

Transit-Oriented Development and Gentrification in Metro Vancouver's Low-Income SkyTrain Corridor

Craig E. Jones

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Executive Summary

From the beginning of 2012 to the end of 2014, the City of Burnaby issued demolition permits for more than 300 apartment units. This was not a significant amount in the context of all apartments demolished in Vancouver region during this period, but it is notable that fewer than 50 apartment units were demolished in Burnaby in the previous nine years (2002 to 2011) and that most of the recent demolitions were concentrated in one area. This area is the neighbourhood of Maywood in Burnaby's regional town centre of Metrotown.

Census tracts within Maywood are characterized by households that are among the region's lowest in terms of individual average income, very high concentrations of recent immigrants, a disproportionately large share of recently arrived refugees, and a rate of rental housing disadvantage that is comparable to Vancouver's well-known Downtown East Side. The demolition of affordable rental apartments in this neighbourhood is thus worthy of attention.

Immigration to Canadian cities is an increasingly suburban process, challenging traditional understandings of urban immigration. It was once thought that immigrants undergo a progressive housing career, starting with initial settlement in the central city, followed by the acquisition of higher-quality housing in the suburbs. The settlement of immigrants directly in the suburbs is a more recent trend in need of further research.

Gentrification and the retreat of provincial and federal governments from the provision of housing has greatly limited the stock of suburban rental housing that is affordable and suitable for recent immigrant families. Additionally, the economic performance of recent immigrants falls short of previous waves of immigration, creating a situation in which immigrants struggle in an increasingly unaffordable housing market in the suburbs.

This research was inspired by the analysis of David Ley and Nicholas Lynch, who in 2012 identified an emerging corridor of low-income census tracts aligned with the SkyTrain Expo Line from East Vancouver to North Surrey. They found that in this corridor the decline of average incomes relative to the region bore a strong correlation with higher-than-average rates of recent immigration.

This report builds on that work with an analysis of data from the 2010 National Household Survey and other regional, quantitative data, complemented with a dozen expert interviews and four focus groups with local residents. The central findings are that the presence of particularly low incomes in the SkyTrain corridor is strongly associated with dense concentrations of purpose-built rental apartment buildings. As these buildings have aged, they have become affordable for low-income people, and as they tend to be larger than newer apartments, they provide options for low-income immigrant families. Although the housing is not always affordable or adequate, focus group participants unanimously praised the rental apartment neighbourhoods in Burnaby, which are walkable, provide easy access to high-quality amenities

and services, occupy a convenient location in the region, offer access to rapid transit, and are characterized by a welcoming community and a bustling yet safe street environment.

Low-income residents appreciate this area because of the amenities it offers, but demolished apartment buildings are now being replaced by condominium towers, potentially leading to the displacement of vulnerable people from this highly valued neighbourhood.

Author

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1. Introduction

1.1 Transit-Oriented Development and Gentrification

In Canadian cities, transit-oriented development (TOD) is an increasingly popular urban development and planning model (CMHC 2009). TOD is generally promoted as a way to create livable, sustainable, and resilient communities that limit the need for automobile use, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality, promote healthier lifestyles, revitalize declining urban areas, and support other community goals such as increased accessibility for those dependent upon transit (Bernick & Cervero 1997; Calthorpe 1993; TransLink 2011, 2014).

As a planning model, TOD arose in reaction to the perceived problems of suburban sprawl that characterized postwar development in North America. At the centre of this new vision for urban development are clusters of relatively dense, multi-use buildings within walking distance of a rapid transit station, supported by pedestrian-friendly design (Bernick & Cervero 1997; Calthorpe 1993; CMHC 2009; Congress for the New Urbanism 2001; Katz 1994; Smart Growth Network 2002).

In the Vancouver region of British Columbia, TOD is described by TransLink (2011), the regional transportation authority, as “concentrating higher-density, mixed-use, human scale development around frequent transit stops and stations, in combination with mobility management measures to discourage unnecessary driving.” TOD usually includes an official community plan or other land use policy document that introduce changes to the built environment such as zoning regulations to allow higher density and mixed use, reduced parking space requirements, enhanced urban design guidelines, and plans and financing for transit infrastructure construction if transit infrastructure is not already in place (Cervero et al. 2002; Dittmar & Ohland 2004; TransLink 2014).

Several studies have found a meaningful relationship between transit and land values (Atkinson-Palombo 2010; Bajic 1983; Cervero 2004; Debrezion et al. 2007; Duncan 2011a, 2011b; Hess & Almeida 2007; Immergluck 2009; Ryan 1999), and some scholars have noted a connection between accessibility to transit and gentrification (Atkinson & Bridge 2005; Filion 1991; Skaburskis and Mok 2006; Walks & Maaranen 2008). Under certain conditions proximity to transit stations has been associated with higher property values (Baum-Snow & Kahn 2005;

Billings 2011; Chatman et al. 2012; Debrezion et al. 2007), and in some cases TOD initiatives have been shown to increase housing prices (Atkinson-Palombo 2010; Duncan 2011a; 2011b; Immergluck 2009). Pollack et al. (2010) found that from 1990 to 2000, U.S. census block groups near transit experienced faster increases in housing prices, monthly rents, and median household income relative to their respective metropolitan area.

TOD has been associated with demographic changes that indicate processes of gentrification. Kahn (2007) found that in 14 U.S. cities that expanded their transit systems between 1970 and 1990, census tracts (CT) within one mile of transit stations were significantly more likely to attract college graduates, compared with tracts without transit. Despite the conjunction of TOD, increased land values, and demographic changes, there has been little research that explicitly analyses the role that access to public transit plays in processes of gentrification (with Grube-Cavers & Patterson 2014 being a notable exception). This project aims to fill this gap in the literature.

1.2 Gentrification and Displacement

Empirically identifying gentrification in a local area is a complicated undertaking. Changes in characteristics of the residents, such as increases in incomes, levels of educational attainment, and the number of professionals, and changes in housing values or rents are often considered (Filion 1991; Freeman 2005; Heidkamp & Lucas, 2006; Kahn 2007; Ley 1986; Lin 2002; Pollack et al. 2010; Walks & Maaranen 2008). An area can be said to be gentrifying if rents, housing values, and indicators of socio-economic status such as income, education levels and percentage of residents in professional occupations increase faster than those for the city as a whole (Filion 1991; Freeman 2005; Hammel & Wyly 1996; Heidkamp & Lucas 2006; Kahn 2007; Ley 1986; Lin 2002).

Although some authors argue that gentrification can bring benefits to an area (Freeman 2005; Vigdor 2002), most scholars agree that the negative effects of gentrification largely outweigh the positives, as increasing housing costs can lead to the displacement of vulnerable, pre-gentrification residents (Kolko 2007; Lin 2002; Newman & Wyly 2006; Pollack et al. 2010; Rose 2004; Slater 2004; Smith & Williams 1986; Walks & Maaranen 2008).

Whereas public transit is often seen as benefiting low-income and minority populations, in some cities the threat of TOD-caused gentrification and displacement has motivated equity advocates to challenge TOD and transit investment initiatives (Pendall et al. 2012; Pollack et al. 2010; Thuncher 2014). In these cases, advocacy groups have criticized TOD plans for exacerbating housing affordability problems and potentially displacing residents (Bartholomew & Ewing 2011; Debrezion et al. 2007; Duncan 2011a; Kahn 2007; Kilpatrick et al. 2007). After reviewing the relevant literature, Rayle (2014, p. 6) concludes that, “the available research supports the proposition that gentrification is a likely—if not foregone—consequence of TOD initiatives.”

Many scholars argue that fundamentally, gentrification is a class struggle over urban land, and the displacement of pre-gentrification residents is central to understanding how capitalist markets drive processes of gentrification (Filion 1991; Lees 2008; Lees et al. 2008; Slater 2008; Smith 1996). However, empirical studies of gentrification have had limited success in showing

that displacement has occurred (Freeman & Braconi 2004; Newman & Wyly 2006), and some studies suggest that gentrification can reduce residential mobility (Ellen & O'Regan 2011; Freeman 2005; McKinnish et al. 2010). Several empirical studies of gentrification have failed to find substantial evidence of displacement (Ellen & O'Regan 2011; Freeman 2005; Freeman & Braconi 2004; McKinnish et al. 2010; Vigdor 2002), leading some to suggest that gentrification can sometimes generate benefits for pre-gentrification residents with minimal displacement (Butler 2007; Freeman 2006; Hamnett 2009).

Findings such as these have spurred vigorous debate in the literature (see Hamnett 2003, 2009, 2010; Slater 2004, 2006, 2009, 2010), but central to this discussion are the methodological and conceptual challenges in proving that displacement has occurred as a result of gentrification (Butler et al. 2008; Davidson and Wyly 2012; Hamnett and Butler 2013). To explain this discrepancy it has been argued that displacement has been transformed from spectacular and brutal episodes of slum clearance to a far more subtle process that includes mixed-income policies and a slow-growing affordability crisis (Lees 2008; Wyly et al. 2010).

Discussions of displacement caused by gentrification have benefited from Marcuse's (1985) distinction between direct and indirect displacement and Chernoff's (1980) concept of social displacement, both of which are relevant to this project. Direct displacement is obvious and measurable as residents are forced to move due to increasing rents or deteriorating housing quality. However, when old neighbours move away, or new businesses open to serve a different clientele, residents perceive that it may be a matter of time until they will be directly displaced (Marcuse 1985).

It is difficult to empirically measure residents' awareness that, for example, members of their co-ethnic community are unable to move into their neighbourhood because affordable housing has been lost to redevelopment. As the socio-economic status of neighbours shifts, residents experience a loss of local political influence as the political leaning of the neighbourhood changes (Chernoff 1980). Social displacement caused by this loss of influence is an essential feature of the experience of displacement (Marcuse 1985; Slater 2009; Wyly et al. 2010).

Under these conditions, improvements to an area, while providing benefits to current residents, may engender resentment, as they are perceived to be for newcomers and not the existing community.

1.3 Vulnerable Immigrants in Gentrifying Neighbourhoods near Rapid Transit

This project contributes an additional layer to the above discussions of TOD, gentrification, and displacement through the consideration of immigrants living in rental housing in gentrifying neighbourhoods near rapid transit stations in the Vancouver CMA. In Canada, there has been a decline in affordability within the private rental market, particularly for very-low income households (Drummond et al. 2004; Moore & Skaburskis 2004; Pomeroy 2001; Skaburskis 2004). Declining affordability is associated with shortages in the supply of affordable dwellings (Crook 1998; Skaburskis 2006; Skaburskis & Mok 2000).

The supply of affordable rental housing in the Vancouver region has fallen short of demand due in part to declining financial support from the federal and provincial levels of government

(Hiebert et al. 2006a; Shapcott 2012). The Vancouver region is one of three key landing sites for immigrants to Canada, and immigration has significant effects at all levels of the regional housing market (Carter 2005; Hiebert & Mendez 2008; Moos & Skaburskis 2010).

Immigrants to Canada are diverse in levels of education, work experience, and financial assets (Ley & Tutchener 2001; Ley 2010; Carter & Vitiello 2012), and the ability to secure suitable, good-quality, affordable housing is a key element in the successful integration of immigrants into Canadian society (Murdie 2008). Recent data from the 2006 Canadian Census has revealed a new pattern of immigrant settlement in Vancouver's suburbs, which has led to increasing demand for scarce affordable housing (Brunner & Friesen 2011; Ley & Lynch 2012; Friesen & Daily 2014; Sherrell 2009). It follows that for those who arrive with limited resources, a growing deficit of affordable rental housing can present a serious obstacle to successful integration.

A few concentrations of affordable purpose-built rental housing apartment buildings are found in Vancouver's suburban municipalities. Built with the support of federal and provincial tax incentives between 1950 and the early 1980s, these aging suburban rental apartment buildings currently offer housing opportunities to those near the bottom of Metro Vancouver's housing market (Carter 1997; Coriolis 2012; Sherrell 2009; Teixeira 2014). These buildings are often associated with recent immigrants and refugees in specific suburban neighbourhoods (Brunner & Friesen 2011; Fiedler et al. 2006; Friesen & Daily 2014; Mendez 2008).

Changes in the country of birth for recent immigrants to Canada have meant that recent immigrants are more likely to be of visible minority status, and visible minorities face significant barriers in Canada's housing market (Carter & Vitiello 2012; Lai & Huffey 2009; Teixeira 2008). Due to the affordable housing shortage, immigrants who land in Canadian cities with limited financial resources (which is often the case for refugees) must engage in housing affordability strategies such as residential crowding in substandard or poorly maintained housing (Fiedler et al. 2006; Francis & Hiebert 2011; Hiebert et al. 2006; Teixeira & Halliday 2010).

Of particular interest to this project is Ley and Lynch's (2012) finding of a coincidence of low average incomes and high rates of recent immigration in census tracts close to sections of the SkyTrain Rapid Transit Line. As immigrant landscapes in the outer suburbs are a relatively new phenomenon, research into the suburban rental housing experiences of recent immigrants is sparse (Teixeira 2014). This project aims to fill this research gap by examining the conjunction of TOD, gentrification, and displacement in two of Vancouver's suburban immigrant districts.

2. Investigating Neighbourhood Change

2.1 Research Questions

The purpose of this research project was to complement an analysis of regional quantitative data with qualitative data collected from interviews and focus groups to provide local context and nuance in neighbourhoods that appear to be facing challenges associated with spatial income inequality. The objective of this project was guided by five research questions.

1. Which suburban neighbourhoods in the Vancouver CMA contain census tracts that exhibit a coincidence of low average individual income, relatively high concentrations of recent immigrants and refugees, high rates of rental housing disadvantage, and proximity to rapid transit infrastructure?
2. According to key informants, what processes of neighbourhood change are currently taking place within these neighbourhoods?
3. How do various factors, agents, and organizations influence current processes of neighbourhood change in these neighbourhoods? Of particular interest are housing and tenure type, government policies, and proximity to rapid transit infrastructure.
4. Why do residents choose to live in these neighbourhoods? Of particular interest are housing costs, supportive social networks, characteristics of the built environment, and accessibility to public transportation and public amenities.
5. How do area residents perceive these neighbourhoods and current processes of neighbourhood change, and how do perceptions align or differ between places?

2.2 Method

A variety of indicators was used to select two neighbourhoods in which to conduct a total of four focus groups. Measures of the residential distribution of recent immigrants and refugees were layered with indicators of low income and rental housing disadvantage from census sources. Those neighbourhoods in which several of these indicators proved to be significant at the census tract scale were selected for further study. In this way, two neighbourhoods in the City of Burnaby were selected: Maywood and Richmond Park.

Data for this study were generated between summer 2013 and fall 2014 from a dozen semi-structured interviews with key informants, and four focus groups with a total of 26 participants.

To complement the census analysis of Ley & Lynch (2012), focus group participants were recruited in neighbourhoods that overlap with census tracts with lower-than-average incomes and higher-than-average rates of recent immigration along the SkyTrain corridor. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with planning and community development professionals, immigration services providers, and elected government officials. The purpose of these interviews was to understand historical and regulatory context for key findings from focus groups. Supplemental data was gathered through a review of policy documents, municipal reports, development permits, and media accounts.

Key informants were asked questions stemming from four important themes. Because the interviews were semi-structured, the specific questions asked varied significantly, but the following themes were addressed by each key informant.

1. General impressions regarding the emergence of low-income census tracts in neighbourhoods along the SkyTrain corridor, as identified by Ley and Lynch (2012).
2. Demographic characteristics of households in particular neighbourhoods.
3. Specific challenges to, and means of, mitigating poverty in suburban neighbourhoods.
4. Evidence of shared social capital and networks of mutual aid in specific neighbourhoods.

Participants in focus groups were asked a limited number of questions designed to provoke group discussion. These questions included:

1. What do you like about your neighbourhood?
2. What don't you like about your neighbourhood?
3. Is your neighbourhood changing in any way?
4. Do you like your housing?
5. What services are most important to you?
6. Is there anything new you would like to see in your neighbourhood?

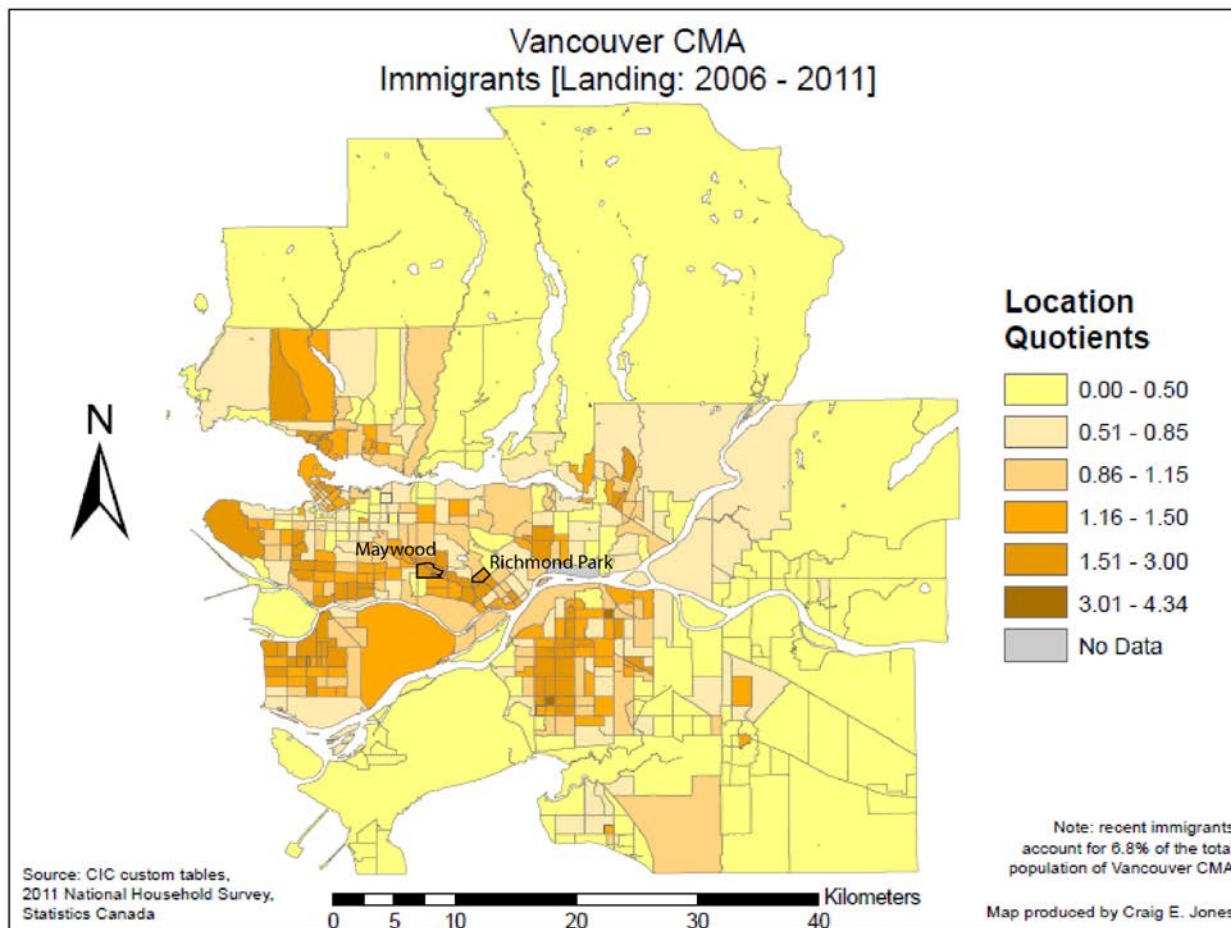
The themes and questions listed above were designed to address the research questions as they provided a means to gain a qualitative understanding of the neighbourhoods selected for further study.

2.3 Neighbourhood Selection

Ley and Lynch (2012) observed that a modest increase in the proportion of renters, high rates of recent immigration, and individuals of visible minority status were associated with a relative decline in the average incomes of census tracts between 1976 and 2006. In this study, indicators of rental housing vulnerability, the residential distribution of recent immigrants and refugees, and average individual income at the census tract scale were layered to identify neighbourhoods for study.

Figure 1 maps recent immigration derived from 2011 National Household Survey (NHS) data. As in Ley & Lynch (2012) the concentration along the SkyTrain corridor is evident. In Richmond Park there is a fairly significant concentration of recent immigrants. Maywood contains a census tract with one of the highest concentrations of recent immigrants in the region.

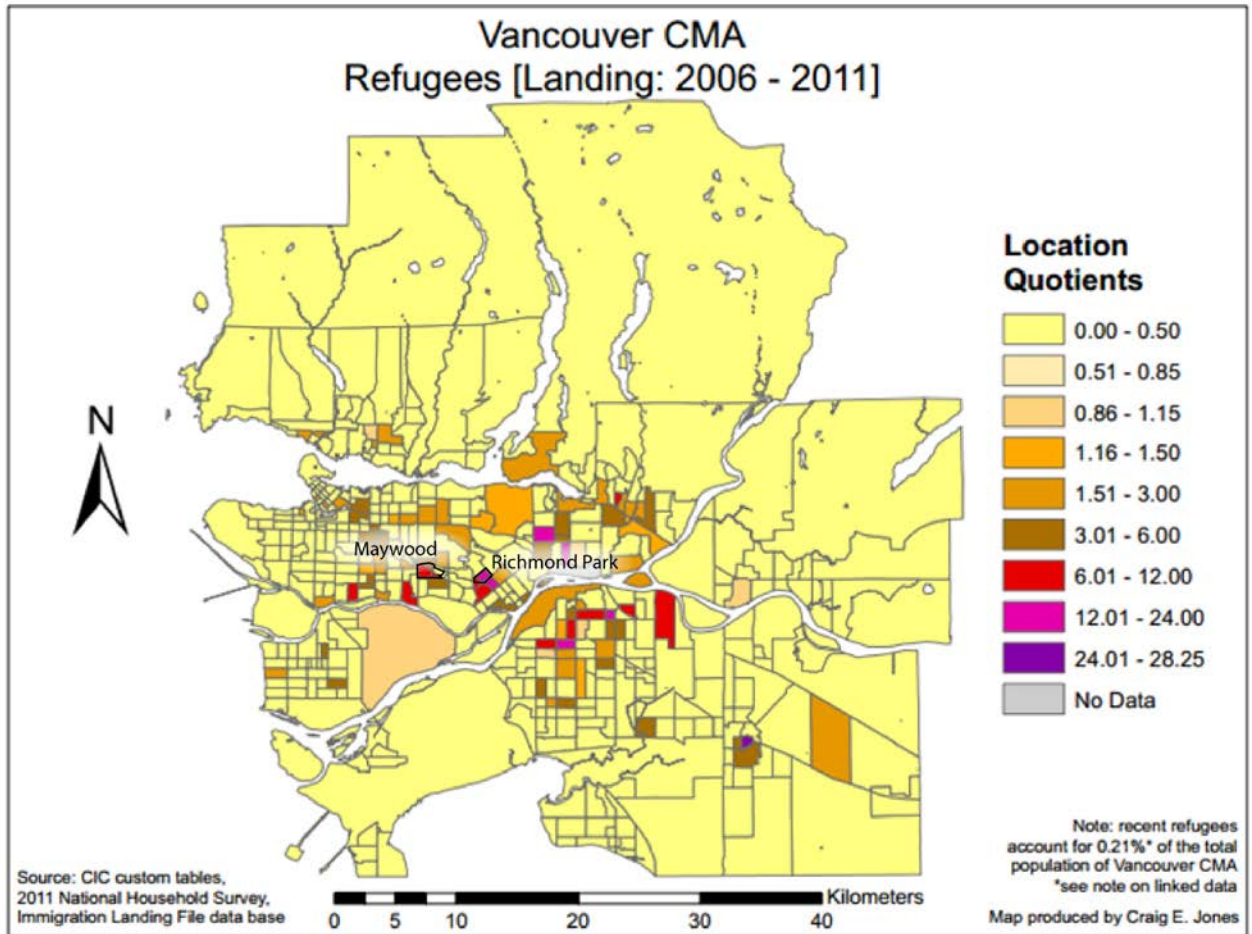
Figure 1: Recent Immigrants in Maywood and Richmond Park



Source: Hiebert & Jones (2015). Reproduced with permission.

One group of newcomers that arrives with limited resources consists of refugees. Figure 2 maps the residential distribution of recently arrived refugees in the 2011 NHS and shows that census tracts in Maywood and particularly in and around Richmond Park are key landing sites for recent refugees in the Vancouver region.

Figure 2: Recent Refugees in Maywood and Richmond Park

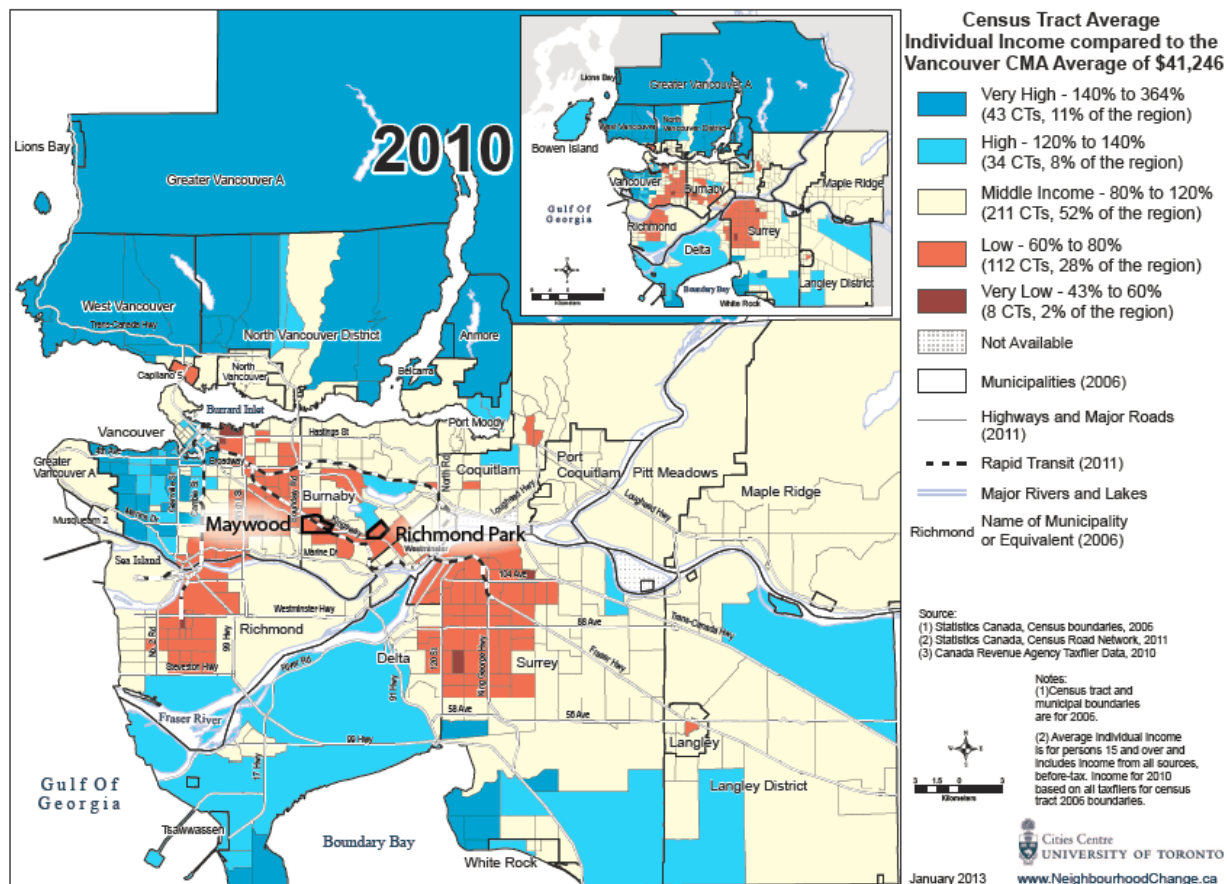


Source: Hiebert & Jones (2015). Reproduced with permission.

Using 2010 Canadian taxfiler data, the Cities Centre at the University of Toronto mapped average individual incomes in the Vancouver CMA. Figure 3 shows that all of the census tracts in Maywood and Richmond Park were identified as low income, with two census tracts in Maywood being amongst only eight census tracts in the region defined as being of very low income status in 2010 (Cities Centre 2013).

Figure 3: Very Low and Low Average Individual Income in Maywood and Richmond Park

Average Individual Income, Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area, 2010



Source: Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, University of Toronto (2013). Reproduced with permission.

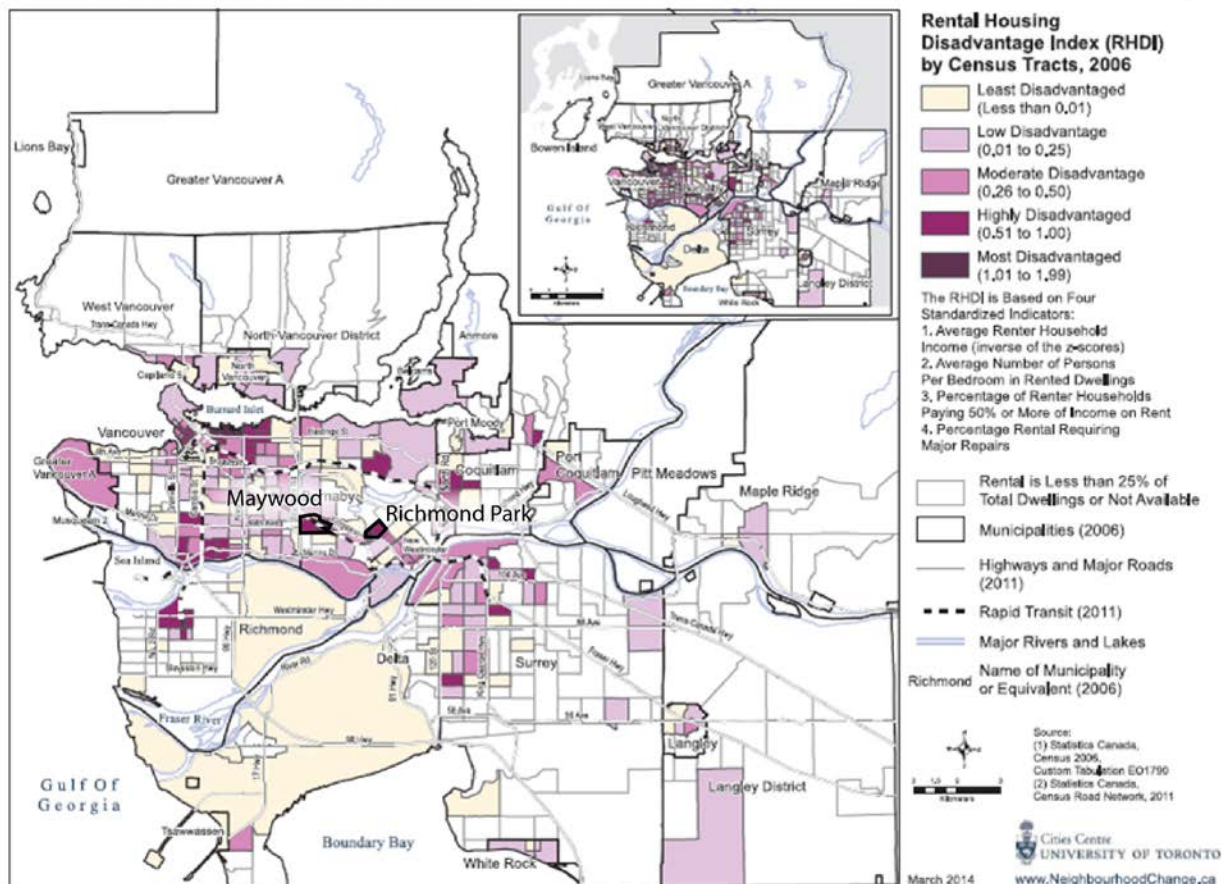
The Cities Centre (2013) produced a rental housing disadvantage index (RHDI) based on the 2006 census. This index (Figure 4) identifies census tracts in Maywood and Richmond Park as experiencing some of the highest rental housing disadvantage in the region. This distinction is shared with only one census tract in Richmond and Vancouver's well known district of poverty, the Downtown East Side.

Although there is a five-year gap between the 2006 Long-Form Canadian Census and the 2011 NHS, the questionable reliability of income data in the NHS makes it impossible to recreate the methodology of the RHDI at the census tract scale (Hulchanski et al. 2013).

Although the boundaries of neighbourhoods as defined by municipalities do not align perfectly with census tract boundaries, there is sufficient overlap of the indicators above to consider Maywood and Richmond Park suitable sites in which to conduct focus groups.

Figure 4: Rental Housing Disadvantage in Maywood and Richmond Park

Rental Housing Disadvantage Index, Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area, 2006



Source: Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, University of Toronto (2014). Reproduced with permission.

2.4 Community Profiles of Maywood and Richmond Park

Community profiles based on the 2006 Canadian Census for Maywood and Richmond Park are available on the City of Burnaby’s website. Unfortunately, as of 1 Jan 2015, community profiles based on the 2011 NHS have not been made available.

The City of Burnaby, including Maywood and Richmond Park, experienced some remarkable changes in the 20 years between 1986 and 2006. All areas experienced significant population growth, which was largely the result of immigration, as the majority of the populations of Burnaby, Maywood, and Richmond Park in 2006 were immigrants. The drastic reduction in the percentage of people who speak English at home reflects the changes in country of birth for immigrants to Canada. It was far more common for residents of Maywood and Richmond Park to be renters than for Burnaby as a whole, and renters in these neighbourhoods were more likely than not to be spending more than 30 percent of their monthly income on housing. In

addition, families in Maywood and Richmond Park had a significantly higher incidence of low income than for Burnaby as a whole.

Whereas the dominant form of housing unit in Burnaby was single- and two-family houses, the dominant form of housing unit in Maywood and Richmond Park was apartments. It should be noted that the number of apartments in a high-rise building is far greater than that of townhouses or low-rise buildings, so the number of individual high-rise properties is significantly less than the number of townhouses and low-rise apartment properties.

Table 1: Community Profiles of Maywood and Richmond Park

	Burnaby (%)	Maywood (%)	Richmond Park (%)
Pop. growth (1986–2006)	43	63	40
Immigrants	51	66	59
English spoken at home (1986)	90	94	95
English spoken at home (2006)	62	41	55
Single- and two-family homes	45	1	29
Townhouse and low-rise apartments	36	49	48
High-rise apartments	19	50	23
Renters	39	65	70
Renters spending more than 30% of monthly income on housing	43	51	51
Prevalence of low-income families	22.10	38.60	35.90

Source: City of Burnaby Neighbourhood Profiles, 2006 Census

As Table 1 shows, almost half of all housing units found in both Maywood and Richmond Park were apartments in townhomes or low-rise buildings. The presence of this housing stock can be explained by four factors:

- Planning decisions made in the 1950s favoured the development of apartment buildings in and near town centres to meet growing residential demand (Beasley 1976).
- During the period that much of Burnaby's purpose-built rental housing stock was developed, a number of tax incentives at the federal and provincial levels of government supported the development of market rental housing (Carter 1997).
- Low-rise purpose-built rental housing in Burnaby has been protected from strata conversions since 1974, when the City of Burnaby adopted a moratorium on all such conversions (Burnaby 1974). Although this moratorium is still in effect, it no longer applies to Burnaby's four town centres.
- The zoning for many of these low-rise buildings has not changed since they were originally

developed, which has prevented redevelopment at higher densities.¹

2.5 Participant Recruitment

Two focus groups were conducted in Maywood, and two in Richmond Park. Focus group participants were recruited by third-party organizations. In Maywood, participants were recruited by staff at South Burnaby Neighbourhood House, and in Richmond Park participants were recruited by staff at the Edmonds office of MOSAIC BC, an immigrant-serving agency. Individuals had to have prior contact with one of these organizations in order to be recruited.

The focus groups were conducted at South Burnaby Neighbourhood House in Maywood and the Edmonds office of MOSAIC BC in Richmond Park. The focus groups were facilitated exclusively by the author. For the two focus groups in Richmond Park, an independent interpreter was present in order to ensure understanding between the author and participants. English was a second language for the majority of participants and the transcript of verbatim responses have not been edited unless absolutely necessary for clarity.

Table 2: Selected Demographic Characteristics of Focus Group Participants

	Maywood		Richmond Park	
	No.	%	No.	%
Number of participants	13		13	
Male	1	8	5	38
Female	12	92	8	62
Average Age	39		46	
Age Range	16-58		25-70	
Immigrant	13	100	13	100
Visible Minority	9	69	13	100
Resident of neighbourhood for less than 3 years	3	23	3	23
Resident of neighbourhood for 3 years or more	9	69	8	62
Resident of neighbourhood for 10 years or more	1	8	2	15
Working full time	1	8	0	0
Working part time	5	39	6	46
Participant or member of family owns home	1	8	0	0
Average number of persons per household	3.9		4.6	

All participants were immigrants, and most self-identified as a visible minority. Most participants had lived in their neighbourhood between three and nine years, and few had lived in their neighbourhood for 10 years or more. Only one participant was working full time and all of the participants but one were renting.

¹ Municipal planner, personal communication.

Participants are not necessarily representative of the population of their neighbourhoods, but they offer a perspective that is important in the context of this research: mostly visible minority immigrants, from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, living in rental housing with limited incomes.

3. Insights from the Focus Groups

With the overlap of low income, rental housing disadvantage, refugee concentrations, and high rates of recent immigration, it was expected that participants would express a generally negative perception of their neighbourhood. However, similar to the findings of Jacobs (1961), regional indicators of disadvantage were contradicted by the perceptions of residents. In fact, focus groups participants unanimously praised these neighbourhoods. Major themes of approval were walkability, an attractive and bustling street environment, easy access to a variety of services, and safety.

I moved here to south Burnaby, because to raise the kids there is lots of things which are convenient for the kids. There is the shopping mall and library and swimming pool and so convenient for the kids... And for me because I don't have a car it is easy for me to get around.

There are a lot of resources... not too far from your house. There are settlement workers... there is a newcomers' centre for children and families which is really good for everybody if you need information.

The schools are very close. You can drop [off] your kids walking; they can walk to school.

It's beautiful, it's quiet, sophisticated. With the passage of time it becomes better. I like it very much.

The area is amazing. It's beautiful, clean, safe. Everything here is more than what we imagined.

I don't feel scared or threatened by anything... I have been here for 9 years now. I feel very safe walking at night like when I am taking the bus; I'm not scared at all.

It's a good area. It's a very safe area. Sometimes we don't even have to lock [our doors].

The welcoming nature of the community was particularly important to participants. This welcoming character was due in part to the presence of co-ethnic communities and a feeling of welcome from the community in general.

My sister is in Montreal right now for school and she says she has just recently found the first... person from Sudan in Montreal, and that's amazing... Every street I turn I see a... person from Sudan. I really like that, even though I'm in a different place, I still get to see people from the same country... I really like Burnaby because there is a lot of diversity.

My mom, she's had a lot of help from people in Burnaby and locally, with finding jobs and just helping out the family. I have seven siblings with a single mom.

I like the people here. They are very welcoming to us. They show respect. When I was a volunteer, I like they smile at me every time. The people I like.

Here I found it not too bad to settle in because there's a lot of community things that you can go to, to meet people. The schools are quite good for getting families together. I found it not too hard to start making a network. Obviously the first few months are hard anywhere, but I didn't find it too bad here.

When my son started kindergarten... they were very welcoming, saying, "Come volunteer." I volunteered a few times here and the teacher was very welcoming.

Here people seem more open to taking in new people.

In addition of the walkability of the neighbourhoods, public spaces are occupied by local residents at all times of the day which creates a lively street environment. The vibrancy of the street was a valued aspect of the neighbourhoods' character, as compared to some higher-status neighbourhoods.

Participant A: Over in North Burnaby you have bigger houses and nice streets maybe, but there is no life in there. No motion, no movement. Here you feel...

Participant B: Action! [Interrupting Participant A and drawing laughter and enthusiastic agreement from all other participants.]

Participant C: I like that the area has action.

Participant A: You can see motion, people moving around.

The combination of a walkable, attractive built environment, and a community in which participants felt welcomed meant that the neighbourhoods of Maywood and Richmond Park were much more desirable than other parts of the Vancouver region in which some participants had lived.

When I lived in North Burnaby and Coquitlam I had to ride to go to the library, I had to ride to go to swimming pool, everywhere I had to ride. But in this here, very convenient. I walk!

It's not like Surrey. If you go to Surrey you see the places, like some villages... so dark and some places are in the bush... you cannot see the shopping centres [or] stores around. Everything looks like a rural area. But here you are just like in the city... the place is beautiful, you can see the people around. Everything is good. The shopping

centres, the community centres, the schools, the environment... everything is there. If you want to see the people, you can see them. But if you are in Surrey you cannot see people around. Like just walking... you have some people that you know, you can just see them anytime you want. You are going out you can see them, say, "Hi," have time, like two, three minute talking to each other.

At first it was after we just moved to Canada... we couldn't meet so many people from our community, it was far, so that's why we moved [to Burnaby from Surrey].

Access to SkyTrain stations in the neighbourhoods was clearly important to all participants, and Burnaby's central position in the region meant that less time was spent commuting long distances. Many participants mentioned that they or a family member could not drive, or that they did not own a car, so access to the SkyTrain gave them mobility that they would not otherwise have. Those participants or their family members who did have access to a vehicle would often choose the SkyTrain over their car to get around.

[T]he SkyTrain transportation is also good. With little kids and family it is very convenient. It's a central place right, Burnaby is the central place, I think. We moved to Langley, but it was too hard to come to downtown. Burnaby is quite good. Everything is convenient nearby.

I think [the rent is] a little expensive, but at the same time it's very convenient. You don't spend so much time in the commute.

My husband works in [Metrotown] and at first we lived in Port Coquitlam, and he was spending lots of time and money commuting, so we decided to move.

For us it's the SkyTrain, because we don't have a car, so SkyTrain is very important for us. It's a pretty central point. You can get downtown easily, but it's not the cost of downtown.

We like very much this area because we live very close to SkyTrain station. It's very accessible for my mother-in-law. We live together and she doesn't drive and it's very accessible for her.

I have a car, but if I have the opportunity to go somewhere on the SkyTrain, I prefer the SkyTrain.

If you don't have car you can just go shop around, you don't have to go far. If you want to go to Metrotown the transport is available. It doesn't matter if you drive or you don't drive.

Participants' individual use of SkyTrain varied, but having access to rapid transit was appreciated by all.

Author: Does everyone use the SkyTrain?

Participant: Yes.

Author: Would that be every day, once a week, once a month?

Participant: Some of us daily, some of us whenever we need it.

Author: So it's a good thing to have in the neighbourhood? [This question drew an enthusiastic "Yes!" from all participants.]

Of course, not all of the feedback regarding the neighbourhoods was positive, and the high cost of housing relative to incomes was a common concern for participants.

So many good things, except rent is a little bit expensive.

It is a bit expensive... we have everything around the neighbourhood, but the rent is expensive.

Also of concern to all participants was the expectation that rents would continue to increase over time.

Author: Do you expect that rent will increase in this area?

Participant: It already is.

Concerns over increasing rents transitioned into negative thoughts about having to live in other parts of the Vancouver region. Some feared the difficulties they would face in finding affordable housing of decent quality in a neighbourhood that would offer the benefits found in Burnaby.

I was thinking about moving away from here and if I look at some other places, I don't feel comfortable moving out from Burnaby. It's like I'm born in Burnaby... it's the background, where I came from.

When I came here, we were renting two bedrooms for \$750 and it was a nice place. Now it's a lot higher than before and my children are growing. We need to move and I don't know where to go. I can't afford to get out of that place because once I get out of that place I need to get a different place and it's for sure going to be more expensive. And I don't want to go away from Burnaby because I like the school and I like everything.

I pay \$1,005 in rent. If they increase that by anything, I will have to move. Maybe to Coquitlam, and over there is going to be like death, not life.

They will push us to live in places like Surrey because it will be cheaper there for someone like me. It will be very difficult.

3.1 Perception of Development in Richmond Park

There was a significant difference between the neighbourhoods in how participants perceived recent development. Richmond Park has seen a few developments of condominium towers in recent years. These towers have been accompanied by new public amenities, such as a shopping centre, a new library, and community centre. Participants in Richmond Park noticed and appreciated the positive effect that that new amenities were having on the area.

We have the new library now, which is a good thing.

We used to go to Metrotown to use the community centre, but now it is very close to our neighbourhood, so we can use it whenever we like, especially our children. We can walk there.

Before the community centre, we used to be discouraged by the distance, because to go there and come back takes a while, but now it's walking distance, so we are using it as much as we can.

New amenities for the neighbourhood, which accompanied the development of condominium towers, were seen as obviously good for residents.

Participant: We have lived here for long, so it's improving every time there is a change.

Author: Do you like the changes?

Participant: Yes, who doesn't like good thing? [This comment drew laughter from the other participants.]

However, participants were somewhat ambivalent about the towers themselves. Participants appreciated the aesthetic value of the towers and hoped that increased residential density in the area could make the cost of housing more affordable.

The towers are nice.

A few of them are OK, but if we keep having more and more, it's going to be like downtown...

At first, the impression is that increasing high-rises will lower rent.

Right now we don't have the intention to look for new house, but if they built more, maybe the price would be cheaper.

An increase in residential density was welcomed by participants if it offered an opportunity to find housing for their community, friends and children.

Author: How would you feel about an increase in density in this neighbourhood? More residential towers?

Participant A: If the price is reasonable, we would like more houses.

Participant B: It's better to have more houses here.

Participant C: Whether they build more it doesn't matter as long as the price is high. For us, if the price is [not] going to be the same, it makes no difference for us, whether they build more or not.

Participant D: When I came here two years before [we found housing in this area], we ask them [if we could] rent house, but all of the apartment it was full. So I have to go to another area. So it's better to have [more housing] because many people are coming, our children also [are getting older], so they have to [find a place of their own]. So it's better for the future.

Author: Are there lots of people in your community that want to live here but aren't able?

P B: Yes. We have so many friends; they ask us if there are new houses because they want to move to this area.

However, there was a contradiction between the hope that an increase in residential density would improve housing options and the reality that none of the participants lived in one of the new towers, nor did they expect to in the future.

Author: Does anyone live in one of the new towers? [All participants answered no.]

Participant: No. It's expensive. We just think it's expensive [so we don't try to live there].

The perception that units in the new towers were too expensive was accompanied by a concern that the improved amenities that accompanied new developments could drive up rents.

These [new developments in the area] increase the rent.

With every improvement in the area, the rents increase. Those who suffer the most are us, people with limited income.

3.2 Perception of Development in Maywood

In Maywood the current development of condominium towers was unanimously perceived as negative. One participant labelled development in this neighbourhood as an "attack of high rises," and the towers were viewed as an immediate threat. Participants were concerned that the owners of low-rise purpose-built rental housing in Maywood were seeing the new towers as an indication that they would one day be able to sell their property to a developer, and that this was acting as a disincentive for landlords to properly maintain their buildings.

I've noticed in just the two years I've been here I saw high-rises over there, over there, over there [pointing south, west and north]. And I think they are very expensive. I've noticed where we are staying, they are not changing and they are not renovating anymore. If it is old they are not changing, that is why we are looking [to move].

The new builds are so expensive to rent; there's either old places that need renovating that they're not doing because they're waiting to just sell and then something new will go up that most people are priced out of it.

Participants in Maywood also expressed feelings of exclusion. One form evokes social displacement (Chernoff 1980), as participants felt unable to influence the political process that led to approval for the development of towers, leading them to conclude that they had no control over the changes happening to their neighbourhood.

I think, for example the high-rises in Metrotown area might be part of the plan of the City of Burnaby, because when they started, there is a new high-rise coming out... because we live nearby that place we went to City Hall to have a public hearing. They invited people from the neighbourhood and with the City Council; Mayor and everybody. There were some people from the low-rise in that area, they talked and they said with all the

new high-rises coming out, that will push away low-income families because they can't afford the high prices, but they like the convenience of living in the Metrotown area; the SkyTrain, library, shopping mall, everything. But the Mayor was there, the Councillors were there, I think they had a public hearing but after that meeting, then I saw the sign came up already. So people can make their noise and go talk to the Mayor or something, but I don't know if it's going to change the plan of the city or not.

There is so many high-rises coming up, one after another, I think we can talk to the media or to the City Hall, but I don't know how it's going to affect the decisions of the City.

The plan is changing the neighbourhood. What I see is just they have to build more high-rises, they not care about the people living in this area... It is plan to build high-rises and the people's concern is not their concern, because they can make more money from building more high-rises.

If we could ask the Mayor to put up the high-rise, but affordable. But who can talk to them?

We cannot stop this trend of having more high-rises.

The physical spaces of the towers themselves were perceived as another form of exclusion, because it was thought that the new units would be too expensive for participants to rent.

Participant A: Everywhere you look it's high-rise, high-rise and noise. Even my daughter, she is eight years, youngest one, and we came out after swimming classes and [she said], "OK Mom, we can buy one of these beautiful [condos]," and I said, "No." She thinks it cheap.

Participant B: Yeah the same thing, my daughter she is just 11 and she says, "Mom, we can take one condo. OK we will take?" Because in my family we have four members and my husband is the only one who is having the income [we could not afford to rent a condo].

Consistent with Marcuse's (1985) definition of indirect displacement, many participants in Maywood feared that they would soon be pushed out of the neighbourhood because it was changing so rapidly.

This neighbourhood is changing fast... The construction is growing fast; it is changing the landscape of the city. It is attack of high-rises. People who are interested in development are coming to this neighbourhood and I know our neighbourhood is changing so fast. Five years ago I was here, living here. It was quiet, we never thought here would change. And now we see every building in this area is going to be demolished [this comment drew general agreement from the other participants], it will be high rise, and people will change... I believe in next five years it will change and people will move from here. And it is so sad that change is going so fast... It is just so sad and what we see is destruction, inconvenience... In this area, all low-rise buildings [will be] completely gone in three years.

I feel less secure [in tenure] than before... In my opinion they will destroy our old building because both sides they built a high-rise. That means in maybe two years they [will replace our building with a high-rise]. We have to think about the future. Move out or buy something. We are scared to move out...

Especially on the south side of the SkyTrain there, where they're knocking down the low-rises and building the high-rises, there's going to be a completely different demographic of people moving into those high-rises compared to the people who were living there before... And I think that the people who could have afforded to live there are going to be shifted further along because they can't afford to live there anymore.

4. Understanding the Different Perceptions of Development

A review of media accounts and policy documents was undertaken in an effort to understand why the perception of development would differ so much between the two neighbourhoods. In 2011 a text amendment to Burnaby's zoning bylaw introduced 'S' zoning, which applies a special status to all multiple-unit dwellings in the four town centres in Burnaby that contain SkyTrain stations. 'S' zoning incorporates low-rise purpose-built rental housing in Maywood and Richmond Park into a density bonus program which establishes a negotiation framework for discretionary zoning between developers and the City of Burnaby (Burnaby 2011). Developers can negotiate for an increase in the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) of a site in exchange for the conservation or provision of amenities or non-market housing (Burnaby 2014).

The 'S' zoning was originally intended to be implemented through individual Town Centre development plan updates, but because there were so many opportunities for the application of the 'S' category, the City of Burnaby considered it appropriate to fast-track the designation by approving it as a text amendment to the existing zoning bylaw (Burnaby 2011). A public hearing at Burnaby City Hall about the introduction of the density bonus program was held on 23 November 2010; no submissions from the public were received regarding the text amendment (Burnaby 2010b). Public consultation on the text amendment was terminated at the end of the hearing and as of the time of writing, no further presentations regarding the text amendment would be accepted by Council (Burnaby 2010a). In each of Burnaby's four Town Centres, the 'S' zoning category can be applied to all multiple-unit residential buildings zoned as RM3, RM4, or RM5. Table 3 outlines some of the limits and requirements of these zoning designations.

The FAR (Floor Area Ratio) is a measure of the maximum buildable area of a development. Using RM4 as a simplified example, on a 1,000m² site with a maximum FAR of 2.0, a developer has a limit of up to 2,000m² of buildable space. As 25 percent of the lot area may be covered, the structure that would take full advantage of the maximum FAR would be an eight-storey building of 250m² per storey. In an RM4 'S' zone, the FAR could be increased to 3.6 and the building that would take full advantage of this maximum FAR would be 15 storeys tall. Therefore, the introduction of 'S' zoning has a remarkable potential to increase a site's maximum allowable FAR, maximum buildable area, and value.

Table 3: 'S' Zoning and Maximum FAR

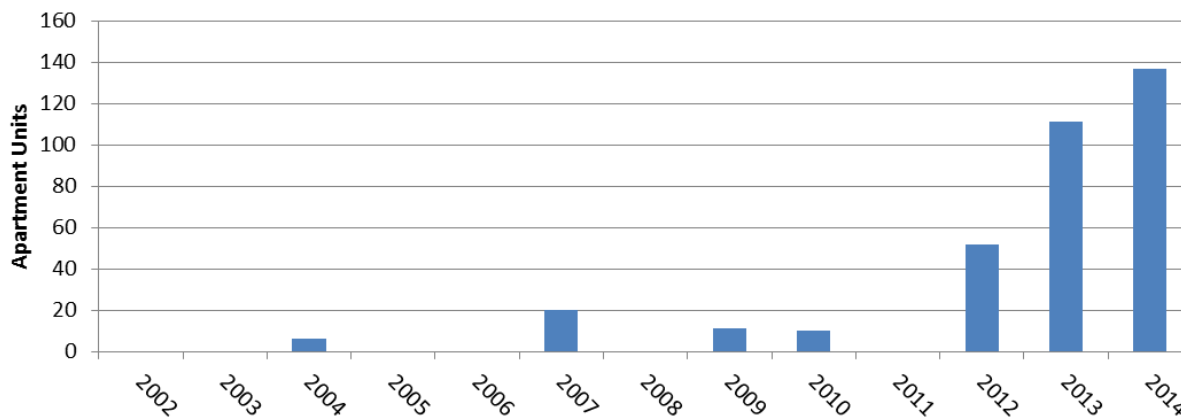
Zoning Category	RM3	RM4	RM5
Maximum height	30m	30m	55m
Minimum storeys	NA	4	4
Maximum storeys	3	NA	NA
Maximum lot coverage	NA	25%	30%
Maximum FAR (floor area ratio)	1.1	2.0	2.8
Maximum FAR 's'	1.5	3.6	5.0

Source: City of Burnaby Zoning Bylaw

The conservation or provision of amenities or housing required for the application of 'S' zoning must be "equivalent in value to the increase in the value of the lot attributable to the increase in floor area ratio" (Burnaby 2014). When the City of Burnaby approves the rezoning of a site to comprehensive development district under the 'S' zoning designation, the increase of maximum FAR increases the maximum buildable area, which increases the value of the land itself (an effect known as "land lift"). It is official policy that the City of Burnaby captures the full value of land lift from a developer through an investment in amenities or non-market housing on site, or as cash-in-lieu of a physical amenity (Burnaby 2014).

Figure 5 below, shows that after the introduction of 'S' zoning in 2011, the number of apartments subject to demolition permits issued by the City of Burnaby has increased sharply.

Figure 5: Apartments Affected by Demolition Permits in Burnaby, 2002–2014



Source: Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book (2013 & 2014), City of Burnaby Permits Issued (2015).

This uptick in demolition permits affecting apartment units is due to the fact that 'S' zoning includes almost all of the low-rise purpose-built rental housing in Burnaby under the density bonus program. In 2012, 363 such properties in Burnaby had been built before 1980, and almost all of this housing stock was located in areas of Maywood and Richmond Park which lie

within the boundary of Metrotown and Edmonds Town Centre, respectively (Coriolis 2012a, 2012b). Although detailed information on the location of apartments demolished in 2012 was not readily available, the vast majority of apartment demolition permits approved in 2013 and 2014 were in Metrotown, within or just outside the boundary of Maywood (Burnaby 2015). The geographical concentration of apartment demolition permits in and around Maywood explains why participants in Maywood had such a different perception of development compared with those in Richmond Park.

One caveat of Figure 5 is that a fire caused the demolition of one building containing 34 apartment units in 2013. The remaining 77 demolished apartment units were located at 6350–6550 Nelson Avenue in Metrotown, just east of Maywood. The estimated value of the amenity bonus for this project was \$9.5 million, given to the City of Burnaby by a developer as cash in lieu of a physical amenity on site (Burnaby 2013a). At the public hearing which approved the rezoning of this site, concerns over the loss of affordable housing in the neighbourhood were raised. The City's response was this:

It is acknowledged that the issue of housing affordability is complex and challenging and influenced by many external factors such as market conditions – supply and demand, projected population growth, income, and market costs of land and building construction. While these existing units may provide a measure of affordable housing within the Town Centre, like many buildings that are nearing the end of their life-cycle, they are advanced for redevelopment based on market conditions, and as it becomes increasingly uneconomic to continue to repair and maintain older building stock as they age (Burnaby 2013a).

A critique of this line of reasoning is that it applies to an entire region of affordable housing. Under this logic, almost all of the aging stock of purpose-built rental housing in Burnaby is a candidate for redevelopment. Concerns over affordable housing in Maywood and Richmond Park were raised in an interview with an elected government official who was involved in the introduction of 'S' zoning. The following section is based upon that interview.

The official commented that segments of the housing stock in Maywood and Richmond Park are unique in the Vancouver region because these older buildings contain apartments which are affordable and larger than most, making them attractive to low-income families. Of concern to the City of Burnaby was that the majority of the purpose-built rental housing in Maywood and Edmonds dated from the 1960s and 1970s and several apartment buildings were deteriorating as they approached the end of their useful life. This housing had not been designed to last for more than 50 or 60 years and none of the buildings had been maintained to extend their usefulness beyond that limit.

Speculation on the value of land and the expectation of increased density in the area acted as a disincentive for landlords to properly maintain their buildings. As the housing stock depreciated, it became affordable for low-income people, but in some cases, the housing deteriorated to a point at which the City was forced to intervene to address poor living conditions. The City became concerned that the deteriorating housing stock could contribute to a further concentration of poverty in these areas which could lead to social issues that the City would not be equipped to manage. Ideally the City would have liked to introduce a diversity of

housing within these areas to achieve a “social mix” of income levels. However, without support from the federal and provincial levels of government to provide incentives or funds for social or rental housing, it was seen as inevitable that densification would lead to gentrification and displacement.

The City of Burnaby approached the provincial government with a plan to create a zone exclusively for rental housing, a plan that was rejected by the Province. Efforts to invest municipal funds in subsidized housing had a negligible effect on increasing the supply of affordable housing and the direct investment of funds into housing construction reduced the City's ability to fulfil other responsibilities. The City decided that funds gained through density bonuses could be better directed at the provision of amenities or put into an affordable housing fund which could be used to offset permitting and licensing costs for subsidized housing. The decision to introduce ‘S’ zoning came after a long and arduous process, during which many solutions were considered, but none were found to be ideal. In the end it was decided that redevelopment in Maywood would be facilitated through ‘S’ zoning.

Near the end of an extended interview, an elected government official spoke at length regarding the challenges the City of Burnaby faces as the condition of purpose-built rental housing in Maywood deteriorates, and the frustration Council members experienced as they tried to find an ideal solution. Ultimately, Council decided that the reality of the market would not permit both the revitalization of housing in Maywood and continued housing affordability for low-income residents. The excerpts below are taken from that interview.

You've got to remember: we've been resisting for 25 years the redevelopment of this area, and there's only so far you can go before the writing is on the wall.

There's no easy equation and I can tell you, we went through a study early on in regard to Metrotown, looking at ways we could try to stimulate the recreation of that amount of [rental] housing that existed, by the new development density that we brought in. Impossible. Every consultant we had said, “Can't do it, can't do it, can't do it.” The numbers don't work. And you can't get that rental housing built because rental housing is just not marketable...

So what I'm doing is accepting the inevitable, which is that you can't have this low a density around a Skytrain station in the middle of an urban centre. And so I've only got that broad sort of brush to paint with. Which is saying by creating more housing, then hopefully, on the trickle-down theory, is that eventually this is going to create better housing opportunities for others. I can't hold back the sea of change. We eventually – despite being... left-wing... [and] very conscious of these issues – we came to the conclusion that we couldn't continue to stop development from happening in the Maywood area [just] because we thought that the people in there should somehow be protected from that reality. Because we were no longer doing them any favours as there was such a downturn in the quality of housing that they were turning into fire traps, rat traps and it was not going well.

We spent a lot of money on consultants and trying to find some magic solution that didn't exist. We worked very hard at it and no matter how many meetings we had, and

no matter what we went through, we couldn't find a way. Even if we took all of what we had and increased density in 'S' zoning and threw [all of the funds collected through density bonuses] back in, we still couldn't accomplish that goal [of retaining the stock of rental housing]. At that point people threw up their hands and said, "We've just got to allow this..." Unless we were told that we could [zone the area exclusively for] rental housing, and we could have frozen everything and said, "You're all in a rental housing character." Then that would be a successful way to move on. Aside from that, as soon as we got to the point that we were allowing the first high-rise in, we knew that the flood gates would open. Either you freeze this area and you ghettoize it, which was what it was becoming, or you say, "All right, once I open this door we know that everybody's going to be saying, 'What about me? You let them, what about my property?'" And it's hard to deny that in Metrotown, which is a regional town centre and the area that's closest to transit with the highest transit ridership station in the Lower Mainland that we're not going to allow density... That would work against everything we're saying in every other area. It was never a comfortable and easy decision and I think you should be aware of that. We don't make these decisions in a cavalier way. We agonize over the decisions we're making.

A lot of people begin to look, and dumb people, they look at it as, "Well, you've got this pot of money over here, use this pot of money to... fix the problem for the people in Metrotown, because this density should pay for the people that are being displaced." That's the logic to say, "Well, you're growing more people there, so you should pay for the people you're displacing by giving them units in these housing." If I do that, if I subsidize those people, what it means is for all the amenities that are required by this more dense population, I got to go to my [tax revenues] to get that money. By maintaining a neutrality on these developments by them providing their own increased amenities, it's not so difficult for my community who are in single family homes to say, "Density is positive. It's not hurting me, in fact I'm gaining amenities in those areas as a result of it."

And then the question becomes, "Since I've rented in this apartment for this long, you owe me. You owe me the right to an apartment, and you owe me the right to live in this neighbourhood." Well, nobody owes you anything and they're not going to give it to you. I can't stimulate the other orders of government... to be involved in any of this. And without their participation, I've got no option to be able to deal with this [housing issue].

In the face of deteriorating housing quality and a lack of support from other levels of government, the decision was made to facilitate redevelopment in Maywood 'S' zoning, and the inevitable demolition of deteriorating purpose-built rental housing had to be accepted.

However, there are unintended consequences to this line of reasoning. Now that the City of Burnaby has introduced 'S' zoning, low-rise purpose-built rental housing in Maywood that is in fair condition is as much a candidate for redevelopment as low-rise rental housing in poor condition. As Coriolis Consulting (2012a) found, age and condition are only part of the redevelopment potential or purpose-built rental housing. They note, "The ratio of existing floorspace to permitted floorspace is a good indicator of whether a property is financially attractive for redevelopment" (Coriolis 2012a).

The introduction of 'S' zoning has skewed that ratio in Maywood and facilitated the demolition of 63 units of purpose-built rental housing at 6225 and 6255 Cassie Avenue, which according to a Council report was in "fair condition" when the site containing a low-rise rental building was rezoned to RM5s with a maximum FAR of 6.28 (Burnaby 2013b). The "broad brush" of 'S' zoning addresses the issue of deteriorating housing, but it also makes housing in fair condition available for redevelopment.

5. Conclusion

Attention focused on Maywood and Richmond Park because of indicators of low income, rental housing vulnerability, recent immigration, and refugees' residential distribution. Community profiles based on 2006 census data for Maywood and Richmond Park showed that these neighbourhoods were occupied mostly by immigrants. Between 1986 and 2006 the percentage of the population that spoke English at home dropped drastically, reflecting changing trends in country of origin for immigrants to Canada, and suggesting that the share of visible minorities in these neighbourhoods increased sharply. They were predominantly occupied by renters in apartments and the majority of these renters were spending more than 30 percent of their monthly income on housing. The prevalence of low-income families in Maywood and Richmond Park was much higher than for Burnaby as a whole. In spite of these indicators, focus group participants in both neighbourhoods were unanimous in their appreciation of the quality of life offered in Maywood and Richmond Park.

The neighbourhoods offer many benefits to the participants; all of whom were newcomers to Canada, many self-identifying as a visible minority, and almost all of whom were renters struggling with the high cost of rent relative to their household incomes. These neighbourhoods are walkable, well-served by rapid transit, central to the region, and offer easy access to valued services and public amenities. Maywood and Richmond Park are more than districts of low-income renters living in poor housing; they are desirable, complete, welcoming communities that offer a quality of life that is difficult for low-income people to find in other parts of the region, particularly if they are refugees or newcomers to Canada.

The high cost of housing relative to incomes and the steady increase of rents over time put stress on those with limited and fixed incomes and the possibility of having to move to find lower-cost housing was of great concern. Very little affordable housing has been created in the Vancouver region in the past 20 years, and rental housing supply has failed to keep up with demand (Hiebert et al. 2006). Therefore, it is unlikely that the occupants of the 200-plus apartment units for which demolition permits were issued in the last three years would have found affordable housing in their neighbourhood. An elected government official agreed with this assessment.

Density bonuses gained through 'S' zoning have made it possible to bring new amenities and services to Maywood and Richmond Park, and the residents of these neighbourhoods have

benefited as a result. Redevelopment through 'S' zoning is continuing in these neighbourhoods, but the experience of redevelopment differs greatly between the two. The perception of development in Richmond Park was not wholly negative, as the construction of condominium towers had so far taken place without the demolition of low-rise purpose-built rental housing buildings. Recent improvements in the neighbourhood, such as a new library and community recreation centre, were made possible through the density bonus program.

The spatial concentration of demolition permits within or close to the boundary of Maywood, however, meant that redevelopment there was viewed as a pressing threat and participants in this neighbourhood expressed feelings of helplessness to intervene in the political process that was facilitating redevelopment.

Although one could question a participant's claim that by the summer of 2017 all of the low-rise buildings in Maywood would be demolished, findings from an interview with an elected government official involved with the introduction of 'S' zoning suggest that this claim might not be too far-fetched. The process through which the redevelopment of Maywood will take place will be mediated through the market, and the neighbourhood's transformation will be influenced by "external factors such as market conditions."

The probability that a given building will be "advanced for redevelopment" will depend upon "market conditions," but as the case of 6225–6255 Cassie Ave. shows, this decision will not depend solely upon whether buildings are "nearing the end of their life-cycle" (Burnaby 2013a). Although it is unlikely that the entire stock of low-rise purpose-built rental housing in Maywood will be demolished by 2017, it could be just a matter of time. The "writing is on the wall" that the days of low-rise purpose-built rental apartment buildings in Maywood are numbered; whether it takes three years or twenty, the "floodgates have opened."

It is clear how the City of Burnaby arrived at the decision to facilitate redevelopment in Maywood through increased densities permitted by 'S' zoning. It must be acknowledged that the municipality of Burnaby is operating in a context of expanding responsibilities with limited resources, with little support from the provincial or federal levels of government to tackle issues related to housing (Hiebert et al. 2006).

However, in attempting to address a concern that a deteriorating housing geography would lead to a deteriorating social geography, the blunt tool of 'S' zoning made the redevelopment of all low-rise purpose-built rental housing in Maywood and Richmond Park financially viable, regardless of the building's age or condition. Even buildings that are in fair condition are now candidates for redevelopment because the ratio of permitted floorspace to existing floorspace can be 'S' zoned to the point at which the value of land dwarfs the value of the structure upon it. One of the key motivations for the introduction of 'S' zoning was to provide a market mechanism that would facilitate the redevelopment of old and poorly maintained rental housing, but under these conditions, a building's age and condition become irrelevant.

Policies to support TOD are present in all of the municipalities through which the SkyTrain runs, from East Vancouver to North Surrey. The planning logic of increasing density near rapid transit stations was often cited in interviews with key informants. It is generally accepted that

continued migration to the region will drive population growth and it is the responsibility of municipalities to provide housing for future residents in an environmentally sustainable way.

Although this argument is not without its merits, the outcome for the low-income neighbourhood of Maywood is an obvious case of gentrification facilitated and justified by the logic of TOD. One need only take a cursory glance at promotional materials promising public art and luxurious amenities in new condominium developments to see that changes to the built environment represent the clear class transformation of this neighbourhood.

Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this project to track the displacement and relocation of the residents of the more than 200 apartment units affected by demolition permits in Burnaby after the approval of 'S' zoning in 2011. However, it is reasonable to conclude that policies to encourage TOD have reduced the stock of affordable rental housing in Burnaby, and high-density residential redevelopment has introduced housing that many pre-gentrification residents could not hope to afford.

Focus group participants (particularly those living in Maywood) who have yet to experience direct displacement communicated an experience of both indirect and social displacement (Chernoff 1980; Marcuse 1985) in their perception that they were unable to intervene in the political process that is bringing significant changes to the built form of their neighbourhood through policies that support TOD.

6. References

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