Meads (Concert Properties), Jon Khalifa (Kevington Build Corp.), Building Manager A and and Lolly Bennett all emphasized that they still felt providing them was the right thing to do. In some cases this was tied to a personal experience with loneliness and having confronted the issue of social isolation themselves, while others noted that they saw the impact that one community building event or amenity can have for their residents.

Selling Features

"In-suite laundry sells apartments, not friendship," echoed one interviewee when asked if apartment renters or condominium buyers care about social connections when signing a lease or deed. Developers and property managers were divided in whether or not the image of a well-connected, friendly building attracts buyers or renters. By and large, all developers understood that people want to see new appliances and in-suite laundry. But often, buildings such as District Main which have created a profound sense of community within their building, see more applicants from people who have relationships (family, friends) with current building occupants. In general, developers and property managers do not use 'social connections' as a means to market themselves, but rely on physical amenities to attract new occupants.

Amenities

The use and scale of amenities vary widely (Table One). While every person I interviewed acknowledged they had at least one building feature that could encourage social connections, their usability was not consistent; Jonathon Meads from Concert Properties acknowledged that more connected buildings will use amenities more than their less connected counterparts. An example of this in motion would be the use of residential gyms; Developer A mentioned that "gyms don't work," while Developer D mentioned that the majority of new residents want a gym. One way to better understand what amenities people want is to conduct focus groups, such as District Main did prior to building their property in an effort to better understand what amenities residents currently use or would like to see. Because of this, they were able to adjust their designs to reflect their target demographic, thus creating features and amenities with high rates of usage. Their building to include one gym on every floor (privacy), and a lobby with a significant amount of open space and a large window to let in natural light all of which are extremely well utilized.

In contrast, Developer A called amenities, "maintenance burdens that are unnecessary." Further, they emphasized that in their experience amenities don't really work, and that communities centres and common interest groups are better spaces to build community.

Table one. Quantifying the usage and cost of amenities promoting social connectedness

Amenity	Number of Buildings Interviewed with this Feature	Cost (low < $1000, mid: $1000-$5000, high > $5000)	Usage (Based on opinion of developer or property manager)
Communal Lounge	5	High	Low
Tenant Appreciation Events	5	Mid	Medium
Gyms	5	High	Mixed usage (Low-High)
Outdoor Gardens, Communal Patios	4	Varies in scale (mid-high)	Mid-High (Spring/Summer)
Community Partnerships (eg. reduced cost for yoga, car sharing)	3	Unsure	Medium
"Welcoming Lobby" or Building Entrance (wifi, newspapers)	3	High	High
Swimming Pool	2	High	Low
Inner Courtyard	1	High	Low
Live-in Property Managers	1	High	High
Wine Bar (using Honour System)	1	Construction: Mid; Upkeep: Low	High
Free Coffee on Weekends	1	Low	High
Communal Candy Jar in Lobby	1	Low	High

Security

As the technology sector grows and surveillance globally increases (Crouch et al, 2014), the advent and usage of '*fobs*' has appeared to increase greatly. One concern is that this type of security may alleviate building residents, as they are unable to access building floors other than

their own; reducing human contact and lessening building community. Almost all new buildings today are built using this technology, and older buildings are   consistently upgrading their facilities to include this type of technology. None of the property managers or developers mentioned any concerns that this type of technology could have on the building's sense of community, although they did emphasize that some building features (stairwells, building lounges, gyms, pools) were accessible to all residents. The only buildings without this technology today tend to be older, and will likely be updated eventually. Building Manager A strongly advocated for the use of fobs and enhanced building security, crediting it to helping the building reduce crime and create a safer environment for all. Developer A expanded this idea by saying that, "people care more about security than they do seeing each other." The consensus between developers and Property managers was that sense of security needs to be met before a sense of community.

Municipal Incentives

Lastly, developers were asked about incentives the City of Vancouver could offer to entice them to build better connected buildings. All developers were interested in Floor Area Ratio (FAR) bonuses or unit increases, which would allow for developers to build higher, increasing the number of units available for rent or sale, thus increasing their profits. In second and third place came tax abatements and parking relaxations, respectively. Some developers shared that they would like to include less parking because of the immense building cost associated, in some cases as much as a third of the building cost, while others emphasized that there was a demand from residents for more. Less desirable incentives include: expedited permitting, preferential scheduling, and voluntary city guidelines.

Conclusions

In summary, the business case for socially connected buildings is quite weak, but buildings that do embrace this mentality did see improvement in brand recognition, and property managers continuously emphasized the joy they found in doing their work - that it was more meaningful. Thus, they key to promoting this type of programming is less tied to the dollars and cents, but rather tied the developers or property managers understanding of social isolation and community, and an internal drive to promote a sense of belonging within their buildings.

Research Limitations

While my research sought to create a business case for social connectedness, its creditability would be increased with a longer time-frame, allowing for a larger pool of interviewees. With more interviews, my research would offer more definite trends, across the

city and its neighbourhoods. Further, it would allow for a clearer distinction between rental and strata properties.

Recommendations

I have five formal recommendations for the City of Vancouver, based off of the literature review and interviews conducted. The first is for the City of Vancouver to develop mandatory design guidelines for developers to adhere to when building new properties, alongside a tool kit of quick starts for property and building managers. The City could model this report off of the Active Design Guidelines prepared by the City of North Vancouver (2015), and should include the best practices in supporting social connectedness. Secondly, the City of Vancouver should offer grants that can support new programming that promotes community building for already existing buildings within the city. This could be similar to Vancouver's Greenest City Grant program, or could potentially be a subset of that program.

Further, multiple property managers expressed little knowledge of these issues and while they were interested in building community within their buildings, they were unsure of where to begin. Those that had less experience with organizing community-oriented programming were interested in learning from those who had implemented such programs. Because of this, I recommend that the City facilitate a series of workshops and dialogues to improve peer-to-peer learning between property managers; this would not only help to share the knowledge, but also equip property managers with the tools and community they would need to see through future initiatives. This may be difficult given the competitive nature of property management firms, so some firms may see little incentives to sharing their experiences and knowledge. Although *Building Manager A* did emphasize he would gladly share his experiences with others in an effort to help advance this issue in Vancouver.

There is little consistency in terms of what "social connectedness" is and how it is measured. Developing a methodology to measure connections and urban wellbeing would allow for the City to better understand which buildings are addressing these social issues and how well. Further, this may serve as a platform to acknowledge and reward buildings that are truly committed to improving the wellbeing of Vancouverites.

Lastly, my recommendation for future research is to compare Vancouver's social isolation crisis to that of other *gateway cities*, such as Sydney or San Francisco. Gateway Cities is a geographic term used to describe global cities which attract people from around the world. Gateway cities often have more in common economically and socially with other gateway cities than other cities in their country. In this case, San Francisco and Sydney share similar characteristics to Vancouver, such as unaffordable housing markets, high cost of living, population size, similar levels of density and high-density residential buildings, and attraction of

new immigrants. It would be informative to understand if these cities were also experiencing similar levels of social isolation and if so, how they are hoping to combat this crisis.

Outside of my research topic, developers consistently acknowledged or mentioned their displeasure with the City of Vancouver's residential rental unit policies, in particular the *Short Term Incentives for Rental Housing* (STIR) program. Developers mentioned that the incentives do not outweigh the maintenance cost, and that it was unreasonable to expect developers to keep all units rental for the next sixty years or the end of life of the building. They expressed concerns that if the market were to change and they were unable to sell their units, this policy could be detrimental to their bottom line. It may merit further research to see how the City of Vancouver can improve their rental housing strategy so that it benefits citizens and developers.

Appendix 1. Interview Questions and Notes

<u>**Basic Information**</u>
Name of Interviewee: Lolly Bennett
Position/Department: Property Manager
Building Name: District Main
Density: Mid-rise (79 units)
Types of units (single, two-bedroom, family style suites): Mostly one-two bedrooms
Do buildings use "fobs" for security purposes? Yes.
Notes on building design:
  • Pays strong attention to community building
  • Held focus-groups with renters to understand what amenities they want and use
  • Provide community events to give back to residents

<u>**Building Characteristics**</u>
1. How many families reside in this building?
   Buildings were not designed for families, but have found that residents who have babies started to stay.
2. Do you have a measure of how many people live alone? If so, how many?
   60% couples
   40% singles
3. What efforts have been made to create a sense of community in this building?
   • Gym on every floor
   • Outdoor patio (3000 ft^2 including three BBQs, garden space, fir trees, herbs, furniture, bees, green-house)
   • Lounge / "Collaboration Room"
   • Welcoming lobby (well-lit, wifi, high-table, front-desk, newspapers)
   • Wine Bar
   • Candy Jar
   • Resident organized events: games nights, "Oscars" party
   • "The Mix" - Saturday coffee in lobby, with extra local goods from Main Street
   • Residents have a Facebook Page
   • Annual Events
     • Pumpkin Carve
     • Summer Patio Party
     • Spring Fling Party
     • Christmas Party
     • Tree decorating contest
4. How well are these used?
   • All are *very* well used

<u>**Financial Logistics**</u>
1. What is the turnover rate or average tenancy for this building?
   People tend to only move out if they are looking to buy a home.
2. What is the cost (in $ and/or in time) of replacing a tenant once they move out?
   Buildings have a wait list, quick turnover time. This helps to rent out units quicker.
3. How much vandalism do you deal with on a monthly basis (number of instances and monetary cost)?
   Very little.
4. What measures do you take to ensure the safety and security of residents?
   Fobs and a security guard at night.

Basic Information

Name of Interviewee: Building Manager A
Position: Building Manager
Company: High-Rise Tower, Downtown Vancouver
Density: High-density (185 units)
Types of units: Studios, One-bedrooms
Do buildings use "fobs" for security purposes? Yes
Notes on building design:
- Large building downtown
- Open, renovated lobby
- Operated by a Strata Council

Building Characteristics

1. How many families reside in this building?
   Very few; but there are some babies in the building
2. Do you have a measure of how many people live alone? If so, how many?
   No
3. What efforts have been made to create a sense of community in this building?
   - Building music festival
   - Christmas party
   - Secluded ground floor garden
   - 2nd Floor - pool and gym
4. How well are these used?
   - Garden used well in the spring/summer
   - Pool and gym not very popular
   - Event was called the "nest expenditure of the year" by Strata Council

Financial Logistics

1. What is the turnover rate or average tenancy for this building?
   2/3 units are rented out, so turnover varies based on that. Not Building Manager's job to rent out
   or sell units; up to the owner of the unit.
2. What is the cost (in $ and/or in time) of replacing a tenant once they move out?
   Not applicable.
3. How much vandalism do you deal with on a monthly basis (number of instances and monetary cost)?
   Used to deal with a lot, but since the introductions of fobs and security cameras this has dropped.
   Now mostly just see break-ins.
4. What measures do you take to ensure the safety and security of residents?
   Fobs, security guards when it was really bad, but not anymore.

Basic Information
Name of Interviewee: Developer A
Company: Rental Only Residential Developer, Lower Mainland
Density: Mid-density residential
Types of units: one-two bedrooms
Do buildings use "fobs" for security purposes? Yes
Notes on building design:
- Mid-use new development (currently in construction phase)
- Staircases
- Outdoor recreation promoted

Building Characteristics
1. How many families reside in this building?
   Unconfirmed; usually tailor designs towards couples/singles. This building's design includes family oriented features.
   Noted that there is strong demand for three bedrooms for families.
2. Do you have a measure of how many people live alone? If so, how many?
   Unconfirmed (under construction)
3. What efforts have been made to create a sense of community in this building?
   - Inner courtyard (featuring playground)
   - Communal Lounge
   - Outdoor garden
4. How well are these used?
   - "Amenities don't really work"
   - Gyms are better utilized in strata buildings in comparison to rental

Financial Logistics
1. What is the turnover rate or average tenancy for this building?
   Rental unit - turnover is fairly frequent.
2. What is the cost (in $ and/or in time) of replacing a tenant once they move out?
   Approximately one month, at most.
   Exceptions would be vandalism (eg. if somebody is evicted can get pretty expensive).
3. How much vandalism do you deal with on a monthly basis (number of instances and monetary cost)?
   Most common is when people vandalize their unit if they've been evicted. This is rare.
4. What measures do you take to ensure the safety and security of residents?
   Fobs.

Developers Only Questions:
1. If incentives were offered from the City of Vancouver to build socially connected buildings, what incentives would entice you?
   - FSR Bonuses (1)
   - Parking Relaxation (2)
2. How do you market your buildings, and would you do it differently if you thought other features would attract buyers/renters?
   Market vacant units online, or on billboards beside buildings.
   Nice, attractive online images are very important.

<u>Basic Information</u>
Name of Interviewee: Developer B
Company: Residential Developer, Lower Mainland
Density: Mid-density residential
Types of units: Previous experience with mid-density buildings; current focus on building row-houses
Do buildings use "fobs" for security purposes? Yes
Notes on building design:
  • Various locations in the city

<u>Building Characteristics</u>
1. How many families reside in this building?
    Less families in mid-density buildings; row-houses geared towards families.
2. Do you have a measure of how many people live alone? If so, how many?
    No
3. What efforts have been made to create a sense of community in this building?
    • Common areas
    • Amenity rooms / lounges
4. How well are these used?
    • People love to try amenities at first, but eventually loose interest
    • Pools, saunas, hot-tubs not well used

<u>Financial Logistics</u>
1. What is the turnover rate or average tenancy for this building?
    Low vacancy rate, but high turnover is not necessarily a bad thing because of rental control formula.
2. What is the cost (in $ and/or in time) of replacing a tenant once they move out?
    Longest a unit stays empty is about one month.
    Cost includes renovating units when necessary
3. How much vandalism do you deal with on a monthly basis (number of instances and monetary cost)?
    Not an issue in most properties.
4. What measures do you take to ensure the safety and security of residents?
    Fobs. Can't see this changing.

<u>Developers Only Questions:</u>
1. If incentives were offered from the City of Vancouver to build socially connected buildings, what incentives would entice you?
    • Preferential Scheduling (1)
    • Provide more incentives for rental
2. How do you market your buildings, and would you do it differently if you thought other features would attract buyers/renters?
    Consider the company to be 'boutique builder,' that they are doing development differently.
    People are attracted to "Kohler faucets" and physical amenities. People won't pay extra for "community"

Basic Information
Name of Interviewee: Developer C
Company: Nationwide Development and Property Management Firm (Large portfolio)
Density: High rise residential towers
Types of units: Mostly one bedrooms and studios
Do buildings use "fobs" for security purposes? Yes
Notes on building design:
  • Located in high-density neighbourhoods, 10+ storeys.

Building Characteristics
1. How many families reside in this building?
       Very few.
2. Do you have a measure of how many people live alone? If so, how many?
       Majority of people live alone. Approximately 1.2 people/rental unit.
3. What efforts have been made to create a sense of community in this building?
   • Promotional contests for residents
        • Prizes include free rent, vacations
   • Partner with local businesses to offer discounts to residents (car sharing, yoga, etc)
   • Elevator signage about upcoming events
   • Live-in property managers
   • Outdoor gardens
   • Swimming pools
   • Rooftop terraces
   • Gyms (sometimes as specific as Squash Courts)
   • Game rooms
   • Events
        • Clothing drives
        • Food drives
4. How well are these used?
   • Utilization varies
   • Indoor swimming pools are not very popular
   • Majority of residents want a new gym

Financial Logistics
1. What is the turnover rate or average tenancy for this building?
       Low turnover and long tenancy. This works against them in the long run because of the rent
       control formula.
2. What is the cost (in $ and/or in time) of replacing a tenant once they move out?
       Depends on the size and scale of renovation necessary. No rule of thumb.
3. How much vandalism do you deal with on a monthly basis (number of instances and monetary cost)?
       Not an issue in most properties, because resident screening is so strict.
       They see more break-ins downtown.
4. What measures do you take to ensure the safety and security of residents?
       Fobs.

Developers Only Questions:
1. If incentives were offered from the City of Vancouver to build socially connected buildings, what
   incentives would entice you?
   • Tax abatements (1)
   • Expedited permitting (2) -> Think the City of Vancouver could do this better. Anything to speed up
     the process helps.
   • FAR Bonuses (3)
   • Parking Relaxation (4) - Rental is costly to build, and street parking is so cheap. Wants to build
     less parking.

2. How do you market your buildings, and would you do it differently if you thought other features would attract buyers/renters?

Focus on physical amenities. People really like roof top terraces.

They include online testimonials on their website from residents.

<u>Basic Information</u>
Name of Interviewee: Jon Khalifa
Position/Department: Developer
Company Name: Kevington Build Corporation
Density: Varies (mid-high rise residential buildings)
Types of units (single, two-bedroom, family style suites): Mostly one-two bedrooms
Do buildings use "fobs" for security purposes? Yes.
Notes on building design:
- Pays strong attention to community building
- Hold focus-groups with renters to understand what amenities they want and use
- Provide community events to give back to residents

<u>Building Characteristics</u>
1. How many families reside in this building?
     Buildings were not designed for families, but have found that residents who have babies will stay.
2. Do you have a measure of how many people live alone? If so, how many?
     Varies per building.
3. What efforts have been made to create a sense of community in this building?
   - Gym on every floor
   - Outdoor patio (3000 ft^2 including three BBQs, garden space, fir trees, herbs, furniture, bees, green-house)
   - Lounge / "Collaboration Room"
   - Welcoming lobby (well-lit, wifi, high-table, front-desk, newspapers)
   - Wine Bar
   - Candy Jar
   - Resident organized events: games nights, "Oscars" party
   - "The Mix" - Saturday coffee in lobby, with extra local goods from Main Street
   - Residents have a Facebook Page
   - Annual Events
       - Pumpkin Carve
       - Summer Patio Party
       - Spring Fling Party
       - Christmas Party
       - Tree decorating contest
4. How well are these used?
   - All are very well used

<u>Financial Logistics</u>
1. What is the turnover rate or average tenancy for this building?
     People tend to only move out if they are looking to buy a home.
2. What is the cost (in $ and/or in time) of replacing a tenant once they move out?
     Buildings have a wait list, quick turnover time. This helps to rent out units quicker.
3. How much vandalism do you deal with on a monthly basis (number of instances and monetary cost)?
     Very little.
4. What measures do you take to ensure the safety and security of residents?
     Fobs and a security guard at night.

<u>Developers Only Questions:</u>
1. If incentives were offered from the City of Vancouver to build socially connected buildings, what incentives would entice you?
   - Parking Relaxation (1)
2. How do you market your buildings, and would you do it differently if you thought other features would attract buyers/renters?

Market themselves as inclusive and community-based. Often find that friends of residents will request to live there, or put their name down on the waitlist.

Basic Information
Name of Interviewee: Jonathon Meads
Position/Department: Development and Sustainability Manager
Company Name: Concert Properties
Density: Varies (mid-high rise residential towers)
Types of units (single, two-bedroom, family style suites): Varies
Do buildings use "fobs" for security purposes? Yes
Notes on building design:
- Pays strong attention to relationship with public realm and building entrance (plazas, water features, parks)
- Amenities vary depending on scale; often include communal lounges, but rarely include gyms
- Provide community events to give back to residents

Building Characteristics
1. How many families reside in this building?
   Lack of interest from families; they do not attract many families to live in residential towers; families do not want three bedroom units.
2. Do you have a measure of how many people live alone? If so, how many?
   No.
3. What efforts have been made to create a sense of community in this building?
   - Different buildings have different amenities depending on scale
   - Annual Tenant Appreciation events (BBQs, Pancake Day, etc.)
   - Lounges
   - Events are mostly organized by property management
   - In rental buildings, they keep staff on site who get to know all residents.
4. How well are these used?
   - No gyms because they "don't work"
   - The taller the tower, the less amenities are used.

Financial Logistics
1. What is the turnover rate or average tenancy for this building?
   Depends on scale; low-rise buildings see longer tenancy and less turnover.
2. What is the cost (in $ and/or in time) of replacing a tenant once they move out?
   Role of the property management firm.
3. How much vandalism do you deal with on a monthly basis (number of instances and monetary cost)?
   Very little; break-ins are their biggest crime
4. What measures do you take to ensure the safety and security of residents?
   Fobs.

Developers Only Questions:
1. If incentives were offered from the City of Vancouver to build socially connected buildings, what incentives would entice you?
   - Expedited permitting (1)
   - FAR Bonuses (2)
2. How do you market your buildings, and would you do it differently if you thought other features would attract buyers/renters?
   Market themselves as inclusive, committed to sustainability, and community-based. Finds it frustrating to see other development groups advertise themselves with similar qualities when they aren't actually doing anything to promote social connectedness.

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