RETROFITTING VANCOUVER'S MOST SACRED LAND USE: THE INTENSIFICATION OF GROUND-ORIENTED HOUSING IN SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBOURHOODS

by

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ABSTRACT

The Metropolitan Vancouver Region is expected to have a population of over 3.3 million within the next 25 years. As a designated growth concentration area, the City of Vancouver is expected to absorb 160,000 people by 2021. While existing plans will allow for future high density developments, 70% of the City's residential areas remain zoned explicitly for single-family use. The intensification of these single-family neighbourhoods is viewed as a way of using the existing housing stock and the existing residential land more efficiently. The intensification techniques that are appropriate for single-family neighbourhoods include: conversion, infill and redevelopment.

Planners think that intensification efforts will not only alleviate some of the detrimental impacts of sprawl, but will also provide a more diversified housing stock that will be more appropriate for the needs of an increasingly complex society. Unfortunately, some existing residents have been extremely vocal in opposition to any intensification efforts in their neighbourhoods. The residents claim that any intensification will disrupt the character of their existing single-family neighbourhoods. While the arguments for retaining exclusive single-family neighbourhoods are specious at best, the NIMBY mentality of residents has often proved to be an effective form of opposition to intensification efforts.

An approach for overcoming the NIMBY syndrome is a successful program of community outreach. Community outreach attempts to minimize community opposition and to rally support for the development within the community. Attention is focused on
the residents who have not already become opponents of the development. A successful community outreach program will limit residents' factual misunderstandings and their exaggerated fears about the project's potential impacts. Negotiations should be undertaken with residents who are willing to compromise; residents who refuse to talk cooperatively should not be brought into the problem-solving process.

Future plans for intensification must establish a sense of certainty in the way a neighbourhood will change. The exaggerated sense of fear that residents have about the potential changes in their neighbourhood is the biggest obstacle to overcome if the Metropolitan Vancouver Region is to successfully implement an intensification program into existing single-family neighbourhoods.
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1.1 INTRODUCTION
The problems created by suburban housing developments have been widely documented and clearly understood. Some of the most obvious concerns - sprawl, auto dependency, long commutes and traffic congestion - are discussed not only by planners and urban geographers but are also topics of common conversation for the people who must face these problems daily. However, even with this widespread understanding, low density suburbs continue to be the most preferred method of accommodating the regional growth requirements of North America's metropolitan areas.

In spite of all the inherent problems, it is no secret why this type of development has continued to have a great demand. It is the image of the ideal American/Canadian dream of a home in the suburbs that has led to the continued development of low density communities. As a result of these aspirations for large homes, open spaces and privacy, we are losing the option of continually constructing neighbourhoods on land that is unused, undeveloped and close to existing metropolitan areas. In the Greater Vancouver Regional District, the experience of a shrinking supply of residually zoned land, coupled with the realization of the problems associated with low density development, have created a consensus that the region can no longer afford the luxury of newly constructed sprawl. An alternative method for providing the needed housing that has
gained wide acceptance with planners is to look for additional opportunities within
Vancouver's existing communities.

The *Livable Region Strategic Plan* has been developed to encourage intensification and to
manage the region's growth through the creation of more compact communities in the
Greater Vancouver Regional District's twenty municipalities. At the municipal level, the
City of Vancouver's *City Plan* also suggests that intensification measures be adopted.

Intensification is the process of using existing residential stock more efficiently and of
encouraging the production of affordable housing. Over time this meaning has been
expanded to include: promoting a compact urban form with higher population and
employment densities, the efficient use of infrastructure and the establishment of mixed
use developments. In spite of these directives, developers and regulators continue to plan
and build developments as if abundant land will be available forever. Most homes
continue to be built to appeal to the traditional image of a family where the father works
and the mother stays at home with their 2.3 children.

It is quite apparent that the land supply is shrinking and households often do not resemble
the households of traditional families. The traditional family no longer makes up the
majority of society's households. In 1989 only 17% of Canadian households were
considered to be traditional families.1 Today, two worker households, fewer children,
more single parent households, and numerous empty nesters and seniors have created

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1 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *Strategic Plan 1992-1996* (Ottawa: Canada
housing needs that are now substantially different from those required by the traditional family.

Available housing is divided into two major structure types which are characterized by the means of access to the individual units. If access to a dwelling unit is by way of a common corridor or hallway within a structure, the unit is generally classified as an apartment unit. If access is direct into the dwelling unit from outside the structure, it is generally considered to be a ground-oriented unit. Examples of ground-oriented housing include: single-detached homes, two-unit homes (including attached units such as side by side duplexes or up/down duplexes and single-detached units with one suite), rowhousing (three or more side by side units) and single units attached to non-residential property.

The single-detached home is differentiated from attached forms of ground-oriented housing by the presence of sideyards, which separate the detached home from adjacent dwellings.

The real estate industry has responded to some of the societal changes and has provided a suitable number of new apartments in established areas. Unfortunately, developers are still using our shrinking supply of residential land to create new communities of single-detached homes. Many non-traditional family units do not need such large accommodations, but people can only purchase what is offered. In order to limit the stress on the remaining unused residential land and to satisfy housing needs, ground-

\[^{2}\text{In the City of Vancouver, single-detached homes are constructed in accordance with the RS-1 Single-Family District Schedule. Accordingly, when referring to single-detached homes within the City of Vancouver, the term single-family home will be used.}\]
oriented alternatives to the single-detached home must become a substantial part of our established communities.

If we are to assume that population growth in one of Canada's most appealing metropolitan regions is inevitable, then so is the corresponding future demand for additional ground-oriented housing. While these projections may well be seen to be inevitable, how the population is to be accommodated is still a topic of considerable debate.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT
Over the next 25 years the Metropolitan Vancouver Region's population is expected to grow to 3.3 million, an increase of 1.2 million from the 1996 estimate. In order to accommodate these new residents, substantial additions to the existing housing stock will be required. Since the City of Vancouver is one of the designated growth concentration areas for the region, it will have to house a portion of this population increase. Adequate planning measures allow for future high density developments, but approximately 70% of the City's residential areas remain zoned only for single-family use, or at most permit a secondary suite. Housing demand projections suggest that the region's housing stock will take on a more urban appearance as the population grows. However, if existing zoning

---

3 BC Statistics uses a component cohort-survival model, Population Extrapolation for Organizational Planning with Less Error (PEOPLE), for all of its small area population projections. The cohort-survival population model makes area specific assumptions about births, deaths and migration in order to produce a population projection for the area under examination. The above projection was established in PEOPLE 21. The results produce by PEOPLE should not be considered infallible, but what could happen given the realization of the assumed conditions.

4 David Baxter, *Homes in Metropolitan Vancouver's Future: Housing Demand by Structure Type, 1996 to 2021* (Vancouver: The Urban Futures Institute, 1996).
remains substantially unaltered, up to two-thirds of the additional housing demand will be for ground-oriented units.

If the Metropolitan Vancouver Region is to avoid the pitfalls of continued urban sprawl, it must face the challenge of finding more appropriate sites for ground-oriented housing. Planners and urban theorists agree that intensification is an important part of the appropriate response to this challenge. The single-family image of a neighbourhood containing only single-detached homes, however, remains very important to those that have bought into the lower-density communities and discussion concerning potential intensification plans often meet with firm opposition. Therefore the question becomes: can plans be made for future intensification of single-family neighbourhoods given the demands of Vancouver's growing population and the concerns of existing neighbourhood residents?

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY
The rationale for altering the existing form of single-family neighbourhoods is primarily based on two reports, produced by David Baxter, that examine how housing demand may grow and change in the Metropolitan Vancouver Region over the next twenty five years. Baxter uses past demographic and behavioral trends, and BC Statistics' population projections to estimate the region's future housing demand. The reports focus on the potential for change in the age specific household maintainer rates associated with the different types of available housing.
A household maintainer is the person considered to be primarily responsible for the financial support of the household. Maintainer rates are derived by calculating the percentage of people in a specific age group who are household maintainers. The probability of a person being a maintainer of a household varies over one's lifetime. There is a low probability in the Vancouver region, 13% in 1991, of a person in the 15 to 24 age group being a household maintainer. The highest age specific maintainer rate for 1991 is 59% for those 65 and older. Distinct maintainer rate patterns also emerge within the specific housing structure types. For example, people in early adulthood have a low probability of being a maintainer of any ground-oriented unit. However, there is a greater probability of a young adult being the maintainer of a household that lives in an apartment.

Baxter's *Housing Demand Projection Scenarios for the Metropolitan Vancouver Region, 1991 to 2021* reports on a number of potential scenarios that were established by employing different techniques for projecting household maintainer rates from the area's 1961-1991 Census data. Baxter's analysis of the future housing demand scenarios suggest that overall household maintainer rates are stabilizing.

Baxter thinks that in many ways 1961 and 1991 represent distinctly different forms of urban development, rather than two points on a continuum. This is the result of the dramatic changes in society, in the economy, in the labour force and in housing that

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5 David Baxter and Delia Laglagaron, *Housing Demand Projection Scenarios for the Metropolitan Vancouver Region, 1991 to 2021* (Burnaby: Strategic Planning Department Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994).
occurred during the 1961-91 period. These changes include: an economy increasingly characterized by the production of services, a dramatic increase in female labour force participation, declining average family size and birth rates, increasing divorce rates, increasing female maintainer rates and the introduction of high rise apartment living into the area. While the forces that contributed to these changes will probably continue, their impact will undoubtedly be more moderate on maintainer rates than they were during the 1961 to 1991 period.

Baxter's amalgam of scenarios, the Livable Region Strategy Scenario, allows for the slowing of growth in maintainer rates experienced during the reference period and for programs that will maximize the potential for development of affordable housing throughout the region. To express both the magnitude and the slowing of maintainer rates during the period, Baxter extends the pattern in a non-linear fashion by using a modified hyperbolic function for the projection. The hyperbolic function is used when the dependent variable, the maintainer rate, is increasing over time in increments of decreasing size. The function also works in such a manner that it establishes an upper bound to growth. Thus, the hyperbolic function is a useful projection technique if one assumes that the pattern of change observed in the Vancouver CMA during the past 15 years will gradually slow over the next 30 years so that there would be no change in the maintainer rates during the 2021 to 2026 period. In addition, this assumption would also ensure that the household maintainer rates would not become unreasonably large.

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6 Ibid., p. 27.
If maintainer rates are assumed to have stabilized, or will stabilize by 2021, then the range of 1,240,000 to 1,268,000 total households provide a reference for housing demand for the Vancouver Metropolitan Region by 2021. Historical trends seem to indicate that the future housing demand will continue to have a strong preference for ground-oriented units.

Both the Stabilizing Recent Rate of Change and the Livable Region Strategy Scenarios predict 2021 ground-oriented housing stock requirements that are significantly different from the Constant 1991 Rate Scenario’s projection (Figure 1). The two scenarios indicate that single-detached housing will decline, while attached housing will increase as a portion of the ground-oriented category.

Baxter concludes that most household formation is the result of choice, how people choose to live together. With the dramatic social, economic and housing market change experienced in the Vancouver CMA from 1961 to 1991, the percentage of people who were household maintainers increased from 40% to 45%. Therefore, we should not expect a dramatic change in the overall percentage of people who are household maintainers during the 1991 to 2021 period. By 2021 the Livable Region Strategy

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8 The Stabilizing Recent Rate of Change Scenario is similar to the Livable Region Strategy because both utilize a hyperbolic equation to project maintainer rates. The difference in the two scenarios is that the Livable Region Strategy adjusts for growth outside the Vancouver CMA and addresses housing affordability constraints; the Stabilizing Recent Rate of Change Scenario does not make these adjustments.

9 The Constant 1991 Rate Scenario assumes that maintainer rates, by age group and structure type, will remain constant at 1991 levels throughout the forecast period.
Scenario anticipates an increase to 50%, and the Constant 1991 Rate Scenario and the Stabilizing Recent Rate of Change Scenario expect an increase to 49%.

**Figure 1: COMPARISON OF SCENARIOS BY STRUCTURE TYPE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure Types</th>
<th>Single Detached</th>
<th>Attached Ground Oriented</th>
<th>Ground Oriented</th>
<th>Apartment Less Than 5 Storeys</th>
<th>Apartment 5 or More Storeys</th>
<th>Apartment Total Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991 Metropolitan Region</td>
<td>351,165</td>
<td>100,665</td>
<td>451,830</td>
<td>1,218,815</td>
<td>670,645</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 Metropolitan Region</td>
<td>547,157</td>
<td>330,949</td>
<td>878,106</td>
<td>2,008,715</td>
<td>1,258,821</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Run Rate of Change (1991 - 1991)*</td>
<td>555,913</td>
<td>665,808</td>
<td>1,201,731</td>
<td>2,664,990</td>
<td>1,644,721</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Rate of Change (1976 - 1991)</td>
<td>667,722</td>
<td>170,685</td>
<td>837,957</td>
<td>2,462,292</td>
<td>1,248,249</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant 1991 Rate</td>
<td>557,744</td>
<td>128,745</td>
<td>736,489</td>
<td>2,216,805</td>
<td>1,242,540</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stabilizing Recent Rate</td>
<td>557,744</td>
<td>192,727</td>
<td>850,472</td>
<td>2,117,829</td>
<td>1,268,311</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livable Region Strategy Scenario</td>
<td>109,538</td>
<td>122,042</td>
<td>12,515</td>
<td>15,547 4%</td>
<td>28,942 2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRS minus Constant Rate</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>23,983 9%</td>
<td>12,515 1%</td>
<td>16,680 9%</td>
<td>-11,133 -11%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRS minus Stabilizing Recent Rate</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>23,983 9%</td>
<td>12,515 1%</td>
<td>805 0%</td>
<td>2,593 2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall maintainer rates may not be expected to change significantly, but the actual make up of the housing stock has undergone significant changes and further such significant changes are expected to continue. While households can, to some extent, substitute one structure type for another, the substitution depends on the way in which the dwelling unit is to be used. For example, the practice of raising children usually occurs within ground-oriented structures; high rise apartments are not considered appropriate for this purpose. According to Baxter, the changes we will see in the housing stock will result from the substitution of different forms of related structure types, particularly the substitution of attached ground-oriented housing for single-detached units.
Baxter's more recent report, *Homes in Metropolitan Vancouver’s Future: Housing Demand by Structure Type, 1996 to 2021*\(^{10}\), utilizes a different methodology than the earlier *Housing Demand Projections Scenarios for the Metropolitan Vancouver Region, 1991 to 2021*, but also envisions a future where ground-oriented housing will continue to be the dominant structure type demanded by the area's population. The first two scenarios in this report assume that either age related housing occupancy patterns remain unchanged from the 1991 Census or occupancy patterns will become more urban. In the latter scenario, Baxter uses present day Metropolitan Toronto as a housing model for Metropolitan Vancouver's future population. A final scenario combines the first two scenarios in an attempt to represent the middle ground between the assumption of constant maintainer rates and the assumption of a more urban form of living.

A comparison of Toronto and Vancouver indicates a common pattern of apartment living early and late in the life cycle, and ground-oriented living in the middle of the life cycle. Baxter believes that the pattern grows out of people's functional housing requirements, which include a strong demand for ground-oriented housing when people are in the child raising stage of their life cycle.\(^11\) The 1991 age specific ground-oriented maintainer rates were very similar for both of the cities. However, there were significant differences in the maintainer rates for attached and single-detached housing units. Maintainer rates for single-detached housing in Vancouver were considerably higher for all age groups, while

\(^{10}\) David Baxter, *Homes in Metropolitan Vancouver’s Future: Housing Demand by Structure Type, 1996 to 2021* (Vancouver: The Urban Futures Institute, 1996).

\(^{11}\) Ibid., p. 27.
the attached ground-oriented age specific maintainer rates were higher in Toronto. Using the Toronto CMA Model would result in a future housing demand that would have more than twice the Base Scenario’s projection for attached ground-oriented units.12 Baxter’s reports identify a potentially significant planning problem and therefore provides the rationale for my study. If the Metropolitan Vancouver Region must accommodate the required ground-oriented units over the next 25 years, the region will be faced with the challenge of finding suitable sites for these additional ground-oriented units. Residential intensification is viewed by planners as an important element in the appropriate response to this problem. Therefore, the purpose of my study is to examine and identify the problems associated with implementing intensification efforts, and to discuss potential methods for the introduction of alternative ground-oriented housing into established single-family neighbourhoods.

1.4 METHODOLOGY AND EXPECTATIONS
The research methodology primarily consists of a review of the literature on intensification. There are many sources that describe the physical characteristics of intensification efforts and techniques. Unfortunately, with the exception of accessory apartments, little has been written about the concerns existing residents have about the intensification of their neighbourhoods, and even less has been written about how their concerns can be resolved. To overcome this lack of literature, discussions concerning potential intensification efforts that have taken place between a local residents’ group and Vancouver planners will be included as a part of my research.

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12 Ibid., p. 29.
This element of research will examine an interesting and ongoing discussion that concerns the rezoning effort for the O'Hagan property in Vancouver's West Point Grey. This discussion features a number of important players and should provide a good opportunity to understand the concerns a single-family community has about increasing the density in their neighbourhood. Expectations are that residents with any vested interests will be extremely wary of any change, and that a successful intensification plan will be difficult to implement. It appears that satisfying the concerns of existing residents will be the major hurdle when attempting to implement any type of intensification strategy into single-family neighbourhoods.

1.5 **OVERVIEW OF THE REMAINING CHAPTERS**
The remainder of the thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter 2 contains a literature review of intensification techniques. This chapter will focus on physical planning and will include different forms of intensification appropriate for single-family neighbourhoods.

The benefits of intensification and the concerns that existing residents have about intensification will be presented in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 will examine and evaluate the concerns that the West Point Grey Residents’ Association have about rezoning the O'Hagan site to allow for higher density. In the final chapter, ideas for gaining community acceptance for potential intensification efforts will be introduced. All of the intensification techniques discussed in this thesis are focused on retrofitting single-family neighbourhoods for added density. Retrofitting can be described as a process where
communities incrementally add to or alter the built environment to accommodate the needs that are shaped by changing social and economic realities.
CHAPTER II
INTENSIFICATION STRATEGIES: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 HOUSING INTENSIFICATION TECHNIQUES
Housing intensification entered the vocabulary of policy, planning and development in the 1980s. It has been generally used as an overarching term to describe various housing forms used to increase the number of housing units in a community. This review will focus on three main housing intensification techniques:

A. Conversion
This is a form of building adaptation through which additions are made to the housing inventory. It can involve subdividing an existing dwelling unit into two or more units, or adding a dwelling unit to an existing residential structure without changing the size or quality of the pre-conversion units. Conversion expands the supply of housing available for consumers without adding new structures to the housing stock.

B. Infill
This involves the construction of new housing built on small parcels of vacant or underutilized land within an existing residential community. Sensitive infill emphasizes that this form of development should respect the physical character of a neighbourhood and be compatible with its social, economic, historical and cultural context.

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13 Canadian Urban Institute, Housing Intensification: Policies, Constraints and Options (Toronto: Canadian Urban Institute, 1991).
developments may include the addition of new units to an existing house, or new units in the side or rear yards of a large lot with an existing building.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{C. Redevelopment}

This requires the creation of new housing units through the redevelopment of currently underutilized sites in already built-up and serviced areas.\textsuperscript{16}

Of all the intensification techniques reviewed, infill is the most prominent intensification technique discussed in the literature. In Canadian literature the emphasis is on small scale infill that is appropriate for single-family neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{17} Most American literature, on the other hand, focuses on making better use of vacant or abandoned land in the inner city. American planners often see infill as an appropriate renewal strategy to revitalize inner city neighbourhoods that have experienced urban decay. "Infill housing, as it was conceived, is the opposite of slum clearance and displacement. It represents integration of buildings - and their residents - into the existing social fabric, not their separation and exclusion."\textsuperscript{18} This form of renewal is often as large as a city block and over 100 units in size. While urban renewal may be one important goal of infill development; the purpose of this literature review is to examine opportunities for adding ground-oriented housing stock to existing single-family neighbourhoods.


\textsuperscript{17} David Hulchanski, \textit{Making Better Use of the Existing Housing Stock: A Literature Review} (Toronto: Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 1982).

The literature was examined in an effort to find appropriate intensification methods for single-family neighbourhoods. Examples are given to illustrate: potential site plans for multi family dwellings that are suitable for single-family sized lots, floor plans of dwellings and the massing of building structures. This literature review is intended to clarify the three main intensification techniques that often have a somewhat vague meaning for many residents of the single-family neighbourhoods where these practices have been proposed.\textsuperscript{19}

2.2 CONVERSION: ACCESSORY APARTMENTS IN SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

An accessory apartment is the most common method of housing intensification. The accessory conversion involves the addition of a unit to a residential structure in a way that does not fundamentally alter the internal layout or plan of the existing dwelling. Accessory conversions vary considerably depending on the type of structure, its age and design, and the size and configuration of the lot. Examples include the conversion of a basement or attic, or perhaps of a sunroom, porch, or guest room. Sometimes the conversion of a small section of a house will also require adding other rooms by building an extension to the existing structure. Owners with secondary units want them to be unobtrusive, if not invisible, because most are installed illegally without building permits.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{19} As part of the Vancouver City Plan Community Visions pilot project, students from UBC’s School of Community and Regional Planning presented a project entitled “Integrating Diversity: Towards Mixed Housing in Dunbar”. The students found that on a whole many residents had no concept of what infill housing was or what its benefits were until they saw the examples that were presented. Plan 540 Project - April 1997.

\textsuperscript{20} Martin Gellen, Accessory Apartments in Single-Family Housing (Rutgers: State University of New Jersey, 1985), p. 5.
A. VANCOUVER’S SECONDARY SUITES

In Vancouver, accessory apartments are referred to as secondary suites. Secondary suites are defined as a second dwelling unit with its own kitchen, in a house that is located in areas of the city with detached houses zoned for single-family use. Secondary suites have traditionally had two central functions from the home owner’s perspective: a) to provide rental income (a mortgage helper), and/or b) to provide accommodation for members of the owner’s family or extended family. However, with only very limited exceptions, both types of suites have been illegal in Vancouver. For a period of more than a decade prior to October 1986, the City had a policy of withholding enforcement of illegal suites unless there was a complaint. Between 1986 and 1989 the City of Vancouver, as a result of extensive political pressure from its residents, began to address the problem of illegal suites by establishing regulations under which currently illegal suites are to be phased out of RS-1 areas. Vancouver’s approach to secondary suites is in obvious contrast to the approach of the provincial government of Ontario. Ontario has encouraged homeowners to create rental suites in their homes in order to create more affordable housing units.

B. ONTARIO’S BILL 120

In 1994, Ontario’s NDP government created Bill 120 to advocate the intensification of ground-oriented housing through accessory apartments. The Bill defined an accessory apartment as a self contained residential unit that has been created by dividing or adding to an existing or newly constructed home (creating two residential units in a detached,
semi-detached or row house). Accessory apartments are seen as having the following benefits:

1. They tend to be more affordable than other private rental units and can provide accommodation for tenants in neighbourhoods which may not otherwise have sufficient supplies of affordable housing.

2. They are an *environmentally friendly* development practice, they encourage more compact and transit supportive communities.

3. Additionally, they are seen as an appropriate response to the prevailing demographic trend to smaller households.\(^{23}\)

Many municipalities in Ontario saw Bill 120 as an intrusion by the province into an area of municipal interest and were also concerned about their inability to enforce standards and safety codes for accessory apartments. The new Conservative government has responded to these concerns, and under Bill 20, municipalities will once again have control over where accessory apartments are permitted. Linda Lapointe thinks that this will be a regressive step that will limit the provision of needed additional rental housing. In Lapointe’s opinion, Bill 20 will result in an increase in illegal accessory suites because there will continue to be a demand for these types of units.\(^{24}\)

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C. THE DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER'S SECONDARY SUITES

In February of 1995 the District of North Vancouver began an examination of the issues that surround the debate of legalized secondary suites. A survey of approximately 2200 secondary suites led to the general conclusion that illegal secondary suites exist because both tenants and owners benefit. However, there was the recognition of the need for greater conformity with the Building Code in order to ensure safety. Concerns about parking problems were also examined.

Historically, attempts to register secondary suites and levy fees resulted in widespread avoidance and encouraged owners to install suites that did not meet safety standards. Since the objective of the District of North Vancouver's bylaw is to encourage owners to install or improve suites for safety reasons, it was thought that the proposal should avoid registration fees that may act as a deterrent to owners of suites coming forward for inspection.

As a result of an October 1997 zoning bylaw amendment, the District of North Vancouver now permits secondary suites in single-family homes subject to several requirements: conformity to the Provincial Building Code; size of suite must be the lesser of 40 percent of total floor space or 968 square feet; a third parking spot must be provided; and the owner must occupy the main unit or the suite. Enforcement of the bylaw will be initiated by a written complaint from an owner, tenant, or neighbour. Municipal staff will then do inspections and require the suite to meet District standards or
be closed. There is no registration program, and suite owners are not charged for water or garbage collection.26

2.3 INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Most literature refers to the intensification of existing residential areas as infill housing. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) views infill development as a transition to higher densities for traditional single-family development. The idea is to increase housing densities in current single-family areas in such a way that the higher densities will not adversely impact the livability of individual dwelling units and the existing character of the neighbourhood. In this manner, the infill concept is geared to preserving the character of the property and the neighbourhood. "Infill development keeps resources where people already live. Infill development is the key to accommodating growth and redesigning our cities to be environmentally and socially sustainable."27

Inherent within the term infill are a number of descriptive phrases of the actual type of infill housing. The infill dwelling that is most appropriate for single-family neighbourhoods is the granny flat, also known as a carriage house, a garden suite or an in-law unit.

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25 The District of North Vancouver, Secondary Suites (District of North Vancouver: District of North Vancouver Planning Department, 1995).
26 The District of North Vancouver, Legalizing Secondary Suites: District of North Vancouver (District of North Vancouver: District of North Vancouver Planning Department, 1997).
A. THE GRANNY FLAT

Figure 2 was a design winner in CMHC's Healthy Housing Idea Competition. The scheme is a variation of the granny flat - a separate unit built off the lane way in the rear yard of an existing home. The infill was designed for non-conventional families such as seniors and single parents. The designers hope that their infill design will promote changes to the building codes and zoning regulations.

The infill dwelling was planned to give people enough privacy, outdoor space and sunlight. The new unit was placed as far as possible from the original home. The unit has a private entry zone and separate outdoor areas that do not overlook one another. The 918 ft² infill was designed to fit at the rear of a 33’ x 120’ lot.

The upper living area is basically an open plan, with daylight on three sides, and with a deck looking away from the main home. On the lower level there is a bedroom between the car ports. The lower bedroom is acoustically and visually protected from the lane by a shallow, glass block framed light court.\(^{28}\) The following axonometric drawing shows the massing of the infill and how it compares and relates to the lot's principal dwelling.

Some people have envisioned the potential of lining a whole block with back alley infill dwellings. Peter Cruikshank thinks that Vancouver should redevelop back lanes in order
to create secondary single-family home streets that have the "mews" character of similar schemes in London and San Francisco.\(^{29}\)

New Urbanism, a new design movement, also makes use of the granny flat in plans for their various development projects. New Urbanism is a phrase coined to encompass the broader principles of various designers and their approach to community design that, while drawing upon sound ideas of the past, is relevant to contemporary issues - it acknowledges the complexity of society and seeks to address pressing issues.\(^{30}\) "What the New Urbanism is really about is community planning and urban design, it is a really good approach for rebuilding cities in general."\(^{31}\)

Peter Calthorpe, one of the founding members of the movement, designed the following affordable house for a narrow lot and included an "in-law" unit over the garage along the rear alley. Rental income from the small apartment may make it possible for a family to buy the front house.


Figure 3: FLOOR PLAN FOR A NARROW LOT INFILL


**B. CMHC’s GARDEN SUITE CONCEPT**
The CMHC has introduced an infill demonstration project which focuses on a housing form that they call a garden suite. The garden suite, according to CMHC, is to be seen as an alternative to institutionalized housing for those elderly Canadians who are capable of living independently as long as they have access to support services.
The CMHC Garden Suite Concept is based on the projected prospects for the growth of the senior aged portion of the Canadian population. “As of 1994, approximately 12 percent of the Canadian population was 65 years of age or older. Taking into account current trends for increasing life expectancies for both men and women, and the nation’s demographic structure, that figure could approach 25 percent by the year 2031.” This projected increase in Canada’s senior population could cause adverse impacts on public expenditures for the elderly. Garden suites, on the other hand, could be an opportunity to reduce public expenditures by creating housing opportunities for senior Canadians who do not require institutional care and can maintain an independent lifestyle.

A garden suite is a self contained dwelling that is installed on a temporary basis as a freestanding unit on a parcel of land where a permanent single-family home has already been located. The garden suite is constructed as a portable one story dwelling with one or two bedrooms, a kitchen, a bathroom and a living room. A unique aspect of the Garden Suite Concept is that the dwelling is intended to occupied by a senior individual or couple who are able to live relatively independently, while the main house on the property would be occupied by relatives of the occupants of the garden suite. The garden suite may also be occupied by those younger than 65 if they are disabled; however, the suite must be occupied by the specific person it was built for.

Existing garden suites have generally been demonstration or pilot projects. However, for regulatory purposes, a recent amendment has been introduced into the Ontario Planning

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32 Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, *The Complete Guide To Garden Suites* (Ottawa:
Act to offer a definition of the term. "A detailed residential structure containing bathroom and kitchen facilities that is ancillary to the existing residential structure, and that is designed to be portable."\(^{33}\) Occupancy restrictions have not been included in the definition since this would contravene Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

C. **RT-1A AND RT-2A ZONING: HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND INFILL**

Vancouver intensification initiatives have often faced the vocal opposition of neighbourhood residents. However, despite this opposition, there are areas of the City that have undergone zoning changes to allow neighbourhoods to implement some of the intensification techniques discussed in this literature review. Some Vancouver examples of infill housing have been built in what were once single-family neighbourhoods.

Infill housing, as a permitted use in some residential areas, was used as an incentive for preserving character homes and streetscapes. The form of infill that emerged, evolved in response to the widespread decline and redevelopment pressures in the inner city conversion areas of Kitsilano, Mount Pleasant and Grandview-Woodlands.\(^{34}\) Most infill developments have taken the form of a detached secondary building added to the rear portion of a lot already containing an existing dwelling. The infill units are designed to look like the surrounding larger older homes.

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\(^{34}\) Ibid., p. 3-2.
\(^{34}\) David Murphy, *Preserving Our Neighbourhoods: Sensitive Infill Housing As A Development Option*, (MA Thesis: UBC - School of Community and Regional Planning, 1994).
The first community to really take advantage of the infill concept was Kitsilano. As Murphy explains, with its proximity to downtown Vancouver and amenities such as beaches, parks and mountain views Kitsilano came under heavy development pressure. Many older homes had begun to deteriorate as land speculators were holding their property in hopes of windfall profits, but residents fearing another West End lobbied against high-rise zoning. This and other issues led to the establishment of a plan for a conversion area.
To reduce development pressure in the area, two new zones (RT-1A and RT-2A) were created in 1977 to encourage building retention by allowing incentives such as infill. RT-1A was to encourage housing suitable for families, while RT-2A promoted housing that was suitable for a diverse population. Floor space ratios (FSR)\(^{35}\) were kept at 0.6 although conversion and infill could lead to conditional approval for 0.75 FSR in RT-2A zones. Infill was encouraged where the existing building on the lot was of architectural or heritage merit and therefore warranted restoration and preservation.

An infill building should be designed in character with the existing home and with the neighbourhood context; it should not create significant adverse effects upon the amenity of neighbouring properties. Overshadowing and overlooking of adjacent active yard space should be minimized; sun penetration to existing and newly created open space should occur daily for significant periods of time throughout the year. There should be minimal shading of existing decks or patios. Existing views should be retained where they are an amenity for neighbouring residents.\(^{36}\)

The infill should not seriously impact the livability of the existing or neighbouring houses. Privacy from all new and existing windows should be respected and useable open spaces at grade should be created for both the new and existing dwellings on the site. Surface parking areas in infill situations should receive special treatment. Garages,

\(^{35}\) A floor space ratio is the ratio obtained when the total floor area of all the floors of the dwelling is divided by the area of the site.

\(^{36}\) City of Vancouver Planning Department, *RT-1A, RT-2A, and RT-5N Guidelines* (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1987).
where provided, should be integrated into the massing of the building. By the early 1980s, parts of West Mount Pleasant and Grandview-Woodlands were also rezoned to RT-1A and RT-2A to encourage the retention of the conversion stock in those areas.

Recently, RT-1A and RT-2A zoning has been replaced with RT-7 and RT-8 guidelines. The intent of these new zoning guidelines is to: a) encourage the retention and renovation of existing buildings, ensuring they maintain an architectural style and form consistent with their original character; b) ensure that new development is compatible with the traditional character of the surrounding street and area; c) ensure neighbourliness; d) maintain high quality design; and e) maintain a range of choice of housing.

A typical example of the infill that has arisen with this form of heritage preservation is a dwelling designed by architect Stuart Howard on West 14th Avenue in upper Kitsilano. The expense of restoring the principal house on this lot, in the 1900-block, a rambling art-and-crafts-style home, was met by adding a 1,500 square foot infill house in a complementary design.

The smaller house is only 16 feet from the larger one, it has its own vista and a terraced walkway to the street. "You don't notice the infill here," says Howard. "It appears like a

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37 Ibid.
cottage in the back yard." Like most infill houses, it has a private entrance, patio garden and takes advantage of Vancouver's lane system that allows back yard garages and rear entrances.

In addition to establishing heritage preservation zones, infill has also been introduced into neighbourhoods that contain large lots. Areas like Riverside, located between the North bank of the Fraser River and SE Marine Drive, with its long narrow lots that range from 30' - 60' in width and 160' - 200' in depth have been rezoned to RS-1B to allow some densification in the form of infill housing while preserving its existing single-family character.

D. VANCOUVER'S THIN HOUSES
Thin houses are the result of small lots or side lot infills. These lots resulted from the creation of half lots early in Vancouver's history when neighbourhoods were being surveyed into 33 foot parcels. Some more affluent buyers decided that 33 feet was not enough for the house they wanted to build so they got together with another buyer of similar mind and bought a third lot; which they divided between them. At that time, no one considered building a house on those 16 or 17 foot slices; they were wanted for an extra large garden or a garage. In October 1985 there was a potential of 480 narrow lots in Vancouver.

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Andrew Crosse built seven thin houses on Vancouver's West Side. "He says the two bedroom homes, although only 905 square feet, felt more like 1,700 square feet inside because they have high ceilings and lots of light."\textsuperscript{42} The seven sold overnight because of the location and the affordable price. "What it allowed was townhouse-style accommodations in a nice, residential neighbourhood."\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p. 1.
Despite its narrow profile and compact living space, the three distinct living levels allows a small household all the privacy they need. Residents say that you forget how thin the house is once you are inside. However, as a result of neighbourhood opposition the RS-1 District Zoning Schedule was amended on January 5 1988 to specify that the minimum width of a site for a one-family dwelling shall be 24 feet. This meant that narrow lots
became undevelopable on their own. In addition, the amendment stopped the subdivision of 50' x 120' lots into a 33' and 17' parcel.

**E. THIN STREETS: THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ENDOWMENT FUND**

Often the simplest solution to a problem escapes the eyes of trained professionals. Luckily, this was not the case for Ted Sebastian and Christian Demarco, two planners with the City of Vancouver. During their daily cycle commute to City Hall, through Vancouver's west side residential neighbourhoods, it became strikingly obvious that, except for arterials, traffic on north/south streets was almost non-existent. Based on this observed use of the streets, the two planners considered modifying a City Plan idea that proposed closing north/south streets to create additional space for recreation.

The Thin Streets Proposal, in its simplest form, suggests narrowing the present 66' right-of-way on north/south streets to 33' and selling or leasing the remaining 33' for new infill housing. The infill housing could be the simple addition of a single-family house at the end of the block, or neighbourhoods could choose to allow other housing types, such as duplexes or townhouses. Demarco and Sebastian suggest that the revenue from the lots could be placed into an endowment fund to be used for neighbourhood improvements.

The Thin Streets Proposal will not constrain present or future infrastructure and services. North/south streets with existing water or sewer lines would be excluded from development. Small gas or underground telephone lines could also be respected or relocated into the remaining right-of-way. Demarco and Sebastian propose that all streets retain at least one travel lane for pedestrians and local automobile traffic. All emergency
vehicles will continue to respond to calls using the fastest and most direct route available. The narrower right-of-way will still allow enough room for a substantial line of trees and a sidewalk on one side of the street. If applied, the Thin Streets Proposal could offer the City of Vancouver a low impact approach to converting the opportunity costs of our over generous street system into additional ground-oriented housing.

Figure 7: THIN STREETS: NARROWING THE RIGHT-OF WAY TO 33’

Figure 7: THIN STREETS: NARROWING THE RIGHT-OF WAY TO 33’

This sketch shows the street and 66 foot right-of-way as it presently is.

This sketch shows the newly created 33 foot road right-of-way and a new home on the newly created 33 foot lot.

Here you can see the typical block layout in Vancouver. The 'x's give examples of where lots can be added.


2.4 REDEVELOPMENT

With the exception of RT-1A and RT-2A zoning, which have had the main objective of heritage preservation, the City of Vancouver has not been very proactive in terms of creating opportunities for additional ground-oriented housing in existing residential areas. The Planning Department of Vancouver, however, has considered a number of proposals to intensify single-family RS-1 neighbourhoods. In fact, Vancouver has a comparatively
long history of planning recommendations for gradual intensification and for the promotion of additional housing opportunities in the city. One of the earliest proposals, Low Density Multiple Dwellings Suitable For RS-1 Areas, provides interesting examples of potential redevelopment schemes for RS-1 sized lots.

A. LOW DENSITY MULTIPLE DWELLINGS SUITABLE FOR RS-1 AREAS

In 1976 Western Research Corporation Limited (WRC) was retained by the Planning Department of the City of Vancouver to:

a. examine the economic implications of allowing low density multiple housing in RS-1 areas, and

b. examine the potential impact of low density multiple housing upon the Vancouver housing market and RS-1 neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{44}

WRC expected that the impact of a policy to introduce low density multiple housing would encourage housing demand to shift from suburban locations to the City of Vancouver. "As the population of the GVRD settles in locations further removed from the city, the increased traffic congestion and the cost of travel will make Vancouver City's redeveloping RS-1 areas more attractive locations."\textsuperscript{45}

While the report's financial analysis is now out of date (Vancouver's housing market and construction costs have changed significantly over the last 20 years), the preliminary site plans contain interesting ideas for the intensification of RS-1 areas through the redevelopment of single-family lots. Similar redevelopment schemes were also part of

\textsuperscript{44} Western Research Corporation Limited, \textit{Potential for and Impact of Low Density Multiple Housing in RS-1 Areas} (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1976) p. 1.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p. 5.
the background paper for *Compact Residential Communities in the Greater Vancouver Regional District*.\(^{46}\)

For the WRC report, Byron Olson Architects provided all study input on the physical implications of low density multiple housing. The sketches produced for the study consider various relaxations of existing zoning requirements. However, the sketches are not to be construed as proposed plans; they are only the examination of the potential for multiple ground-oriented units on common sized Vancouver RS-1 lots. The proposal considers dwelling units that would share side walls with their neighbours.

The dwelling are described as rowhouses, townhouses, or terraced houses, and are a traditional urban solution that dates back to at least medieval times.\(^{47}\) The chief constraint on the rowhouse is the width between the shared walls on either side. Comments from Thin House residents indicate that dwellings with a narrow front can be designed to provide accommodations that are more than adequate. Examples have been provided for lots that measure: 33’ x 120’ and 66’ x 120’. Sketches consider floor space ratios of 0.60 (what is currently allowed in RS-1 zoning) and a potential up-zoning to an FSR of 0.75.

Byron Olson Architects also incorporated underground parking into many of the site plans for their low density multiple dwellings. In the 1970s, this design concept might

\(^{46}\) Bob Burgess, *Background Paper: Compact Residential Communities in the Greater Vancouver Regional District* (Burnaby: GVRD Planning Department, 1974).
have been considered quite futuristic, however, it is now a potential option for even small-time home builders. Small Hitachi excavators are well suited for working on small parcels of land, and concrete pumping systems are now readily available and can be rented. These advances make the construction of underground parking on small residential lots an option that is now worth considering.

I. POTENTIAL FOR A 66’ X 120’ LOT WITH AN FSR OF 0.60
The most common lot size for a single-family dwelling in Vancouver is 33’ x 120’. A recent common practice is to subdivide large 66’ and 99’ lots to allow construction of a detached unit on each 33’ parcel.

The back-to-back townhouses, proposed by Olson, could be constructed on either the consolidation of two side-by-side 33’ lot or one 66’ lot. This proposal would offer five 950 ft\(^2\) units. The dwellings would not be located across the site width since this would only allow a 10.4’ width for each unit. Dwellings would be 2 1/2 stories high and parking would be provided under ground.

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Figure 9: BACK-TO-BACK TOWNHOUSES ON A 66' X 120' LOT

Source: Western Research Corporation Limited, Potential for and Impact of Low Density Multiple Housing in RS-1 Areas, (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1976) p. 75.

II. POTENTIAL FOR 33' X 120' LOT WITH AN FSR OF 0.75

Increasing the FSR to 0.75 enhances the redevelopment potential of all residential lots.

For example, a 33' lot could utilize a clustered townhouse arrangement to create three 990 ft² dwellings or an arrangement of two detached dwellings with 1483 ft² each.
Figure 10: HOUSING OPTIONS FOR A 33' LOT WITH AN FSR OF 0.75


B. GROUND-ORIENTED, MEDIUM-DENSITY HOUSING IN THE GVRD

Regional planning interest in intensification techniques stem from the Livable Region Strategic Plan’s desire to accommodate growth by creating compact ground-oriented housing in its growth concentration areas. In 1996, the GVRD compiled a booklet of photographs and information about a wide range of ground-oriented housing in Greater Vancouver. Most of the projects have been completed in the last few years, although a
few are as much as twenty years old.\textsuperscript{48} The majority of the examples are ground-oriented projects that have been built on large parcels of land and situated on the periphery of single-family neighbourhoods often along arterial roadways. However, there are some examples similar to the small scale redevelopment that the WRC proposed in its 1976 report.\textsuperscript{49} All of the documented examples include the following information: the project address; a general description of the project and its site size; the density in units per acre and (where available) the floor space ratio; the size of individual units; and the parking arrangements.

Additionally in 1996, the GVRD surveyed 606 of its residents to examine attitudes about ground-oriented, medium-density housing.\textsuperscript{50} Ideally most respondents wanted a big house, a view, and a location that was not far from downtown and the ocean. Considering the expense of this vision, respondents agreed that townhouses, duplexes and other forms of ground-oriented, medium-density housing would be a satisfactory compromise. The report found that the most important factor driving both choice of residence, and resistance to increased density, were fears related to unwanted and uncontrollable intrusions from neighbours.\textsuperscript{51} Of those surveyed, 85 percent were willing to accept at least a ten-unit townhouse within three blocks of their residence. Older residents (aged

\textsuperscript{48} Greater Vancouver Regional District, \textit{Examples of Ground-Oriented, Medium-Density Housing Projects in Greater Vancouver} (Burnaby: Strategic Planning Department Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996).

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p. 92-99.

\textsuperscript{50} Greater Vancouver Regional District, \textit{Report on Telephone Survey of GVRD Residents on Attitudes Towards Ground-Oriented, Medium-Density Housing} (Burnaby: Strategic Planning Department Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996).

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., p. 45.
55+) and residents of single-detached homes were significantly less tolerant of increased housing densities.\textsuperscript{52}

With background from its 1996 reports, the GVRD has recently focused on establishing a regulatory environment for ground-oriented, medium-density housing.\textsuperscript{53} Research suggests that the necessary policy and regulatory innovations needed to support an environment for ground-oriented, medium-density housing are already in place in at least one of the GVRD’s municipalities. However, these solutions are not being applied consistently. It appears that the challenge is not one of learning new ways, but rather of broadly applying what is already being done.

The most serious disincentives to these newer forms of ground-oriented housing can be summarized into three issues:

1. The ground-oriented, medium-density message is not getting out clearly, consistently and strongly enough to overcome community resistance to change. This holds true whether the message is being transmitted through OCPs, area and neighbourhood plans, or through the regulatory tools themselves.

2. The approach to zoning and rezoning and the design control tools used in these processes are making it more complex, time consuming and costly to develop ground-oriented, medium-density housing than it need be.

3. Municipal zoning bylaw regulations contain many provisions that discourage ground-oriented, medium-density housing, and put it at a disadvantage to other more traditional housing forms.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., p. 38.
\textsuperscript{53} City Spaces Consulting Ltd., \textit{The Regulatory Environment for Ground-Oriented, Medium-Density Housing Greater Vancouver} (Burnaby: Housing Task Force Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1998).
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 37.
2.5 COMPARING DWELLING YIELDS PER ACRE
Finally, it is important to be able to visualize the increase in ground-oriented housing opportunities that can be accomplished with common intensification efforts. The following examples contrast a standard single lot detached dwelling yield per acre with yields of some of the alternatives housing types that have been introduced in the review of intensification strategies.

Assuming 25 percent of land is used for streets and utilities:

1. A standard single lot residential development would provide 6.6 dwelling units per acre. A standard suburban residential lot is approximately 7,500 square feet.

2. Small single lots in inner city neighbourhoods, created pre-World War II, are approximately 5,000 square feet. A typical smaller lot development would accommodate 10.6 dwelling units per acre.

3. Carriage homes and townhouses/rowhouses are able to accommodate many more households. For example, the carriage homes (with an "in-law" unit) accommodate 16 net homes per acre, while townhouses accommodate 20-22 homes per acre.55

2.6 SUMMARIZING THE INTENSIFICATION TECHNIQUES
There are three main methods of intensification that are appropriate for single-family neighbourhoods.

1. Conversion - Altering an existing dwelling to create an additional dwelling unit. The accessory apartment is the most common conversion. A basement, attic, or guest room in a single-family home can be converted into an accessory apartment. Conversions
provide: i) a rental income for the owner, and/or ii) accommodation for members of the owner’s family or extended family.

2. **Infill** - Constructing a new unit in the side or rear yard of a lot that already contains an existing dwelling. The infill dwelling most appropriate for single-family neighbourhoods is the granny flat. The granny flat is a separate unit that is often built off the lane in the rear yard of an existing house. Variations of this form of infill have been recommended as alternatives to institutionalized housing for Elderly Canadians (CMHC’s Garden Suites) and as means of heritage preservation (RT-1A and RT-2A zoning). Vancouver’s Thin Houses and the Thin Streets Proposal are two additional forms of infill.

3. **Redevelopment** - Building new housing on underutilized sites in an already built-up and serviced area. The low density multiple dwelling site plans prepared by Byron Olson Architects are examples of potential redevelopment schemes for typical RS-1 sized lots. The redevelopment plans provide multiple dwelling alternatives to the detached single-family home.

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CHAPTER III
WHAT THE INTENSIFICATION DEBATE IS ALL ABOUT

The current round of suburban growth is generating a crisis of many dimensions: mounting traffic congestion, increasingly unaffordable housing, receding open space, and stressful social patterns. The truth is, we are using planning strategies that are forty years old and no longer relevant to today's culture. Our household makeup has changed dramatically, the workplace and workforce have been transformed, real wealth has shrunk, and serious environmental concerns have surfaced. But we are still building World War II suburbs as if families were large and had only one bread winner, as if jobs were all downtown, as if land and energy were endless, and as if another lane on the freeway would end congestion.⁵⁶

The existing and past growth patterns in North America have created metropolitan areas that are forced to expand spatially in order to provide for the housing needs of their growing populations. Consider Figure 3.1 which compares population changes between the urbanized core and the surrounding urban and rural areas of Canadian cities for the period of 1986 to 1991. In all cases, the surrounding areas grew at a higher rate than the urbanized cores. However, the growth at the urban fringe, and into previously non-residential areas has been accommodated at a much lower density than in the core.⁵⁷

The growth patterns that occurred between 1986 and 1991 typify where and the way in which most post World War II housing developments have been built. As Calthorpe suggests, North American cities expanded using technologies which assumed that abundant and cheap energy and land would be available forever. These assumptions have influenced the construction of large and spacious homes, fostered an addiction to the

automobile, and increased the separation of the workplace from the home. As a result, urban sprawl became a legacy of these abundant energy resources and the widespread belief of an individual right to the unrestricted use of a private automobile, whatever the social costs and externalities.

Figure 11: COMPARING GROWTH IN CANADIAN CITIES

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Data Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogues no. 93-303 and 93-304

The Costs of Sprawl is a well known study that examined the costs of various development patterns in six communities. Using engineering estimates, the study included capital and operating costs of utilities, including water supply, sewers, storm drains, and soft services including police, fire and schools. The study found that sprawl is the most expensive form of residential development in terms of economic costs,
environmental costs, natural resource consumption, and many types of personal costs. The cost differences are particularly significant for the portion of total costs which are likely to be borne by municipal governments. It can be said that the costs of sprawl affects us all and ultimately we will all pay.

People across North America are becoming more concerned about the detrimental effects caused by sprawl. Their initial emotional response is to simply stop growth in the cities that are experiencing expanding populations. However, stopping the growth of a city is almost impossible and is economically unhealthy. The issue is not growth per se, but where and how the growth should take place. Planners have been considering more sustainable ways to accommodate growth, and residential intensification techniques have been suggested as one method of creating compact development patterns out of existing neighbourhoods. "Compact development means less pavement, shorter pipes, less maintenance, less distance to travel, and shorter journeys to work." By focusing on resettling core cities and densifying new and existing edge cities on the urban periphery, planners hope to reverse the growth patterns of sprawl and its corresponding social, economic and environmental implications.

The problem of accommodating a growing population is particularly onerous for the City of Vancouver. In 1994 the Greater Vancouver Regional District’s (GVRD) Livable

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59 Ibid.
The Region Strategic Plan asked Vancouver to absorb 160,000 more people by 2021 in an effort to help reduce the consequences of continued urban sprawl in the region. The City will have to add about 100,000 housing units in order to meet these projections. Two-thirds of this housing growth will be satisfied by projects the City has already approved. The GVRD feels that Vancouver also needs more ground-oriented housing to meet the needs of the region’s growing population.\textsuperscript{61}

Where and how this additional housing is to be accommodated in Vancouver is the subject of a lively debate. Planners generally agree that a good strategy is to use intensification techniques within the City’s existing single-family neighbourhoods. Unfortunately, the strategy is often faced with considerable resistance from the residents of these neighbourhoods. The resistance is not just found in Vancouver; it is evident wherever and whenever residential intensification is suggested. The remainder of this chapter will look at the benefits that can be achieved through intensification and, conversely, the concerns that existing residents may have about intensification efforts in their neighbourhoods.

3.1 THE BENEFITS OF INTENSIFICATION TECHNIQUES
There are a number of benefits that arise through the intensification of single-family neighbourhoods. The following are those that are considered to have the greatest potential impact.

\textsuperscript{61} City of Vancouver, \textit{Making Choices} (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1994), p. 6.
A. Alleviates the detrimental impacts of sprawl.
John Archer admirably states the main reasons why planners think that the intensification of existing residential areas is an appropriate response to the consequences created by sprawling development patterns.

A substantial public investment is recognized in existing urban services (water, sewers, garbage collection, police, schools and libraries, for example). In many municipalities this infrastructure is not being used to its capacity: a much larger population could be served with little or no increase in municipal expenditures or reduction in the quality of service. An increase in population in an area through new development could also mean greater efficiencies for public transit systems. 62

In Vancouver, the creation of additional ground-oriented housing in the settled urban areas will ultimately reduce the pressure to continue establishing ground-oriented housing further and further out into the Fraser Valley. The typical single-family home is too wasteful of land. What we must do is concentrate on forms of residential design that makes more efficient use of land. Efforts must be made to plan for growth while the existing quality of life in the region is maintained. Vancouver must manage its precious land resource, or it will ultimately face the destruction of the very features that made this region so attractive in the first place. 63

B. Provides a more diversified housing stock.
Cities were once planned to accommodate a society of greater cultural and economic homogeneity. However, we now have a more complex society that contains a wider variety of households and a population that is more economically stratified than it was in the past. Unfortunately, as a result, the available housing opportunities do not reflect the needs of all the households that exist in the present day.

The misfit between buildings and household sizes represent both problems and opportunities. One elderly woman complained "I don't want to spend my golden years cleaning three bathrooms." Patrick Hare suggests that the dream of a large detached single-family house may be fading for people who recognize the new needs of some households. For example, many sociologists have observed that the elderly often do not choose to move from their homes, even when their health or financial situation becomes precarious; many elderly cannot bear the psychological losses associated with losing ties to their dwellings and communities. While some older residents do leave the community to find appropriate housing, many remain in their old community in a house that is too big and expensive for them to maintain.

Less than one-quarter of people move when they become seniors. Of those seniors that move, 76% move less than 50 kilometres to smaller homes, which are often closer to other family members. However, as single land use postwar suburbs mature, planners are becoming increasingly aware of the lack of enabling physical environments for the elderly in those neighbourhoods. Planners think that the establishment of intensification techniques that focus on accommodation for seniors will provide a way to better integrate an aging population into communities which have not been designed for the purpose of

66 Bob Burgess, Background Paper: Compact Residential Communities in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (Burnaby: GVRD Planning Department, 1974), p.11.
agining in place. One such intensification technique is the CMHC’s Garden Suite program.

The Garden Suite program is just one of the intensification ideas that make it possible for older residents to move out of their single-family homes without leaving the neighbourhood. Through the assessment of demonstration garden suite developments in Ontario the following benefits were identified:

- Facilitates the provision of support, companionship and security for elderly occupants while allowing both households continued independence.
- Provides a healthy aging environment that may delay or preclude the need for institutionalization.
- Since host families provide care for the elderly there will be the potential for reduced community services and may forestall the need for accommodation in homes for the aged or for nursing homes.
- Will free up under utilized housing as seniors move to smaller more appropriately sized units.

C. Enhances safety and provides income for homeowners.

A survey conducted by Patrick Hare of 200 residents in three communities explored the advantages and the disadvantages of accessory apartments. Hare’s study found that added income, security, companionship, exchange of services, and the opportunity for the elderly to age in place were the factors most often seen as obvious benefits. Survey respondents thought that accessory apartments worked well for both parties.

Those interviewed felt that accessory apartments were a good source of inexpensive housing for young and old and the rents provided a source of income for the homeowner.

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69 Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, The Complete Guide To Garden Suites (Ottawa: Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation, 1995).
The presence of tenants was felt to provide security from crime, decrease the potential danger of accidents when alone, and perhaps most importantly, alleviate the fear of damage to the house when the homeowner was away. Services like shoveling walks and raking leaves benefited the homeowner. On the other hand, homeowners were often asked to baby-sit for their tenants.

Companionship was a clear benefit for some homeowners and tenants, but lack or privacy was the most frequently cited problem. Privacy concerns did not appear to significantly reduce the general satisfaction with having or occupying an accessory apartment. As assessed by homeowners and tenants, impacts to the neighbourhoods' quality was felt to be minimal and no major parking problem were experienced. Approximately half the respondents felt that accessory apartments improved their neighbourhoods.70

D. Creates interesting and enjoyable neighbourhoods.
Jane Jacob's said that "the greatest flaw in the city zoning is that it permits monotony. Diversity is necessary to create good living environments, diversity cannot flourish under the rigid decree of most zoning ordinances."71 However, most modern land use regulations appear predicated on the idea that there is something incompatible about accommodating people in different housing types. Luckily some good examples of diversified neighbourhoods were created prior to the constraints of exclusionary land use regulations. A good example of the benefits of a diverse neighbourhood comes from the past experience of Philip Langdon.

70 Patrick Hare, Linda Hollis and David Guttman, *Accessory Apartments: A New Housing Option For The Elderly Homeowner* (Catholic University of America, 1984).
As a young newspaper reporter, Philip Langdon and his wife lived in Buffalo on the second floor of what is known in that city as a two-flat. The two-flat is a two family, 2 1/2 story house, which was built in great numbers in the early decades of the 20th century in the North East and the Great Lakes regions. Cities such as New Haven, Buffalo, and Cleveland and their suburbs are full of these two family houses, which are often intermixed with detached houses and an occasional apartment building. In Langdon’s opinion, areas that contain two-flats mixed with single-family dwellings and the occasional 4 to 6 unit apartment building are areas that establish highly agreeable neighbourhoods.72

These ideas are now being replicated by new developments whose designers subscribe to the belief that interesting and lively neighbourhoods are more likely to occur when there is an intimate mixture of types of housing - detached houses, duplexes, row houses and apartments. New Urbanists, Duany and Plater-Zyberk (DPZ) believe that even apartments can be compatible with detached houses if the shape and scale of the apartment buildings resemble those of individual houses.73

In Kentlands, a DPZ development, most of the dwellings are townhouse; the rest are detached houses. "A small three bedroom townhouse in the middle of the block sells for about half the price of a five bedroom detached house on the corner. This does not mean the poor will live cheek by jowl with the rich, but it does enable the block to

73 Ibid., p.167.
accommodate people with different sizes of families, different budgets, different ages - a broader mix than is usually found in brand new suburban developments."\textsuperscript{74}

A Vancouver area survey examined a subdivision that contained a mix of duplexes and single-family homes.\textsuperscript{75} Residents commented favourably on this mixture of homes and they felt that it broke up the monotony that is so apparent in many other subdivisions. The resulting variety was seen as a desirable feature and one of the reasons for selecting a unit in the neighbourhood. Champlain Heights, another Vancouver development, demonstrates the compatibility of multiplex and single-family dwellings achieved through careful design and respect for scale.\textsuperscript{76}

\textbf{E. Establishes a neighbourhood endowment fund.}
If the Thin Streets proposal (narrowing the present 66' right-of-way on north/south streets to 33' and selling the remaining 33' for new housing) was to be implemented, what would make it attractive to community residents is that it operates as an endowment fund that offers a new source of revenue to residents and local government. The additional lots created by the intensification scheme could be a revenue source for the special initiatives considered by individual neighbourhoods. In a study area that extends from Alma to Arbutus and from 10th Avenue to 16th Avenue, Demarco and Sebastian found that there were 65 lots with no constraints and 15 lots with minor service constraints. A conservative estimate for the value of these 80 easily released lots is - \((80 \times \$300,000 = \text{?})\)

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{74} Ibid., p.138.
\item \textsuperscript{75} Cornerstone Planning Group Limited, \textit{Survey of Resident Attitudes: Glen Robertson Subdivision Duplexes} (Burnaby: GVRD Planning Department, 1978).
\item \textsuperscript{76} Thompson, Berwick, Pratt and Partners, \textit{Successful Examples of Neighbourhood Infill - A Housing Opportunity} (Vancouver: Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1973), p. 24.
\end{itemize}
$24 million. Demarco and Sebastian think that the key to the neighbourhood support of their proposal will be the neighbourhood control over the endowment fund.77

3.2 WHY RESIDENTS OPPOSE INTENSIFICATION EFFORTS
In 1986 the Vancouver Planning Department conducted a survey to find out what happens after a higher density development becomes part of a single-family neighbourhood.78 Six higher density developments, built in Vancouver's single-family neighbourhoods, were studied. The developments ranged from a Thin House built on a 16 foot frontage to a 161 unit apartment building. When higher density housing is proposed in a single-family neighbourhood, existing residents become quite apprehensive about potential negative impacts. This Planning Department study examines whether the pre-construction fears of existing residents are realized. After reviewing the concerns of the residents, these concepts were identified for study: People, Environment and Economics.

A. People
A frequently raised question was who and how many people will move into the neighbourhood. Some residents worry that the new neighbours will have different life styles and little commitment to the community.79 The survey found that many of the residents of the larger projects were older people who had raised a family in the area. These residents wanted to remain in the neighbourhood but preferred smaller dwelling units that had greater security and lower maintenance. New residents also included young singles and couples who had been raised in the area.

78 Vancouver Planning Department, New Neighbours: How Vancouver's Single-Family Residents Feel About Higher Density Housing (Vancouver: Vancouver Planning Department, 1986).
The respondents were seen to have little awareness of who actually lives in the new developments. They feel that the new residents have different lifestyles and are not the "family people" that are predominant in the area. This judgment seems to be largely made on the basis that the housing form or tenure is different.\(^79\)

**B. Environment**
The fear that the project will generate too much traffic and create parking problems on adjacent streets was present in all of the study sites. Less frequently, neighbours identified certain specific potential impacts such as infringement of privacy, loss of sun, or view.\(^81\) After living near higher density developments, what do neighbours say about these environmental impacts?

The study hoped to find that single-family neighbours would, overtime, accept new higher density housing. What was found was that among adjacent residents, who had lived in the area prior to the development, the resentment generated by the proposal for redevelopment did not die down with the passage of time. There was little difference in the intensity of their opposition to the Thin House and to the larger apartment developments. Both felt that their property had been permanently affected in spite of the design efforts to reduce the impacts. Countering this was the observation that people who live a short distance from the project, though they may have voiced pre-construction concerns, report that now the project has little or no effect on them. Adjacent neighbours

\(^{79}\) Ibid., p. 5.  
\(^{80}\) Ibid., p. 6.  
\(^{81}\) Ibid., p. 7.
who had moved in after the project was built also had less objection to it, understandably so otherwise they would not have chosen their current home.\textsuperscript{82}

The most common reason given for the resistance to legalizing accessory apartments was the belief that conversion would change the nature of single-family neighbourhoods.\textsuperscript{83}

Just how neighbourhoods will be changed is not clear, however, and maybe that's the problem. According to Hare, for many single-family homeowners the neighbourhood in which they live is very important because home ownership has paid off financially beyond most homeowners' best dreams. Their house is often their largest asset and any change in zoning regulations creates a fear of loss in both quality of life and finances. As a result, reasons will be found to oppose any change that does not come with a guarantee that the change is a change for the better.

Hare sites a survey conducted by the Tri-State Regional Planning Commission that found an irrational element to many of the concerns that were raised against conversion. When the survey asked resident respondents how they had located conversions, only one out of 186 respondents felt that increased traffic indicated the location of houses that had accessory apartments. Nevertheless, the second most frequent complaint about accessory suites was that they increased traffic. "This apparent discrepancy indicates that

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 14.

\textsuperscript{83} Patrick Hare, Susan Conner and Dwight Meriam, \textit{Accessory Apartments: Using Surplus Space in Single-Family Houses} (Chicago: Planning Advisory Services, 1981), p. 3.
homeowners who are anxious about accessory apartments will find reasons to oppose them even if they are not borne out by the facts."

In the late 1980s Vancouver's City Hall heard so many complaints about secondary suites that the issue became somewhat of a staple of the City Council's agenda. In a review of these complaints, Stanbury and Todd found that many of the concerns were the same as those found in Patrick Hare's studies on accessory apartments. The main concern was that suites in RS-1 areas, whether legal or illegal, contradict the fundamental character of RS-1 zoning, namely that it consists of a detached house containing a single-family. RS-1 areas are not supposed to contain dwellings with multiple residential units.

C. Economics
For most people their home is their largest investment and there are concerns about whether the project will decrease the desirability of their property and hence its value. The City of Vancouver study could not find any factual documentation of a decline in property values when they examined property assessment statements. It is also clear that proximity to the new higher density developments has had little or no effect on the overall pattern of change in ownership or tenure in the respective study areas.

The fear of lower property values is often used as a reason to oppose intensification. Patrick Hare has found that many residents believe that accessory apartment ordinances will adversely affect property values. "There are few available facts on the subject, other

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84 Ibid., p.3.
than the lack of significant change in property values reported in towns that have ordinances.\textsuperscript{86} Hare argues that an accessory apartment ordinance is unlikely to make property values decline. In Hare's opinion, if a house has the potential of bringing in an additional rental income, it is worth more.\textsuperscript{87}

The Western Research Corporation found that it would be unlikely for RS-1 properties adjacent to redeveloped or redeveloping properties to experience any decrease in market value. On the other hand, property values will experience increases when the market perceives a particular area is ready for redevelopment. "Zoning is in essence a restrictive measure. While zoning can prevent market forces from materializing, it cannot create market forces which do not otherwise exist.\textsuperscript{88} Rezoning RS-1 properties will only result in redevelopment if consumers are desirous of the new product allowed. To the extent that market demand does exist, redevelopment will begin to occur. The Western Research Corporation thinks that low density multiple housing may also be a vehicle for rejuvenating older, decaying neighbourhoods, but cautions that this could lead to the removal of the lowest priced housing and could increase speculation in the market that might lead to a deterioration of the housing stock that may not have otherwise taken place.\textsuperscript{89}

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} Western Research Corporation Limited, \textit{Potential for and Impact of Low Density Multiple Housing in RS-1 Areas} (Vancouver: City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1976), p. 62.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., p. 10-11.
Many of the individuals involved in the development process think that zoning has failed to adequately regulate land use. However, even after several decades of criticism by academics and practitioners "zoning still enjoys wide popular support, largely because it has always been an effective means of discouraging change. To no one's surprise, zoning is perhaps most popular with those who live in single-family, detached homes, the land use that zoning protects most fiercely." Zoning is politically important as well. Local public officials know that voters look to zoning as a key means of protecting the value of their homes and the closely guarded character of their communities. By examining zoning history it is easy to see how single-family zoning attained its sacred value, and alternatively, why the validity of single-family zoning is now an increasingly debated issue.

As early as the 19th century, communities in the United States used their police power to promote the public interest by regulation and segregation of residential and other land uses. As Edward Ziegler explains, the concept was a simple one - keep the "pig out of the parlor" (or neighbourhood) by exercising local police power through general ordinances rather than by proceeding on the more difficult case-by-case public nuisance basis. Under the theory of protecting public health and safety, tenement housing was often prohibited in single-family areas.

In 1926 the concept of comprehensive zoning received constitutional approval in the
United States’ Supreme Court decision in *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*
The ruling in the case was in favour of the municipality’s right to prevent a property owner
from using land for purposes other than those for which it had been zoned; the Court
established the power of local government to "abate a nuisance". The latter, the Court
ruled, could be defined very broadly to include anything affecting the general welfare of a
residential area. As a result, zoning quickly came to be used to exclude not only
undesirable land uses from residential areas but also (by establishing large minimum lot
sizes or dwelling sizes) undesirable people.

Single-family housing was seen to have the least potential for rental income of all private
land uses, and was thought to be the least able to compete in an unregulated land market.
However, planners, the courts and public officials saw single-family residential areas as
worthy of special protection because of the vital socialization functions of family life and
neighbourhoods. An additional justification for exclusive single-family districts was
that it was an attempt to ensure that every dwelling in the district was not only occupied
but also owned by a single household. Planners thought that owner-occupancy, as a
dominant housing tenure for all classes, would ensure that homeowners would take a
stake and an interest in the immediate and in the broader community.

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94 Martin Gellen, *Accessory Apartments in Single-Family Housing* (Rutgers: State University of
The exclusive single-family zoning district was explicitly intended to foster a purified environment which protected children from interaction with the wider world of adult life. Gellen thinks that accessory apartments represented, to many individuals, a deviation from the traditional image of housing, family and neighbourhood. Accessory apartments symbolize a change in the way the single-family home is used and the change clashed with the traditional meanings attached to single-family zoning. "Accessory apartments were once considered a reliable indicator of blight. They were found only in marginal single-family neighbourhoods that showed signs of deterioration and decline. The perception is difficult to alter, despite the presence of conversions in many stable and well maintained neighbourhoods."\(^{95}\)

It is interesting to note that while *Euclid v. Ambler* established comprehensive zoning practices, it did not uphold the municipality's authority to create exclusive single-family residential districts. The central question in *Euclid v. Ambler* was whether low density residential districts should exclude apartment buildings as well as commercial and industrial uses. Even though *Euclid v. Ambler* has been cited as a precedent, the case did not address the creation of exclusive single-family neighbourhoods. "It did not uphold their (the municipality's) authority to exclude two family houses, for the court did not class these with apartment buildings as coming close to being nuisances."\(^{96}\)

While cases have seemed to equate two family dwellings with apartment buildings, there has been one notable exception. The exception was *Miller v. Board of Public Works*, a

\(^{95}\) Ibid., p. 6.
case also often quoted as justification for exclusive single-family districts.97 While suggesting that there might be good reason to exclude two family dwellings from single-family areas, Miller v. Board of Public Works failed to indicate what they were. Instead it was argued that two family homes were comparable to single-family homes in terms of building form and scale, and were a type of housing that did not change the character of the neighbourhood. Gellen is not surprised by this lack of clarity in early court decisions on the issue of exclusion of two family dwellings from single-family neighbourhoods, and points to the fact that the two family house was a common feature of the residential landscape of turn of the century suburbia.98 Unfortunately the constitutionality of exclusive single-family neighbourhoods have never been settled in the courts. The Supreme Court’s decision in Euclid v. Ambler brought an end to attempts by the courts to articulate a rational basis for single-family zoning; the rationale for exclusive single-family districts was taken to be self evident.99

The logic that single-family zoning was originally justified as a method of promoting an increase in home ownership opportunities was the result of the limitations of the system of property law in the early 20th century. As the structure of households changed new forms of tenure and householdings emerged. By the 1960s with the advent of rules for regulating airspace rights and the perfection of condominium ownership it was possible

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96 Ibid., p.117.
97 Miller v. Board of Public Works of the City of Los Angeles, 195 Cal 477, 234 P 381 (1925).
for a broad scale fractionalized owner-occupancy of multiple unit buildings. As a result, the traditional relationships between households, dwelling types, tenure and lifestyle are unraveling. Gellen cautions that conversions like accessory apartments are less a downgrading of the American Dream than an adaptation to new dimensions of family, of householding, and of housing need.

David Hulchanski sees the concern that accessory apartments destroy neighbourhoods as a veil for the following words: discrimination, exclusion and neighbourhood protectionism. Hulchanski thinks that the exclusion of certain types of housing from neighbourhoods is an attempt to preserve the low density enclaves of the single-family home. Hulchanski has termed this protectionism "residential apartheid" to indicate a human rights issue, and show that zoning is being used to exclude people rather than uses. In Hulchanski's opinion, the greatest barrier to making better use of residential land is social rather than technical, it concerns who will be the residents of the new units.

The accessory apartment offers a way to make ownership of existing homes more affordable for first time buyers and long term owners who need the additional income from an apartment to help maintain their properties. By creating a mix of housing types in low density neighbourhoods, an accessory apartment can also provide a supply of transitional housing arrangements for people when they pass through difficult transitions in life, such as divorce, marital separation, and coming of age. The opportunity to

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100 Ibid., p.121.
101 Ibid., p.127.
exchange services with tenants often substitutes for social supports that were provided by the extended family in earlier generations.\textsuperscript{103}

There are residents of exclusive single-family neighbourhoods who realize that they may benefit from the intensification of their community. The opposition to intensification comes from concerned residents who think that they are being unfairly asked to face individual costs and risks in order to provide benefits and opportunities for people from outside their neighbourhood. Perhaps, as these concerned residents begin to understand the potential benefits that they may realize from accessory apartments and other intensification techniques, the dream of a large home on a large lot will hopefully become a less important goal and exclusive single-family neighbourhoods will be seen as an atavistic endeavour to be avoided. However, as the following case study will show, the sacred quality of the single-family neighbourhood continues to provide the reasoning for resistance to intensification efforts. Chapter IV will evaluate the rationale for the residents’ arguments against rezoning a half block parcel of land in a RS-1 neighbourhood.

\textsuperscript{103} Martin Gellen, \textit{Accessory Apartments in Single-Family Housing} (Rutgers: State University of New Jersey, 1985), p. 127.
CHAPTER IV
A CASE STUDY:
EXAMINING THE OPPOSITION TO THE O'HAGAN REZONING

4.1 PURPOSE
The purpose of this case study is to examine and evaluate the concerns and arguments residents have about the potential consequences of allowing the O'Hagan land parcel to be rezoned for a density higher than present RS-1 zoning allows. The concerns and arguments will be evaluated in order to determine whether they are valid or merely preconceived beliefs that are not borne out by the facts.

4.2 THE O'HAGAN SITE: HISTORY, LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION
The O'Hagan site, a vacant half block parcel of land in Vancouver’s West Point Grey, has an interesting history. Purchased from the Crown in 1911 by Lawrence O'Hagan during the time that the first houses were being built in the neighbourhood, the site has remained in his family for three generations. Lawrence initially established a small orchard on the site but when his son, a successful lawyer, took control of the land the orchard was left to grow wild. Thus, for the last thirty years, the O'Hagan property has been unused. The lawyer's son, Fred, now has control and he is pushing for CD-1 zoning in order to create a special design for the site that would not be allowed under the existing RS-1 zoning regulations.

The O'Hagan property is located in West Point Grey (WPG), the westernmost neighbourhood in Vancouver (downtown is a 10 minute drive by car). Though on the edge of Vancouver, the neighbourhood is by no means peripherally situated. The UBC
campus, the second largest activity generator in the Vancouver region, lies directly west of WPG, across the Pacific Spirit Park. The O'Hagan site is half a block from Trimble Park, Queen Mary School is immediately north of the park (Jericho Beach and the Pacific Spirit Park are within easy walking distance). Additionally, the O'Hagan property is close to the Upper West 10th Avenue commercial district and the 10th and 4th Avenue bus routes. The commercial district is a three block strip between Tolmie and Discovery Street that contains a number of shops, services and professional offices.

Figure 12: THE WEST POINT GREY STUDY AREA

Bordered on the west by Sasamat Street, the O'Hagan site takes up the western half of the 4400 Block West 8th and 9th. The land parcel is 330' x 250' and slopes gradually from west to east. Under present RS-1 zoning regulations the O'Hagan site could be divided into 22 single-family 30' lots built at an FSR of 0.60. An active neighbourhood residents' association is committed to retaining RS-1 zoning in this part of WPG; it has been very vocal in opposition to the rezoning proposal for the O'Hagan site.
4.3 THE WPG NEIGHBOURS
West Point Grey has a very politically active and community minded citizenry. In 1992 the directors of the West Point Grey Residents' Association (WPGRA) resolved that the neighbourhood residents needed to start planning for the future of their community. At the end of an inclusive planning process, and with the help of a provincial government grant, the West Point Grey Healthy Neighbourhood Plan was completed in August 1994. While the plan is of no force or effect, it expresses the desires and aspirations of a broad range of community residents regarding how their community should change and develop. The policies and goal statements that relate to the development of the O'Hagan site include:

- Pedestrian safety and the calming of traffic on side streets in WPG should be promoted.
- Most residents of WPG like the character of their neighbourhood and do not wish to see it change much with respect to appearance, life style, population density or economic status. Nevertheless, there is seen to be a need to permit a wider diversity of housing types in order to allow residents to age in place.
- Limited zoning changes should be considered if they permit accommodations that address a greater variety of residential needs. Zoning changes should only be made when they are approved by the community.
- Non-traditional housing options that may help to achieve the above goals should be identified. e.g. thin houses, infill housing, rowhouses, or shared accommodations for seniors and others.
- New construction and exterior renovation should conform sympathetically with the style, scale and character of the surrounding street, block, and neighbourhood.  

4.4 THE O'HAGAN DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL
As of this writing, the plan for the O'Hagan property has faced two community meetings (February 24, 1998 and June 11, 1998) and architect Roger Hughes has been encouraged by City Planning Staff to consider options which respond to residents’ concerns. The site plan has evolved since 1996 and now includes "house like" duplexes and triplexes that
reflect the traditional neighbourhood character. Two small scale apartment buildings (10 and 14 units) are also located on the site.

Figure 13: A DESIGN OPTION FOR THE O'HAGAN SITE

The height of the duplex and triplex buildings will be 35', and the two apartments will be 41' in height. The present outright height allowance for RS-1 zoning is 30'; the discretionary height allowance is 35'. The proposed FSR will be increased from the RS-1 maximum of 0.60 to a site specific CD-1 FSR of 1.05. All buildings have been designed to minimize overshadowing both within and beyond the site. The apartments are designed to accommodate aging in place and should help to allow seniors to remain in the

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105 This is the site plan that was presented during the February 24, 1998 meeting. Architect Roger Hughes conducted meetings with a committee appointed by the WPGRA and also held two neighbourhood information meetings prior to the February 24th open house and public information meeting.
community. A variety of units will allow "house rich / cash poor" seniors to downsize from their present single-family homes. Additionally, all parking will be placed underground in an effort to reduce the visual impact of the automobile.106

4.5 THE WPGRA’S ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE O’HAGAN REZONING
The following are the main arguments that the WPGRA has against the O’Hagan rezoning proposal. The arguments were prepared for the February 24, 1998 public meeting.

1. In June 1997 the WPGRA financed a survey that was sent to every household in West Point Grey. The result was that 86% of respondents favoured the retention of RS-1 zoning for the O’Hagan property. With this result and votes taken at the general meetings of the WPGRA, the Association feels that it can claim that the residents of WPG have decisively indicated, on several occasions, that they favour the retention of RS-1 zoning with respect to the O’Hagan site. The WPGRA states that if the O’Hagan proposal is to qualify as a Neighbourhood Housing Demonstration Project a measure of public support must be present. Their claim is that the necessary support is obviously lacking for the O’Hagan property.

2. The WPGRA thinks that the O’Hagan rezoning will establish a precedence for the 540 absentee holdings in WPG. They fear that once the O’Hagan site breaks the RS-1 zoning envelope, other applications will be certain to follow

106 The information about the site proposal has been provided by Fred O’Hagan’s Home Investments Ltd.
3. The O'Hagan proposal entails underground parking for 110 cars. The only entrance/exit for the vehicles would be located on 8th Avenue which is a heavily used cycle route to and from UBC. The WPGRA claims that the large number of vehicles entering and leaving the underground parking through the cycle route on 8th Avenue would constitute a disaster waiting to happen.

4. Within two blocks of the O'Hagan site are four school crossings for two schools and Trimble Park; all are located on 8th Avenue. In the WPGRA's opinion, the significant number of vehicles going to and coming from the O'Hagan site would present a very hazardous situation.

5. The WPGRA thinks that the 4500 Block West 10th Avenue would be a much better location for the type of development suggested by the O'Hagan proposal. The Safeway property is owned by Mutual Life Insurance Company and will be available for redevelopment within 20 years. The WPGRA cites the City Plan idea that neighbourhood centers should be developed on established commercial routes as support for their location suggestion. By comparison, the O'Hagan property is viewed by the WPGRA as sitting at the very center of the RS-1 neighbourhood.

6. The WPGRA submits that there are ample opportunities for densification that do not invade areas that are strictly residential. In their opinion, the Jericho Lands, the Safeway property, the commercial strip from Tolmie to Discovery Street and the UBC housing
developments are areas which will allow for densification without infringing upon residential property.

7. Architect Roger Hughes describes the O'Hagan project as an opportunity for WPG seniors to age in place. The WPGRA feels that the structures that have been proposed are totally unsuited to the needs of seniors. In the WPGRA's view, it would be difficult to justify the rezoning on the basis of its suitability for aging in place.

8. The WPGRA finally states that single-family zoning provides for a way of life that holds great meaning for the people of the WPG neighbourhood. It is for this reason that residents choose to pay the heavy premium that is entailed in living here. As long as the residents of this neighbourhood are willing to pay this premium the City must respect the wishes of the vast majority.

4.6 EVALUATING THE WPGRA's ARGUMENTS
1. The WPGRA claims that opinion polls show that the residents of WPG have decisively indicated, on several occasions, that they are not in favour of the rezoning proposal for the O'Hagan property. Early in the rezoning process (December 1995) City Planning Officials requested that the developer consult with the community through the WPGRA before making a rezoning application. A sub-committee of the WPGRA was asked to provide input into the proposed development and to solicit the opinion of the neighbours. At this time the WPGRA claimed to be entirely neutral and did not endorse either RS-1 zoning or a zoning change. The sub-committee viewed its function as:
1. Ensuring that a public review process is developed which includes the near neighbours and the broader WPG community.

2. Seeing that community values as expressed in the West Point Grey Healthy Neighbourhood Plan are incorporated into the proposal.

However, the WPGRA did not retain a neutral stance for long. Some WPGRA members formed the Save RS-1 Committee to oppose the rezoning, and the Committee then went on to win control of the WPGRA. The WPGRA was under this influence when the opinion poll was administered to the WPG residents. The opinion poll addressed a straightforward question to WPG residents: Are you willing to consider a change in zoning of the O'Hagan property from RS-1 to CD-1? Unfortunately, with the poll, the WPGRA included a letter from one of their directors that strongly criticized the O'Hagan proposal and stated the results of past WPGRA opinion polls on the subject (See Appendix).

The WPGRA claims that they received a response of approximately 30%, but the presence of the letter in the opinion poll package could have seriously impacted the validity of the poll. For WPG residents who were not fully informed about the O'Hagan proposal, the content of the enclosed letter would certainly establish a negative attitude to any rezoning proposal for the site. A Housing Action Group member reported that the Save RS-1 Committee supporters stacked WPGRA meetings. The Housing Action Group member said. "You may now hear that 70 per cent of the community is opposed,

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108 A resident committee that grew out of the process that developed the West Point Grey Healthy Neighbourhood Plan. They have stated that they have not taken a side on the rezoning issue.
but it's 70 per cent of the people who attend (association) meetings."\textsuperscript{109} Additionally, mail surveys results have been shown to be very biased. "Often only individuals opposed to development will be motivated to fill out the survey form."\textsuperscript{110}

From the start of the rezoning controversy, the neighbourhood has been bombarded with flyers that proclaim in big bold letters \textbf{STOP THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT 8TH AND SASAMAT STREET}. Those residents that support RS-1 zoning are very vocal and have turned out in full force to attend the O'Hagan community meetings. The RS-1 supporters continue to control the WPGRA. The WPGRA is now headed by a resident who lives directly across from the O'Hagan site. The WPGRA president accuses planners of being "philosophically in the pocket" of the developer, and of ignoring the WPGRA.\textsuperscript{111}

The public meetings have had many people speak out in favour of the O'Hagan proposal, but they are not as vocal or as organized as those who support RS-1 zoning. The individuals that support rezoning can envision the benefits of adding a variety of housing opportunities in the neighbourhood, while RS-1 supporters have a decidedly different agenda and outlook. At the open house to discuss the O'Hagan plan past WPGRA president commented: "Where are the social benefits for the neighbourhood? This will shadow my back patio as well as several others from all the morning sunlight. I've been

accused of being almost a terrorist for defending single-family zoning," added the former association president. "It is an endangered species and should be protected."\(^{112}\)

2. The WPGRA thinks that the O'Hagan rezoning will establish a precedence for the absentee holdings in the neighbourhood. While there may be a number of absentee holdings in WPG, there are none the size of the O'Hagan site. Any other redevelopment scheme would occur on significantly smaller sites and would respect the scale of its surroundings to the degree that current RS-1 zoning would. The O'Hagan site would undoubtedly establish the precedence that duplexes and triplexes are dwellings that are compatible with single-detached houses in size, scale, and function.

3. The WPGRA is afraid that the large number of vehicles entering and leaving the O'Hagan through the cycle route on 8th Avenue would constitute a disaster waiting to happen. The entrance/exit onto 8th Avenue is a site specific concern. Accidents will not happen if cyclists and those entering and exiting the O'Hagan development respect the intersection at 8th Avenue. The O'Hagan proposal suggests that no-parking areas be created on 8th Avenue to give cyclists and motorists improved lines of vision at the entry to the development. Additionally, traffic on this block of 8th Avenue could be slowed by adding a stop sign on 8th Avenue at Sasamat Street.

\(^{112}\) Ibid., p. 12.
4. The WPGRA is concerned that the vehicles from the O'Hagan development will significantly add to neighbourhood traffic. However, the 110 cars are not all going to be driven at the same time and their combined impact will be minimal at best. A traffic study conducted by Traffic Engineers N. D. Lea Associates concluded that additional traffic generated by the O'Hagan development as it is currently proposed will be insignificant.\textsuperscript{113} If there are concerns about school crossings the most obvious solution is to slow traffic on 8th Avenue and reduce its attractiveness to commuters that travel to and from UBC. The installation of stop signs at Discovery and at Sasamat Street would undoubtedly produce this result. No concerns are voiced about parking problems because the underground parking should be sufficient, and the neighbourhood has always had ample on street parking.

5. The WPGRA thinks that the Safeway property could be redeveloped in the style of the O'Hagan proposal. However, Safeway is currently the major grocery store for over 12,000 WPG residents. If and when the Safeway property is redeveloped, a similar sized grocery store will undoubtedly be part of the redevelopment scheme. The O'Hagan proposal should not be considered as a neighbourhood center development; it is a residential alternative to single-family housing.

6. The WPGRA submits that the UBC housing developments, the Jericho Lands, the Safeway property and the commercial strip from Tolmie to Discovery Street are areas that will allow for densification without infringing upon residential property. All the areas

\textsuperscript{113} This study was funded by Fred O'Hagan's Home Investments Ltd. The information was
mentioned are, or will be high density condo style developments. Although the O'Hagan proposal includes two apartments, a large portion of the site will be devoted to duplexes and triplexes. If the proposal is accepted, the O'Hagan site will establish alternative forms of ground-oriented housing that are compatible with single-family homes.

Those opposed to allowing higher density on the O'Hagan site think that it will set a precedent for higher density zoning throughout the neighbourhood. This is a serious misunderstanding that is impeding any rational discussion about the true merits of the O'Hagan proposal. The O'Hagan proposal does not provide high density (high-rise apartment) living; it mainly provides a ground-oriented alternative to single-family housing. While the suggested FSR of 1.05 is higher than the RS-1 zoning allows, it is significantly lower than that of a high-rise apartment complex.

7. The WPGRA claims that it would be difficult to justify the rezoning of the O'Hagan site on the basis of its suitability for aging in place. Obviously, the duplexes and triplexes with three stories above ground and one below ground are not well suited for the needs of the elderly, but these dwellings were probably never intended for seniors. The O'Hagan proposal intends that a portion of the 24 apartment units will be designed to accommodate aging while allowing residents to continue living in the community. A variety of units will allow "house rich / cash poor" seniors to downsize from their present single-family houses.

provided in a brochure that was available to all WPG residents.
8. The WPGRA thinks that single-family zoning provides a way of life that holds great meaning for the people of the neighbourhood, and, as a result, people pay a heavy premium to live in WPG. The WPGRA does not give any reasoning how a half block development, that contains duplexes, triplexes and two small scale apartments, will impact the way of life of the people in the neighbourhood. The WPG neighbourhood is not predominantly a single-family community; the household structures are varied and include individuals renting illegal secondary suites, groups of unrelated university students sharing a house and retired empty nesters.\(^{114}\)

The O'Hagan proposal will establish a precedent to provide better forms of accommodation for these varied households. The provision of ground-oriented alternatives to single-family houses should not have a negative impact on the way of life of the residents of WPG; it should enrich their lifestyles by allowing the residents not only to age in their present community, but by also providing their sons and daughters with more affordable opportunities for housing in the neighbourhood. As for paying a premium to live in the area, homeowners have reaped enormous capital gains from their properties over the years and this more than offsets any increase in property taxes. For those residents that may have bought homes in recent years, it is mainly the location of the neighbourhood and its surrounding amenities that result in the high premiums. It appears, however, that the majority of the individuals in the WPGRA are long time

\(^{114}\) In a Bay Area study Bert Verrips found that residents of single-family neighbourhoods resisted changes that would alter their neighbourhoods' homogeneous character. However, these neighbourhoods were already economically and socially quite diverse. See Bert Verrips, *Second Units: An Emerging Housing Resource* (San Francisco: The Housing / Greenbelt Program, 1983), p. 57.
residents who bought into the neighbourhood when home prices were comparatively inexpensive.

4.7 CONCLUSION
The examination of the WPGRA’s arguments affirms the notion that the sacred quality of a single-family neighbourhood provides much of the reasoning for resistance to intensification efforts. However, there are WPG residents who support the rezoning of the O'Hagan site and who realize the benefits of the precedence that the rezoning will establish. Unfortunately, RS-1 supporters are more vocal and organized, and tend to ignore or shout down any discussion about the community benefits of allowing alternative forms of ground-oriented housing to be built in the neighbourhood. Residents opposed to intensification may see the potential for widespread social benefits, but they think that they will only face individual costs and risks without receiving any benefits from the intensification of their neighbourhood.

RS-1 supporters tend to focus on their own immediate interests at the exclusion of broader community interests; their arguments for retaining an exclusive RS-1 neighbourhood are specious at best and tend to force an artificial homogeneity that does not reflect the reality of the increasingly diversified range of households in the neighbourhood. Therefore, community meetings must move toward discussing the issues that surround the intensification debate. Until an effort is made by RS-1 supporters to move beyond individual concerns, no progress will be made in community discussions. Chapter 5 will suggest ways of overcoming the NIMBY syndrome, and ways of introducing the social benefits of intensification to present RS-1 supporters. Once people
realize that their own housing needs will change over time, it should be easier to explain the benefits of allowing their present community to change too.
5.1 ADVOCATING INTENSIFICATION
Vancouver and its surrounding municipalities have a history of planning documents and plans that advocate intensification efforts. The GVRD’s Livable Region Strategic Plan is a growth management strategy in which two of its four overarching policies deal directly with intensification efforts. The two policy goals asks municipalities to:

1. Build Complete Communities. The goal is to create communities that are more mixed and well rounded than most of the ones we now have. The plan suggests that one of the keys to achieving this goal is to ensure that there is a diversity of housing types, tenures, and costs, in each part of the region in balance with job distribution. The plan would have exclusive single-family neighbourhoods develop alternatives to the detached single-family home.

2. Achieve a compact metropolitan region. Another important objective of the regional plan is to increase the density of the already urbanized areas of Greater Vancouver. Opportunities for the construction of ground-oriented housing in these areas should be sought, and higher densities should be encouraged especially along transportation corridors where improved transit services are planned.\(^{115}\)

\(^{115}\) Greater Vancouver Regional District, Livable Region Strategy: Proposals A Strategy for Environmental Protection and Growth Management (Burnaby: Strategic Planning Department Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993).
The problem with the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* is that the GVRD is seen as a toothless entity, and part of a system that does not work. Individual municipalities can resist GVRD policy that does not suit local interests because the GVRD has no elected voice and no political clout.116

At the municipal level, the City of Vancouver has developed a plan that is intended to be fully compliant with the *Livable Region Strategic Plan*. *City Plan* directives suggest: a. Adding more housing to single-family neighbourhoods - in new forms - to provide housing for neighbourhood residents at different stages in their lives; b. Developing new forms of housing that appeals to people looking for features traditionally only available in single-family housing. Unfortunately, many of these initiatives have not been actively pursued. It appears that City Council has been hesitant to adopt these planning measures for fear of antagonizing voters.

Council's position is quite understandable. Residents are usually anxious about the consequences of particular proposals and the actions that will affect their neighbourhood. Residents can be quick to assume the worst, and their fears of change may be compounded by a misunderstanding or misinterpretation of a proposal. This situation occurred in Burnaby, a municipality in the Greater Vancouver Regional District, when attempts were made by planning staff to introduce a strategy that would allow homeowners to add a suite to their homes.

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116 See Alan Artibise's comments in Daniel Wood, "Here They Come," *The Georgia Straight*, 4-
In the early 1980s, Burnaby initiated the Residential Neighbourhood Environment Study. This planning exercise, often refereed to as the "Compaction Plan", promoted the development of more compact housing and the intensification of the existing housing stock. The Compaction Plan focused on Burnaby’s lower density residential neighbourhoods in an attempt to identify the potential for establishing more housing opportunities. The implementation approach was to be sensitive and incremental, and this was explicitly stated. "The approach should be sensitive to the unique qualities which exist in each neighbourhood...The approach should be incremental to allow neighbourhoods and their residents the opportunity to grow and adjust to the proposed changes."\textsuperscript{117}

When the plan was unveiled in the summer of 1984, Burnaby’s residents were very vocal in opposition. By August, the Burnaby City Council abandoned the plan because of the excessive objection and the receipt of a 4,000 name petition.\textsuperscript{118} According to Janet Lee, the presentation of the Compaction Plan may not have conveyed the impression that changes would occur incrementally. She thinks that the presentations showed the concept plan at the end of the long term without much reference to how the change would be phased. Therefore, people were afraid that densities would suddenly double overnight, even though, this was obviously not the plan’s intent. Like the O’Hagan site rezoning

debate, the reaction of Burnaby residents to the Compaction Plan is very indicative of the NIMBY syndrome.

5.2 THE NIMBY SYNDROME
The NIMBY (not-in my-back-yard) syndrome "refers to the protectionist attitudes of and oppositional tactics adopted by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighbourhood."\(^{119}\) However, when a project is opposed for NIMBY reasons, residents often realize the inherent value, but believe the negative impacts should be inflicted on another community that has less desirable characteristics to protect.\(^{120}\) Dear’s research has shown that community opposition seems to follow a three-stage cycle.

1. Youth: News of the development proposal breaks, lighting the fuse of conflict. Opposition tends to be confined to a small vocal group residing very near to the proposed development. NIMBY sentiments often reflect an irrational, unthinking response by opponents.

2. Maturity: The battle lines are solidified and the debate moves into the public forum. As a result, the rhetoric of opposition takes on a more rational and objective tone.


3. Old Age: The period of conflict resolution is often long, drawn-out, and sometimes inconclusive. Victory tends to go to those with the persistence and stamina to last the course. \(^{121}\)

5.3 SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAMS
Community outreach is one strategy that is being used to overcome NIMBY opposition. A community outreach program is an appropriate tool for both developers and planners of worthy yet contentious developments. As presented by Debra Stein, a successful community outreach program serves two basic purposes: to minimize community opposition and to rally support for the development. \(^{122}\)

A. MINIMIZING COMMUNITY OPPOSITION
There are three main factors that cause community opposition: a. lack of adequate information; b. fear of not being included in the decision making process; and c. conflict of interest. \(^{123}\)

I. Providing adequate information.
Much community opposition can be attributed to lack of adequate information on the project, to factual misunderstandings, or to exaggerated fears of project impacts. In general, residents want first hand information on what is going to be constructed in their community, but without adequate information, residents usually become opponents of the proposed project.


\(^{123}\) Ibid., p. 7.
The incidence of misunderstanding and exaggerated fears were readily apparent in the opposition to the Compaction Plan and in the opposition to the O'Hagan rezoning. In Burnaby, residents did not understand that intensification plans would be sensitive and take place incrementally. Exaggerated fear made Burnaby residents believe that residential densities would double overnight if the Compaction Plan was adopted. The same sense of exaggerated fear was present at the June 11th O'Hagan community meeting. While City of Vancouver planners and the O'Hagan site architect clearly stated that the FSR for the site would be approximately 1.0, residents interpreted that a new development at the O'Hagan site would set a precedent for high density in the neighbourhood. Several residents spoke out that they did not want to wake up to a ten story apartment building being built next door to their home. This was obviously not what was intended to be communicated to the WPG residents, but no effort was made to address the mistake.

The solution to this problem is to simply provide the required information, preferably before permanent opposition is formed. The information must be clear, credible and knowledgeable. Stein thinks that one-way communication to residents will help reduce opposition arising from misunderstanding. Unilateral communication, such as direct mail, newsletters, flyers, have the advantage of controlling the message content and of not having to respond to opponents. When information is complex and needs a detailed explanation, bilateral communications, such as small group presentations for community

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124 Ibid., p. 7.
leaders, information booths and telephone hotlines, are recommended as a way of maintaining the advantage of a controlled environment.

Multiparty presentations, such as open house workshops or community wide meetings, can also effectively convey a message; however, the drawback is that opponents tend to form coalitions and create an anti-development atmosphere that suppresses the voice of project supporters. The multiparty forum, in which all interest groups are allowed to meet and speak, often does not enhance the interest of the development. Too often meetings turn into hostile confrontations, ending in opponents unifying and gaining strength, thus intimidating those who are supportive, or at least not opposed to the project. Additionally, large meetings are not conducive to structured discussions of key issues because the large number of participants can easily hijack the original agenda. Therefore, unilateral, or bilateral small scale forums are the preferred methods of communication.  

The potential problems that are associated with a multiparty presentation were clearly illustrated at the O'Hagan rezoning meeting. Through the WPGRA, the RS-1 supporters were very vocal and effectively set the agenda for the June 11th meeting. Facilitator Larry Beasley, a City of Vancouver planner, had difficulty eliciting comments from the people that supported the rezoning bid. Those individuals that spoke in support of the rezoning were effectively intimidated by the vocal RS-1 supporters, and, as a result, no real discussion concerning the merits of the development took place. RS-1 supporters
stated that they would accept nothing less than half a block of single-family homes on the O'Hagan site. However, even with the prevailing atmosphere, it was interesting to see that there were residents who obviously opposed the vocal and organized group of RS-1 supporters.

II. Establishing public participation.
When residents think they are being ignored or left out of the decision-making process, the usual reaction is to demand a voice in the process. There are many reasons to include residents in the decision-making process. Some jurisdictions require it by law; some developers involve citizens to maintain a good public image; and politicians may desire residents involvement to legitimize their support for the project.

Often community leaders react against certain projects simply because the developer did not acknowledge their leadership positions in the community. They therefore vocalize their opposition against the project to validate their positions. They best way to defuse these potential outbursts is to acknowledge their concerns publicly by inviting them to small group discussions.

III. Addressing conflict of interests.
When community opposition arises not from the lack of information or the absence of citizen participation, then it is usually attributed to conflict of interest. In fact, community opposition cannot usually be resolved by providing information or holding meetings. If public information cannot dispel the notion that a project threatens the

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125 Ibid., p. 18-22.
welfare of the community or the interests of individual neighbours, then the best way to resolve the problem is through negotiations.\textsuperscript{126}

Negotiation itself has positive value for the developer, because through negotiation, the opponents are no longer dealing with an anonymous business entity, but with a real person who is open to dialogue in a structured format. Often, the mere act of listening to the community defuses the explosive nature of the situation. Moreover, the input from the community may lead to a better project for all concerned parties.

Conflicts of interests should be differentiated from conflicts of values. Conflicts of interests are conflicts over what people want or do not want. Conflicts of value, on the other hand, are conflicts over what people believe. Much community opposition can be attributed to conflicts of values, not actual conflicts of interests.\textsuperscript{127}

Conflicts of interests arise from the presence of both positive interests and negative interests of two parties. The developer obviously derives a positive interest from the project, while the residents feel they will suffer from the project, hence the negative interest. Sociological research has shown that people expect much higher compensation for a loss of environmental quality than what they would be willing to pay for the equivalent improvement in environmental quality.\textsuperscript{128} In other words, people are extremely protective of the status quo when faced with a potential negative impact, even though they may rationally recognize the benefits that may come from the same

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., p. 22.
\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., p. 24.
development. During negotiations, the developer should acknowledge residents' exaggerated fears of the negative impact, offer reasonable concessions to alleviate the impact, while emphasizing the positive features of the development. "Instead of trying to change opponents' emotions and fears, negotiating parties try to fulfill conflicting goals through a series of trades or concessions." As a result, residents should feel that their concerns are recognized and compensated for, and their opinion about the project may then shift to being a relatively favourable one.

Conflicts of values in land use disputes are, on the other hand, viewed by residents as an affront to their moral integrity and ideological commitments. However, having different values does not have to result in unresolvable conflict. With luck, the developer may engage the opponents in negotiation. The developer should try to seek a common ground with the opponent by eliciting specific goals for the community and agreeing with them. With this agreement, the opponent becomes disarmed and the exchange is transformed from a conflict of abstract ideology to an exploration of specific and possible measures to achieve community goals. Unfortunately, the residents who see a development proposal as being morally wrong will often see negotiations about the project as being equally unacceptable.

130 Ibid., p. 25-28.
The WPGRA, for example, has adopted a stance that they will accept no alternatives to a half-block of single-family homes on the O'Hagan site. Stein suggests that if the residents involved in a land use controversy refuse to talk cooperatively, then attempts should be made to bring more moderate residents into the problem-solving process. In WPG, more moderate residents can be found in the Housing Action Group; a resident committee that grew out of the process that developed the *West Point Grey Healthy Neighbourhood Plan*.

By separating residents who refuse to negotiate from those who are willing to compromise, a developer can show City Council that vocal neighbourhood activists do not represent the entire neighbourhood. In fact, those neighbours who refuse to negotiate will damage rather than enhance their cause. Activists who claim to care about the future of the community will lose credibility if they refuse to engage in productive debate. Additionally, by declining to negotiate, opposition also risks losing any decision-making power to other residents or to City Council.

It is readily apparent that Stein's suggestion of by-passing the opposition and ignoring their position may not be an effective technique in situations where the opposition is organized and committed. Undoubtedly, the WPGRA would not allow itself to be marginalized in this manner; it would insist that its voice be heard by the decision-makers on council. Therefore, it would appear that the key to at least confronting the NIMBY syndrome is to expect it and prepare for it ahead of time. By immediately acknowledging
and responding to all objections, a project's proponents can greatly improve their chance of success.

While it is unlikely that any strategy will eliminate opposition entirely, a successful community outreach program may help turn the scales in favour of an unconventional housing project, so that a majority of residents will support the project rather than oppose it. Public hearings appear to be one place in our society where no one seems to listen; it is important to use workshops, seminars and other informal, interactive settings to encourage dialogue, give and take, and negotiation. However, negotiation process will only succeed if the parties involved believe that they have something to gain from taking part in the process. Roger Fisher and William Ury have defined this position with their concept of a negotiator's BATNA - the best alternative to a negotiated agreement.\(^{131}\) To be acceptable, any negotiated agreement must produce a result that is marginally better than the alternative of not settling the dispute. The neighbourhood residents that will be most responsive are undoubtedly those individuals that support the general concept of the development proposal, and who can envision the potential benefits that will occur when the development is constructed.

**B. ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT**

By its nature, the reduction of opposition is a preventive measure; once the opinions of residents are formed and vocalized, they have already taken a public stance and any

revision on their part becomes very difficult after that point.\textsuperscript{132} Therefore, rather than wasting time and energy in converting the opponent, an alternative approach is to focus on those who have not yet become opponents. By approaching potential target groups and providing them with credible information, individuals will think twice about supporting the opposition to the development. The absence of their opposition will be in the development's favour, and any support from the various groups will be an added bonus.

Obviously, the absence of strong opposition will not be enough to obtain project approval; positive public support is also needed when a development requires rezoning. To be effective, the support for the project must come from residents of the community, and they must voice their support at public meetings. These potential supporters must be identified and encouraged to attend the public meetings. An eye should be kept open for anyone who voluntarily voices support or favourable opinions for the project. Stein suggests that there are four target groups readily available to solicit support from: 1. Direct beneficiaries of the project; 2. Project users; 3. Indirect beneficiaries; and 4. Special interest groups that ideologically support the project of the general land use.\textsuperscript{133}

\begin{multicols}{2}
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\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., p. 93.
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For an individual to express support at public meetings five conditions must be present:

1. The individual must have a personal interest in seeing the project approved; needs to be motivated by more than abstract reasons. Look for supportive neighbours who live within a close proximity of the development.

2. The individual must believe that his opinion, once expressed, will actually influence the outcome.

3. The individual must believe that participation is meaningful and substantial. A supporter may feel discouraged when there are many other supporters present and they decide not to speak.

4. The individual must feel a need to be represented, and feel that the existing participants do not represent his interests adequately. People often resent the presumption that their interests can be dictated by a spokesperson that they have not selected.

5. The individual should feel confident that his opinion is valid and that his cause is justified even in the face of opposition.\textsuperscript{134}

In principle, those who give testimony should have a direct interest in the project, and they should be people whom politicians expect to be present, such as proximate neighbours, project users and special interest groups.

\textbf{5.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS}

The vocal opposition of neighbourhood residents has derailed many intensification efforts. While residents may realize the inherent value of the development proposal, they believe that the negative impacts should be inflicted on another community that has less
desirable characteristics to protect. This reaction appears to be particularly evident for large scale project proposals, like for the O’Hagan site, where the potential negative impacts are perceived to be quite substantial. On the other hand, the actual intensification of small scale site has met with comparative success in neighbourhoods like the Kitsilano Conversion Area, Riverside and parts of West Mount Pleasant.

The extreme reaction to the proposal for the O’Hagan site seems to indicate that perhaps the best way to initiate intensification in a single-family neighbourhood is by developing small scale sites on an incremental basis. This approach will allow for the gradual growth and the gradual change of exclusive single-family neighbourhoods. As a result, existing residents may perceive the negative impacts of small scale intensification as being less severe and less intrusive than the intensification of a large neighbourhood site. For sites where traces of the NIMBY mentality remain, Stein’s program of community outreach may be used as a method of overcoming unreasonable opposition.

A community outreach program serves two basic purposes: to minimize community opposition and to rally support for the development. Attention is focused on the residents who have not already become opponents of the development. A successful community outreach program will limit residents' factual misunderstandings and their exaggerated fears about the project's potential impacts. Negotiations should be undertaken with residents who are willing to compromise; residents who refuse to talk cooperatively should not be brought into the problem-solving process.

\[134\] Ibid., p. 78-80.
A successful program of community outreach should enable some developers to introduce intensification efforts into previously exclusive single-family neighbourhoods. These developments may well be the best advertisement for intensification techniques if residents see that the techniques produce an acceptable form of ground-oriented housing for neighbourhoods that previously contained only single-family homes. However, past experience demonstrates that broad planning directives for intensification lead to opposition where residents often experience an exaggerated sense of fear about the potential for change in their neighbourhood. This fear is perhaps the biggest obstacle to overcome if the Greater Vancouver Metropolitan Area is to successfully implement an intensification program into existing single-family neighbourhoods.

5.5 FOR FUTURE STUDY
The experience of Burnaby's Compaction Plan should not be forgotten because it illustrates how oppositional forces build as a result of misinterpretations and exaggerated fears. One way of creating a sense of certainty in the way a neighbourhood will change is to set future accommodation goals for individual neighbourhoods. These target levels could be established by extrapolating Baxter's housing projections for the Metropolitan Vancouver Region down to the municipal level. The projections are made in an effort to anticipate how areas will grow in the future. With this knowledge, appropriate responses can be developed. By looking at annual net additional occupancy projections, municipalities can establish an equitable and reasonable way of distributing population throughout existing neighbourhoods on an annual basis. If accommodation targets are
well established, residents should have less reason to experience exaggerated fears about the way in which their neighbourhoods will change.

While exclusive single-family neighbourhoods are the predominant form of residential land use in Vancouver, some neighbourhoods have allowed intensification techniques to be introduced. Accordingly, neighbourhoods like the Kitsilano Conversion Area, which allows intensification, should be examined to establish an inventory of successful intensification sites. Survey research should look at such issues as neighbourhood fit and impacts on parking. Questions about the livability of the dwelling and what it is like to live next door should also be asked. A document, or perhaps even a video could then be created to aid in educating communities about the potential of intensification, and builders/developers about community concerns and perceptions related to the impact of the intensification of single-family neighbourhoods.

In addition, property values of neighbourhoods that have experienced intensification should be examined. Neighbourhoods like the Kitsilano Conversion Area should provide satisfactory sources of survey data. Housing prices for real estate near areas with intensification could be compared to blocks of exclusive single-family homes to see if there are any significant price differences. If price differences are not readily apparent, residents will have less reason to fear a devaluation of their property if intensification occurs in their neighbourhood.
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Mayor Philip Owen and Members of City Council,
453 West 12th Avenue,
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

As residents in the Point Grey neighbourhood, we urge you to consider carefully the rezoning proposal for the O'Hagan property between 8th Avenue, 9th Avenue, and Sasamat St. We are deeply concerned about this particular parcel of land and the general pattern of development which is emerging.

This is and always has been essentially a single family neighbourhood - we can see no reason to change the fundamental character of the area.

The Planning Department has embarked on a process of densification in Vancouver. We have serious reservations about its density vision, one which clearly is not shared by the Point Grey community. Even in the context of densification, we cannot understand how developing the O'Hagan parcel makes sense. Already major increases in density are on the horizon with the Jericho lands project and the proposed 18,000 person UBC development. The 10th Avenue corridor is already zoned for four (4) story residential/commercial, yet it will be a number of years before that development is complete and there is a need for higher density elsewhere. On three separate occasions West Point Grey residents have opposed this rezoning proposal by margins of 92%, 71% and 73%.

A project of this type is the "thin edge of the wedge" that will open the door to unrestrained densification and erosion of our neighbourhood. With currently approved (as well as proposed) developments, there are already serious strains on the resources of the community. Any implementation which densifies this neighbourhood must be carefully thought out and sensitive to the needs and character of the area - this one definitely is not.

Apparently the O'Hagan proposal includes "seniors-oriented" apartments. This is a cynical attempt to confer social legitimacy on the project. This rezoning proposal would do only one thing - increase the density and traffic in the neighbourhood, while offering absolutely no redeeming contributions to the community that surrounds it.

The decision to rezone the O'Hagan property is not the Planning Department's to make. Most of the residents in this neighbourhood have paid a premium and have gone to considerable lengths to live here. We have chosen the area for its single family nature and community spirit, characteristics which have steadily eroded away in other parts of Vancouver. We intend to stay highly active until Vancouver City Council and the Planning Department recognize the legitimacy of our position. We believe that current and future generations will applaud your foresight in maintaining the area. We will not accept unnecessary densification in the very heart of a single family neighbourhood.

Name of Resident

Address of Resident
The current RS-1 zoning for the vacant half-block bounded by 8th and 9th Avenues (commonly known as the O’Hagan property) should not be changed.

I am willing to consider a change in zoning of the O’Hagan property from RS-1 to CD-1.