Housing Affordability within Complete Communities: A Descriptive Case Study of Metrotown Town Centre

by

Christopher Conrad Puzio

Diploma – (Sustainable Community Development), Simon Fraser University, 2014
B.A. – (Sociology), University of British Columbia, 2011

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Approval

Name: Christopher Conrad Puzio
Degree: Master of Urban Studies
Title: Housing Affordability Within Complete Communities:
A Descriptive Case Study of Metrotown Town Centre

Examining Committee: Chair: Patrick J. Smith
Professor, Urban Studies and Political Science

Meg Holden
Senior Supervisor
Professor, Urban Studies and Geography

Karen Ferguson
Supervisor
Professor, Urban Studies and History

Leonard J Evenden
External Examiner
Professor Emeritus, Geography

Date Defended/Approved: March 22, 2019
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Abstract

The 1976 Livable Region Strategy outlined a vision for the Metro Vancouver region which would focus development and growth on strategically placed Regional Town Centres. Metrotown, a community in the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby, was one of four initial Regional Town Centres created as part of the 1976 Livable Region Strategy. Over the next 40 years Metrotown emerged as one of the most developed Regional Town Centres outside of Vancouver’s Downtown Core. Part of the reason for Metrotown’s success as a Regional Town Centre is the City of Burnaby’s commitment to developing Metrotown as a complete community. Metrotown is a community known for its high-density urban form, access to high quality rapid transit, and being well serviced by community amenities. However, I argue in this thesis that one aspect of the complete community ideal has been lost in Burnaby’s pursuit of creating a complete community at Metrotown, and that is the concept of housing affordability. I argue further that this disconnect between housing affordability and complete community principles at Metrotown has resulted in the displacement of residents through demovictions.

In this research I use quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze how Metrotown performs as a community that embodies housing affordability and complete community principles. I then use these methods to illustrate how the disconnect between housing affordability and complete communities at Metrotown has been occurring. I arrive at the conclusion that, at the turn of the millennium, Burnaby began along a path of development for Metrotown that laid the foundation for Metrotown’s explosive growth we see today. This growth, however, has come at the cost of housing affordability in the community and the displacement of renters through the process of demovictions across Metrotown.

My research will be useful as a case study for urban planners and academics interested in the housing affordability outcomes of urban intensification schemes like complete communities. My research is also applicable to communities that are similar to Metrotown where difficult social and political decisions must be made to balance development and growth pressures while preserving affordable rental housing stock.
**Keywords:** Complete Communities; Housing Affordability, Metrotown, Burnaby, Suburban Development, Suburban Planning, Demovictions
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my Dad. It is because of you that I am able to write this. I will never forget the love and support you have provided.
Acknowledgements

I’d like to acknowledge Erin for all her love and support she has given me during the writing of this thesis. I’d like to thank Karen for helping me get to this point by teaching me how to write academically and editing my papers back in the day. I’d like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Meg Holden, for her patience and understanding. I’d also like to recognize the financial support granted to me by the Doug Drummond Research Fellowship which helped me in completing this project.
# Table of Contents

Approval .......................................................................................................................... ii
Ethics Statement ............................................................................................................ iii
Abstract ........................................................................................................................... iv
Dedication ......................................................................................................................... vi
Acknowledgements ......................................................................................................... vii
Table of Contents ........................................................................................................... viii
List of Tables .................................................................................................................... xi
List of Figures .................................................................................................................. xii
List of Acronyms ............................................................................................................. xv

## Chapter 1. Introduction .............................................................................................................. 1
1.1. Research Goals .......................................................................................................... 1
1.2. Research Questions .................................................................................................. 3
1.3. Research Format ........................................................................................................ 3

## Chapter 2. Key Research Concepts ......................................................................................... 5
2.1. Housing Affordability Principles .............................................................................. 5
2.2. Expanding Measures of Housing Affordability ...................................................... 6
2.3. Housing Affordability Versus Affordable Housing .................................................... 7
   2.3.1. Affordable Housing Definition ......................................................................... 7
   2.3.2. Defining Housing Affordability Principles: ...................................................... 9
2.4. Complete Community Principles ............................................................................ 9
   2.4.1. Defining Complete Community Principles: .................................................... 10
   2.4.2. Conclusion – Research Concepts: ................................................................. 11

## Chapter 3. Literature Review – Suburban Development and Complete Communities ............................................................................................................................................................................. 12
3.1. Early History of the Suburbs ...................................................................................... 13
3.2. World War One Suburbs .......................................................................................... 13
3.3. Post World War II North American Suburbs .......................................................... 15
   3.3.1. The Automobile and Post World War II Suburban Development .................... 16
   3.3.2. Policy Reactions to Early North American Suburbanization ............................ 18
3.4. Housing Affordability in Canada Following the Second World War ....................... 19
   3.4.1. Post War Canadian Housing Policy and the CMHC ....................................... 19
   3.4.2. Maturing Suburbs, Complete Communities and Compactness ...................... 20
   3.4.3. Evidence for Developing Complete Compact Communities .......................... 22

## Chapter 4. Literature Review - Complete Community Related Theories and Concepts ............................................................................................................................................................................. 24
4.1.1. New Urbanism and Complete Communities ....................................................... 26
4.1.2. Housing Affordability and New Urbanism ......................................................... 27
4.1.3. Limits of New Urbanism ..................................................................................... 29
4.1.1. Employment and Complete Communities: .............................................................. 30
4.2. Complete Community Related Concepts ................................................................. 31
4.2.1. Smart Growth ........................................................................................................ 31
4.2.2. Suburban Downtowns and Metrotowns ............................................................. 32
4.3. Suburban Gentrification .......................................................................................... 34
4.3.1. Suburban Gentrification and Housing Affordability ........................................ 34
4.3.2. Metrotown and Suburban Gentrification ......................................................... 35
4.3.3. Suburban Gentrification and the Impacts of Demovictions on Residents .......... 36
4.4. Literature Review Conclusion ................................................................................ 36

Chapter 5. Methodology & Data Collection ................................................................... 38
5.1. Research Design and Objectives ........................................................................... 38
5.2. Usefulness of Descriptive Case Study Methodology ............................................. 39
5.3. Semi Structured Interviews .................................................................................. 39
5.4. Content Analysis .................................................................................................... 40
5.4.1. Content Analysis: Policy Review ................................................................. 41
5.4.2. Content Analysis: Media Articles ................................................................. 42
5.5. Quantitative Methodology Approach: Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Complete Communities ................................................................. 43

Chapter 6. Defining the Metrotown Study Area ......................................................... 47
6.1. Designing My Metrotown Study Area .................................................................. 47
6.1.1. Study Area Differences: ................................................................................ 49

Chapter 7. Metro Vancouver and Complete Communities ............................................ 51
7.1. Metro Vancouver Regional Context and History ................................................. 51
7.1.1. Moving Towards Complete Communities ..................................................... 52
7.1.2. Complete Communities and Metro Vancouver Policies in the 21st Century .... 52

Chapter 8. Metrotown Community Overview .............................................................. 54
8.1.1. Metrotown Geographic Overview .................................................................... 54
8.1.2. Metrotown Population Overview ................................................................... 55
8.1.3. Metrotown Neighbourhoods Overview ......................................................... 56
8.2. Metrotown Historic Overview ............................................................................. 57
8.2.1. A History of Affordable Rental Stock in Metrotown: .................................... 59
8.3. Current Metrotown Housing Overview .............................................................. 60
8.3.1. Metrotown Housing Typology ....................................................................... 62
8.3.2. Co-op and Non Market Housing in Metrotown ........................................... 63
8.3.3. Preliminary and Current Land Use Framework for Metrotown .................... 65
8.3.4. Density and Land Use Examples .................................................................. 68
8.3.5. Current Housing Overview of Metrotown Conclusions ................................ 75

Chapter 9. The Metrotown Downtown Plan ................................................................. 78
9.1. Urban Planning in the City of Burnaby ................................................................. 78
9.1.1. Overarching City Policy ................................................................................ 79
9.1.2. Community Benefit Bonus Policy ............................................................... 80
## List of Tables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Comparison of Urban Intensification Schemes</th>
<th>25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 2</td>
<td>Features of a Metrotown. Source: Archer, 1969</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3</td>
<td>Interview Participants. Source: Author</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4</td>
<td>Burnaby Municipal Planning Documents Used in Content Analysis. Source: Author</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 5</td>
<td>Metro Vancouver Complete Community Indicator Set</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 6</td>
<td>Study Area Census Tracts and Neighbourhoods</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 7</td>
<td>Study Area Differences</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 8</td>
<td>Metrotown Demographics compared to the rest of the City of Burnaby</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 9</td>
<td>Study Area Key Demographic and Housing Data</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 10</td>
<td>Metrotown - Complete Community Infrastructure Projects</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 11</td>
<td>Burnaby's Community Benefit Categories and Examples</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 12</td>
<td>&quot;S&quot; Zoning Density Bonus Allowances. Source: City of Burnaby (2018)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 13</td>
<td>Metro Vancouver Complete Community Indicator Set</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 14</td>
<td>Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Findings: Burnaby and Metro Vancouver</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 15</td>
<td>Housing Choices Complete Community Indicators</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 16</td>
<td>Burnaby and Metro Vancouver Rental Demand Rates to 2026. Source: Metro Vancouver, 2015</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 17</td>
<td>Median Renter Household Income Comparison. Source: Statistics Canada, 2011</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Figures

Figure 1  Burnaby Housing Continuum. Source: City of Burnaby. 2016....................8
Figure 2  Thesis Specific Metrotown Study Area. Source: Author (2018) ...............48
Figure 3  Metrotown Neighbourhood Map 2017 Source: City of Burnaby – Metrotown Downtown Plan (2017).................................................................50
Figure 4  Map of Metro Vancouver and Core Areas. Source: Metro Vancouver (2017) ........................................................................................................54
Figure 5  Map of Burnaby’s Towncentres. Source: City of Burnaby. 2017 ...........55
Figure 6  Crystal Mall. Source: Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7469667 ..........59
Figure 7  Percentage of Renters in Metrotown Neighbourhoods and Rest of City of Burnaby. Metrotown Total and Burnaby Whole City Added for Reference. Source: 2016 Canadian Census Data (2016).................................................61
Figure 8  Rental Housing as a percentage of total housing built between 1940-1960 in Metrotown Source: Author – Data Derived from 2011 Canadian Census Data ......................................................................................................................62
Figure 9  Total Occupied Units By Structure Type 2006 & 2016 Source: CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018) ..............................................................63
Figure 10 Metrotown: Supportive, Co-op and Non Market Housing Projects ........64
Figure 11 Preliminary Land Use Framework Map – Metrotown. Source: City of Burnaby Draft Downtown Plan (2017). ............................................................66
Figure 12 Built Form Framework Map – Metrotown. Source: City of Burnaby Draft Downtown Plan (2017). .............................................................................67
Figure 13 General Land Use Map of Metrotown. Source: City of Burnaby Downtown Plan (2017). .............................................................................................68
Figure 14 Map and Information Table of High Density Mixed Use Locations in Metrotown ........................................................................................................69
Figure 15 High Density Mixed Use Ground Floor Development Along Beresford St. with Public Art. Source: Author 2018 ..........................................................70
Figure 16 Map and Information Table of High Density Residential Locations in Metrotown ........................................................................................................71
Figure 17 Example of Urban Form in Core Residential Land Use Designation. Source: Metrotown Downtown Plan City of Burnaby (2017) ..................72
Figure 18 Map and Information Table of Medium Density Residential Locations in Metrotown ........................................................................................................73
Figure 19 Example of RM3 Medium Density Housing Type. Source: Author (2017) ...................................................................................................................74
Figure 20 Townhouse Form Example in the Ground Oriented Residential Land Use Area. Source: Author (2017).................................................................74
Figure 21 Number of Renters and Owners in Metrotown 2006-2016. Source Statistics Canada (2016) .................................................................75
Figure 22  Example of housing typologies in the RM5/C2 High Density Mixed Use Zoning Source: Author (2018) ................................................................. 77
Figure 23  The 45-storey Sovereign project is an example of the density bonus that S zoning allows. Source: Google Maps. (2018) ......................................................... 85
Figure 24  42-storey Metroplace Tower (6461 Telford Ave.), another example of “S” zoning density bonus with mixed use commercial (RM5-C2). Source: Google Maps (2018) .................................................................................. 86
Figure 25  Metrotown Neighbourhood Map 2017 Source: City of Burnaby – Metrotown Downtown Plan (2017).............................................................. 95
Figure 26  Example of form of RM/C3 Mixed Use Zoning at Metro-Downtown Neighbourhood. Source: Author (2017) ................................................................. 97
Figure 27  Metrotown Skytrain Station and Transit Hub. Source: Author (2018) .......... 98
Figure 28  Development Underway in the Metro-Downtown Neighbourhood. Source: Author (2018) ................................................................................................. 99
Figure 29  Example of RM5 High Density Housing Type in the Marlborough Neighbourhood. Source: Author (2018) ................................................................. 101
Figure 30  Extent of Marlborough Neighbourhood Demovation Process. Source: Stop Demovictions Burnaby Campaign (2016) ..................................................102
Figure 31  Mixed Use RM5/C2 Zoning with commercial at grade. Source: Author (2018) ............................................................................................................. 103
Figure 32  Example of townhouse podium design typical in new RM5/C2 High Density Mixed Use Zoning in Metrotown. Source: Author (2018) ................. 104
Figure 33  Example of new build RM4 High Density zoning type in the Maywood Neighbourhood. Source: Author (2018) ................................................................. 104
Figure 34  Telford Ave Project Awaiting Demolition. Source: Author (2018) .......... 105
Figure 35  Central Park East Tower Developments Source: Google Earth (2018) ....... 106
Figure 36  Burnaby Housing and Transportation Costs. Source: Census Canada (2011), Metro Vancouver (2016). ................................................................. 112
Figure 37  Metro Vancouver Housing and Transportation Costs. Source: Metro Vancouver (2016) .................................................................................................. 112
Figure 38  Metrotown - New Dwelling Unit Completions by Housing Type 2010-2017 Source: CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018) ................................. 117
Figure 39  Example of townhouse integration into highrise development at Metrotown Source: Author (2018) ....................................................................................... 117
Figure 40  Total Occupied Units By Structure Type 2006 & 2016 Source: CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018) ................................................................. 118
Figure 41  New Dwelling Unit Completions in Metrotown By Tenure Source: CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018) ................................................................. 119
Figure 42  Metrotown Purpose Built Rental Apartment Rental Rents / Month Source: CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018) ......................................................... 120
Figure 43  Burnaby Purpose Built Rental Apartment Rental Rents / Month. Source. CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018) ................................................................. 120
Figure 44  Burnaby South Housing Price Index 2011-2018. Source: Real Estate Board of British Columbia Housing Price Index (2018) ........................................ 121
Figure 45  Income Distribution of Renter Households in Metrotown Source: Author – Data Derived from 2011 Canadian Census Data ......................................................... 123

Figure 46  Rental Units Lost 2010-2017 Metrotown and Burnaby. Source: CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018) .................................................................................. 125

Figure 47  Vacancy Rates Across All Unit Types - Metrotown. Source: CMHC. 2018 ......................................................................................................................... 126

Figure 48  Major Projects Approved or in Approval Process in Metrotown 2015-2017: Source: Author – data from City of Burnaby (2018) ........................................ 129

Figure 49  Percentage of Buildings in Metrotown Neighbourhoods That Require major repairs source: 2011 Canadian Census Data ............................................. 134
# List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCA</td>
<td>Burnaby Citizens Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CANCEA</td>
<td>Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis</td>
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<td>CCA</td>
<td>Capital Cost Allowances</td>
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<td>CMHC</td>
<td>Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation</td>
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<td>CNU</td>
<td>Congress of the New Urbanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAR</td>
<td>Floor Area Ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>H+T</td>
<td>Housing and Transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMRPB</td>
<td>Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAHS</td>
<td>Regional Affordable Housing Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Regional City Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>RGS</td>
<td>Regional Growth Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTA</td>
<td>Residential Tenancy Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCAR</td>
<td>Shelter Consumption Affordability Ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFU</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University</td>
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<td>TOD</td>
<td>Transit Oriented Development</td>
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</tbody>
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Chapter 1. Introduction

I still remember how excited I was when the Metropolis Mall at Metrotown opened in 1998. I remember watching movies at Station Square and taking Christmas pictures with Santa. The Metrotown community has had a major impact on my upbringing and my personal connection to the community is one of the reasons I am writing this thesis. One thing that has always stood out to me with Metrotown is how much the community has changed over the past 20 years. With this research project I wanted to capture and analyze that change.

Burnaby’s development of its Town Centres since the year 2000 has been impressive in terms of its scale and ambition, however, the development towards a dense urban form has come at a cost, specifically in the form of displacement, rising rents, and a community that has lost its identity as an affordable enclave in the Metro Vancouver region. Concerns have been raised by housing advocates, academics, and residents, as to whether Burnaby’s ambition of creating a downtown at Metrotown is ultimately coming at too high a cost to the social and economic wellbeing of its residents.

This research project took place during a time of significant change in Burnaby’s political, social, and economic landscape. During this research project, the Metrotown Downtown Plan was adopted by Burnaby City Council, the demovictions occurring at Metrotown became national news, and finally, a municipal election saw the ousting of long time Mayor Derek Corrigan. I incorporate these and many other changes and their impacts into this thesis. In the following sections, I introduce my research purpose and question while also laying out the format and contents of this thesis.

1.1. Research Goals

With this research I aim to achieve the following four goals:

- Define the distinct characteristics of a North American suburban complete community.

- Explore the relationship between housing affordability principles and the complete communities concept.
- Use a case study of an established complete community and evaluate the performance of housing affordability within that community.

- Discuss the outcome of my case study and the challenges and opportunities of housing affordability within complete communities.

Housing affordability and complete communities are the two key research concepts being examined in this thesis. The relationship between these two concepts is complementary. Complete communities are created as a result of the successful implementation of housing affordability strategies, and successful housing affordability strategies rely on the development and implementation of well-designed and functioning communities. The purpose of this research focusing on these two concepts is threefold.

First, complete communities, as a community planning theory, is abstract and not as fleshed out as other similar planning concepts like New Urbanism, Smart Growth and Transit Oriented Development (TOD). This research project intends to contribute to the field of knowledge of complete communities and offer evidence that it is a distinct development theory when compared to similar concepts like TOD, New Urbanism, and Smart Growth.

The second purpose for researching complete communities and housing affordability is that these two concepts have not, as far as I can ascertain, been researched or measured at a local community and neighbourhood level. With this thesis, I intend to contribute to the academic and practical aspects of the complete community theory by conducting quantitative and qualitative analysis of Metrotown as a complete community. My analysis includes gathering and analyzing statistical data to measure how Metrotown is achieving complete community ideals and housing affordability.

The third purpose of my research is to contribute to the growing academic field critical of suburban development and gentrification. Demovictions, which is the process of eviction of tenants by demolition, along with rental tenant displacement, were two gentrification processes and trends that emerged out of this project, and through my analysis of these two trends, the use of semi structured interviews and content analysis, I hope to add original research content to the field of suburban gentrification which I believe to be a field that is generally under-studied.
One of my main intentions in this research was to conduct a case study of a developed suburban community facing significant urban housing challenges in the form of displacement of low-income renters. The ways in which these challenges are met will determine Metrotown’s community identity over the next 40 years - will Metrotown be a community dominated by luxury condo owners? Or, will Burnaby implement policy that ensures Metrotown remains an economic and culturally diverse community for the foreseeable future? These are some of the supplementary questions that guide my research into both the housing affordability and complete community factors that shape Metrotown.

1.2. Research Questions

The central research question of this thesis asks: What have been the social, economic, and political outcomes of Burnaby’s policy commitments to the 2010 Metro Vancouver Regional Growth I also aimed to answer the following supplementary research questions:

- What is a complete community and how is it defined in relevant academic literature?
- What is the role of housing affordability in complete community theory?
- How does Burnaby define and implement the complete community theory?
- How does Metro Vancouver define and implement complete community theory?
- How well does Metrotown perform when measured as a complete community?

1.3. Research Format

The format of this research project will first introduce and define the key concepts underpinning this research: complete communities and housing affordability. We will then move on to a literature review which grounds these two concepts in academic literature.

Following the literature review, a comprehensive planning overview of Metrotown will be provided. These sections will introduce my unique Metrotown study area and examine its built form and demographics. Relevant regional and municipal planning policies will also be analyzed to provide the reader with an understanding of the
regulatory mechanisms, both historical and current, which have shaped Metrotown’s development as a complete community since the end of the Second World War.

An important part of this thesis is to define Metrotown as a complete community and this is done by evaluating the complete community performance of Metrotown through the use of an established indicator set. The indicator set chosen for this research focuses on housing affordability within a complete community setting. My analysis will be rounded out by an overall evaluation of how Metrotown is trending in terms of meeting complete community and housing affordability principles.

Finally, the discussion and conclusion portions of this thesis will focus on the outcomes of the regional and municipal planning objectives that have supported the development of Metrotown as a complete community. The process and impacts of demovictions in Metrotown emerged as key research phenomena I wanted to capture with this project. I will argue that displacement and demovictions are among many social and economic outcomes of Burnaby’s housing policies and its commitment to creating complete communities over the past 70 years. I will conclude my thesis with a discussion on the future of Metrotown, and the future of the complete community concept as well as provide recommendations on how the complete community concept, as it is currently playing out in Metrotown, can be retooled to avoid the displacement and demoviction outcomes currently being witnessed there.

The following section highlights my key research concepts. It is vital for the reader to understand these concepts as they are reiterated throughout this thesis. Particular attention should be paid to the principles that underpin the concepts of housing affordability and complete communities.
Chapter 2. Key Research Concepts

I chose to explore housing affordability and complete communities for two reasons. First, these two concepts have played a major role in Metrotown’s development since the end of the Second World War. Second, the 2018 municipal election in Burnaby highlighted the importance of my two research concepts for Burnaby and its residents. Both housing affordability and community development were major electoral issues with many media outlets reporting that 16-year incumbent mayor Derek Corrigan lost the mayoral election due to his stance and policies towards housing affordability and the consultation and development of the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan (Gawley, 2018).

The second reason I chose to research these two concepts was because understanding housing affordability and complete community trends in Metrotown allows me to capture and describe the urban and social changes I witnessed Metrotown go through as I was growing up in the community. I now explore my research concepts and their underlying principles.

2.1. Housing Affordability Principles

Housing affordability is not solely an economic issue; it has far greater impacts on our environment and society. For example, a lack of affordable housing in cities can lead to suburban sprawl as families are forced further to the fringes in the hope of finding affordable housing. Increased commute times for families forced to the edges of our cities has impacts on greenhouse gas emissions and personal and societal health (Gurstein, 2012). Housing affordability also brings into question issues around social equality and income distribution. If housing is seen more as a commodity that can be traded for profit rather than viewed as a human right, then the world will continue to see the rise of poverty, homelessness and income inequality in our cities. Elements of housing affordability including access to safe, affordable, and adequate shelter have been outlined as a basic human right by the United Nations (2009). The implementation of the policies that enable access to affordable, adequate and sustainable housing will likely require major societal, governmental, and economic shifts in North America. These shifts can benefit from case studies such as that of Vienna, Austria that prove that
social housing and housing affordability for the masses are possible (Forster & Menking, 2016).

2.2. Expanding Measures of Housing Affordability

Organizations like Metro Vancouver and the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) have put forward two alternative ways of measuring housing affordability.

In a 2015 report produced by Metro Vancouver titled the Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Study, a revised measure of housing affordability was put forward because according to Metro Vancouver, conversations about affordability in this region must include both housing and transportation costs (Metro Vancouver, 2015). The study used the following indicators to measure the cost burden different households face: household income, household composition, fixed and variable transportation costs, and in some cases childcare costs. The major key finding from this study was that:

Regionwide, owners with mortgages paid 40% of their pre-tax income for housing and transportation; renters paid 49%. Many families are struggling under the weight of a heavy housing and transportation cost burden, leaving them with difficult choices about what to spend on food, clothing, child care, and other expenses. (Metro Vancouver, 2015. p.4)

In chapter 11, I provide a more in-depth analysis of Metro Vancouver’s findings and study methodology.

Another example of an organization looking beyond the common understanding of housing affordability is The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis (CANCEA) which advocates for the use of the Shelter Consumption Affordability Ratio (SCAR). The SCAR index measures shelter consumption costs over discretionary net income after other necessities as a tool to better understand housing affordability (Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis, 2017). The SCAR index recommends 40 indicators to understand housing affordability including: costs of residential development inputs and land supply, population and demographics, labour force, income, and wealth. The SCAR index and Metro Vancouver’s cost burden analysis both point to a shift in government’s and academia’s understanding of affordability and moving beyond a simplistic ratio measure of price to income.
2.3. Housing Affordability Versus Affordable Housing

There are definitional and conceptual differences between housing affordability and affordable housing. To elaborate on these differences, I refer to housing academic Michael Stone who defines affordable housing as: “The challenge each household faces in balancing the cost of its actual or potential housing, on the one hand, and its non-housing expenditures, on the other, within the constraints of its income” (Stone, 2006). Stone defines housing affordability as a relationship. He states: “affordability is often expressed in terms of “affordable housing.” But affordability is not a characteristic of housing—it is a relationship between housing and people. For some people, all housing is affordable, no matter how expensive it is; for others, no housing is affordable unless it is free” (Stone, 2006. p. 153).

2.3.1. Affordable Housing Definition

Affordable housing in contrast to housing affordability is a much more grounded concept that is underpinned by widely recognized policies and quantitative data. The most commonly used definition of affordable housing is a measure of price to income ratio; the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation states that: “Affordable housing generally means a housing unit that can be owned or rented by a household with shelter costs (rent or mortgage, utilities, etc.) that are less than 30 per cent of its gross income (CMHC, 2018). The CMHC states that: the term "affordable housing" can refer to any part of the housing continuum from temporary emergency shelters through transition housing, supportive housing, subsidized housing, market rental housing or market homeownership” (CMHC, 2018). In some cases, affordable housing is used interchangeably with social housing, however the two concepts are distinct based on the fact that the private market has the ability to deliver affordable units without the support of public (social) funds. The definitions of affordable housing put forward by the CMHC are often implemented through policy and referred to in many Canadian municipalities and their housing policies. Cities like Burnaby illustrate and define the different aspects of housing with a housing continuum as seen in figure 1 below.
The definition of affordable housing remains fairly constant across the political geographies relevant to this research. As per Metro Vancouver’s definition, housing is considered affordable when monthly housing costs (rent or mortgage payments including property taxes, strata fees, and heating costs) consume less than 30% of before tax (gross) household income. Housing affordability concerns are invariably associated with households with low and moderate incomes as they cannot afford market rates (Metro Vancouver, 2016a).

The City of Burnaby defines affordable housing as housing which has a market price or rent that does not exceed 30% of a household’s gross income, must be in good repair, and be suitable to household need (i.e. housing is not overcrowded). This measure applies to households of low to moderate income, that is, households which have income that is 80% or less than the median household income for the urban area in which they live (City of Burnaby, 2016a). Across both definitions is an emphasis on the role of incomes as they relate to shelter cost. In one policy document titled: Affordable Housing and Homelessness - A Response to Issues and Proposals, the City of Burnaby makes a link to affordable housing and housing affordability, stating: “Housing affordability is a function of housing cost and household income” (City of Burnaby, 2007).
2.3.2. **Defining Housing Affordability Principles:**

I refer to the CMHC’s definition of Core Housing Need as the main housing affordability principles guiding this research. A household in core housing need is defined as being in a state at which the “housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability, standards and the household would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards)” (CMHC, 2018). Adequate, affordable, and suitable housing are defined as:

**Adequate:** housing is reported by residents as not requiring any major repairs.

**Affordable:** dwellings cost less than 30% of total before-tax household income.

**Suitable:** housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.

These three principles guide my thesis definition of housing affordability and will also be used in helping better understand how Metrotown has performed in meeting housing affordability principles.

2.4. **Complete Community Principles**

The other key research concept this thesis examines is the concept of complete communities. The definition of complete communities put forward by the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) in 1999 was comprehensive; it included elements of transportation, employment distribution, economic development, housing, and urban design. This definition would eventually be encompassed in numerous Official Community Plans and Regional Context Statements across Metro Vancouver in the following decades.

In 2013 the City of Burnaby submitted a Regional Context Statement (RCS) to Metro Vancouver which set in motion and committed Burnaby to meeting the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy of 2010:

Metro Vancouver is a region of communities with a diverse range of housing choices suitable for residents at any stage of their lives. The
distribution of employment and access to services and amenities builds complete communities throughout the region. Complete communities are designed to support walking, cycling and transit, and to foster healthy lifestyles (City of Burnaby 2013).

Planning literature across North America promotes the development of complete communities either directly or indirectly; examples of policies that directly promote complete community can be found in cities like Winnipeg Manitoba, Austin Texas, and Mississauga Ontario (Winnipeg, 2011. Austin, 2012. Mississauga, 2015). Planning for complete communities is a planning and development ideal that is easy to agree on by those in the political and development spheres, however, the implementation often does not match what the theory promotes, especially in suburban communities where sometimes access to quality jobs does not match the type of housing being developed (Grant, 2002). The success of complete communities is not well-studied and evaluating the performance of complete communities is often only done in a qualitative way. With this research I intend to lay some groundwork on evaluating complete communities through performance and indicator measures used by Metro Vancouver. Currently there is no research or standard for how well a complete community ought to perform to be considered complete or successful.

One of the goals of this research is to begin the discussion on one aspect of complete communities, the performance of housing affordability within them. This research hopes to serve as a basis for future analysis of complete communities and its various other aspects including transportation, health, wellbeing, and employment. While all four of these aspects will be touched upon in this research, more extensive examinations of these concepts would help the planning of successful future complete communities.

2.4.1. Defining Complete Community Principles:

The following complete community principles are derived from the Greater Vancouver Regional District’s 1994 definition of complete community:

- A better balance between jobs and labour force in each community, thus creating more opportunities for people to work closer to home or live closer to work;
- A greater mix of housing types to enable more diversity of age groups and household sizes;
• A better distribution across the region of public services for education, health care, culture, and recreation; and
• improved transportation services that serve local centres more conveniently, including better local transit service and more opportunities to cycle and walk (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1994).

The semi-structured interviews I conducted also helped define complete community principles. With each interview I began with the question “what does a complete community mean to you?” Each of my interview participants echoed Metro Vancouver’s definition of a complete community. Here I highlight one of my interview participants’ definition of complete community which encapsulated the concept well: “I think the standard of a complete community has everything you need within its boundaries, appropriate housing, access shops and services, employment, good transit, and community amenities” (Metro Vancouver Planner, 2018).

One of the main products of my research was an evaluation of the performance of Metrotown as a complete community using a set of measurable indicators. In chapter 11, I employ a complete community evaluation of Metrotown. This evaluation is based on the Metro 2040 Dashboard which measures specific indicators and the performance of municipalities in meeting the Metro 2040 (Regional Growth Strategy) goals. The evaluation in chapter 11 aligns with a quantitative understanding of complete communities while the four principles mentioned above provide a qualitative understanding of complete communities.

2.4.2. Conclusion – Research Concepts

As mentioned previously, it is important for the reader to understand the concepts underpinning this research as they are revisited throughout this thesis. Complete communities and housing affordability are related concepts and share various principles.

In the next chapter, I conduct a literature review that examines both key concepts outlined in this chapter and their relationship in academia.
Chapter 3. Literature Review – Suburban Development and Complete Communities

This literature review is broken up into two parts. The first portion focuses on the history of suburban development in Western Europe and North America. I then examine the relevant literature around urban intensification theories. This will help frame the concept of complete communities and the function of housing affordability within them. The second part of the literature review looks at the relationship between housing affordability, complete communities, and the suburbs.

This literature review will focus on the history of suburban development, complete community related concepts, and the impact of housing affordability policies in urban planning. The purpose of focusing on the history of suburban developments is to give the reader an understanding that the implementation of complete community theory has been an on-going process since the early 19th century with various iterations along the way. Many of the early suburban developments in England and the United States embodied the principles of modern complete communities. By examining the history of suburbia, two outcomes are produced. First, there is a clear distinction between suburban and urban complete communities. Second, the history of suburban development shows that there has always been an appetite to create complete communities outside of core city centres.

This literature review also focuses on complete communities and the role of housing affordability in related complete community development theories like New Urbanism, Transit Oriented Development and Smart Growth. There is also a focus on the emerging field of suburban gentrification which examines how gentrification processes are becoming more frequent in inner ring suburban communities. By the conclusion of this literature review, the reader should have a greater sense of the following: what complete communities have been trying to achieve for over two centuries, the connection between suburbia and complete communities, and the role of housing affordability in both complete community and traditional suburban settings.
3.1. **Early History of the Suburbs**

The first recorded North American suburbs, according to Henry Binford, appeared around Boston Massachusetts in the early 19th century prior to the outbreak of the American Civil War. The fringe towns of Cambridge and Somerville Massachusetts were the first American suburbs, Binford claims (Binford, 1985). These suburbs outside of Boston occupied an economic and social space in between the rural and urban environments. In terms of early suburban economies, many processing facilities were set up in the suburbs including ice-works, dairy farms, and soap factories. As the suburban economy began to grow, so too did the ambition of newly suburbanized residents who began attracting capital investment in the form of bridges, streetcars, and housing subdivisions on former farmland (Binford, 1985). The first suburbs provided social and economic refuge from their related urban centres – this claim is substantiated when analyzing the Garden City movement which promoted master planned suburban communities a century after the development of the Cambridge and Somerville suburbs.

In exploring the genesis of the North American suburbs, the role of the English Garden City, conceived by Ebenezer Howard cannot be understated. The Garden City was designed to be a self-contained master planned community that could provide the economic and social needs of its residents. Garden Cities were highly prescriptive in their planning, going so far as supporting ideal population densities per acre. The overall structure of a Garden City was initially planned to hold 32,000 residents. Garden Cities would then be connected to a larger central city made up of roughly 52,000 residents. The connected whole of Garden Cities, with their central city, formed what Ebenezer Howard called the “The Social City” (Miller, 2002. Lewis, 2014).

3.2. **World War One Suburbs**

The Garden City and the related New Towns movement were made possible by the work of individuals like Ebenezer Howard, Raymond Unwin and Henrietta Barnett. Their work was realized in developments like Letchworth Garden City and the Hampstead Garden Suburb (Steuer, 2000. Miller, 2002). The Garden Cities movement at its core provided an alternative to urban living, which during the late 19th and early 20th centuries was increasingly being criticized for being unhealthy and dehumanizing. In addition to providing an alternative to urban living, the Garden City movement was also
seen as a vehicle to experiment with popular political ideologies of the time, including Marxism and Fabianism – the latter being an English based socialist political movement (Miller, 2002). The Fabians promoted political change through social systems rather than outright revolution. Popular Fabians like Raymond Unwin viewed the opportunity to create master planned communities as a chance to embed socialist utopian ideals including prioritizing housing for the industrial classes, and allowing for early iterations of cooperative housing tenure models (Miller, 2002). Ultimately, Unwin’s utopian planning projects like Letchworth Garden City did not achieve the socialist dream he envisioned, however, they did promote and attract attention towards sustainability initiatives common to modern day complete communities including the promotion of greenspace, and highly dense residential communities. With Letchworth Garden City, Henrietta Barnett famously quipped that it will be a Garden City for all classes and mandated that the utmost care be taken for the environment.

Many of the political and social ambitions set out by the Fabians and the Garden City Movement quickly lost momentum with the outbreak of the First World War. Suburbs became valued for their potential growth and capacity to take on the needs of a wartime economy. This was particularly true in the United States and England. As Miller explains, the Allies on the Western Front were facing a munitions shortage. Back home the problem was that not enough workers could adequately be housed around munitions and other types of factories. The solution came in the form of the development of garden suburbs around mass production centres with Eltham, a suburb on the outskirts of London, being the first example of one such employment housing centred suburb. Miller also points out that Yorkship Village (now Fairview), on the outskirts of Camden New Jersey, was an American example of a suburb being built around mass production facilities to help with the war effort in 1917 (Miller, 2002). In addition to the suburbs becoming economic hubs, they were also contributing to the emerging concept of the regional metropolis. This claim is especially true in pre-World War II Los Angeles which exemplified many of the regional planning principles modern urban planners believe to be sound and positive planning practices today, including supporting a regional public transport network, and focusing growth in specific areas to avoid sprawl.

The interwar period was a golden age for the suburbs according to Lionel Frost. To Frost there was no better exemplification of this golden age than the City of Los Angeles during the interwar period. Los Angeles was what Frost called a Garden
Metropolis - it connected several small outlying communities to the central city of Los Angeles by a well serviced street car and modest freeway network. Frost wrote about Los Angeles: “Every man, however poor, literally seems to live under his own vine and fig tree” (Frost, 2001). The golden age of the suburbs, however, came to a dramatic halt in 1929. The following decade would especially impact middle class Americans settling into newly formed suburban developments across the country. James Kunstler cites that during the first three years of the Great Depression, housing starts fell by 95%. He also cites that the Great Depression exposed a host of larger social and economic issues: “The bulk of American workers toiled in the very factories that were overproducing cars and electric waffle irons, and even before they were laid off in the Depression, few blue-collar workers could have afforded a new house in the suburbs and a car to drive there” (Kunstler, 1993). Academia has often framed the suburbs as a negative, unhealthy, and unfulfilling environment; this claim is usually associated with post-World War II suburbs which grew exponentially without regard for sound planning practices. However, an examination of pre-World War II suburbs conducted in this chapter reveals the utility and ambition the suburbs which continue to this day to impact human settlement behaviour.

3.3. Post World War II North American Suburbs

The North American suburban boom following the Second World War launched millions of residents into the middle class of society, as Rachel Heiman puts it: “By the 1950s, a good portion of white (and soon to be white) Americans had begun to view themselves as members of the middle class. They earned decent wages, owned homes with yards, bought the latest consumer goods, drove around in cars, sent their kids off to college, and saw their lives reflected in the mass culture of the time” (Heiman. 2015 p. 25-26). The suburbs were home to the middle class of society in North America following the War; however, pervasive societal, economical, and environmental problems presented themselves almost as quickly as the suburbs themselves were settled. Raymond Mohl points to the American highway revolts of the 1960’s and 1970’s which saw residents actively protest and block expanded freeway networks to serve the influx of suburban traffic to city centres (Mohl, 2004). Protesting residents saw freeway expansion into their cities as the catalyst that would physically destroy vibrant communities (Stiem, 2016).
Following the Second World War the suburbs were home to a massive demographic shift which saw millions of urbanites become suburbanites in the process known as white flight. Geographer Jamie Peck provides a very clear picture of the post war suburbs and those who called it home: “Suburbia was the ‘habitat of the young married couple with a large family of young children, a commuting husband, and one or two cars’; Homo sprawlus worked in the skilled trades or in the sub-managerial white-collar sector and while one-eighth of ‘frontier wives’ were found to be working, they were to remain largely invisible, beyond proxy discussions of schooling and shopping; families were typically ‘forced to the fringe for financial reasons” (Peck et al. 2014. p.11).

American suburbs were, up until the 1980’s, socially exclusive communities that were mainly home to white middle and upper class residents. Canada had a much more storied history of diverse suburbs up until the post war era when housing became more regulated and expensive for low income individuals (McCann, 2006). Meanwhile, in the US, the white suburb remained the norm until the 1980’s when census information revealed that the suburbs were becoming less white and more diverse (Hanlon et al, 2007; Kunstler, 1993). In Canada, Carpio et al and Preston highlight that the end of the twentieth century showed a shift towards Canadian suburbs becoming much more diverse. What is even more noteworthy is that homes in Canadian suburbs were being purchased by more immigrant families. Preston observed that immigrant families were bypassing the city and heading straight for the suburbs to purchase houses in Canada (Carpio et al, 2014. Preston et al, 2009).

3.3.1. **The Automobile and Post World War II Suburban Development**

An academic analysis of the suburbs cannot ignore the role of the automobile in suburban development following the Second World War. As the suburban landscape in North America began to undergo massive social and built form changes following the Second World War, unforeseen consequences began to emerge. The most impactful of these consequences was the inability of North American transportation networks to deal with the influx of millions of new car owners driving long distances to and from work (Kunstler, 1993). Not willing to stop the American post war growth machine, President Eisenhower enacted the interstate highway public works project in 1956, which called for the creation of 41,000 miles of new expressways that would link up American cities with a population of 50,000 or more. There were also funding approvals for numerous smaller
work projects that dealt with widening roads and increasing the capacity of suburban road networks. The appetite for an expanded road network was clearly present in the United States as exemplified by the work of Robert Moses who in 1956 proclaimed “The postwar highway era is here!” (Kunstler, 1993). The Interstate Highways Act of 1956 is now synonymous with urban decay and poor urban planning practices in the United States, yet during its time, the act was hailed as a successful job generator for low and middle class labourers which helped spur along the American post war growth machine. Kunstler helps frame the massive scale of Eisenhower’s Interstate program: “It devoured as much steel and concrete each year as a hundred cities. It required armadas of colossal earth-moving machines. It was simply the largest public works project in the history at the time” (Kunstler, 1993). The construction of freeways and interstates, as well as the alteration of other car-oriented transportation infrastructure, fractured and altered North American cities and promoted negative urban planning elements like suburban sprawl, and income inequality. The history and impact of road building during post war suburbanization in North America is important to understand in a complete community context because the notion of complete communities and other urban intensification theories were seen as an answer to the urban decay issues that freeway construction created in many American cities (Mohl, 2004).

Complete communities were intended to address the over dependency on the automobile by creating self-sufficient communities where the need to drive and rely on personal transportation would be diminished. In a complete community, the residential and commercial form and development would be oriented to frequent transportation networks rather than to the freeway. One of the ways that modern suburbs are dealing with the hangover effects of unchecked development in North America is through retrofitting current suburban developments into more complete communities. Dunham-Jones and Williamson (2009) provide examples across North America where former low-density communities retrofitted suburban hallmarks of suburban development like large parking lots, malls, and single family neighbourhoods into denser, more complete developments and communities. This trend of retrofitting has been met with criticism by academics like James Howard Kunstler (2009) and Ann Forsyth (2013) who believe that the scale and challenge of retrofitting our suburbs to become more complete is too great and point to examples like Las Vegas and Detroit as suburb developments being abandoned completely rather than undergoing any type of retooling or retrofitting.
In terms of its form and development, the future of suburban developments will be varied, argues Forsyth (2013). Forsyth points to the fact that suburban definitions have not kept up with the reality that suburbs are diverse in their form, densities, and use; thus any prediction of suburban development will be difficult as some suburbs will remain low density mainly white upper middle class while others will take on more density and see benefits of retrofitting projects (Dunham-Jones and Williamson, 2009). In the next section we will explore how housing development will continue to play a significant role in modern suburbs.

3.3.2. Policy Reactions to Early North American Suburbanization

To deal with a large mass of returning American soldiers, as well as the need to keep the post war economic engine churning, a massive buildup of housing was undertaken in the United States. The mass production of housing solved two problems. First, it housed returning soldiers and their families in comfortable suburban homes, and second, it created jobs across various sectors of industry. Both Hanlon and Kunstler state that the suburbanization process brought millions of Americans into the middle class in addition to creating thousands of jobs. The aggregate impacts of suburbanization were benefiting almost all sectors of the American economy, and there appeared little that could stop the massive suburban growth machine (Kunster, 1993, Hanlon et al, 2010). To move the new middle class into the suburbs, both Canada and the United States created housing systems that allowed for the easy procurement of mortgages and other loans (McCann, 2006; Frost, 2001). In the United States, the Veterans Administration in concert with the Federal Housing Administration were incentivizing returning military men to move into brand new turnkey suburban homes by offering no down payments on new homes, and brand new long term – low interest rate mortgages (Kunstler, 1993).

The modern North American suburb is a direct result of post war economic policy and land use planning decisions. Regarding Canada’s post war suburban boom, Richard Harris writes that: “[following the Second World War] the favored from of development became the comprehensively planned Neighbourhood oriented to the automobile, built in carefully managed phases and catering overwhelmingly through mortgage practices and house design to middle-class consumers” (Harris, 1978, p. 32). Regionally this idea excelled in Vancouver, British Columbia, where in 1946, the Lower Mainland Regional
Planning Board was created in order to facilitate the growth of Valley Towns, Town Centres, and Regional Town Centres, with each undergoing the form of suburbanization that Harris explains (Harcourt et al, 2007).

The post-war Canadian and American suburbanization processes were different mainly in two ways: first, the dependency on the personal automobile was much more pronounced in the United States than it was in Canada; second, the pace and growth of development that suburbs underwent was much more rapid and unchecked in the United States in comparison to Canada. In the Canadian suburbanization process, Frost explains that unlike their American counterparts, Canadian cities were much more committed to public transportation and the rejection of large scale freeway programs (Frost, 2001). The difference Frost highlights is that Canadian cities were not as spatially fragmented by freeway development as their American counterparts were. Examples of Canadian communities rejecting freeway fragmentation include Vancouver and Toronto in the 1960’s and 1970’s.

3.4. Housing Affordability in Canada Following the Second World War

In Canada, returning soldiers were greeted by a new housing system that incentivized new housing production and allowed individuals to borrow money in new ways through the newly formed Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) which was established in 1946 (Hulchanski, 2007). Canada’s post war suburbanization was also marked by the passing of the Federal Dominion Housing Act and later the National Housing Act in the 1950’s which opened the door for Canadian suburbs to house many more middle-class households by offering longer borrowing periods and lower down payments (Pavlic and Qian, 2013). One of the major roles of the CMHC in its early days was to facilitate and implement various federal housing and financial programs.

3.4.1. Post War Canadian Housing Policy and the CMHC

Following the end of the Second World War, Canada, through the CMHC, began on a 30-year path towards creating and incentivizing private rental development across the country. The housing product within the Metrotown neighbourhood of Maywood is a
direct result of federal government rental incentive programs. Tony Crook identified two phases of incentives that created the legacy of rental housing across Canada following the Second World War. The first was the Capital Cost Allowances (CCA) technique within the federal tax policy, which enabled individuals and corporations to create paper losses on rental investments and thus reduced tax liabilities on other income. Crook states that: “A key advantage of the CCA provision was that it allowed landlords to reduce taxation on new dwellings in the early years of an investment, thus generating cash in the early years and deferring taxes until later years” (Crook 1998. p.342). The Capital Cost Allowances were dissolved with tax reforms in the mid-1970’s and many of the incentives that corporations and private individuals found with the CCA were no longer present.

The second major rental incentive program in Canada following the War was the Limited Dividend Programme. From 1946 to 1974 the Limited Dividend Programme produced 100,000 units of social housing across Canada. Crook describes how the program worked: companies were given favourable loans in return for limiting their dividend, for charging below-market rents, and for limiting tenants to those in specific income groups (Crook, 1998, p.342). As Crook points out, there was never any strong social housing program in Canada and the provision of affordable rental was left up to individual landlords and small scale developers. The Limited Dividend Programme, however, ensured that without the provision of social housing, rental units were still affordable for low and moderate incomes in Canada. As mentioned before, the housing stock, tenure, and type in Metrotown appears to have been a direct result of these two incentive programs. It should be noted that many of the criticisms made against these programs during their duration were aimed at the substandard housing the programs produced. This critique will come up in this research as well, as the substandard housing, low density, but affordable rental housing at Metrotown is at the centre of the current demoviction issue there.

3.4.2. Maturing Suburbs, Complete Communities and Compactness

To round out this portion of my literature review I shift away from a historical review of the suburbs and focus on what the future holds for suburban developments. Modern suburbs that were a result of North American Post War development are changing in various ways. Perhaps the most drastic change is the withdrawal of political
and public-financial support for the suburban developments. Gone are the days of publicly funded financial and construction programs that helped build the swaths of single family homes following the War. Newly built suburban developments are now delivered through the private market and rely heavily on marketing, financing, and low land costs to sell their subdivisions (Nelson, 2013). The future of the suburbs appears to favour the concept of retrofitting and working with what already exists within them (Jones, 2011).

Jill Grant provides a rationale as to why our relationship with the suburbs will need to drastically change. Six emerging trends are highlighted by Grant as signs that the traditional single-family suburb will increasingly become a development pattern of the past. Grant cites: rising energy costs, lagging employment, falling incomes, shifting wealth, tighter home financing, and changing housing and community preferences, as reasons why the suburbs will be forced to change both in terms of how they perform socially and their patterns of development (Grant, 2013, p. 6). Grant and other academics like Nelson (2013), Forsyth (2013), Fawcett (2013), Blais (2013), and Filion (2013) have noted a shift towards infill development and urbanization; however, the effects of ‘parasitic suburbanization’ are still being felt in North America (Grant et al., 2013).

The stark terminology of parasitic suburbanization comes from Beauregard’s analysis of migration waves in America. Beauregard argues that following the end of the Second World War a massive transfer of wealth occurred from the urban to the suburban realm. For Beauregard the suburbs were a parasite on the urban realm and siphoned off valuable public funding and political attention (Beauregard, 2006). Grant proposes that the fourth wave of migration, typified by the parasitic suburbanization notion, played a central role in the 2008 economic crash and American housing crisis. Grant states: “Parasitic suburbanization came with a price. I estimate that largely because of it, four million more homes were built in the USA than were needed during the 2000s. The Great Recession witnessed more home foreclosures than at any time since the Great Depression. By 2010 the US home ownership rate had fallen to 65.1%” (Grant, 2013, p.7).

Promoting affordable housing policies, building complete communities and developing a compact urban form appear to be a part of the solution to the challenges
presented by decades of suburbanization. As Grant illustrates, changing housing and community preferences are shifting how we build and develop, especially in the suburbs. Compact and complete communities are a beneficial form of development for the residents that live within them. These compact communities are also beneficial for a region’s economic productivity.

### 3.4.3. Evidence for Developing Complete Compact Communities

Robert Cervero found that labour productivity was higher in regions where growth was managed. Cervero states: “An inherent benefit of efficiently managed growth is high labour productivity. This theory is attributable to two key factors: efficient regions provide firms with good access to a comparatively large pool of workers, within any given distance, and correspondingly aid job searches among members of a labour force; and, efficient transport infrastructure increases the speed, and thus reduces the time, of linking labour markets and business enterprises” (Cervero, 2001, p. 4).

As for residents of compact communities, there are findings which show those who live within compact communities are generally more satisfied with their personal relationships compared with residents of low density suburban neighbourhoods (Mouratidis, 2018). Mouratidis highlighted that one of the reasons why individuals are more satisfied with personal relationships in compact urban environments is because of the walkability and shorter distances to facilitate larger social networks (Mouratidis, 2018).

### Historical Analysis of the Suburbs Conclusion

One the main goals of this literature review was to illustrate the connection between suburban development and complete communities. At their ideological core, the suburbs were designed to be self-sustaining and complete. They were intended to provide reprieve and exist independently from their urban counterparts. The process of suburbanization has been marked by key moments, like the prevalence of the private automobile, the inward and outward flow of capital and finances from the urban to the suburban, and major cultural and racial migrations to and from cities impacted the socio-economic composition and nature of both the suburban and urban environment. Retrofitting and redeveloping North American suburbs will be one of the greatest challenges moving forward into the 21st century.
In the next portion of this literature review, I examine how the theory of complete communities currently functions and exists within other similar urban intensification schemes. In the following literature review sections, I also highlight literature that connects the complete community concept with housing affordability principles.
Chapter 4. Literature Review - Complete Community Related Theories and Concepts

When I set out on this research project, I wanted to investigate whether the complete community theory is a distinct theory of development, different from the theories I will be reviewing here. What I found through my literature review is that the concepts of New Urbanism, Transit Oriented Development, Smart Growth, Suburban Downtowns and Metrotowns, are similar. The term Complete Communities in many cases can be used interchangeably with the other concepts mentioned. The purpose of this section is to highlight how other related theories share many of the core concepts that the complete community theory puts forward.

In this section, I introduce and elaborate on five similar urban intensification theories: New Urbanism, Smart Growth, Transit Oriented Development, Suburban Downtowns, and Metrotowns. Various governmental and planning organizations across North America, when defining complete communities, often include elements of creating communities, either existing or new, that demonstrate compactness, affordable housing, are accessible to all ages and abilities, and prioritize alternative modes of transportation over automobile use. This portion of the literature review focuses on five popular development and planning practices with which the concept of complete communities shares its identity. Table 1 presents a comparison of how three of the five development concepts I explore in this chapter relate to one another. The data for table 1 was produced from three local planning entities and demonstrates how local examples of these development schemes are implemented. The table only illustrates the similarities these concepts share in the literature they are referencing. Similar indicators were bundled together in each concept. It is evident that these three planning concepts of complete communities, Smart Growth, and TOD are far more similar than they are different, and the application of one of these development approaches will include elements of the other.
### Table 1  Comparison of Urban Intensification Schemes

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<td></td>
<td>Compact Settlements</td>
<td>Intensify the existing fabric rather than expand into greenfield areas; Take advantage of specific intensification opportunities</td>
<td>Destinations – focus growth along high demand destination along frequent transit corridors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Balance Between residents and jobs</td>
<td>Direct employment to strengthen the core and designated sub-Centres, and;</td>
<td>Diversity – increase housing mix, balance the job and housing mix, and create vibrant communities</td>
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<td>More affordable housing to job concentrations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>A ratio of at least one job for every person in the labor force is a desirable community ratio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Density</td>
<td>Making life easier for people by providing more goods, services, and opportunities closer to where they live.</td>
<td>Denser, mixed-use development in greenfield areas</td>
<td>Density – promote infill and concentrate density along frequent transit stops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>More opportunities to cycle and walk to activities</td>
<td>Increase transportation choice and reduce car usage;</td>
<td>Demand Management – discourage unnecessary driving, support walking and cycling to be the cheapest and easiest forms of transportation</td>
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<td>Improved transit services to education and other activity Centres</td>
<td></td>
<td>Distance support fine grained networks for pedestrians and cyclists, design for walkability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Design – support public realm design and promote walking and cycling uses of streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Greater mix of housing types/house hold sizes</td>
<td>Increase supply of new affordable housing;</td>
<td>Diversity – increase housing mix, balance the job and housing mix, and create vibrant communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improve range of housing types</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 1 we can see that New Urbanism, Smart growth, complete communities, Transit Oriented Development (TOD), Suburban Downtowns, and Metrotowns are interrelated concepts that advocate for the same type of compact development, yet they are employed as five distinct approaches to development and urban planning. In the following sections I expand and explore literature that connects each of these theories with the complete communities concept.
4.1.1. **New Urbanism and Complete Communities**

Jill Grant, in her book *Planning the Good Community: New Urbanism in Theory and Practice*, provides a definition that links the ideas of New Urbanism and complete communities: “Drawing on historic lessons from the most beautiful and successful cities, new urban approaches affirm the appeal of compact, mixed use, walkable, and relatively self-contained communities. Instead of car-oriented development practices, New Urbanism argues for traditional architecture and building patterns that facilitate walking and create strong urban identities” (Grant, 2006 p.1). Grant’s definition highlights the important architectural and design aspects that embody the new urbanist ideal. Often associated with Traditional Neighbourhood Development (TND), New Urbanism promotes a nostalgic sense of communities that were walkable and compact prior to the Second World War (Grant, 2012).

In 1981, the pioneers of the New Urbanist movement Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk planned and developed the idyllic New Urbanist prototype community of Seaside, Florida. The development of Seaside was viewed as a modern day response to the Garden City movement in urban planning which influenced mass suburbanization in the United States following World War II (Fulton, 1996; Grant, 2006). Rather than an emphasis on space and privacy most commonly found in traditional suburban subdivisions, the New Urbanist development at Seaside promoted compact, pedestrian friendly mixed-use communities.

Following the success of Seaside, Duany and Plater-Zyberk, along with several other architects and urban planners, formed the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) in 1993. In 1996 the group ratified a charter which to this day outlines the mandate of New Urbanism which has now spread worldwide as a popular approach to urban planning (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2017). New Urbanism has taken many forms and has been implemented in several scales and contexts including central cities as well as suburban greenfield developments. The essence of what New Urbanism aspires to achieve is summed up by Jill Grant:

New Urbanism and related approaches share an interest in designing urban places that are vibrant, mixed-use, and pedestrian-friendly, with well-defined edges, coherent open space systems, and civic centres. They emphasize an attractive public realm, high-quality design, alternatives to automobile use, and mixed housing types. Their urban
pattern follows traditional (pre-twentieth century) forms. While American New Urbanism often proposes connected street systems and traditional architectural designs, European approaches may feature modernist architecture and secluded residential streets or mews. (Grant. 2006. p.60)

Whether or not New Urbanism achieves the goals outlined by Grant above is up for debate. What is clear, however, is that both developers and municipalities find New Urbanist developments attractive both from a market and social perspective. Grant points out that many planners see New Urbanism as a normative theory that provides the tools to implement a vision of ‘good’ community (Grant, 2006). ‘Good’ community is the sort of language that is used in New Urbanist theory and iterated in official CNU literature, for example, section thirteen of the Charter of the Congress for the New Urbanism uses the language of ‘authentic community’. The following excerpt is taken from the Charter of the New Urbanism:

Within neighborhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2017).

By using language like ‘good’ and ‘authentic’, it can be assumed that New Urbanism attempts to create utopian inspired communities, however, as we will see from the works of Grant and Smith, the push towards inclusive New Urbanist communities has sometimes resulted in the opposite and even evoked revanchist style municipal policies.

4.1.2. Housing Affordability and New Urbanism

In the Charter for the New Urbanism, two sections directly address the important role of housing in New Urbanist theory. Section seven states: “Cities and towns should bring into proximity a broad spectrum of public and private uses to support a regional economy that benefits people of all incomes. Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the region to match job opportunities and to avoid concentrations of poverty.” Section thirteen of the charter states: Within neighbourhoods, a broad range of housing types and price levels can bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction, strengthening the personal and civic bonds essential to an authentic community. Section seven and thirteen are the only explicit mentions of affordable
housing in the charter, they also provide an interesting insight into the role that affordable and adequate housing has in the New Urbanist agenda.

Unfortunately, the market reality of New Urbanist developments highlights the inability for New Urbanism to provide affordable housing for those that are outside of the middle to upper classes of society. The work of academics like Song and Knapp, and Eppli and Tu highlight the economic problems of New Urbanism in housing matters. In 1999, Eppli and Tu concluded in their study of one of the first new urbanist developments in the US, Kentlands in Maryland, that most of the projects in Kentlands were priced at above-market rates (Tu, C. and Eppli, M, 1999).

Song and Knaap further expanded on the Kentlands study by examining New Urbanist developments across the new United States and found that potential homeowners were willing to pay an 18% premium for housing in New Urbanist developments that provided walkable neighbourhoods, and access to transit and amenities (Song & Knaap, 2003). Finally, Emily Talen further elaborates on the work of Song and Knaap and Eppli and Tu in her 2012 study which focused on the attitudes developers have towards affordable housing in mixed-income new urbanist neighbourhoods in the United States.

Talen found that developers in the United States had difficulties accessing credit and government subsidy programs for mixed income affordable housing in their new urbanist projects mainly due to two factors: first, creditors were unwilling to lend to projects that promoted section seven of the Congress of New Urbanism charter because of a perception that mixed income affordable developments were undesirable on the basis that these developments would bring crime and lower property values.

Second, developers themselves felt that through their own research, homeowners were hesitant to buy into mixed-income new urbanist developments because of the reasons stated previously: perception of crime following low-income residents, and the decrease in property values they thought would follow (Talen, 2012). Homophily and neighbourhood homogeneity were factors outside of the developer’s powers to address in all the studies mentioned above and as Talen states there is very little government oversight or enforcement of new urbanist developments to live up to their affordability and social agenda: “In New Urbanism, for example, actual achievement
of socially diverse community building is optional. Builders of exclusive resort communities are welcomed into the organization, sit on the Congress of New Urbanism board, and are given awards. There is no accounting of social goal achievement, little understanding of what it takes to achieve social diversity and little disclosure about the failure to move beyond neighbourhood homogeneity" (Talen, 2012).

4.1.3. **Limits of New Urbanism**

The theory of New Urbanism sounds good on paper, however, as Jill Grant and Neil Smith have pointed out, there have always existed incompatibilities between New Urbanism and the sociopolitical and economic system in which it has no choice but to function within. The result of this fundamental incompatibility is what Jill Grant refers to as the four ironies of New Urbanism.

1. New Urbanism appeals to traditional forms and values while adopting modernist tactics.

2. New Urbanism supports enhancing the public realm while advancing the private realm.

3. New Urbanism advocates urban forms while building suburban enclaves.

4. New Urbanism calls for democratic and participatory communities and an egalitarian social vision while insisting on the need for expert judgment and producing developments for elite consumers.

What Grant's four ironies point out is the disconnection between the theory and practice of New Urbanism. What has resulted from this disconnection is the exacerbation of housing affordability issues and social issues around mixed income and socially diverse neighbourhoods. What is even more problematic is the image that New Urbanism sells to municipalities and homeowners. As Grant points out, affordability and socioeconomic equality, have sometimes proven secondary to getting New Urbanist developments built (Grant, 2009). Grant goes on further to elaborate that most New Urbanist projects have few jobs and limited cultural and racial diversity mix, and New Urbanists advocate community values while some projects destroy poor neighbourhoods (Grant, 2006). Grant is joined by Neil Smith who echoes the idea that New Urbanist theory is unable to implement a social housing agenda, because of its neoliberal capitalist nature (Smith, 1999). Although nothing as explicit as overt revanchism has taken place in Burnaby, there are undertones that the neoliberal mechanisms that
enable New Urbanism have affected housing affordability, and exacerbated income and social inequality in Metrotown. My interviewees expressed concern that Metrotown is trending towards a community in which teachers, firefighters, and other essential workers no longer live within the community but rather commute in and out of it on a daily basis. This trend will affect a core tenet of the complete community theory and that is providing employment opportunities to those that live within the community. One caveat that ought to be stressed more in a complete community approach is that local area wages must enable local residents to achieve housing affordability goals (e.g. live within their means (30% housing and income ratio), adequate and safe housing).

4.1.1. Employment and Complete Communities:

One important aspect of complete communities that was highlighted throughout my research was the connection between local area employment, housing affordability and complete communities. Ideal complete communities should have a balance between jobs and people living within the community. This balance should take into consideration housing affordability principles and ensure that local area wages match the cost of housing within the community. The connection between jobs and complete communities was one of the founding ideas for Howard and the Garden City movement (Steuer, 2000; Frost, 2001; Merlin, 2014). The idea that residents should work and live in the same community has benefits from a sustainability perspective, however, complete communities struggle to retain a balance between jobs, transportation behaviors, and housing. Louis Merlin, in his study measuring community completeness, focuses on the link between jobs and housing balance. In his study he finds that in large metropolitan areas where mobility is high, residents do not feel a need to live in the same community in which they work, as Merlin points out, “Given the range of residential and employment choices available in a sizable metropolitan region, residents rarely choose to work and live in the same community if they have high levels of mobility” (Merlin, 2014). One interesting finding Robert Cervero puts forward is that: “In a high-cost housing market, it is plausible that workers are willing to endure longer commutes in return for suitable housing on the fringes” (Cervero, 2001, p.18). Cervero also points out that large metropolitan regions with nodes of compact urban cores that are well serviced by transit infrastructure have much higher economic productivity compared to traditional freeway focused cities.
The points that Merlin and Cervero make are interesting as they highlight a potential drawback of the complete community principle which is the failure often to connect housing affordability to local area employment and wages. This point will be explored within the context of Metrotown in chapter 12. In the next section I highlight development theories that share similarities with the complete communities concept. The purpose of highlighting these theories is to show the reader that differentiating the complete communities concept from other more popular urban intensification theories is challenging and brings into question what role does the complete community ideal play in community development – is it an urban planning and policy goal or is it a process that pushes development to consider certain elements that can help make communities more healthy, vibrant and sustainable? In the concluding chapters of this thesis I argue that through some retooling, the complete communities theory can be both a process and end goal for municipalities and other planning organizations to strive towards. In the following section I examine related urban intensification theories.

4.2. Complete Community Related Concepts

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) shares many similarities with New Urbanism and complete communities in that it seeks to provide a form of development that is less car dependent and focused on developing compact communities around high frequency transit corridors– the belief of the TOD concept, as with other similar concepts, is that cities were more sustainable, healthy, and vibrant before the dominance of the automobile (Dittmar et al., 2004). Modern implementation of the TOD principle focuses on providing high density mixed use zoning around transit stations and promotes the use of alternative modes of transportation including cycling, walking, and public transit. There is also an importance placed on public realm design within transit oriented developments. The success of transit oriented developments is also dependent on government coordination which, through the use of policy, helps implement TOD projects – examples of policy enabling TOD projects include the use of mixed use municipal zoning and coordinating regional and municipal transportation objectives through regional planning.
4.2.1. **Smart Growth**

The Smart Growth development policy was a response by governments to address unchecked development and the growing environmental, social, and economic concerns resulting from urban sprawl in North America following the Second World War (CMHC, 2005). In a 2005 CMHC report on Smart Growth, a definition is provided: Smart Growth refers to land use and development practices that enhance the quality of life in communities, preserve the natural environment, and save money over time. The aim is to limit costly urban sprawl, use tax dollars more efficiently and create more livable communities (CMHC, 2005). Smart Growth is particularly useful when describing the development in Metro Vancouver which has followed many smart growth principles since the 1950’s with the release of the first regional planning document in Metro Vancouver titled: The Lower Mainland Looks Ahead (LMRPB, 1952). Smart Growth is mainly exemplified in the Regional Centre (formally Regional Town Centres) development that Metro Vancouver, and its constituent municipalities, have followed in the last 60 years.

4.2.2. **Suburban Downtowns and Metrotowns**

In this section I highlight two unique planning theories that connect the concept of complete communities to a suburban setting.

**Suburban Downtowns**

In his study of suburban development in various Toronto suburbs, Edward Relph developed his idea of a Suburban Downtown. Relph stated that suburban downtowns ought to possess two qualities. First, they must have a major landscape or civic feature like a city hall, mall, or library, and second, they must be products of intentional planning processes. In Relph’s observations, the intentional planning process that created suburban downtowns in Scarborough, Markham, Pickering and Mississauga was the 1976 Toronto-Centered Region Concept (Relph. 1991).

**Metrotowns**

Metrotowns were a form of development R.W Archer studied in Australia during the 1960’s. It is unclear whether there is a direct connection between Burnaby’s Metrotown and the Metrotowns that exist in Australia, however, the similarities are striking. Both Larry Beasley and David Pereira in their dissertations arrived at the
conclusion that R.W Archer in his 1969 study of Metrotowns provided the most appropriate description of Metro Vancouver’s Regional Town Centre model and consequently best described Burnaby’s Metrotown (Beasley, 1976. Pereira, 2011). As table 2 highlights, the Metrotown concept, although meant for a citywide application, encapsulates the characteristics of Burnaby’s Metrotown.

**Table 2  Features of a Metrotown. Source: Archer, 1969r**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Features of a Metrotown</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit for Planned Development:</td>
<td>Physically distinct and planned urban units with populations ranging from 50,000 to 200,000 persons Each containing a wide range of activities including offices, industry and tertiary services and facilities to provide a large number and wide range of local employment opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Employment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Centre:</td>
<td>Each containing a large city-type Centre and providing a range of retail, entertainment, medical and educational services for the local population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space and Transport:</td>
<td>Physical separation from other Metrotowns by a network of wide &quot;green belts&quot; to provide definition and landscape contrast for each metro-town, and to accommodate a network of metropolitan transportation corridors together with a number of institutional-type activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth Capacity</td>
<td>Further metropolitan growth through new Metrotowns with the greenbelt network accommodating the necessary expansion of the transport corridors and special land uses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through an overview of suburban development and Metrotowns, it becomes clear that the urbanization of the suburbs has been a process in the making since at least the 1960’s in the Western World. Urbanizing the suburbs is often seen as a solution to alleviating many regional planning issues like easing transportation problems and having people live close to where they work – these are the challenges that Suburban Downtowns and Metrotowns are meant to solve. In Metro Vancouver we have seen the success of these suburban development programs shine through in the development of the Town Centre model. In comparing Toronto and Vancouver suburban development patterns, Pierre Filion notes the nodal development of areas like Metrotown and the prevalence of Vancouver regional planning, more so than has been the case in Toronto, to emphasize higher residential development around key transit hubs (Filion and Kramer, 2011).
4.3. Suburban Gentrification

As mentioned above, there is a strong case for the connection between new urbanism, gentrification, and housing unaffordability. Academics like Smith and Grant have highlighted the ironies and problematic aspects of implementing New Urbanist ideals into community development. In this section we will explore the literature around suburban gentrification and how it relates to the concepts of New Urbanism, Smart Growth, and Transit Oriented Development.

An emerging field of study in the academic realm of suburbia is the concept of suburban gentrification. Neil Smith and Jason Hackworth give general context to suburban gentrification by outlining three waves of gentrification that began in the 1950’s and followed through to the 1990’s. Smith and Hackworth point out that the ebbs and flow of government support and spending on social programs, as well as the role of private capital in urban development have been the main catalysts in the various waves of gentrification (Hackworth and Smith, 2001). The three waves of gentrification that Smith and Hackworth are describing mainly applied to urban centres and did not affect suburban settings for the most part. However, Hackworth and Smith make the argument that the culmination of the first three waves has now resulted in a fourth wave of gentrification that is typified by “…[an] outward diffusion of gentrification from the urban center” (Hackworth and Smith, 2001.p.464). Lees et al. characterize this fourth wave of gentrification as “an intensified financialization of housing combined with the consolidation of pro-gentrification politics and polarized urban policies” (Lees et al, 2008, p.179).

4.3.1. Suburban Gentrification and Housing Affordability

It is important to understand the role of suburban gentrification when discussing the impact of New Urbanism on housing affordability. Both Markus Moos and Scott Markley make the argument that New Urbanism planning policies and the policy tools they leverage, like mixed use zoning, have resulted in housing unaffordability and the creation of enclaves for the wealthy (Moos, 2017; Markley, 2017). Matt Hern emphasizes the notion that New Urbanism and sustainability initiatives add to unaffordability when he states: “…New Urbanism is very clearly creating a new and specific dialectic of tidy unaffordability. It’s a real dilemma: in making a city more
attractive and liveable, “sustainability” is fast becoming just another commodity” (Hern, 2010, p. 27).

Moos, in his study of mixed use zoning policies, tested the hypothesis that by raising the amenity value of specific locations, mixed-use zones will see larger declines in affordability than the rest of the city and metropolitan region and that this impact will be larger for occupational groups whose incomes are negatively influenced by shifts toward a knowledge based economy (Moos, 2018). Moos’ conclusion is that: “...our analysis paints a picture consistent with general notions in the literature: The core of the city—the most lively and amenity-rich areas where people can live, work, and play in proximity—is increasingly unaffordable, especially to those in lower paid occupations.” Moos’ argument plays into the notion that urban and suburban gentrification is increasingly pushing low income residents and lower skilled workers to the fringes of our cities and regions” (Moos, 2018, p. 15).

4.3.2. Metrotown and Suburban Gentrification

The concepts of new urbanism, suburban gentrification, and housing unaffordability are tied together within the context of Metrotown by geographers Craig Jones and David Ley who studied the impact of gentrification along Metro Vancouver’s Skytrain corridor and found that many low-income residents, refugees, and immigrants were being displaced by redevelopment in historically affordable communities (Jones and Ley, 2016). They state: “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” (Jones, 2015, p. 8). Jones and Ley point to specific municipal policies that have enabled displacement and intense development in certain Metrotown neighbourhoods. They also point to the role of the Transit Oriented Development theory which is enabling displacement and gentrification in the area. Jones and Ley iterate that the adoption of Transit Oriented Development at Metrotown, although it endorses the preservation of the natural environment, is having major negative social impacts on the community: “A new twist … is that suburban gentrification is being accomplished by state-endorsed transit-oriented development, a progressive set of policies advancing environmental objectives” (Jones and Ley, 2016, p. 11). The relevant factor between my research and the research that Jones and Ley have conducted is the identification of
larger scale policy tools that have been used to justify gentrification at Metrotown. Complete communities and Transit Oriented Development theories advocate for compact high-density communities, and as Ley and Jones have pointed out, this shared principle between complete communities and Transit Oriented Development has resulted in displacement and raised questions around economic inequality and class issues in Metrotown.

4.3.3. **Suburban Gentrification and the Impacts of Demovictions on Residents.**

Tenant displacement is one of the direct outcomes of a demoviction process. Even with protections like a tenant relocation policy, the act of displacement has mental health impacts on vulnerable residents. In 2017, Lim et al conducted a study on a cohort of 12,882 residents in gentrifying neighbourhoods in New York. Between 2006 and 2014, 23% of the cohort was displaced. Compared to those who remained, displaced residents were more likely to make emergency department visits and experience hospitalizations (Lim et al., 2017). Further supporting research that displacement, gentrification, and demovictions have mental health impacts on tenants is provided by Smith et al who studied the impacts of older adults who remained in gentrifying communities. Both economically vulnerable and higher-income older adults in gentrifying neighbourhoods had more depression and anxiety symptoms than those living in more affluent areas. Higher-income older adults in gentrifying neighbourhoods had poorer mental health than their counterparts in low-income neighbourhoods (Smith et al., 2018). Lim et al and Smith et al’s findings reveal that there are mental health impacts on displaced tenants, on top of other burdens including financial insecurity and uncertainty around housing options.

4.4. **Literature Review Conclusion**

The purpose of this literature review was to achieve four objectives. First was to historically situate complete communities and housing affordability and show the reader that complete community and housing affordability principles seek to address the shortcomings of historical and modern suburban development. This includes promoting a compact urban form, minimizing the reliance on the private automobile, developing a wide range of housing types, and connecting the local residential base to local area jobs.
The second objective of this literature review was to illustrate the conceptual similarities that the complete community theory shares with other urban intensification schemes including New Urbanism, TOD, and Smart Growth. Indeed, the complete community theory is a unique urban intensification theory recognized by urban academics and implemented in municipalities across North America.

The third objective was to review both historic and modern North American housing policy and the relationship that exists between developing complete communities and the function of housing affordability within those communities. For Canada I highlighted the influence of post war housing policy on developing Metrotown as the complete community it is today.

The fourth objective was to connect the development of complete communities to suburban gentrification and displacement. I highlighted the work of academics who view the push towards New Urbanist, and Transit Oriented Communities as a path towards gentrification. Understanding the how and why of suburban gentrification is important because it will set the stage for policy to better react to issues around displacement.

The reader should now be aware of the academic literature, theories, and history underpinning this research project. I will now introduce my research methodologies and how they will be applied to my analysis and case study of Metrotown, complete communities, and housing affordability.
Chapter 5.  Methodology & Data Collection

5.1.  Research Design and Objectives

Before setting out on the analysis portion of this thesis and my case study of Metrotown it is important that I introduce the research methodologies used in this project. With my methodologies I wanted to ensure that I was able to capture and highlight the changing nature of Metrotown and what these changes mean for housing affordability and complete community principles. Specifically, with my research design and methodologies I wanted to achieve the following objectives:

- Conduct a historical and current overview of relevant regional and municipal planning documents as they relate to my study area and key research concepts. The intention behind this objective is to highlight the regulatory frameworks which impacted the creation and implementation of complete community and housing affordability policies on regional and municipal scales. This objective was achieved using content analysis, and semi structured interview methodologies.

- Provide the reader with quantitative understanding of complete communities through the evaluation of Metrotown as a complete community using a set of established indicators. The intention behind this objective is to show the reader how Metrotown is either trending away from or towards complete community and housing affordability principles. This will be done using Metro Vancouver’s Complete Community evaluation framework.

- Using content analysis of newspaper articles, blogs, municipal and regional policies as well as semi structured interviews I wanted to illustrate the current housing and complete community challenges that Metrotown is facing. It became clear as my research progressed that I would not be able to conduct a descriptive case study of Metrotown without addressing the demoviction issue currently playing out at Metrotown. Newspaper articles, blogs, interviews, and city records proved to be very valuable in framing the current demoviction issue at Metrotown.
5.2. Usefulness of Descriptive Case Study Methodology

Babbie and Benaquisto consider the case study research design useful because it allows for a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies to uncover complex social phenomena (Babbie and Benaquisto, 2013). This research was designed around a descriptive case study. As Babbie and Benaquisto describe, the case study is not a method but rather a research design choice that is versatile and open to a mixed methods approach. The case study design is particularly useful in describing a single unit or process. With this research, the aim is to use Metrotown as the case study to explore the relationship between housing affordability and complete communities. One of the strengths of the descriptive case study is the ability for the researcher to design a project that intensively focuses on a single instance, case or process of a complex social phenomenon.

The subjects of housing affordability and complete communities are inherently complex and their definitions are not entirely agreed upon in either academic or professional realms. A mixed methods approach that supports a descriptive case study can be drawn from various sources of data. Robert Yin cites six sources of data that a case study can utilize which include: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts (Yin, 1984). This research project utilises interviews, documentation, and archival records to strengthen the outcomes of the descriptive case study design. The drawbacks of the descriptive case study are highlighted in the conclusion of this research project.

5.3. Semi Structured Interviews

Seven interviewees were selected based on their experiences with how urban life has been affected by the development of a complete community at Metrotown. The rationale used to select my interview participants was borrowed from Jill Grant and her research of Canadian suburbs. In Grant’s work, she selected interviewees based on their role in community development. For example, in her research into the challenges of implementing New Urbanism planning principles in Canadian suburbs, Grant interviewed participants with backgrounds in planning, politics, and development. With this thesis I employ a similar methodology as Grant in that I select interview participants based on their relationship and experience with housing affordability and complete
community matters in Metrotown. I feel confident that the seven interviewees I chose were able to represent and speak to my key research concepts and provide insights that I would not be able to gain from my content and quantitative analysis.

I transcribed and coded the seven interviews that I conducted into themes as they relate to complete community and affordable housing. The interviewees covered a wide range of professions including journalists, community activists, and municipal and regional planners.

Table 3 Interview Participants. Source: Author

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interview Participant</th>
<th>Interview Participant Profession</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ken Cameron</td>
<td>Regional Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christina Demarco</td>
<td>Regional Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverly Grieve</td>
<td>Municipal Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Participant 1</td>
<td>Metro Vancouver Regional Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Participant 2</td>
<td>Metro Vancouver Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johannes Schumann</td>
<td>City of Burnaby Planner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray Martin</td>
<td>ACORN – Community Organizer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I treated each interview individually and catered questions to each interviewee. Interview questions were adjusted prior to each interview and emerging themes and concepts were elaborated on further by the use of follow up questions during the interviews. The semi structured interview method allowed for a conversation-like experience with my participants rather than a rigid interview. However, to keep the interviews focused on the concepts of complete community and housing affordability, interviewees were asked the following base set of questions: 1. Please define what a complete community means to you. 2. Is achieving complete communities a process rather than a goal? 3. What role does affordable housing or housing affordability play in complete communities? 4. What have been the successes and failures of implementing complete community and housing affordability principles at Metrotown? From these four base questions, follow up questions were asked and explored with interview participants.

5.4. Content Analysis

To conduct a comprehensive descriptive case study of Metrotown, I relied heavily on content analysis and data collection methodology. My content analysis was divided into two parts. The first part was a policy review of relevant municipal and regional
planning documentation, and the second part of my content analysis reviewed local media and newspaper articles.

5.4.1. **Content Analysis: Policy Review**

Metrotown is a product of policy and planning processes that have taken place over the last 70 years. The Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB) regional vision in 1966 established the future of Metrotown as a regional Town Centre; from there, various planning processes both at the municipal and regional planning levels have shaped Metrotown into the community it is today. With my policy review, I first examined regional planning documentation relevant to Metrotown’s formation and current identity. The following regional documents were reviewed and coded into themes based on my research concepts: Housing affordability and complete communities.

- Livable Regional Strategic Plan (1996)
- Metro Vancouver Regional City Centre Profiles (2017)
- Plan for the Lower Mainland of British Columbia (1980)
- Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (2016)
- Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Study (2016)
- Metro Vancouver 2040: Regional Growth Strategy (2010)

The 12 documents in table 4 highlight the municipal planning literature and policies used in my content analysis. These documents represent the framework that helped form the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan.
Table 4  Burnaby Municipal Planning Documents Used in Content Analysis. Source: Author

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Name</th>
<th>Scope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Official Community Plan (1998)</td>
<td>Burnaby- Citywide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sustainability Strategy (2011)</td>
<td>Burnaby- Citywide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Sustainability Strategy (2016)</td>
<td>Burnaby- Citywide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Centre Standards (2015)</td>
<td>Burnaby- Citywide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Burnaby Transportation Plan (1995)</td>
<td>Burnaby- Citywide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby Housing Profile (2016)</td>
<td>Burnaby- Citywide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Benefit Density Bonus Program (2011) – Burnaby City Council Report</td>
<td>Burnaby- Citywide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby Metrotown: A Development Plan (1977)</td>
<td>Metrotown Specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrotown Downtown Plan (2017)</td>
<td>Metrotown Specific</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.2. Content Analysis: Media Articles

As part of my content analysis I also conducted a data collection and review of relevant media articles pertaining to my key research concepts and study area of Metrotown. I bounded my media collection and analysis from August 2017 to August 2018 and in total I collected 60 newspaper articles, 43 articles from the Burnaby Now and 27 articles using the LexisNexis database which provided me with access to The Vancouver Sun, The Vancouver Province, and The Globe and Mail newspapers. I used a combination of keyword searches in the Burnaby Now and Vancouver Sun databases which helped in identifying the articles that would be useful for my content analysis. Keywords I used included: Metrotown, affordability, development, housing, and demovictions. My media analysis and data collection also included blog articles and special research pieces. For example, to understand one perspective of demovictions at Metrotown I analyzed blog posts from The Volcano, a blog affiliated with the Alliance Against Displacement which is one of the most active advocacy groups in Metrotown. I reviewed special research articles from The Tyee and their work on Burnaby’s development and displacement issues at Metrotown as well.

My data collection of relevant media articles was bound to a one year period in 2017. This was to ensure that my research was not over burdened with analyzing an abundance of newspaper articles over a longer period. It also became clear through my content analysis that the narrative around demovictions in Metrotown was constantly evolving and that I would never truly capture the entire picture of my research concepts.
playing out in Metrotown. I feel confident that my data collection was able to capture the major narratives and discourses around housing affordability and complete communities in Metrotown. The major narratives and discourses I uncovered mainly dealt with displacement, demovictions, opposition to the Metrotown Downtown Plan, opposition to council approval of rezoning projects, Burnaby council and the mayor’s unwillingness to take on housing affordability challenges, and the changing demographics and nature of the Metrotown community.

5.5. Quantitative Methodology Approach: Conceptualizing and Operationalizing Complete Communities

One of the main features of this research project is measuring how well Metrotown performs as a complete community. In order to do this I chose an established indicator system of measuring complete communities found in table 5 and applied it to my Metrotown study area. The reasons for conducting this quantitative exercise were to show that complete communities can be defined and measured at a scale smaller than a municipality, and to show how housing affordability plays an integral role in the complete communities concept.

To conduct my quantitative analysis, I chose an indicator set derived from the Metro 2040 Dashboard which measures how well municipalities are achieving the goals laid out in the current Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy. Metro Vancouver used nine indicators to measure how municipalities are trending in regards to creating complete communities. Table 5 outlines and describes how each indicator measures an aspect of a complete community.

Table 5 is derived from Metro Vancouver’s Metro 2040 Regional Growth Strategy online dashboard which was set up as part of the strategy’s method of monitoring its goals. To frame the quantitative data collection and analysis portion of this research project, there needed to be a justifiable data collection process and clear performance measures that speak to complete communities. These two factors were addressed with the use of Metro Vancouver’s definition and performance indicators of complete communities found in table 5. The four main complete community indicators are supported by nine performance indicators that rely on CMHC, Canadian Census, Metro Vancouver, and the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver for their data. One of the
stated goals of this research is to provide an analysis of complete communities at a more fine grained community level, rather than the current municipality-wide level which complete communities are being measured by in Metro Vancouver.
Combining housing and transportation costs (H+T) provides a new way of looking at affordability. Housing and transportation represent the two largest expenditures for many working households. Housing and transportation costs are intrinsically linked – a lower priced home may be associated with a longer and more expensive commute; conversely, a shorter commute by transit may be associated with a more expensive home.

- Median Household Income
- Housing Costs
- Transportation Costs

Municipal Housing Actions
This measure monitors adoption and implementation of housing action plans. Adopting a housing action plan indicates the commitment of a municipality to facilitate housing diversity and affordability.

- Adopted and implemented housing action plan

Housing Choices
Two ways of measuring the composition of housing developments are by housing type and housing tenure. Housing types include ground-oriented dwellings (houses, townhouses), apartments, and row houses. Housing tenure means whether the dwelling unit is owned (freehold or condominium) or rented. Having a diversity of housing by type and tenure ensures residents have access to housing suitable and desirable to their life stage and income.

- New Dwelling Unit Completions By Tenure
- New Dwelling Unit Completions By Type
- Purpose Built Rental Apartment Rents
- Housing Price Index

Rental Demand and Supply
The Regional Affordable Housing Strategy provides estimates for rental housing demand by income level. The intent of this measure is to track how that demand is being met through new supply. To meet demand, funding from other levels of government is required. These estimates are provided as reference to assist in long range planning and represent a mid-range / average trend projection based on the existing rental households in each municipality.

- Metro Vancouver Housing Demand Projections to 2026

\[1\] Derived from Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Analysis of the City of Burnaby

Note: Table data include all non-farm, non-band, non-reserve private households reporting positive incomes and shelter cost-to-income ratios less than 100 per cent. For renters, shelter costs include, as applicable, rent and payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal...
services. For owners, shelter costs include, as applicable, mortgage payments (principal and interest), property taxes, condominium fees, and payments for electricity, fuel, water and other municipal services.

Another component of my methodology is the creation of my Metrotown study area which is a distinct geography created by combining 6 census tracts located in the Metrotown area. My methodology for creating the Metrotown study area is described in the next chapter.
Chapter 6. Defining the Metrotown Study Area

To conduct a quantitative analysis using Metro Vancouver’s complete community indicator set I needed to create a study area for which I could collect census data. As mentioned previously, Metro Vancouver’s approach uses the municipal scale of analysis and thus a major exercise of this thesis was to transcribe Metro Vancouver’s indicators to the community level. In this chapter, I outline the study area which I created for this thesis in order to conduct a quantitative analysis of the Metrotown community. To create my study area (figure 2), I used a combination of census tracts to recreate a close approximation of Burnaby’s geographic designation of Metrotown that the City used for the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan (figure 3).

6.1. Designing My Metrotown Study Area

When I set out to conduct my descriptive case study of Metrotown, I needed to ensure the reader would understand the geographical, demographic and socio-economic properties of the community. There are two reasons for defining a unique study area of Metrotown. First, the City of Burnaby uses a boundary definition of Metrotown that does not align with any census tracts that are publicly available through Statistics Canada. Second, Metro Vancouver’s analysis of complete community indicators is conducted at the municipal level and thus a key piece of work was to transpose the indicators Metro Vancouver uses to the smaller scale of Metrotown. This allowed me to examine census data to inform the analysis of Metrotown as a complete community.

The Metrotown Study area I created for this research utilized six census tracts highlighted in table 6 below. It should be noted that I created neighbourhood names that closely reflect the neighbourhoods in Burnaby’s Metrotown Downtown Plan, and in cases where the geography was too misaligned, like with the Metrotown Gateway neighbourhood, I named the neighbourhood based on its land use ideals described in the 2017 Metrotown Plan.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metrotown Study Area</th>
<th>City of Burnaby Metrotown Neighbourhood Equivalent</th>
<th>Census Tract ID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metro Downtown</td>
<td>Metro-Downtown / The Ridge</td>
<td>0226.03 (9330226.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlborough</td>
<td>Marlborough</td>
<td>0226.04 (9330226.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maywood</td>
<td>Maywood</td>
<td>0227.01 (9330227.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park</td>
<td>Central Park East / Maywood</td>
<td>0227.02 (9330227.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrotown Gateway</td>
<td>Central Park East / Metro-Downtown</td>
<td>0228.03 (9330228.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park North</td>
<td>Central Park North</td>
<td>0228.04 (9330228.04)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study area created for this research, represented in figure 2, is a close approximation of what Burnaby uses to designate Metrotown, represented in figure 3, with only one of the census tracts deviating slightly from Burnaby's Metrotown boundary. Figure 2 shows a map of my research study area. The yellow cross-hatched section of Central Park North indicates where my study area extends further than Burnaby's Metrotown boundary.

Figure 2  Thesis Specific Metrotown Study Area. Source: Author (2018)
6.1.1. **Study Area Differences:**

A caveat to consider for my study area is the difference between the neighbourhood boundaries Burnaby uses for official urban planning work in Metrotown, and the Metrotown neighbourhood boundaries of my study area. The difference in the neighbourhood boundaries is illustrated between figure 2, my study area, and figure 3, Burnaby’s Metrotown neighbourhood boundaries. There are three significant neighbourhood differences that need to be noted: first, the Maywood neighbourhood in Burnaby’s Metrotown definition is much larger in area than the census tract that I have labeled as Maywood in my study area, and in my study area the Central Park neighbourhood includes a large segment of Burnaby’s Maywood area. The second difference is the lack of the Ridge neighbourhood in my study area which is included in Burnaby’s Metrotown neighbourhoods. Third, the area designation of Central Park North in my study area projects further north and includes several more single-family homes than what Burnaby designates with its Metrotown boundary.

My additional study area in Central Park North accounted for 140 single detached homes and 65 semi-detached houses which are not represented in Burnaby’s designation of Metrotown. These differences needed to be highlighted to make clear that any neighbourhood analysis done in this research cannot be associated with the neighbourhoods used in Burnaby’s Metrotown designation. However, taken as an entire community, the Metrotown boundaries used in this research and in Burnaby’s designation match with only a minor deviation in area, the data differences this deviation results in are highlighted in table 7.

Overall, the impact that the addition of a larger population, more detached single-family houses, and a wider geographic area has on my research is minimal, but the reader should be aware that my study area is not an exact representation of how Burnaby defines Metrotown. In the next chapter, I examine how top level regional policy has helped facilitate the creation of Metrotown as a complete community.
Figure 3  Metrotown Neighbourhood Map 2017 Source: City of Burnaby – Metrotown Downtown Plan (2017)

Table 7  Study Area Differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Indicator</th>
<th>Metrotown (as defined by this research project)</th>
<th>Metrotown (as defined by the City of Burnaby)</th>
<th>Amount of difference in demographic data between my research study area and Burnaby’s Metrotown designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population(^1)</td>
<td>31,003</td>
<td>27,713</td>
<td>+3290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Occupied Private Dwellings(^2)</td>
<td>14,147</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>+1147</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)2017 Canadian Census Information  
\(^2\)2011 Canadian Census Information
Chapter 7. Metro Vancouver and Complete Communities

The development of Metrotown as a complete community has been supported by both the region and the City of Burnaby. In this chapter, we will explore the relationship between the regional Town Centre model and the creation of complete communities.

7.1. Metro Vancouver Regional Context and History

Planning and developing Regional Town Centres (RTCs) in the Metro Vancouver area had its beginnings in the 1950’s when the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB) released its vision for the Lower Mainland in a document titled “The Lower Mainland Looks Ahead” (LMRPB, 1952). Within this document, the Metro Vancouver region was to follow the American trend of decentralizing and spreading growth out into the region. This growth would be focused in what the LMRPB called valley towns (LMRPB, 1952). Valley towns eventually evolved into the concept of Regional Town Centres by the 1960’s and 1970’s. At the same time, the initial foundations of creating complete communities within RTCs began to occur.

Within the LMRPB’s Official Regional Plan (1966), Regional Town Centres became the tool that the region would use for growth management. It was envisioned that compact Regional Towns, each with its own business and civic centre, would complement a regional business, social, and financial Core in downtown Vancouver (LMRPB, 1966). It appears that these concepts play into the idea of elements of a complete community. Initial locations of RTCs were loosely given in the LMRPB’s 1966 plan, however, it was the GVRD’s 1975 Livable Region Strategy which fully fleshed out the concept of RTCs by laying out their function, form, and location within the Lower Mainland region. The 1975 Livable Region Strategy is also the first time that the term complete communities is mentioned explicitly in popular regional planning literature:

Our picture of daily life deals with basics: where a person lives, where he works, the Regional Town Centre where he finds community life and liveliness. These places are close together, for this should be a Region of complete communities - livable cities in a sea of green - each containing many of the opportunities a metropolis offers (GVRD, 1975).
Four initial RTCs were outlined in the Livable Region Strategy: Burnaby Metrotown, Downtown New Westminster, Coquitlam and Whalley-Guildford. The intention of these RTCs was to provide a broad range of employment opportunities, community and cultural facilities, housing, and other services (GVRD, 1975). The GVRD would return in 1980 to further flesh out its RTC policies with a focus on jobs and transportation. The Plan for the Lower Mainland of British Columbia GVRD document outlined a very specific vision for RTCs. This vision would have a major impact on the development of Metrotown as both an RTC and complete community. Under the Centres Policies section of the document, RTCs would be the location of major retail and shopping facilities, office employment, and cultural services (GVRD, 1980).

7.1.1. Moving Towards Complete Communities

Metrotown is a product of the successful implementation of Metro Vancouver’s Regional Town Centre Model. This model was described as a series of “cities in a sea of green” by the early regional government of Metro Vancouver (LMRPB, 1963). The vision of Metro Vancouver was to balance growth amongst a series of Town Centres while preserving and respecting the environment between these Town Centres. The concept of the Regional Town Centre model was created to deal with suburban sprawl, as Ken Cameron states: “[in the early days of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board,] growth was rapid, densities were low, and there was too much emphasis on the core [Vancouver]” (Cameron, 2017). The vision was to connect each of the Town Centres with a rapid transit line. Metrotown envisioned this rapid transit line in its 1977 development plan which regarded rapid transit as a vital piece of infrastructure to anchor and support the dense forms of housing and high concentration of jobs at Metrotown.

7.1.2. Complete Communities and Metro Vancouver Policies in the 21st Century

By the 1990’s the GVRD was beginning to develop the concept of RTCs to include ideals of complete communities. Beginning in 1990, the GVRD set out on a six-year engagement strategy with the region’s public. This strategy was titled Creating Our Future and included reports and findings of the engagements in 1990, 1993, and 1996. The strategy’s main purpose was to address two issues. First was the problematic regional nature of a single core serving the region (Vancouver), and the second issue
was the dominance of the automobile and the negative impact of suburban sprawl. The mission statement from the 1990 Creating Our Future summary document states:

“We can no longer afford to pursue the 1960s concept of a single business core surrounded by predominantly residential suburbs all served primarily by the private automobile. This concept leads to fragmentation of community life, excessive dependence on the automobile and the waste of valuable land. (GVRD, 1990, p. 19)

The Creating Our Future engagement process created a list of 54 action items seeking public response. One of the action items the GVRD was hoping to get public input on was: “Working with municipalities and the development industry to create new forms of development that combine a mixture of residential and commercial uses, provide a variety of housing types, tenures and costs, and place greater reliance on walking, cycling and public transit” (GVRD, 1990, p. 19). The public’s response to this principle was overwhelmingly positive and this principle would be included in the 1996 Livable Region Strategy which outlined ‘build complete communities’ as one of the four policy directions for the region.

The definition of complete communities as outlined in the 1990’s did not change considerably and similar wording was used to define complete communities in the 2010 Metro Vancouver: Regional Growth Strategy. Two strategies to achieve complete communities were outlined in the 2010 Regional Growth Strategy: (1) Provide diverse and affordable housing choices. (2) Develop healthy and complete communities with access to a range of services and amenities. Creating and supporting complete communities still appears to be a major focus for Metro Vancouver as evidenced in the term’s usage in the recent 2016 Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (Metro Vancouver, 2016).
Chapter 8. Metrotown Community Overview

Today, Metrotown is a booming Regional City Centre (RCC). The population is young and educated, with 51% of residents between the ages of 20 and 49 and 50% of the total population having a university degree (City of Burnaby, 2017). Metrotown is also an important economic centre as it is home to more than 24,000 jobs, a large shopping mall, and other regional amenities like hotels and conference centres.

8.1.1. Metrotown Geographic Overview

Figure 4 Map of Metro Vancouver and Core Areas. Source: Metro Vancouver (2017)

Metrotown serves as Metro Vancouver’s Geographic centre as seen in figure 4. Metro Vancouver’s early regional planning work identified Metrotown as a key strategic location to develop the regional city centre model. As one of my interviewees pointed out, Metrotown sits upon a plateau overlooking the region, making the views from high rise apartments particularly attractive.
8.1.2. **Metrotown Population Overview**

By area and population Metrotown is the largest of the four town centres in Burnaby (figure 5). Table 8 provides the general population and household count of my Metrotown Study area compared to the rest of Burnaby and the rest of the Metro Vancouver region. Metrotown is a dense community with 81 residents and 77 jobs per hectare. To provide a comparison, Metrotown is the fourth densest Regional City Centre out of nine RCC’s in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 8</th>
<th>Metrotown Demographics compared to the rest of the City of Burnaby</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metrotown Study Area(^1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>31,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total households</td>
<td>16,752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: \(^1\)The table information provided above for the Metrotown Study Area is derived from six census tracts that make up the descriptive case study area. More information on the census tracts chosen for this study area can be found in the Chapter 5 Table Source: Statistics Canada 2016 Census Database
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Area Neighbourhood</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Total Private Dwellings</th>
<th>% of Owner households spending 30% or more on shelter costs</th>
<th>% of Renter households spending 30% or more on shelter costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metro-Downtown</td>
<td>7,638</td>
<td>4,917</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlborough</td>
<td>2,600</td>
<td>1,306</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maywood</td>
<td>5,290</td>
<td>2,742</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park</td>
<td>5,181</td>
<td>2,869</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Gateway</td>
<td>4,566</td>
<td>2,306</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park North</td>
<td>5,728</td>
<td>2,612</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2016 Canadian Census Data

8.1.3. **Metrotown Neighbourhoods Overview**

As outlined in the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan, Metrotown is a collection of six distinct neighbourhoods. Table 9 shows the population breakdown for each neighbourhood and other relevant housing indicators. The Metro-Downtown neighbourhood has seen significant high-rise development since the year 2000 and as a result contains the highest population in the entire Metrotown community.

Populations in Central Park, Metrotown Gateway, and Central Park North all decreased in population between 2011 and 2016, however, the Maywood community dramatically increased its population by 34% between 2011 and 2016. The likely reason for this population increase was the completion of major residential projects in the neighbourhood like the Moda Tower located at 6658 Dow St which contributed 249 residential units to the community, and the Metroplace Tower located at 6461 Telford Ave which added 342 residential units to the Maywood neighbourhood.

The high rate of renters paying more than 30% of their income on shelter costs in the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood is noteworthy – one possible reason for this trend could be the prevalence of high cost secondary rental units in newly built buildings. The three neighbourhoods of Marlborough, Central Park, and Maywood have the highest proportion of purpose built rental housing stock and as such the home ownership population in these neighbourhoods is much lower than other Metrotown neighbourhoods where condo development is much more common.
8.2. **Metrotown Historic Overview**

Burnaby has been a city that has benefited greatly from its geographical position in the Metro Vancouver Region. In 1891 the founding cities of the region, New Westminster and Vancouver, were connected for the first time by an interurban rail system. Along the newly established rail line, settlements and businesses began to pop up and eventually in 1892 the City of Burnaby was settled to better serve the settlements along the interurban rail line. Burnaby would continue to thrive throughout the early 20th century as the interurban railway gave way to paved roads and the private automobile.

Metrotown was a successful community that served the geographic middle ground in Burnaby between New Westminster and Vancouver. David Pereira researched the history of town centres in Burnaby for his master’s thesis and points to the fact that Metrotown success in the early 20th century was largely due to the establishment of a large Ford Motor Company factory, and the Kelly-Douglas and Sears Merchandise distribution centres which once stood where Metrotown Mall stands today (Pereira, 2016).

One of the questions I asked throughout my research was why Metrotown has succeeded as a complete community. When I refer to a successful complete community I refer to a community’s ability to attract residents and businesses while supporting and growing a large base of labour and productivity. Metrotown has embodied these traits as it has grown and developed as community since the early 19th century. One of the major contributors to Metrotown’s success was its development as a working class suburban community during and after the Second World War. Burnaby throughout the War developed housing around its commercial and industrial hubs. As we explored in the literature review, suburbs during the First and Second World Wars were areas of booming growth largely in part to the war effort. Metrotown contributed to the War effort in World War Two by producing military vehicles at the Ford Motor Factory located where the current Metrotown Mall stands (Pereira, 2016). Much of the affordable high-density housing stock found throughout Metrotown was built during and shortly after the Second World War.

Following World War II, Burnaby planning staff created policies like the 1966 and 1969 Apartment Studies that would protect much of the developing low rise secured
market rental housing around Metrotown, which was mainly occupied by working households. The federal rental incentives mentioned in my literature review enabled the affordable rental housing that helped Metrotown become a successful affordable complete community early on in its development history.

Major commercial and industrial facilities at Metrotown helped support the growth of Metrotown following the War. One aspect that Miller did not reflect on in his research was examining what happens to war-effort-focused suburban communities when the war is over. Metrotown’s success is a product of Burnaby being able to carry the momentum as a wartime suburb by ensuring that housing, and commercial and retail opportunities continued their development in Metrotown following the War. Between the 1960’s and 1980’s, Burnaby was accommodating more high-rise apartments throughout its neighbourhood boundary. During this time, Burnaby supported and benefited from various regional planning process which focused economic growth within the region’s town centres, which included Metrotown and many of the community infrastructure projects highlighted in table 10 below.

### Table 10 Metrotown - Complete Community Infrastructure Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Infrastructure Development</th>
<th>Year Completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metro Towers 1 and 2</td>
<td>1985 &amp; 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrotown and Patterson SkyTrain Expo Line Stations</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrotown Mall</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonsor Recreation Centre</td>
<td>1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Prittie Public Library</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolis At Metrotown (Metrotown Mall Extension)</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Mall Development</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It wasn’t until the year 2000 that the current chapter in Metrotown’s development began. The completion of the Crystal Mall development in the year 2000, I argue, marked the beginning of Burnaby’s current pursuit of high-density mixed-use development in its four Towncentres. Burnaby’s pursuit of high-density development is closely associated with a high number of Asian immigrants landing in Burnaby between 1991 and the year 2000, with roughly 31,285 Asian and Pacific immigrants landing in Burnaby during that time period (NewToBC, 2018, p. 7). Burnaby is also a desirable place for new immigrants to land, and by 1999 over 47% of Burnaby’s population were new immigrants mainly arriving from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan (Burnaby, 2009, p.
11). The Asian immigration context is important to understand, especially when looking at the reasoning and eventual outcomes of the Crystal Mall development. Crystal Mall (figure 6) embodies Burnaby’s current planning approach to population growth and housing demand. Crystal Mall can be viewed as a response to a large influx of Asian immigrants to Canada and Burnaby during the 1990’s. In that same light, Burnaby today is responding to regional housing growth targets by providing ample supply in its four Towncentres.

One aspect of Metrotown’s history that deserves particular attention is the role that affordable rental housing has played in shaping the identity of Metrotown since the end of the Second World War.

Figure 6  
Crystal Mall. Source; Public Domain,  
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7469667

8.2.1. A History of Affordable Rental Stock in Metrotown:

My interview with Ken Cameron, a local historian of municipal and regional planning in Vancouver, revealed that Burnaby has a legacy of strong political leadership, both in its councils and within its planning department. To illustrate his point, Ken Cameron highlighted the work of Anthony Parr, the Director of Urban Planning for Burnaby from 1964 to 1993. Parr, as Cameron states, knew of the low-income housing situation in Metrotown and his work on the 1966 and 1969 Apartment Studies were
examples of how Burnaby would protect that stock from demolition and redevelopment. However, Cameron also iterates that Parr knew that the low-income neighbourhoods of Burnaby would eventually give way to market developments due to demand (Cameron, 2017). Beverley Grieve also conveyed, in our interview, that Burnaby planning staff and Mayor Doug Drummond were well aware of the importance of the low-income housing stock in Metrotown for decades and that the area was often seen as underperforming because of its low densities, but valuable because of its affordability. Grieve points to the fact that much of Metrotown was zoned RM3 (low density residential) for longer than many thought it would be, considering the significant growth in the region and city throughout the late 1990’s and 2000’s (Grieve, 2018). We see from Grieve’s and Cameron’s accounts of Burnaby’s policy and political will that there was recognition for a long period of time that Metrotown was a low income community and that the affordable housing stock needed to be protected for as long as possible.

As mentioned previously Metrotown is a changing community in terms of its characteristics, and demographics. The following section will look at the emerging housing trends currently playing out in Metrotown.

8.3. **Current Metrotown Housing Overview**

The approval of the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan allowed for a complete overhaul of the Metrotown’s land use framework. An overview of Metrotown’s current housing situation reveals a community that is in a process of change.

Metrotown is still a predominantly renter community and this fact is represented in figure 7 below. As pointed out in the literature review, the majority of the housing product in Metrotown is a result of two major federal incentive programs which granted private developers tax breaks to produce affordable secured market rental housing. We can see that Metrotown is a product of the federal rental incentive programs by highlighting two indicators. First, the larger proportion of renter households over owner households in Metrotown neighbourhoods (figure 8) highlights the rental focused nature of Metrotown which has a 53% share of renters compared to the overall 38% share of renters across all of Burnaby. One key takeaway to further reiterate how Metrotown was a product of the federal rental incentive programs is illustrated when data from figures 8 and 9 are combined. We can see that neighbourhoods which have an older stock of
housing (figure 7) also had higher rates of rental housing in figure 6, except for Central Park North which is primarily a homeowner neighbourhood typified by single family detached houses.

![Figure 7](image_url)

Figure 7  Percentage of Renters in Metrotown Neighbourhoods and Rest of City of Burnaby. Metrotown Total and Burnaby Whole City Added for Reference. Source: 2016 Canadian Census Data (2016)
8.3.1. **Metrotown Housing Typology**

In terms housing type, over 93% of all residents in the Metrotown study area live in high rise apartments as evidenced in figure 9. We can see that the housing trend in Metrotown appears to be towards the development of larger and taller apartment projects with little progress being made in row housing developments over the last ten years. It should be noted that the increase in row housing between 2011 and 2016 was due to the preferred podium tower design used in Metrotown which has enabled ground-oriented housing at the base of high rise projects, see figure 35 as an example of this design in Metrotown.
8.3.2. **Co-op and Non Market Housing in Metrotown**

In terms of non-market, co-op and supportive housing stock, Metrotown contains 9 projects with a total of 694 units – figure 10 provides the location and relevant project information. Co-ops are often seen as a more secure and affordable housing option when compared to both rental and home ownership. The Centennial Co-op Located at 4160 Bond St is a good illustration of this fact with its average housing costs within the co-op costing $1068 for a 2-bedroom and $1345 for a 4-bedroom unit. Twenty of Burnaby’s 26 housing cooperatives were built with the support of the British Columbia Provincial Government in the ten year period between 1981 and 1990. Since the 1990’s, no new co-ops have been built in Metrotown.
The development of non-market housing might be part of the solution to ensure Metrotown remains an affordable rental community over the next 40 years. The City of Burnaby has been clear that every single zoning allowed under the new Metrotown Plan allows for the inclusion of non-market housing. This claim is likely due to the fact that the
City does not require affordable housing as part of a community amenity contribution. Instead, the City of Burnaby is allowing developers to lead the way in developing the non-market housing stock without making this a requirement. Burnaby, with the new Metrotown Downtown Plan has essentially said: We offer the land, you [developers] build the affordable housing” (Interview with Metro Vancouver Planner, 2018). Some non-profit projects have been approved. In 2017, the City of Burnaby approved the New Vista Society project, a 14 storey supportive housing building which will contain 125 units of non-market housing. What is interesting about this project is Burnaby’s financial commitment to this project totalling $5.6 million from the City-Wide Housing Fund.

8.3.3. Preliminary and Current Land Use Framework for Metrotown

In November 2016, a Draft Metrotown Downtown Plan was submitted to Burnaby Council as part of an update on the plan’s development process and public consultation. In the draft plan reviewed by council, two maps were presented that illustrated the land use framework that would support development over the next 40 years in Metrotown. The maps (figure 11 and 12) are important as they clearly illustrate a vision for Metrotown that supports the dramatic up-zoning and allowance of high-rise buildings. The draft land use maps laid the foundation for the final general land use map in figure 14 which was included in the final approved Metrotown Downtown Plan.
Perhaps the most telling sign that the new Metrotown Downtown Plan aims for higher density developments across the entire neighbourhood comes from figure 12 which highlights the allowable building floor heights in the allowable in the plan. Figure 13 closely relates to the land use designations found in figure 12.
Figure 12  Built Form Framework Map – Metrotown. Source: City of Burnaby Draft Downtown Plan (2017).
In the Draft Metrotown Downtown Plan, three land use designations were created to frame the type of development (housing type, density) each Metrotown neighbourhood would take on over the next 40 years. The draft land use designations gave way to three specific types of densities which are covered in the next section. The following section provides the characteristics of each land use designations found in the draft plan which guides intensity of density across the Metrotown neighbourhood.

8.3.4. Density and Land Use Examples

The 2017 Metrotown Plan allows for three types of densities summarized in the figures and tables below. It is evident that the types of densities Burnaby is promoting are much higher and denser than any other development plan Burnaby has approved for Metrotown, especially in historically lower density communities like Maywood and Marlborough. The purpose of this section is to connect the types of densities described in this section to the land use designations and built form outlined in figures 11 and 12. The planning language that Burnaby uses in its allowable densities is abstract and thus
in sections 10.1.1 through 10.1.6, I provide how these densities might be and currently are being realized in Metrotown’s six neighbourhoods.

Downtown Core Land Use Designation – High Density Mixed Use

Figure 14  Map and Information Table of High Density Mixed Use Locations in Metrotown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Density</th>
<th>Density Allocated to (Metrotown Neighbourhood)</th>
<th>Description and Example of Typical Project</th>
<th>Typical Building Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Density Mixed Use</td>
<td>Central Park North Maywood</td>
<td>High density mixed-use areas are characterized by commercial podiums with high-rise office and residential building forms.</td>
<td>12 or more floors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Park East</td>
<td>Mid- to high-rise office and residential buildings are intended to sit atop the commercial podiums</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metro-Downtown Marlborough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Burnaby – Metrotown Downtown Plan, 2017. Pg. 39-4

The downtown core of Burnaby will contain the highest densities in the community. The main urban design element in the urban core will be commercial podiums that frame the public realm. The intention of the podiums is to create ‘human scale massing’ that is oriented for pedestrian activity. High density mixed use developments will respond to specific opportunities including prominent intersections, corner lots, and natural features.

Burnaby is set on creating a vibrant downtown at Metrotown. In the 2017 plan Burnaby states that this Downtown Core will contain: active streets, with retail frontages,
display windows, attractive landscaping, special lighting and weather protection fixtures (City of Burnaby, 2016c). From my field visits to Metrotown, it was evident in three major project sites along Beresford Street that this commitment to creating a downtown was already underway as seen in figure 15.

![Figure 15](image.jpg)

**Figure 15**  High Density Mixed Use Ground Floor Development Along Beresford St. with Public Art. Source: Author 2018

Along with the smaller scale retail shops lining Beresford Street, public art, public seating, and landscaping were all present.
Core Residential Land Use Designation – High Density Residential

Figure 16 Map and Information Table of High Density Residential Locations in Metrotown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Density</th>
<th>Density Allocated to (Metrotown Neighbourhood)</th>
<th>Description and Example Typical Project</th>
<th>Typical Building Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Density Residential</td>
<td>Maywood</td>
<td>High density residential areas are characterized by mid- to high-rise apartment buildings with ground oriented apartments or townhouses to frame the street.</td>
<td>12 or more floors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marlborough</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Park East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Central Park North</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Burnaby – Metrotown Downtown Plan, 2017. Pg. 39-42

With the core residential land use, Burnaby envisions a medium to lower density urban form that will support the higher densities found in the downtown core land use designation. The residential forms will be typified by mid to high rise-rise multiple-family residential buildings with ground-oriented townhouses and live-work units set close to the street (City of Burnaby, 2016c). The core residential areas will allow residents access to the core downtown areas via streets designed for alternative transportation methods (walking and cycling). Figure 17 is an artist’s rendition of a streetscape where this lower density land use designation can be visualized.
Figure 17  Example of Urban Form in Core Residential Land Use Designation. Source: Metrotown Downtown Plan City of Burnaby (2017)
Ground Oriented Residential Land Use Designation – Medium Density Residential

Figure 18  Map and Information Table of Medium Density Residential Locations in Metrotown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Density</th>
<th>Density Allocated to (Metrotown Neighbourhood)</th>
<th>Description and example of Typical Project</th>
<th>Typical building Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium Density Residential</td>
<td>Central Park North Maywood Marlborough</td>
<td>Medium density residential is characterized by multiple-family residential buildings in ground oriented and low-rise forms (generally three to four storeys), including rowhouses, townhouses, and low-rise apartments.</td>
<td>Typically 1-12 floors. 12+ floors allowed in some neighbourhoods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: City of Burnaby – Metrotown Downtown Plan 2017. Pg. 39-42

This land use designation is used for the edges of Metrotown with developments going no taller than four storeys. Ground-oriented row-houses, townhouses, and low-rise apartments are encouraged in these areas. Burnaby envisions that these areas will have high quality urban parks and greenspaces dotted throughout along with appropriate community amenities and services (e.g. plazas). Figures 19 and 20 illustrate the types of residential forms currently found in this land use designation.

The implications of the land use designation planning process on complete communities and housing affordability principles will be explored in chapter 9, where the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan is explored in more depth.
Figure 19  Example of RM3 Medium Density Housing Type.  Source: Author (2017)

Notes:  The Centennial Park Co-op located at 4160 Bond St exemplifies the lowest density zoning in the Metrotown area.  RM3 zoning allows for a maximum of 1.5 FAR and its built form is described as “Residential buildings in ground-oriented and low-rise forms (row-houses, townhouses, and low rise apartments). (City of Burnaby, 2017)

Figure 20  Townhouse Form Example in the Ground Oriented Residential Land Use Area.  Source: Author (2017)
8.3.5. **Current Housing Overview of Metrotown Conclusions**

With the land use and built form designations outlined, along with a current snapshot of housing trends, two questions are raised. Will Metrotown continue to be a community of renters, and will housing still retain its nature as an affordable rental community? To answer the first question, I refer to figure 21 below which highlights the ownership to rental trend in Metrotown over the past three census periods.

![Renters and Owners Households - Metrotown](chart.png)

**Figure 21**  Number of Renters and Owners in Metrotown 2006-2016. Source: Statistics Canada (2016).

As we can see, the number of owners has increased since 2006 while the number of renter households has remained fairly static. As the Metrotown Plan continues to be implemented and more projects complete under the plan, it is likely that the number of owners will exceed the number of renters in Metrotown by the next census period. With added supply, the secondary rental market will likely remain the same as new supply brings secondary unsecured rental units which compensate for the loss of rental units in the purpose built rental stock in Metrotown. As a result, the number of renters might
remain the same in Metrotown over the next census period, but there will be a large reduction in secured rental tenancies.

Today, Metrotown embodies the essence of ‘Burnabyism’. Although not academically defined the concept of ‘Burnabyism’ has been referenced by Metrotown historian David Pereira (Pereira, 2016). Burnabyism has been typified by high density mixed use development around transit centres; The Crystal Mall development is a poignant example of Burnabyism at play. Moving forward Burnaby is likely to continue its trend of developing high-rise podium based projects in Metrotown.

In the Metrotown Downtown Plan, emphasis is put on clarifying and explaining the densities, land use designations, and built form in Metrotown over the next 40 years. The Metrotown Downtown Plan puts forward the case for a new housing environment in Metrotown. This fact is illustrated in the plan’s complete ‘up-zoning’ of the entire community. With the allowance for higher densities, Metrotown will potentially shift its identity as an affordable, lower to mid-density rental community to one that favours high density market condo development and unprotected market based secondary rental units. Metrotown’s potential new identity is displayed in figure 22 where we see the classic mid-rise Metrotown rental development in the shadow of the new high-density condos currently being developed through the Metrotown Downtown Plan.
In the next chapter I conduct an observational analysis of Metrotown’s six neighbourhoods and explore how neighbourhood complete community and housing affordability aspects will be affected by the implementation of the Metrotown Downtown Plan.
Chapter 9. The Metrotown Downtown Plan

In this chapter, we explore the processes behind developing and implementing the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan. Dissecting the plan allows for several insights into how Burnaby approaches urban and community planning. The Metrotown Plan is not a comprehensive community plan, it is rather a land use plan. The Metrotown Plan relies on other policies and mechanisms like the S Zoning Designation, and the community benefit contribution to incentivize and allow for development of the community beyond land use alone. These overarching city policies have real world impacts on renter displacement and community development and will be discussed in the conclusion to this chapter.

In Burnaby’s Metrotown Downtown Plan, there is a clear direction for Metrotown to become a new regional downtown. Including the already existing amenities found within Metrotown, the pursuit of a downtown identity will bring even more amenities to the community. Access to amenities like park spaces, civic facilities, and other services that meet the day-to-day needs of residents are a cornerstone of the complete community framework. However, in Metrotown the plan for the development of a downtown has sparked a frenzy of development beginning in the year 2000 with the Crystal Mall development which added 218 residential units, hotels, and a new Hong Kong style mall to the community (Pereira, 2016). From 2015 – 2017, Metrotown has been experiencing a boom in its development with over 30 major projects approved or in the approval process.

Through my interviews it was revealed that the Metrotown Downtown Plan is a product of a unique approach to urban planning. In the next section I highlight how Burnaby approaches urban planning and how its distinct approach to community planning has produced the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan.

9.1. Urban Planning in the City of Burnaby

Urban planning in Burnaby is mainly influenced by two policies, the first is Burnaby’s Official Community Plan (OCP) which was adopted in 1998 and was updated and revised in May 2014. The second policy is the Regional Growth Strategy, against
which Burnaby measures many of its growth targets, including population, employment, and transit demand. Johannes Schumann mentioned that a major driver for a new Metrotown Downtown plan was to accommodate regional population and household growth targets (Schumann, 2018).

In terms of complete community, Burnaby’s OCP views complete communities as an extension of its Town Centre model. The OCP states:

The "more complete communities" concept is an extension of the City's existing development framework. It builds upon the development of the four Town Centres within their respective quadrants of the City, with Metrotown also serving the City as a whole. Each of these centres contributes to Burnaby's increasing overall diversity and self-sufficiency. (Burnaby 1998, p. 19).

From the wording in the OCP we can see that Metrotown is meant to be both a complete community and Regional Town (City) Centre. Burnaby’s commitment to its town centre-focused-growth reveals a unique aspect of Urban Planning in Burnaby.

9.1.1. Overarching City Policy

In my interview with Johannes Schumann, it was made clear that Burnaby’s approach to community planning revolves around the land use framework. The framework is then supported by implementing overarching city policies and goals. Johannes stated:

That’s really the way that planning works in Burnaby, and it is quite a bit different from other jurisdictions where we may call it a community plan, and that is the right terminology, but in fact [Burnaby] limits it to a land use designation plan as a primary focus for these plans, and then we have overarching municipal plans that deal with affordable housing, sustainability, accessibility – those are overarching city goals. (Johannes Schumann, City of Burnaby Planner, 2018)

Burnaby’s overarching polices have major influences on Town Centre planning and are meant to fill in the gaps left by a land use plan. Table 4 highlights the current overarching city goals used in creating the Metrotown Downtown Plan. The approach to urban and community planning that Burnaby takes in comparison to the City of Vancouver is quite different. For example, Vancouver will have inclusionary housing requirements laid out in its community plans like the Downtown Eastside Community
Plan (City of Vancouver, 2018). Burnaby relies on overarching city policy to address unique community challenges, and with the case of the Metrotown Plan the overarching city policies have been inadequate in dealing with housing affordability issues. Whether Burnaby’s approach to urban planning is considered ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is not the subject of this thesis. However, section 9.3 will highlight some of the challenges, specifically with the Metrotown Plan, that Burnaby’s planning approach has entailed.

It was mentioned in my interview with a Metro Vancouver planner that the issues around demovictions and displacement in Metrotown were brought on by two planning policies: the Metrotown Downtown Plan, and the Community Benefit Bonus Policy, which was amended to become the Supplementary Community Benefit Bonus Density Policy (S Zoning). In the following sections I provide an overview of Burnaby’s benefit bonus policies, and the tenant assistance program.

9.1.2. Community Benefit Bonus Policy

The Community Benefit Bonus Policy Program is a city-wide policy that allows the City of Burnaby to receive cash contributions from land developers in return for density and other development bonuses. Established in 1997, the policy saw recent revisions in 2010, 2011, and 2014 to reflect the increased development in Burnaby’s four Town Centres. The City of Burnaby categorizes community benefits into three pools: community amenity, affordable housing, and cash contributions. These pools are further explained in table 11 below.

The community benefit program divides all cash contributions the city receives from development into two funds. The first fund is a Town Centre Fund which receives 80% of all cash contributions made to the city. The second fund is the City-Wide Housing Fund, which takes in the remaining 20% of cash contributions on a per project basis. The *Burnaby Now* reported on May 4th, 2018 that the City-Wide Housing Fund has accumulated $87 million to date (Boothby, 2018).

The City-Wide Housing Fund is meant to support affordable housing and special needs housing programs in Burnaby. In 2014, Metrotown received $327,000 from the fund to support two special needs housing projects, one for seniors and one for women and children fleeing domestic abuse. The Burnaby Sustainability Strategy states that
since 2013 over $1.32 million has been allocated to help support the development of 132 affordable housing units including over $1.2 million for 121 units of seniors rental housing.

In later amendments to the Benefit Bonus Policy, the City of Burnaby began encouraging cash contributions in lieu of developer-built community amenities. As one of my interviewees conveyed to me, developers in Metrotown had mixed feelings of contributing cash rather then helping to deliver a community amenity like child care spaces. Developers wanted to make their projects more attractive by offering to help build amenities, however, with a cash in lieu contribution, the developers no longer had a say in the amenity being developed. Burnaby taking cash rather than requesting amenities came as a result of the 2010 "S-Zoning" policy and council’s direction to focus on developing specific council approved Town Centre amenities. In Metrotown, the council-approved amenity was an event centre which has not been planned for, even though the project is able to dip into a billion-dollar reserve fund to build the project (City of Burnaby, 2017).
### Table 11  Burnaby’s Community Benefit Categories and Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Amenity</th>
<th>Affordable and/or Special Needs Housing</th>
<th>Cash Contribution in Lieu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• major public open space or plaza</td>
<td>• units developed under senior government nonprofit housing programs</td>
<td>• A contribution made to the City by a developer or applicant based on the value of the additional density achieved through a density bonus. The money is allocated exclusively for the future provision of a community amenity and/or affordable and/or special needs housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• public facilities, including libraries, community recreation centres, arts facilities, youth centres;</td>
<td>• price controlled limited-equity market units;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• space for community or nonprofit groups that serve the community;</td>
<td>• units controlled or managed or owned by non-profit housing groups providing affordable housing;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• public art</td>
<td>• guaranteed rental units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• extraordinary public realm improvements including landscaping treatment and special street furniture;</td>
<td>• housing for people with special needs such as those with physical or mental disabilities, or victims of violence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• improvements to park land or other public facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extraordinary environmental enhancements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• child care facilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 9.1.1. The Supplementary Community Benefit Bonus Density Policy

The Supplementary Community Benefit Bonus Density Policy, or more commonly known as the ‘S’ zoning, was approved by Burnaby City Council in 2010 and was amended to the already existing Community Benefit Bonus Policy discussed above. “S” zoning allows for increased residential densities in Burnaby’s Town Centres. The
The general purpose of this policy is to extract additional value from developments around highly desirable development sites. The ‘S’ zoning allows for residential and CD (Comprehensive Development) projects to receive a parking requirement relaxation, as well as bonuses to the allowable floor area ratio (FAR).

Specifically, this policy addresses development in the four Town Centres where Burnaby has seen a significant amount of development interest. Table 12 below illustrates the impact of the ‘S’ zoning policy on residential zoning. Density bonusing is pursued by municipalities all over the Metro Vancouver region, however, Burnaby stands out in regards to the bonus FAR allowances for mixed use residential and commercial projects which allow for projects to go up to 11 FAR if they combine commercial and residential components. This “S” zoning policy and the density bonusing for mixed use projects are two reasons why Metrotown’s development has been typified by massive high rises as seen in figures 24 and 25.

Table 12  "S" Zoning Density Bonus Allowances. Source: City of Burnaby (2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Designation (Zoning)</th>
<th>Maximum Residential FAR Prior To &quot;S&quot; Zoning Approval</th>
<th>Maximum Residential FAR After To &quot;S&quot; Zoning Approval</th>
<th>Mixed Use (Commercial / C3) FAR Addition</th>
<th>Maximum Mixed Use (Residential + Commercial) FAR After &quot;S&quot; Zoning Approval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RM5s</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM4s</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RM3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For clarity, the floor area ratio is a measure of a building’s total gross floor area to the area of the site upon which it is built. The high FAR allowance in Metrotown is exemplified by projects like the 45 storey Sovereign project located at Willingdon and Kingsway Ave (Figure 23.) which is a mixed use residential and commercial tower zoned to CD-1 (RM-5/C3) with a FAR of 8.6 (City of Burnaby, 2010, p. 2). Another example of the new density bonusing that the “S” zoning policy allowed for can be seen with the Metroplace Tower project (Figure 24) which is a 42-storey project rezoned as a CD-1 (RM-5/C2). The commercial mixed-use component in the Metroplace Tower is a lower density commercial zoning compared to the Sovereign Tower which had a C3 zoning.
allowance, however, the Metroplace Tower project was still able to achieve a FAR of 6.3 (City of Burnaby, 2010a, p. 4).

Bev Grieve highlighted in our interview that the community benefit program had a significant influence on development in Burnaby because it accelerated the potential for development of high-density towers which previously would have required more time to become approved as ‘one-off’ projects at council (Grieve. 2018). The ‘S’ zoning allowed for extensive rezoning opportunities to projects that were near frequent transit networks, and within one of the four Town Centres. Metrotown development applications over the last year indicate that the “S” zoning had significant uptake amongst major projects in Metrotown. The benefits of the “S” zoning are likely attractive to developers for two reasons. First, the increased density allows for either higher unit counts or larger units which will help developers recoup costs more quickly through sales. The second reason developers would find the “S” zoning designation attractive is the construction savings potential with the possibility of a reduction in parking allowance (Burnaby, 2010).
Figure 23 The 45-storey Sovereign project is an example of the density bonus that S zoning allows. Source: Google Maps. (2018)
9.1.2. **Burnaby Tenant Assistance Policy**

Burnaby’s Tenant Assistance Policy helps protect tenants in developments where six or more units are being displaced. Prior to the existence of this policy, tenants were only covered by the Residential Tenancy Act, which gave tenants two months’ notice to vacate a property as well as one month free rent compensation. The new Tenant Assistance Policy ensures the following protections:

- A written commitment to exceed the minimum requirements of the Residential Tenancy Act
- Documentation of the affected units, including number, size, rental rates and existing vacancy rates;
- A plan to guide communication between the applicant and the tenants;
- A minimum of three months’ notice and three months’ rent compensation for each affected tenant;
- An offer to interested tenants to secure any available rental housing unit in the new development, or in an off-site rental housing unit managed by the same applicant;
- An offer to interested tenants to purchase an available housing unit in the new development; and
Information on other accommodation options for tenants to relocate in the same area and/or other areas.

Tenant relocation plans are common in Metro Vancouver municipalities. New Westminster and the City of Vancouver both have adopted similar policies.

In the context of Metrotown, the tenant relocation assistance policy has been criticized by housing advocates for doing too little for low to moderate income residents being displaced. Zoe Luba from the Alliance Against Displacement and Stop Demovictions Burnaby explains the criticism that advocates have for the tenant relocation policy:

“An extra month, if you’ve lived in a neighbourhood for 10, 15, 20 years, and if you’re looking at your rent literally doubling or having to move to a completely different area of the province, an extra month’s rent is a drop in the bucket, and the bucket is very, very deep,” she said. “Even a year of rent to compensate isn’t enough. It’s really not because, if you’re given the compensation money, and there’s no vacancy, what do you do with that?” (Zoe Luba Quoted in Burnaby Now Article Titled: Burnaby's Tenant Assistance Policy Doesn’t Cut it: Advocate - dated March 6th 2018)

Zoe Luba’s concerns focus on the fact that Metrotown is increasingly becoming unaffordable, especially for low to moderate income earners.

Burnaby planning staff also recognize the challenges of implementing a policy in the current housing environment in Metrotown. The main challenge is keeping residents within the community after they have been displaced due to redevelopment, however, with extremely low vacancy rates in the community and the lack of affordable replacement units, people are forced to leave the community – these challenges were reflected in my semi-structured interviews:

With the original applications, I think there was capacity within the community to absorb the tenant relocation and as those applications started to increase, the ability to reabsorb within your community becomes [limited] and eventually more problematic…it became this issue where there is not enough affordable local rental housing to meet the need. (City of Burnaby Planner – Interview, 2018)

However, a recent shift in Burnaby’s position on affordable and social housing may address advocate concerns on tenant relocation and housing affordability issues. Burnaby may be trying to achieve a stricter policy if recent comments by former Mayor Derek Corrigan are to be believed. Corrigan was quoted in a 2018 Burnaby Now
newspaper article stating that: “The ultimate goal is to have one-to-one replacement – with every apartment torn down replaced by a new apartment at similar monthly rent” (Burnaby Now, 2018).

9.2. **Urban Planning In Metrotown**

Up until 2017, Metrotown was developing under the framework of the 1977 Metrotown Development Plan. The following section highlights what the 1977 Plan was aiming to achieve at Metrotown along with how the plan influenced the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan.

9.2.1. **The Influence of the 1977 Metrotown Development Plan**

In Metrotown, two major planning documents laid the foundation for development as a Regional Town Centre and Complete Community. The first was the 1969 Apartment Study that promoted the growth of apartment buildings in the Metrotown area. The second planning document was the 1977 Metrotown Development Plan which officially gave Metrotown a growth management plan, at least at the municipal level.

In this chapter I will mainly focus my analysis on the 1977 Metrotown Development Plan. In 1976 the City of Burnaby commissioned Norman Hotson Architects to create a vision for the Metrotown area. Burnaby Metrotown: A Development Plan was a growth management plan that would realize Metrotown as both a Regional Town Centre (RTC) and the core of Burnaby itself (Parr, 1977). The 1977 development plan balanced the regional need for Metrotown to fulfill its role as an RTC as well as ensure that development would be in accordance with municipal planning objectives. Burnaby’s 1969 Apartment Study set out policy suggestions that would guide planning decisions. These decisions were based on a hierarchy of planning and development. Burnaby, as set out through the Apartment Study, was to be a city of neighbourhoods, communities, and districts. In the hierarchy, neighbourhoods were the lowest order of development and districts were the highest, meaning districts would be comprised of numerous neighbourhoods and communities. In creating the hierarchy of development, Burnaby could concentrate growth in its Town Centres while still retaining single-family home development in the majority of its non town centre neighbourhoods.
David Pereira, in his analysis of Larry Beasley’s 1976 thesis, highlights Burnaby’s comprehensive and complete vision for Metrotown versus what regional Greater Vancouver Regional District planners had envisioned for Metrotown which was a community that was more focused on providing office, commercial and retail services to the region with less emphasis on housing (Pereira, 2012). The push and pull between the GVRD and Burnaby over Metrotown eventually resulted in Burnaby succeeding in developing its vision of a complete community in Metrotown. Burnaby’s success at Metrotown was even more validating once the lynchpin of the Regional Growth Strategy, the Skytrain rapid transit line, was announced, serving Metrotown.

The 1977 Metrotown development plan was very progressive for its time, in fact many of the urban planning elements that the 1977 Development Plan was promoting align with complete community ideals. For example, it suggested that Metrotown avoid further development of single detached houses within the Metrotown boundary and continue developing compact residential buildings as it had been doing. The plan also recognized the need to have walkable and safe communities, and identified pedestrian barrier effects that Kingsway, the main thoroughfare of Metrotown, had on the potential to create a walkable transit-oriented community. From its official inception as a municipally-designated community, the roles of commercial and retail opportunities were front and centre for Metrotown’s development. However, the vision that the 1977 development plan had for Metrotown was intriguing as it called for a retail and commercial form that would go against the grain of common retail developments in the region. Auto oriented strip malls were common in both Burnaby and the region. The Metrotown Development Plan called for a pedestrian oriented shopping centre that would be interlaced with linear parks, plazas, and large indoor and outdoor community spaces. The overall vision for the entire community in 1977 which strongly delineated specific, commercial, retail, institutional, and residential land uses was generally achieved by the time the new Metrotown Downtown Plan was approved in 2017. The purpose of the new plan was to update Metrotown’s growth over the next 40 years and allow for greater density especially in the residentially zoned areas of the community.

When Metrotown was conceived as a Regional Town Centre in 1975, Burnaby quickly realized that the density and development that the RTC model was suggesting was beyond the three levels of development the city had been working under (Burnaby, 1977). With the 1977 Metrotown Development Plan, a new level of development was
added to Burnaby’s development hierarchy. Metrotown would take on the role of the
primary urban core development designation, which was now the highest-level order of
development in the city.

9.3. The 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan

The Metrotown Downtown Plan was approved by Burnaby City Council on July
24\textsuperscript{th} 2017. It enabled new land use designations and envisioned a future for Metrotown
as a new regional downtown that would include and support social, recreation,
entertainment, and cultural elements. Understanding the Metrotown Downtown Plan is
important for this thesis as it provides the regulatory framework by which Metrotown is
currently developing. The Downtown Plan also provides an understanding of how
Burnaby council and planning staff intend to address issues around affordable housing
and complete communities at Metrotown.

My analysis of the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan breaks down the plan into
the following sections: Plan development, content, and the challenges and limitations.

9.3.1. Metrotown Downtown Plan Development

Johannes Schuman, City of Burnaby Planner, highlighted the following reasons
that the Metrotown Downtown Plan needed updating: First, if Burnaby was to meet its
regional obligations to absorb population and household growth over the next 40 years it
would need areas like Metrotown to accommodate more density. Second, Burnaby was
looking to consolidate its building and development bylaws which had not been updated
since 1977. Third, the planners and council were interested in pursing the concept of a
regional downtown core that would not compete with the central business district identity
of Downtown Vancouver but rather take on a mixed use downtown identity.

The concept of a new Metrotown Plan began in the late 90’s when staff were
directed by council to begin monitoring the community in terms of its demographics,
housing needs, transportation habits, and community development opportunities. With
increased development beginning in the year 2000, and a real estate development
market eager to develop in the community, council and planning staff set out on public
consultation for the Metrotown Plan beginning in 2016. The City of Burnaby states that
in total, the City hosted and attended over 40 stakeholder meetings and community events, directly engaging over 2,000 people in the process (City of Burnaby, 2018). Throughout the consultation individuals were asked to comment on specific planning outcomes they would like to see achieved in the final plan. The contents of the final plan are highlighted below. It should be noted that a lack of consultation on the plan was expressed by Murray Martin, one of my interviewees. The consultation and challenges brought on by the Metrotown Plan will be covered later.

9.3.2. Metrotown Downtown Plan Content

The goals of the Metrotown Downtown Plan are best summarized in the following quote taken from the introduction section of the plan:

To establish an exciting, inclusive, and sustainable downtown for Burnaby; one comprised of well-connected neighbourhoods that provide a sense of place and community identity; provide major office, business, tourism and employment opportunities; provide a variety of housing choices; provide civic, recreational, and cultural amenities and facilities that serve the needs of the Metrotown community and Burnaby as a whole; is supported by a comprehensive transportation network that promotes a more walkable, healthier, and active community; and provide a high quality public realm that evokes a sense of beauty, creativity, excitement and vibrancy. (Burnaby, 2016)

The plan is comprehensive and ambitious, as it attempts to redevelop the entire community to allow for higher density residential and commercial uses over the next 40 years (2017-2057).

According to Burnaby, Metrotown as a sustainable downtown will include large scale civic infrastructure projects like a new sporting arena and theatre and will promote sustainability principles like increasing walkability in the community, developing compact housing forms, and focusing on urban design that respects the environment and encourages community interaction and connectivity.

One of the purposes that Burnaby states for the update of the Metrotown plan is to accommodate growth and provide the opportunity for varied housing options. The Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy estimates that an additional 125,000 people will be living in Burnaby by 2041, making the total population of Burnaby 345,000
residents. In direct relation to a core aspect of the complete community theory, this quote was taken from the Metrotown Downtown Plan (DATE, PAGE):

The Metrotown Development Plan update, through increasing the capacity of existing land areas in the Town Centre, provides an opportunity to accommodate a share of this anticipated future growth. In addition to accommodating growth, the plan update will support a diversity of housing types and tenures, with a range of unit types, to meet citizens’ needs through all stages of life.

It is this excerpt from the new plan that relates directly to complete community ideals around housing choices, types, and tenures.

9.3.3. **Metrotown Downtown Plan Challenges and Limitations**

As mentioned, the content of the Metrotown Plan lacks any kind of inclusionary zoning or housing requirements. It is strictly a land use plan. This fact was admittedly not communicated very well to the public by the City of Burnaby, as Johannes Schumann mentioned in our interview. The inability of the plan to deal with any issues around displacement and demovictions appeared to be the most significant limitation of this plan. What is included in the plan is vague in terms of addressing complete community and housing affordability issues, it is mentioned in the plan that the vision is to create an exciting, inclusive, and sustainable downtown. Specifically, the intention of an inclusive community is defined by Burnaby as:

- Requiring that physical accessibility is equal to all, regardless of physical ability, age, gender, or cultural background;
- encouraging a community that welcomes all socioeconomic levels and embraces its diversity;
- building on a sense of community and pride by fostering a safe and inclusive Downtown;
- facilitating housing options by establishing a land use framework that supports a variety of housing types and tenures.

These definitions of inclusive community are encouraging and support the principles of complete communities and housing affordability. However, according to two of my interviewees, how can Metrotown aim to be an inclusive community when they are displacing low income renters and not requiring the replacement of these affordable units in new developments? It is this question that exposes the challenges and limitations of both the Metrotown Plan and the complete communities theory.
9.4. **Burnaby Today**

Since 1987, Burnaby has been governed by the Burnaby Citizens’ Association (BCA) with Mayor Derek Corrigan holding his position since 2002. Under Corrigan, Burnaby has seen the addition of three Skytrain lines (Expo, Millennium, and Evergreen lines), and the expansion and development of its four town centres. In 2009, Burnaby was selected as the ‘best run city’ in Canada by McLean’s Magazine. The award highlighted Burnaby’s strong planning and policy regulations and value capture policies like the Community Benefit Policy.

Burnaby’s award might have come as a surprise to those who point to Burnaby’s record on affordable housing, especially since Mayor Corrigan became mayor in 2002. In the three housing-related Burnaby planning documents analyzed for this study (Burnaby Housing Profile (2016), Affordable Housing And Homelessness A Response To Issues And Proposals (2007), and Burnaby Official Community Plan (1998)), it is clear that Burnaby will not lead the development of affordable housing (social housing) without significant partnership commitments from the Federal and Provincial governments. Burnaby has also been criticized for its approach to homelessness by not allowing for the operation of homeless shelters within the city which it claims is because of a lack of interest and funding from homeless services providers (Burnaby, 2007).

The Mayor of Burnaby has been clear in his belief that cities cannot and should not be responsible for addressing housing affordability alone. For Burnaby’s Mayor Derek Corrigan, the provision and funding for affordable and social housing programs and projects has been, and always will be the responsibility of the Provincial and Federal governments. Corrigan’s feelings towards senior levels of government needing to be responsible for the provision of housing was further illustrated in a quote from a *Vancouver Sun* article in 2016 “…it’s not the city’s responsibility to ensure that people have affordable housing or social housing. We do what we can to try and help out, but it’s other orders of government who have all the levers and buttons that can be pushed in order to make those things happen” (Lee, 2016).

To address the issues brought up by advocates and critics regarding the City of Burnaby’s policies towards affordable and social housing, Burnaby points to the fact that it has developed 7,876 units of nonmarket housing in 154 developments across the city
and has the second highest share of non-market housing units amongst Metro Vancouver municipalities (Deutsch, 2016). Burnaby also points to its successful Adaptable Housing Policy which requires that 20% of single level units in multi-family developments and 100% of units in seniors-oriented developments be adaptable for those with mobility and accessibility challenges, as well as its work on legalizing secondary suites, and allowing flex-units in certain developments (City of Burnaby, 2007). In chapter 12, we will discuss a potential shift in Burnaby’s policies towards housing affordability which may bring the City in line with our municipalities in the region like Vancouver and New Westminster, which are building significantly more social and secured market rental housing units than Burnaby. In the next chapter, I present my observational findings of Metrotown. Understanding the individual neighbourhoods of Metrotown will help inform my analysis of Metrotown as a complete community which is done in chapter 11.
Chapter 10. Metrotown Observational Analysis

Metrotown is a community made up of distinct neighbourhoods. In the Metrotown Downtown Plan (2017), six distinct neighbourhoods within Metrotown are identified. Each of these neighbourhoods has its own distinct plan of development that supports the core Metro-Downtown neighbourhood. Over the next 40 years, the 2018 Metrotown Downtown Plan, envisions that the neighbourhoods surrounding the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood will ease in higher development towards the Metro-Downtown core. This will be accomplished by zoning for lower density high-rise and mid-rise buildings in communities like Central Park North, Marlborough, and Central Park East, while focusing the highest densities in neighbourhoods like Maywood and the Metro-Downtown neighbourhoods.

Burnaby describes the function of the surrounding lower density neighbourhoods as gateways from the east and west which ease in higher densities to the core. The focus of Metrotown scaling up densities towards the core is an urban design decision that
takes into consideration the vast number of single-family neighbourhoods surrounding Metrotown. An example of lower density development that accommodates high density development can be found in figures 20 and 35 which show the potential scale of the townhouse and mid-rise apartment buildings that are meant to complement the higher density developments in figures 24 and 25. Burnaby’s vision for Metrotown has been contentious and was discussed in detail in chapter 9; the reader should have a good understanding of what is trying to be achieved from an urban design perspective in the new Metrotown Downtown Plan.

10.1. Observational Overview and Analysis of Metrotown Neighbourhoods -

In the previous section I outlined the land use designations in the new Metrotown Downtown Plan. In the following sections, I show the reader how Metrotown’s new land use designations will be implemented in each of the six Metrotown neighbourhoods. My observational findings from my field visits as well as interpreting and analyzing the Metrotown Downtown Plan were used to inform this section.

10.1.1. Metro-Downtown Neighbourhood Analysis

Metro-Downtown in the Context of the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan

In the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan, the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood is meant to serve as the commercial, residential, and employment hub for the City of Burnaby and the community of Metrotown; the development of this neighbourhood also has regional implications as it will further develop one of the region’s main Regional City Centre Cores located at Metrotown. To develop the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood planners allowed the highest intensity land uses and densities supported in the plan.

The RM-5/C3 zoning is currently the highest density land use available in the Metrotown Plan. A few examples of this high-density form of development have already been constructed in Metrotown as is illustrated in figure 26. The mixed-use RM-5/C3 is represented by podium high tower forms with surrounding large-scale retail and at grade commercial uses.
Figure 26  Example of form of RM/C3 Mixed Use Zoning at Metro-Downtown Neighbourhood. Source: Author (2017)

One of the aspects that makes the entire Metrotown community succeed as a complete community is its hub and spoke development model. The Metro-Downtown neighbourhood has been, and in the new 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan will continue to be the hub of complete community amenities to which the other five Metrotown Neighbourhoods connect. The focus of the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood has been and will continue to be the Metrotown Mall which has provided an abundance of amenities (retail, culture, entertainment and public transportation) to local area and regional residents. This neighbourhood is also home to the Bonsor Community Centre, Bob Prittie Library and Civic Square, Metro Towers, and a major transit hub that connects the bus network to the Expo Line Skytrain system.
Metrotown’s success as a complete community and Town Centre has been largely because of the supportive civic infrastructure the community was built around. With the new Metrotown plan, Burnaby is proposing adding even more significant civic projects to support its new downtown development path. Burnaby’s community benefit policies will be explored in chapter 9, however, it should be noted that a large scale events centre has been proposed as a priority amenity project for the Metrotown community and has directed capital funding in the 2017 budget (City of Burnaby, 2018).
Metro-Downtown Neighbourhood Opportunity and Vision

Historically, Metro-Downtown has been the commercial and retail heart of the entire Metrotown Community. With its small lot sizes, independent businesses, various restaurants, cafés and shops, the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood has attracted visitors from around the region for decades. One aspect of the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood that thrives are the small lot sized store fronts which add to the diversity and vibrancy of the community by ensuring a wide range of retail and commercial opportunities, rather than the large block retail shops which have been developing along Kingsway as well. Two interviewees (City of Burnaby Planner, and a journalist) echoed the importance of allowing and supporting small store and commercial fronts (no higher than 25,000 square feet). Supporting this ‘sweet spot’ for retail and commercial developments will allow the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood to remain a vibrant neighbourhood that serves the local and regional residents.

The Metro-Downtown core will need to see high-density, mixed-use developments to realize its potential as a downtown. Burnaby points out in the 2017 Metrotown Downtown plan that the core area will: “[need] to respond to specific opportunities, including prominent intersections, corner lots, natural features, open spaces and views. A strong focus is placed on the provision of public art and the commitment to high-quality, timeless and sophisticated architecture. The redevelopment
of major Town Centre blocks, including the Metrotown mall site, should incorporate a fine-grained system of public streets, lanes, pathways and open spaces” (City of Burnaby, 2016 p. 13).

Perhaps one of the most ambitious portions of the new plan for Metrotown is the allowance of a partial demolition of the existing Metrotown Mall to make way for a series of newly formed city blocks, each zoned for the highest possible mixed-use zoning. Figures 31 and 32 illustrate the proposed high density mixed use developments that would be part of the Metrotown Mall redevelopment plan. The mall has served as a central focus for the community for over thirty years, however, the sale of the Sears site at Metrotown Mall, and the purchase of that site by Concord Pacific in 2017, has brought a new vision for the Metrotown Mall and the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood, that favors residential, commercial, and retail land uses over the existing parking lot currently on site.

10.1.2. Marlborough Neighbourhood Analysis

Marlborough in the Context of the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan

In the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan, the Marlborough neighbourhood is intended to support higher densities in the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood. This will be achieved by allowing medium to high density residential development. The focus of mixed-use development (commercial and residential) is not as intense in the Marlborough neighbourhood as it is intended to be in the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood.

Figure 33 illustrates early examples of the type of residential density that the Metrotown Downtown Plan is calling for within the Marlborough neighbourhood. The RM5 towers (seen in figure 33) do not require a mixed use (commercial) component and podium spaces can be allocated for ground oriented townhouse development.
Marlborough and Demovictions

The neighbourhood of Marlborough has experienced similar redevelopment and demoviction processes as seen in the Maywood neighbourhood. The work of housing activists in 2016 highlighted the extent of displacement by one block (figure 30) in the Marlborough neighbourhood which has seen extensive redevelopment. The Stop Demovictions Burnaby Campaign claims that development on this block alone has displaced over 300 residents in the span of four years and potentially could displace up to 400 once demolitions are complete (Stop Demovictions Burnaby, 2016, p 10). Demovictions, I argue, are social and economic outcome of Burnaby’s and the Region’s goal of creating a complete community at Metrotown. The issue of demovictions will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 12.
Figure 30  Extent of Marlborough Neighbourhood Demoviction Process.  
Source: Stop Demovictions Burnaby Campaign (2016)
10.1.3. **Maywood Neighbourhood Analysis**

**Maywood in the Context of the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan**

In the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan, the Maywood neighbourhood is intended to be the residential heart of the entire Metrotown neighbourhood (City of Burnaby, 2017, p.52). Using RM5/C2 zoning, Burnaby hopes to make Maywood a vibrant and active community by allowing small to medium scale retail and other commercial uses like cafés and restaurants to be integrated into mixed use residential projects. An early example of this integrated zoning can be seen in figure 35 where we see public art, wide sidewalks, and a café integrated into the podium of a large scale residential tower along Beresford St in the Maywood neighbourhood.

![Mixed Use RM5/C2 Zoning with commercial at grade. Source: Author (2018)](image)

Burnaby designated Maywood as a core residential area. This means that Maywood is planned to be primarily a neighbourhood characterized by mid to high rise multiple family residential buildings with ground-oriented townhouses. The zoning that will enable Maywood to achieve its core residential designation is the RM5/C2 zoning seen in figure 35. Although the residential zoning enables the high-rise towers in the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood, the commercial zoning doesn’t allow for as high of a
FAR, this means that commercial and retail developments will have a smaller footprint than what is seen in the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood.

Figure 32 Example of townhouse podium design typical in new RM5/C2 High Density Mixed Use Zoning in Metrotown. Source: Author (2018)

Maywood as a core residential designation also exhibits lower density housing forms as seen in figure 37. These housing developments are located further on the outskirts of the Maywood neighbourhood and are used to scale up the development towards higher densities in the Metro-Downtown core.

Figure 33 Example of new build RM4 High Density zoning type in the Maywood Neighbourhood. Source: Author (2018)
Maywood and the Impacts of Displacement

The Maywood neighbourhood has been the centre of attention of the demolitions issue in the Metrotown community mainly because of the community composition which is comprised of mainly new immigrants and landed refugees. Craig Jones highlights here:

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. (Jones, 2015, p. 3)

Maywood plays an important role in accommodating low income residents. The impact of the community being an affordable hub of refugee and new immigrant households means that any displacement will be felt more acutely by these vulnerable populations.

10.1.4. Central Park East Neighbourhood Analysis

Central Park East in the Context of the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan

The Central Park East neighbourhood contains the oldest examples of high rise developments from the 60’s and 70’s in Metrotown. The form developed in Central Park East is much higher than the low-rise apartments typical in the Maywood and Marlborough neighbourhoods developed roughly around the same time. Central Park
East is highly serviced by amenities including the adjacent Central Park and one of the two Skytrain stations (Patterson) in Metrotown. Figure 38 illustrates the concept of apartments in the park which the 1977 Metrotown Development Plan called for in this neighbourhood. The relationship between Central Park and this neighbourhood is to be maintained in the new Metrotown Downtown.

In the Metrotown Downtown Plan, the Central Park East neighbourhood, like the Maywood neighbourhood, is intended to take on the Core Residential framework. Burnaby states that the core residential area: “…is to be characterized by mid- to high-rise multiple-family residential buildings with ground-oriented townhouses or live/work units set close to the street” (City of Burnaby, 2016, p. 14).

![Central Park East Tower Developments](image)

**Figure 35** Central Park East Tower Developments
Source: Google Earth (2018)

10.1.5. **The Ridge Neighbourhood Analysis**

**The Ridge Neighbourhood in the Context of the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan**

The Ridge is the smallest of the Metrotown neighbourhoods by area land and within the Metrotown Downtown Plan is intended to be planned and used as a buffer
between the single-family neighbourhoods in the north and the higher densities in the southern Downtown Core neighbourhood. Burnaby hopes to create the Ridge neighbourhood as a buffer by allowing for medium density residential developments. Currently the Ridge is typified by row and townhouse developments, along with storey residential buildings.

10.1.6. **Central Park North Neighbourhood Analysis**

The Central Park North neighbourhood is designated to follow a ground oriented residential form. The Metrotown Downtown Plan calls for ground-oriented residential to be characterized by multiple-family residential buildings in low-rise forms (generally 1-4 stories), including row-houses, townhouses and low-rise apartments, all of which would have direct entry to the street (City of Burnaby, 2017). Figure 19 illustrates the ground oriented residential designation Burnaby is describing. It should be noted that this townhouse project on Sardis St and Patterson Ave is zoned RM5, the highest residential zoning in Burnaby. It is evident from this project that Burnaby’s adherence to its development guidelines like the ground oriented residential designation is followed stringently even when opportunities for higher density developments are available.

10.1.7. **Metrotown Neighbourhood Observational Analysis Conclusions**

My analysis of the Metrotown neighbourhoods revealed two different stories. One story describes a vibrant complete community in the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood. The Metrotown Downtown Plan focuses the highest mixed-use densities in the Metro-Downtown neighbourhood to create a residential and commercial hub not only for the other surrounding Metrotown neighbourhoods, but also for the entire City of Burnaby. With the Metrotown Downtown Plan, Burnaby declared that it will create a second downtown core within the region, however, Burnaby does not intend to position itself as a competitor to the central business district (CBD) in Downtown Vancouver. Burnaby instead is intending to create a mixed use downtown that mixes many residential and commercial uses (Schumann, 2018).

The other half of the story within the Metrotown neighbourhoods revolves around demovictions, displacement, and change. If Municipal and Provincial policies are not put
in place that manage the pace of change in neighbourhoods like Marlborough and Maywood, we will likely see the increase of displacement of renters through redevelopment over the next five to ten years. Murray Martin, one of my interview participants, highlighted that the demoviction process in Vancouver is a serious human rights issue. Martin also highlighted that there is no precedent to the demovictions occurring in Metrotown, nowhere else in Canada do we see demovictions happen at the scale and intensity they are happening in Metrotown (Martin, 2018).

The change that Metrotown has gone through since the year 2000 is both impressive and problematic. Change is the constant theme in the Metrotown Downtown Plan. The impact that this change is having on the Metrotown community varies. Change within neighbourhoods like Metro-Downtown is less felt by residents as development does not come at the cost of redeveloping existing housing stock. However, change in neighbourhoods like Maywood and Marlborough is more high stakes for residents because of the displacement factor and allowing for higher densities in formally lower density neighbourhoods. The analysis and focus on demovictions in the neighbourhoods of Marlborough and Maywood highlights a weakness of both the Metrotown Downtown Plan and the complete communities concept; that weakness being the inability to properly manage a pace of change that does not result in displacement of people.

In the next chapter, I address the compatibility of the Metrotown Plan with complete community and housing affordability principles.
Chapter 11. Quantitative Analysis of Metrotown as a Complete Community

The following sections will analyze Metrotown Regional City Centre in terms of its performance as a complete community. To conduct my analysis, I will be utilizing a set of indicators derived from Metro Vancouver’s Metro 2040 Regional Growth Strategy which outlines ‘Developing Complete Communities’ as one of the five goals set out in the strategy (Metro Vancouver, 2017). This research is using a locally based framework of evaluating complete communities that uses easily accessible and relevant data sources like CMHC and Canadian Census information.

To quantify complete communities, this research employed the indicator framework used by Metro Vancouver. This framework was chosen for two reasons. First, given the scale and scope of my research, it was unreasonable to create my own indicator set and thus by using an established indicator set I can conduct a rough initial assessment of Metrotown as complete community. The second reason I chose this indicator set was that it fit within the social, political, and economic context of my research; this made gathering relevant data to inform my indicators much simpler.

Metro Vancouver breaks down how it measures complete communities into two components. One focuses on the impact that housing has on complete communities and the other focuses on the quality of life and health impacts that complete communities have on the population. For the purpose of this research project, I will be mainly engaging with the first component of Metro Vancouver’s complete community definition. Referring back to table 5, we can see the performance indicators that Metro Vancouver uses to measure the provision of affordable housing which includes indicators like:

- Median Household Income
- Housing Costs
- Transportation Costs
- Adopted and implemented housing action plan
- New Dwelling Unit Completions By Tenure
- New Dwelling Unit Completions By Type
- Purpose Built Rental Apartment Rents
- Housing Price Index
- Metro Vancouver Housing Demand Projections to 2026
Metro Vancouver defines affordable housing in the complete community framework in the following terms: “Affordability is a significant regional challenge, both for renters and homeowners, but locations near transit improve overall affordability. There is more housing diversity, but the need for townhouses and larger units continues to increase” (Metro Vancouver, 2017a). Seeing the emphasis on housing affordability principles in Metro Vancouver’s complete community evaluation framework was validating for this research because it showed that political urban planning bodies view housing affordability as an integral piece of creating and defining complete communities. The data analysis here will only focus on the first complete community component of creating diverse and affordable housing.

Before we measure the performance of Metrotown as a complete community, the reader should be reminded of the performance indicators used in Metro Vancouver’s analysis and measurement of complete communities. My research has adapted and scaled down Metro Vancouver’s indicators in order to quantifiably measure Metrotown as a complete community. Table 13 highlights both the complete community indicator and associated performance indicator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro Vancouver Complete Community Indicators</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing Transportation Cost Burden</td>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transportation Costs¹</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Housing Actions</td>
<td>Adopted and implemented housing action plan</td>
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<td>Housing Choices</td>
<td>New Dwelling Unit Completions By Tenure</td>
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<td></td>
<td>New Dwelling Unit Completions By Type</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Purpose Built Rental Apartment Rents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Housing Price Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rental Demand and Supply</td>
<td>Metro Vancouver Housing Demand Projections to 2026</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following sections in this chapter follow the same format. First, I introduce the complete community indicator and its associated performance indicators. I then provide and analyze the data for each performance indicator. Finally, I evaluate that indicator in terms of how it relates to the creation and support of complete community
principles. A scoring system was not used in my evaluation of each indicator; rather, I provide a brief overview of the indicator and remark on where that indicator is trending.

11.1. Complete Community Indicator: Housing Transportation Cost Burden

**Performance Indicators:** Median Household Income, Housing Costs, Transportation Costs.

The first complete community and housing affordability indicator I will be measuring is the housing and transportation (H+T) cost burden indicator. Metro Vancouver puts forward three performance indicators to evaluate the housing and transportation cost burden that households face. To gather the data for these performance indicators, I used the findings from Metro Vancouver’s 2016 study and pulled the following statistics for owner and renter households: median household income, housing costs, and transportation costs. Table 14 illustrates the costs relevant to the cost burden study and reveals that Burnaby residents face less of a cost burden compared to residents in the region as a whole. For Burnaby, 47% of all renters feel a cost burden when their income, and housing and transportation costs are considered as an overall measure of affordability (Metro Vancouver, 2016a, p.15). As mentioned previously, the problem of burdened households is important to understand as burdened households are more likely to make lifestyle and wellbeing trade-offs in order to meet their housing and transportation costs.

### Table 14 Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Findings: Burnaby and Metro Vancouver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Burnaby Owners</th>
<th>Metro Vancouver Owners</th>
<th>Burnaby Renters</th>
<th>Metro Vancouver Renters</th>
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<td>Housing Costs</td>
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<td>$ 24,744.00</td>
<td>$ 12,516.00</td>
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<td>Transportation Costs</td>
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<td>$ 11,133.00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>$ 92,281.00</td>
<td>$ 49,989.00</td>
<td>$ 52,153.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Housing costs represent average payments for all homes owned by working households with mortgages.

**Transportation cost estimates are representative for working households, regardless of tenure.

Source: Metro Vancouver Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Study (2016).
For Metro Vancouver, housing costs and transportation costs are considered in the cost burden evaluation. Findings that were revealed by the 2016 Housing and
Transportation (H+T) Cost Burden study released by Metro Vancouver showed that working renter households faced higher housing and transportation cost burdens than working owner households; however, the conclusion was that both groups are facing challenges in meeting their housing and transportation needs. The study found that in places where households spend more on housing, they may spend less on transportation and vice-versa; the study also found that households living near frequent transit networks were able to absorb higher costs of housing by spending less on personal vehicles and driving expenses (Metro Vancouver, 2016a). What is often not included in choices around affordability are the transportation costs of living in less dense and less serviced communities where the daily needs of residents are only easily met by personal automobile use. What the Housing and Transportation Cost Burden Study found is that the outer suburban communities in Metro Vancouver generally paid less for their housing expenses than their inner suburb and central city counterparts; however, the transportation cost burden incurred by these suburban households often outweighed most of the savings households had from lower housing costs.

Table 14 and figures 36 and 37 highlight the cost burden analysis of Metro Vancouver and Burnaby. What the findings reveal are that housing trends in Burnaby remained fairly consistent with the study’s findings: renter households are generally more financially burdened than owner households. Burnaby homeowners are higher income earners than renter households; and, as a result, a median income owner household will pay roughly 40% of their income on housing and transportation, meanwhile a median income rental household in Burnaby spends roughly 47% of their income on housing and transportation. In other words, Burnaby is more affordable for owner households than it is for renter households.

There were research limitations for this specific complete community indicator measuring the H+T cost burden Metrotown residents faced in 2011. First, the findings were not specific to my Metrotown study area. As Metro Vancouver states in its methodology for the H+T study, they were able to obtain special order Canadian census information for two data sets to measure housing costs: monthly gross rents for renters and major payments for owners. For transportation costs, Metro Vancouver obtained TransLink regional trip diary information and was able to compose a transportation cost for both renters and owners. Although my research was not able to obtain the fine grained information to be able to conduct a housing and transportation cost burden
analysis for the Metrotown study area, these findings are still significant in revealing the affordability challenges residents of Burnaby and Metrotown face.

**Evaluation:**

Table 14 and figures 36 and 37 highlight the cost burden analysis of Metro Vancouver and Burnaby. What the findings reveal are that housing trends in Burnaby remained fairly consistent with the study’s findings: renter households are generally more financially burdened than owner households. Burnaby homeowners are higher income earners than renter households; and, as a result, a median income owner household will pay roughly 40% of their income on housing and transportation, meanwhile a median income rental household in Burnaby spends roughly 47% of their income on housing and transportation. In other words, Burnaby is more affordable for owner households than it is for renter households.

**11.2. Complete Community Indicator: Municipal Housing Actions**

**Performance Indicator:** Adopted and implemented housing action plan.

The second complete community indicator that Metro Vancouver evaluates is the action that municipalities are taking towards housing affordability. Metro Vancouver considers municipalities to be working towards complete communities when they approve and implement official housing strategies. The majority of municipalities in Metro Vancouver have official housing strategies which outline long term housing goals and integrate regional housing goals set out in the 2016 Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (RAHS).

The municipality of Burnaby does not have a current housing strategy; however, the Burnaby Housing Profile (2016) and the Burnaby Official Community Plan (1998) have served to guide Burnaby council’s housing policy decisions in the absence of an official housing strategy. Approved housing strategies are beneficial for two reasons. First, strategies set out long term housing goals that help inform planning and development decisions by both the public and private sector. Second, municipal housing strategies signal that municipality’s ambitions to senior levels of government which helps
in regional planning coordination and informs Provincial and Federal governments about future Municipal funding needs.

**Evaluation:**

The lack of a housing strategy poses challenges when creating or supporting complete community principles. The performance measure of this indicator is a simple yes or no. Does Burnaby have a current housing strategy? No. Is the Metrotown Downtown Plan considered to be a housing strategy? No. As mentioned previously, the Metrotown Downtown Plan is only considered to be a land use plan; it does not contain targets towards or policy goals commonly found in housing strategies.

**11.3. Complete Community Indicator: Housing Choices**

**Performance Indicators:** New Dwelling Unit Completions By Tenure, New Dwelling Unit Completions By Type, Purpose Built Rental Apartment Rents, Housing Price Index

The third complete community and housing affordability indicator I will be measuring for Metrotown is the housing choices indicator. Table 15 illustrates the performance indicators and data sources I used to collect the data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing and Transportation Cost Burden indicator</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Dwelling Unit Completions by Tenure</td>
<td>Historical Completions by Dwelling Type (By: Homeowner, Rental, Condo, Co-op)</td>
<td>CMHC Starts and Completions Survey 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Dwelling Unit Completions by Type</td>
<td>Historical Completions by Dwelling Type (By: Homeowner, Rental, Condo, Co-op)</td>
<td>CMHC Starts and Completions Survey 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose Built Rental Apartment Rents</td>
<td>Historical Median Rent by Bedroom Type (By: Bachelor, 1 bed, 2 bed, 3 bed)</td>
<td>CMHC Starts and Completions Survey 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Price Index</td>
<td>Home Price Index</td>
<td>Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Dwelling Unit Completions by Tenure Analysis

The Metrotown community has historically been a medium to high density residential community. Beginning with low-rise 3 storey walk ups in the 1950’s and 1960’s, Metrotown in 2019 exhibits some of the highest residential densities outside of the Vancouver city core.

One of the core principles of complete communities is the provision of housing choices; this means that individuals should have both access to and choices amongst various forms of housing types and tenures in a community. A mix of housing types including apartments, both mid-rise and high-rise, townhouses, and middle to lower density street oriented residential developments are encouraged in the complete community framework. Figure 38 highlights the performance of Metrotown, delivering various forms of housing types since 2010. The data shows that Metrotown has mainly been delivering high-rise housing over the past decade while other housing forms like row and housing developments have been less developed. Row and townhouse forms are regarded as desirable housing forms in the complete community due to their ability to deliver a dense housing form while retaining elements of a single family home (e.g. personal front door, private outdoor space). Metrotown for its part has been incorporating row and townhouse developments into the podiums of many of the recent high-rise developments as pictured in figure 43, however the development of apartment units still dominates the housing type being offered at Metrotown.
In figure 40 we see the history of housing typology in Metrotown. The dominance of apartment developments has characterized Metrotown as a community since the end of the Second World War; however, more recently we see a shift away from low-rise apartment buildings to more modern high-rise buildings in the community between 2006 and 2016. The older housing stock found at Metrotown was mainly low-rise apartment buildings built during the 1950’s and 1960’s. With increasing development in the community, the historic low-rise apartment buildings are being demolished to allow for higher density high rise residential developments.
Figure 40  Total Occupied Units By Structure Type 2006 & 2016 Source: CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018)

New Dwelling Unit Completions by Dwelling Type Analysis

Metrotown has often been regarded as an affordable community especially for low income and immigrant families who mainly occupy the older housing stock developed in the 1950’s and 1960’s (Ley and Jones, 2016). That affordability could be threatened if current trends continue like the lack of purpose-built rental which we see illustrated in figure 41. Through a complete community lens it is problematic that very few new purpose rental units are being built in Metrotown, although it appears this trend is changing as we will discuss in chapters 12. It should be noted that a lack of purpose built rentals puts pressure on existing older rental units within the community to meet the needs of lower income renters. With the lack of a purpose built rental market, first time and displaced renters will be forced to turn to the private strata rental market where there is no security of tenure and rental rates are often higher (Connolly, 2018).

The recent spike in rents as seen in tables 46 and 47 may indicate that as market developments in Metrotown become more common, the current rental stock availability within the community will begin to become more scarce and thus more expensive, in turn
forcing displaced low income residents out of the community. In Figure 45, we see the complete lack of rental unit production in Metrotown over the past seven years, the production of condo units has dwarfed any other type of development at Metrotown.

![Figure 41: New Dwelling Unit Completions in Metrotown By Tenure Source: CMHC Market Rental Survey Data (2018)](image)

**Purpose Built Rental Apartment Rents Analysis**

Analyzing rental rates will help inform the housing choices indicator, the associated performance indicators for this indicator examine rent rates over time across all bedroom types. For my analysis, I comparatively measured Metrotown and the entire city of Burnaby. As demonstrated in figures 42 and 43, the average rental rate across all units at Metrotown from 2009 to 2017 increased. Comparing Metrotown and Burnaby provides a local comparison of rental rates and highlights Metrotown’s profile of being more affordable in terms of rents when compared to the rest of Burnaby. For additional comparison of affordability in the region, the average rental rates in the City of Vancouver in 2017 were $1,108 for a bachelor unit, $1,326 for a single bedroom, $1,865 for a 2 bedroom, and $2,223 for a 3 bedroom units. In the context of the region, Metrotown’s rental rates are still considered to be affordable when compared to the City of Vancouver.
The final performance indicator used in the housing choices category is the housing price index (HPI). The HPI in figure 43 covers a larger geography than my Metrotown study area, however, the information still provides a reliable indication of housing prices within the community. As seen in my analysis of rental and homeowner households, both types of households experience burdens in meeting their housing and transportation costs. As is seen in figure 48, the barrier to entering the housing market is increasing as housing prices continue to soar, not only in the Metrotown area but the entire Metro Vancouver region. Homeownership plays an important role in creating
complete communities as because of its role in offering a range of housing types and tenures for residents, homeownership offers the security of tenure that rental does not.

![Figure 44 Burnaby South Housing Price Index 2011-2018. Source: Real Estate Board of British Columbia Housing Price Index (2018)](image-url)

**Evaluation**

It is evident that high-rise construction is the primary housing structure type being supported and built in Metrotown. This trend indicates that high-rise, high-density residential projects are part of Burnaby’s vision of a complete community, and generally this vision aligns with the complete community principle of promoting and supporting dense urban forms. However, when factoring in affordability measures, Metrotown begins to stray away from meeting complete community principles.

As seen in figure 41, Burnaby produced very little secured rental stock between 2010 and 2017, the lack of a secured rental stock forces vulnerable and new renters to seek accommodation in the unsecured secondary market which often comes at the price of higher rents and loss of tenure security. Finally, the rising rent rates in both the secured rental stock (figures 46 and 47) and the private rental stock (Connolly, 2016) create affordability issues for renters. Soaring home prices (figure 44) round out an overall affordability issue taking place in Metrotown for both renters and potential owners.
11.4. **Complete Community Indicator: Rental Supply and Demand**

**Performance Indicators:** Metro Vancouver Housing Demand Projections to 2026

The final of the four complete community indicators is the rental supply and demand measure. The 2016 Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (RAHS) set out a target for rental demand for municipalities to meet through to 2026. Table 16 breaks down the expected rental demand for Burnaby. The rental demand is also provided for the entire Metro Vancouver area as context. Metro Vancouver uses its own demand prediction methodology and rental income distribution to assess how Metro Vancouver municipalities are performing to meet rental demand. Figure 45 highlights the current income distribution bands in Metrotown from 2006 to 2011 and the trend appears to be towards lower income residents being squeezed out of the community and a rise in higher income households.

There are limitations to the data analysis conducted here. First, the rental demand data is only provided at a municipal level and no rental demand data is available through Metro Vancouver for the Metrotown community. The City of Burnaby, however, produces its own population and household demand statistics based on their own analysis of census trends. By 2041, Burnaby projects that Metrotown’s population will increase to 66,800 residents from the current population of 27,700 residents. Burnaby also predicts that Metrotown will increase its number of dwelling units to 31,800 from the current count of 16,000 dwelling units. Although Burnaby’s projection data does not align with Metro Vancouver’s projections to 2026, what both pieces of data reveal is that Burnaby is expected to grow and take on a large portion of housing demand in the near and long terms. However, as it currently stands, Burnaby is trending away from meeting the demand for low income rental housing at Metrotown.

### Table 16: Burnaby and Metro Vancouver Rental Demand Rates to 2026.
**Source:** Metro Vancouver. 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership Demand</th>
<th>Rental Demand</th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Moderate Income</th>
<th>High Income</th>
<th>Total Demand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>13,100</td>
<td>5,900</td>
<td>3,780</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>1,110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Increase in total households over 10 years is based on regional population and household projections. Regional total exceeds municipal aggregate totals due to municipal variance. Very low income <$30,000/year, Low income <$30,000-50,000/year, Moderate income $50,000-75,000/year, Above moderate $75,000-$100,000/yr, High income $100,000/yr plus. Household maintainer rates and cohort projection method using census/NHS based household maintainer rates and projected demographic, characteristics (age, births, deaths, immigration, Canadian migration, intra-regional migration). Assumes that household income and household type ratios remain constant over the projection period. See Metro Vancouver Regional Planning. Metro Vancouver Housing Demand Projections – Overview of Assumptions and Methodology. Dec 2015.

Evaluation

Complete community principles highlight the importance of vibrant and inclusive communities. These social equity principles would indicate that the complete community theory promotes creating communities for all types of folks across all incomes. If trends in Burnaby continue, we will see the rise of middle and high income earners while lower income earners are gentrified out of the community. It does appear that income distribution in Metrotown still heavily favours the middle to low income band of income earners in 2011.
11.5. **Quantitative Analysis Conclusions – Assessing Metrotown:**

The purpose of this chapter was to use my adapted complete community indicator set and evaluate how Metrotown performs as a complete community. Measuring the complete community performance of Metrotown addressed two research objectives. First, can complete communities be measured, and second, how well is Metrotown performing as a complete community.

Throughout my analysis it became clear that any evaluation of a complete community requires many more considerations than just housing affordability; however, measuring housing affordability trends is an important first step in evaluating the completeness of a community. My evaluation of Metrotown as a complete community is incomplete and suggestions on how to create a more robust evaluation framework are discussed in the conclusion of this thesis. Although my evaluation is incomplete, it did shed some light on housing affordability trends in Metrotown that are worth analyzing and discussing.

Recalling figure 7, 53% of Metrotown residents are renters and it has historically been viewed as an affordable rental community in the region. Although they are the majority, renters in Metrotown are facing considerable challenges. First, they are more cost burdened than their homeowner counterparts. For example: renter households comparatively earn less than homeowner households but spend more of their income on housing and transportation costs combined. Second, Metrotown is losing its secured rental housing stock while doing a very poor job of replacing it. Figure 50 takes into consideration all the losses and gains of secured rental units in Metrotown and as can be seen, Metrotown is still losing a considerable amount of rental even when gains in rental housing are factored in.
Third, renters are facing ever higher rental rates across all bedroom types in Metrotown. This figure will continue to rise as supply of secured rental is lost to condo developments. The loss of affordable rental units is particularly hard on renter households earning low incomes in neighbourhoods like Maywood and Marlborough as illustrated in table 17. For existing low-income renter households in Metrotown, the pressure to be able to afford rising rental rates will be challenging moving forward and will likely result in households leaving to find more affordable units, likely along the suburban fringes of the region.
Table 17  Median Renter Household Income Comparison. Source. Statistics Canada. 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighbourhood</th>
<th>Median Renter Household Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maywood</td>
<td>$13,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlborough</td>
<td>$33,985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Park East</td>
<td>$33,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Burnaby</td>
<td>$39,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metro Vancouver</td>
<td>$41,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fourth, increasingly low vacancy rents will create challenges for displaced renters looking to relocate within the community. As discussed in section 9.1.2 (Burnaby Tenant Assistance Policy), the historically low vacancy rates (figure 47) highlight the challenges of finding existing rental units in Metrotown. In comparison, in 2017 the vacancy rates in the entire city of Burnaby for a bachelor unit was 0.3%, 0.5% for a 1-bedroom, 0.8% for a 2-bedroom, and 0.3% for a 3-bedroom in.

Figure 47  Vacancy Rates Across All Unit Types - Metrotown. Source: CMHC. 2018

Note: CMHC did not have data for 3-bedroom units

Looking at other aspects of complete community and housing affordability trends that emerged from this analysis, it is difficult to ignore the type of housing currently being built at Metrotown. In figure 41, we see that the development trend in Burnaby is towards building a high rise apartment form. The housing diversity that complete
communities promote appears to be lacking in Metrotown. The price of homeownership will also prove to be challenging for any prospective homebuyer as recent trends show an upswing in apartment homeownership prices. Burnaby also appears to be on a path towards not meeting its rental demand expectation for low and modest income residents while exceeding its ability to provide housing for high end incomes. Burnaby also appears unwilling to produce secured rental units which negatively reflects Burnaby’s ability to meet housing affordability goals, with rental being more accessible and affordable compared to ownership.

On the other hand, Metrotown and Burnaby are exceeding complete community goals when it comes to developing compact amenity rich communities. Metrotown is highly accessible by various high frequency transit modes and recent residential developments meet the definition of highly densified compact communities. Finally, the impressive amount of high quality amenities in the area means that residents have access to all types of recreation, retail, and wellbeing offerings within walking distance.
Chapter 12. Displacement and Demovictions

With this discussion chapter I want to round out the conversation around Metrotown, complete communities, and housing affordability by introducing a critical discussion around a key issue that is top of mind for residents, advocates, and politicians: demovictions.

It became clear in my research that one of the most significant social and economic outcomes of Metrotown's development towards becoming a complete community has been the rise of demovictions in the neighbourhood. Burnaby and Metro Vancouver’s aspirations of creating compact dense communities close to employment hubs that are well serviced by frequent transit networks has triggered the redevelopment of low-density housing that has supported lower income renters since the end of the Second World War.

One specific policy was echoed throughout my interviews as having the greatest influence on the demovictions issue in Metrotown: the Supplementary Community Benefit Bonus Density Policy (S-Zoning). As discussed, this has allowed developers to receive substantial density bonuses for projects near frequent transit networks within Burnaby’s town centres. The conditions for development that the S-Zoning created were all too enticing for developers, as Murray Martin stated in one of my interviews: “It’s the City creating this speculative frenzy, and then they [developers] react, and I don’t like to let developers off, but it is like expecting a shark not to feed” (Martin, 2018).

On the surface, the S-Zoning policy supports complete community ideals by allowing high density residential development near transit and employment opportunities in communities like Metrotown. However, this pursuit of developing high density projects near transit and employment centre has, in the case of Metrotown, resulted in a wave of development that has demolished swaths of affordable housing stocks to make way for high-rise market developments. According to the Alliance Against Displacement, Burnaby’s current development trajectory will result in the eviction of 6,000 low income people by 2040 (McGowan, 2017). Displacement and development in Metrotown is likely not going to slow down in the near future, as evidenced by the number of major projects approved or in the approval process in the Metrotown Area as seen in figure 48.
A large portion of projects are in the Maywood, Marlborough and Central Park neighbourhoods. Additionally, all of these projects will result, or have already resulted, in some form of tenant displacement because of the lack of greenfield undeveloped sites at Metrotown.

![Map of Metrotown with major projects highlighted](image)

**Figure 48** Major Projects Approved or in Approval Process in Metrotown 2015-2017: Source: Author – data from City of Burnaby (2018)

The format of this chapter will introduce the concept of demovictions as well as provide the social impacts that demovictions are having on Metrotown and its residents. The impacts of demovictions on tenants will be highlighted to expose the problematic nature of demovictions in the complete community and housing affordability framework. I will then focus on how demovictions are enabled through City of Burnaby policy, and what current policies exist to deal with outcomes like demovictions. I will also highlight the role of advocacy groups which have become major political agents speaking against demovictions and new development at Metrotown. Finally, I will articulate how Provincial Government changes have given municipalities the power to address housing affordability issues constructively. Throughout this chapter I will also be relating the
impacts that demovictions have on the two key research concepts of this thesis: housing affordability and complete communities.

12.1. Metrotown Demovictions

What are Demovictions – Defining the Process of Demovictions:

Demovictions are simply defined as demolition driven evictions (Drury, 2016). For this research I wanted to uncover the process of demovictions in Burnaby and from my media and content analysis, as well as from my interviews, the process of demovictions began to take shape.

Step One: A Land Value Spike Entices Property Sales

The first step in a demoviction process occurs when a landlord sells their property to a prospective buyer who can maximize the allowable density on a site. Property owners in Metrotown were encouraged to sell their properties because of the high land value that the S-Zoning policy and Metrotown Downtown Plan ushered in. For example, following the release of the Metrotown Downtown Plan in 2017, land values in certain Metrotown properties increased in value by 462% (Martin, 2018). Further to Martin’s point, a 2018 real estate report tracked information on per buildable square footage and found that in 2017, 21 projects in the Metrotown Neighbourhood saw drastic increases in land values. The report stated: “Throughout 2017, the range of per buildable values [in Metrotown] increased from approximately $212 [/Sq. ft] all the way up to $350 [/Sq. ft] with an average of approximately$275 [/Sq. ft.]” (Jones Lang LaSalle IP, 2018, p.2). To put these findings into perspective, other Metro Vancouver suburbs like Richmond saw a maximum price per buildable square foot cap out at $180, and the City of Surrey’s was $80. Burnaby was second only to the City of Vancouver which had an average price per buildable square foot rate between $650 to $750 (Weeks, 2017).

The increase in land values occurs because of the development potential that the new policies allow. The purchasing and developing of properties in Metrotown is mainly done through three large scale developers. Chris Cheung, a local area journalist, highlighted that the competitive development market in Metro Vancouver means that the small-scale property owners lack the means to develop their own land and thus large-
scale developers like Bosa, Anthem, and Concord Pacific dominate the development market in Metrotown.

Step Two: Incentivizing Move Outs

After purchasing a property, but prior to a rezoning application, a developer will often hire a consultant firm to help empty out a building by incentivizing tenants to leave early. In my interview with Murray Martin, he highlighted that development companies want to empty a building prior to a rezoning because the developer can avoid disruptions in their development (e.g. no organized protests against the development) when the unit is vacant at the time of rezoning (Martin, 2018). Martin highlighted that intimidation and aggressive buyout tactics are used by developers and their consultants to empty out buildings (Martin, 2018). Once a building is cleared of tenants it often remains vacant while awaiting rezoning approval.

Martin raises concern in his advocacy work: the push to empty buildings in Metrotown has resulted in a significant amount of livable properties sitting vacant and boarded up while they await rezoning approval. Murray Martin views this as unacceptable especially during a housing crisis in Burnaby and Metro Vancouver (Martin, 2018).

Step Three: Renoviction Through Landlord Use of Property Clause

The third step in a typical demoviction process takes place after a project receives a rezoning approval and can legally demolish the property. In most cases developers will act on their own behalf or through a subsidiary company to enforce the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) which is the Provincially legislated legal mechanism used to evict tenants in British Columbia. Tenants are often evicted on three grounds: first landlords can evict on the grounds of change of landlord use of property; second, landlords can evict on the grounds of excessive rental arrears accrued by the tenants, and third; the landlord can evict tenants based on units requiring extensive repair without the tenant being able to remain in situ. After tenants have been served notice to vacate their property for any of the reasons above, they will in some cases be eligible for tenant protections through the Residential Tenancy Act which as of May 2018 gives the displaced tenant four months’ notice to vacate the property and one month free rent. In other cases, the tenant will be offered protections through the City of Burnaby’s Tenant
Assistance Policy. The requirements and protections under Burnaby’s Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy were covered in section 9.1.2.

The result of this three-step process is that a tenant gets displaced out of their unit. This demoviction process has occurred in both purpose built rental and stratified buildings in Metrotown (Weaver, 2016). The impact on tenants that demovictions has is exacerbated in Metrotown where rent rates in the secondary rental market are much higher than rents in the secured market stock which forces the tenant out of their community in order to find housing that is affordable elsewhere.

12.1.2. Why are Demovictions Occurring at Metrotown?

Many of my interviews pointed to the approval of the S-Zoning text amendment and Burnaby City Council approving the Metrotown Downtown Plan as motivating the main uptick in demovictions in Metrotown.

Metrotown is a community with an aging housing stock (see figure 8 for percentage of housing stock per neighbourhood built between 1940 and 1960). Most of this older housing stock in Metrotown has run the course of its natural life and requires extensive repairs. Johannes Schumann stated in our interview that much of the post war housing stock in Metrotown was built as temporary housing, featuring lead piping, asbestos, and single pane windows. Much of the housing stock facing redevelopment has already or is reaching the end of its natural building life. Burnaby does not have a Standards of Maintenance Bylaw, which is often used by municipalities to enforce the upkeep of a building’s condition. By not having a Standards of Maintenance Bylaw, Burnaby does not require building owners to upkeep and improve their buildings. When buildings are not maintained, a landlord can potentially use legal clauses within the Residential Tenancy Act to evict an entire building on grounds that extensive work and repairs are required in the units.

Under the Residential Tenancy Act of British Columbia, landlords may evict tenants on the grounds that extensive work is needed to repair the unit. Landlords have used the RTA to clear out entire buildings before selling the property to a developer who sells to another developer that has the capacity to build higher density housing over the formerly lower density older housing stock (Diewart, 2018). The up-zoning of the
Metrotown community, combined with landlords selling land to developers, are two major factors why demovictions are occurring at Metrotown.

To further support the claim that aging housing stock is contributing to demovictions at Metrotown, I will refer to University of British Columbia researcher Craig Jones who studied the effects of Transit Oriented Development on Metrotown. Jones created a Rental Housing Disadvantage Index (RHDI). This index helps identify buildings that could go through the demoviction process. Jones’ index included the following indicators: average renter household income, average number of persons per bedroom in rented dwellings, percentage of renter households paying 50% or more of their income on rent, percentage of the rental requiring major repairs. Jones’ findings revealed that Metrotown, specifically the Maywood neighbourhood, scored very high in the index and thus could be considered more disadvantaged; in turn, they are likely to experience demovictions as part of the redevelopment process of Metrotown as a whole (Jones and Ley, 2016).

The Metrotown demovictions and the impact they have on residents is troubling through a complete community and housing affordability lens. First, Metrotown demovictions have disproportionately impacted lower income renter households. Demovictions also impact housing affordability through measures like housing suitability and adequacy. As stated by tenants facing demovictions at Metrotown, disrepair is common in buildings facing potential demovictions in that community, and figure 53 demonstrates how buildings in Metrotown neighbourhoods proportionately require more major repairs, when compared to the entire city of Burnaby.
The CMHC uses housing adequacy as a measure of housing affordability; for example, a household is considered to be under housing stress if it is compromising living conditions in order to meet shelter costs. With regard to the situation in Metrotown, and specifically the state of disrepair of older buildings, it is evident that some tenants in older buildings are enduring substandard living conditions in order to be able to afford to rent in a high amenity community like Metrotown (Diewart, 2018).

### 12.2. Demovictions and Burnaby Housing Policy

Craig Jones and David Ley’s research on low income communities along Skytrain corridors in Vancouver referenced throughout this thesis concluded that Burnaby’s Supplemental Community Benefit Policy was directly resulting in displacement and loss of affordability in Metrotown. Jones and Ley concluded that the S-Zoning policy has facilitated the displacement of vulnerable tenant groups out of Metrotown (Jones and Ley, 2016). Critics have been especially vocal against the S-Zoning policy as it was only approved as a text amendment and did not receive any type of public consultation. The S-Zoning policy is controversial and compromises the concepts of housing affordability and complete communities at Metrotown because it has been viewed as the catalyst of renter displacement in that community.
In theory the S-Zoning policy aligns with complete community principles because it enables high-density projects that further support the notion of developing compact communities. However, as previously noted, the S-Zoning policy has arguably already led to the displacement of hundreds of households in Metrotown. Demovictions facilitated by the S-Zoning policy have highlighted a weakness in the complete community theory which is the inability of the theory to recognize the social and economic impact that promoting dense urban forms can have in already developed and tenanted communities.

12.2.1. The Consequences of Development, Density, and Growth in Metrotown

The S-Zoning policy has clearly had negative effects on the community of Metrotown, as seen with outcomes like demovictions. The discussion around the policy revolves around the concept of development and gentrification. For growing communities like Burnaby, redevelopment and displacement are inevitable; however, policy that replaces lost units at affordable rates for displaced tenants can help alleviate some of the impacts that redevelopment can have, especially on vulnerable groups like low income earners and refugee families.

Burnaby, for its part, has done an excellent job of focusing growth within its four Town Centres; however, demovictions appear to be at least one of the negative outcomes of Burnaby’s Town Centre growth policies. The Town Centre model has worked well for Burnaby because it has enabled communities and high-density development to form around amenity rich mall sites and transit networks, however, the Town Centre model has been reluctant to deal with a much larger issue – the densification of single and two family neighbourhoods. Johannes Schumann, City of Burnaby Planner, commented on this in our interview, stating:

“We’ve had this really interesting dichotomy philosophically in this city that if we protect single and two family neighbourhoods we can increase our densities in the areas where its closest to transit. So we went whole hog on the density in the transit areas and really didn’t affect any density at all in the single family neighbourhoods…it’s not a bad policy but at some point you reach a capacity.”

The S-Zoning policy, Town Centre model, and new Metrotown Downtown Plan, indicate that Burnaby has chosen a path of development that will continue to leave
single and two family neighbourhoods relatively untouched. In fact, in the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan, the geographic borders of the community were not revised from the 1977 Development plan. It was clear that Burnaby was not willing to expand the neighbourhood of Metrotown into the surrounding single family neighbourhoods. The policies that have supported the urban intensification of Metrotown, like the S-Zoning policy, point to the political reluctance of Burnaby to ask single family neighbourhoods to change their form and composition. The following quote from Mayor Derek Corrigan reinforces the notion that Burnaby’s mayor and council made a political choice to redevelop the existing low-rise rental stock rather than explore infill or higher density options in Metrotown’s single-family neighbourhoods:

You must look when you go in there and say how can you live for $700 to $800 from a transit station in the middle of an urban centre? You certainly can’t do that in any other country in the world. It’s not possible… Metrotown is so valuable because it’s so close to transit. If you believe you want transit-oriented density, you have to make the hard decisions. And so it’s like if you want to make an omelet, you have to break a few eggs. (Little. 2016).

12.2.2. Rental Only Zoning and the Impact on Metrotown

One specific planning tool Burnaby claimed is beyond its control, is the ability to mandate rental only zoning. In the region however, cities have been able to incentivize rental requirements in new projects using their own policies. For example, the City of Vancouver’s Rental 100 program provides density bonuses to developments which include secured market rental units in new projects (City of Vancouver, 2012). Also, New Westminster’s Secured Market Rental Housing Policy (City of New Westminster, 2017) grants developers breaks on parking requirements and increases in density in return for the developers agreeing to build secured market rental housing units. It seems that even within the region, cities are able to create and implement affordable housing policy that incentivises and creates secured market rental units, which is why Burnaby’s position on the matter is questioned by advocates, and even other municipalities in the region (Martin, 2018a).

A recent development in May 2018, however, gave the City of Burnaby Provincially granted power to enable rental only zoning when the British Columbia Provincial government passed Bill 23 (Residential Rental Tenure Zoning Amendment
Act, 2018). This legislation allows municipalities to zone undeveloped land for rental housing, mandate a certain percentage of units on any piece of undeveloped property to be rental, or force exiting rental properties to remain rental after redevelopment (Province of British Columbia, 2018).

Following the Province’s announcement that municipalities could create their own zoning districts, two critical events occurred in Burnaby that perhaps signaled a change in Burnaby’s approach to housing affordability. The first event occurred on 19 July 2018, at Burnaby Council where council members decided to send two applications back to a developer to be refined and include greater levels of affordability and a greater secured market rental component. The two projects, if they were approved, would have displaced 177 rental units at Metrotown (Gawley, 2018a). In a city where rezonings are passed quickly and often without question, the striking down of two development applications from a well-established developer Anthem Properties was seen as a peculiar move by council. In fact it was later revealed that council was seeking that at least half of the units would need to be non-market rental units guaranteed in perpetuity, in order for council to support the application (Gawley, 2018a).

The second event that indicated a shift in Burnaby’s attitude to housing affordability issues occurred on Monday, 23 July 2018, when Burnaby passed a motion that would allow city staff to create a new rental only zoning bylaw that would ensure:

- All redevelopment of current rental sites include the replacement of the current housing units
- That those units be available at established, affordable rates
- That the new units be made available to current tenants
- In addition to complying with the new rental zoning bylaw requirements, all redevelopments of market rental buildings will also contain the satisfactory inclusion of a non-market or social housing component (City of Burnaby, 2018a)

The changes that Burnaby is proposing towards a more rental friendly housing policy is not genuine according to Murray Martin, housing advocates, and residents who state that the change in attitude towards housing affordability is motivated by an upcoming municipal election in which the issue of demovictions and housing affordability have become the deciding political issue (Martin, 2018). One issue anti-displacement advocates have with the rental only zoning policy is the timing and Burnaby's position on implementing the policy. Murray Martin believes that Burnaby’s pivot towards adopting
the rental only zoning policy was a purely political move to signal to voters that Corrigan and the BCA were serious about addressing the displacement and housing affordability issues across Burnaby (Murray, 2018. Luba, 2018).

12.3. Demovictions: The Role of Activism and the Media

Housing activism and the media are synonymous with the demovictions process at Metrotown and are highlighted in this section to show that both entities play a role in supporting and challenging the principles underpinning housing affordability and the creation of complete communities.

12.3.1. Housing Activism

The presence and activism of anti-displacement advocates has become an important part of the demoviction story at Metrotown. There are three main advocacy groups speaking out against displacement at Metrotown: The Alliance Against Displacement, ACORN Burnaby, and the Metrotown Residents Association. The tactics used by these advocacy groups have ranged from disruptive to informative, for example on May 29th 2018, ACORN held a 100 person demonstration outside Burnaby City Hall against rezoning proposals that would displace 211 units of low income housing at Metrotown (Boothby, 2018). The most active of the advocacy groups working against displacement at Metrotown has been the Alliance Against Displacement which has held large rallies, marches and sit-ins against displacement policies. One such sit-in took place on Thursday 8 March 2018, inside the office of the mayor of Burnaby. Informative tactics have ranged from: speaking at council hearings, writing editorial pieces for local newspapers, publishing research reports and monthly newspaper publications. The activism of these advocacy groups have garnered the attention of national media, and Provincial politicians from the New Democratic and Green parties.

The relationship between advocacy groups and the City of Burnaby has not been positive. In April 2017, Major Corrigan was quoted as saying “They [Alliance Against Displacement] are verbally and physically abusive bullies who think they can get their way through intimidation.” (Verenca, 2017). One major victory housing advocates in Metrotown have been able to claim since demovictions have become a political issue is
the involvement of local labour unions who have come out in support of a moratorium on development in Metrotown.

In 2016 The Alliance Against Displacement, ACORN Burnaby, and the Metrotown Residents Association co-published a report on the state of displacement at Metrotown titled “A Community Under Attack – the Displacement of Vulnerable Metrotown Residents by the City of Burnaby’s Demoviction Development Policies.” This document was researched, put together and financed by the advocacy groups and details the experiences of residents who have been displaced or are facing displacement as a result of demovictions. Four myths are outlined in the document that call into question the motivations of development at Metrotown, as well as the spread of misinformation by Burnaby to suppress the impacts of demovictions at Metrotown. The four myths outlined in document are: Density in Metrotown is moderate and is needed to improve affordability, affordable housing is not our (City of Burnaby’s) responsibility, we (City of Burnaby) care about low income families, and, our public consultation process works. The document goes on to outline four priority actions to stop demovictions:

1. Declare an immediate moratorium on demolitions of rental apartments,
2. Rehouse all those displaced by demovictions,
3. Create a community planning committee and begin a resident-driven community planning process; scrap Burnaby’s proposed demoviction and displacement plan,
4. Build social housing by contributing City-owned land and resources.

The reason that this document is raised as noteworthy is because of the response that it garnered from City of Burnaby staff who were directed by Council to respond to the advocacy group’s report. Staff returned to council in September 2016 with a 30-page report which contained a detailed response to each of the concerns and criticisms raised in the A Community Under Attack report. Burnaby staff concluded that: “In summary, the submission presents erroneous information regarding the City's role and legislated powers and mischaracterizes what has been a long-standing City initiated and supported community plan and development process” (City of Burnaby, 2016d). The timing of the response by staff to the report aligns with a significant public relations campaign by the City to promote the Metrotown Downtown Plan which by September 2016 had already received two draft approvals for the plan from Council.

A Community Under Attack is a document that represents a well-organized collection which appears to have the resources to challenge the City of Burnaby and
their mandate of development and displacement at Metrotown. Advocacy groups have been claiming major wins in regard to affecting the demoviction process at Metrotown as evidenced in June 2018 when two projects that would have displaced residents at Baker and Marlborough Ave were struck from the Burnaby council agenda and sent back to the developers to include non-market housing options. ACORN housing activist Murray Martin claimed in an interview following the removal of the agenda items: “They [Burnaby City Council] finally blinked” (Gawley, 2018b). Housing activists in Metrotown claimed even further victories in 2018 when several labour unions backed ACORN’s call to halt the demolition of rental apartment buildings at Metrotown. One of the unions representing the teaching Support Staff (TSSU) at Simon Fraser University backed ACORN and claimed that “Tons of our members live in the Metrotown area ... and a lot of them have been demovicted and displaced or are having to move away simply because they can’t afford the rents that are here” (Gawley, 2018c).

12.3.1. The Media

Media coverage of demovictions in Metrotown has been extensive, even reaching national levels in 2017. One of my interviewees described how the drama of demovictions was a draw for reporters and journalists across the region: the interviewee stated that “It’s a classic David and Goliath story” (Metro Vancouver Planner, 2018). One interesting role that the media has played in demovictions at Metrotown is how the story of demovictions has been told through a policy lens. One of my interviewees told me that the work of David Ley and Craig Jones in 2015 helped frame how certain city policies, S-Zoning to be specific, were the reason that so many demovictions were occurring. When the public became aware of this information, and began to understand it, then the issue became political because the public could now point to a single council party responsible for passing a policy which enabled demovictions in Metrotown. This fact alone played a major role in the outcome of the 2018 Municipal Mayoral Election in Burnaby in which incumbent Mayor Derek Corrigan lost due in part to how demovictions and the Metrotown Downtown Plan were implemented (Campbell, 2018).
12.4. The Future of Affordable Housing, and Complete Community at Metrotown

Given that the Metrotown Downtown Plan veered away from any mention of complete community and did very little to address housing affordability issues at Metrotown, it is worth discussing the future of these two concepts and their roles in the future of Metrotown and Burnaby. In this section I will put forward four recommendations that attempt to balance the interests of the region, City of Burnaby, and residents.

**Recommendation One: Amend the Metrotown Downtown Plan to include rental only land uses.**

Following the announcement that the Province of British Columbia would allow municipalities to implement rental only zoning policies, many experts in the development and planning field expressed concern that Metrotown and the Metrotown Downtown Plan were too far along to see the benefits of a rental only zoning land use designation. The concerns raised by experts were highlighted at a housing professional conference in May 2018. Consultant, urban planner, and professor, Noha Sedky weighed in on the challenge of Metrotown adopting the rental only zoning policy, stating at the conference: “It would be a contradiction of the process that they’ve gone through, and… they would also have to go through a zoning bylaw amendment and a public process” (Connolly, 2018a).

The consultation process of the Metrotown Downtown Plan was problematic according to housing advocates and concerns raised by residents were not addressed in the final approved plan. In section 8.2.3 I examined Burnaby City Council’s shift to consider allowing rental only zoning policies. With Burnaby’s shift, and the belief that Burnaby did not consult properly with the initial Downtown Plan, there appears to be an opportunity to amend the downtown plan to address both of these issues. Cities like Vancouver often amend community plans to be adaptable to the changing development and social landscapes, the Downtown Eastside Plan for example was amended in 2018 to include special design guideline considerations for the Chinatown neighbourhood which were not included in the original plan.

Allowing for rental zoning would bring Burnaby into line with other municipalities in the region that have been able to incentivize and create affordable housing through
inclusionary housing policies. A rental zoning policy would require developers to include affordable housing in a portion of new development. Burnaby would do best to learn from the issues that arose from a lack of public consultation with the S-Zoning policy and in the case of a new rental zoning policy the City should consult with residents of Burnaby’s Town Centres, as well as developers, and housing providers.

**Recommendation Two: Connect housing prices and rents to local area incomes**

Through my media scan and analysis, it was clear that displaced Metrotown tenants were finding it difficult to relocate within the community. Many tenants referred to the increase of rents in both the purpose built and secondary markets. The new developments at Metrotown are not purpose-built stock and thus any rental units in the new developments are not secured and are left up to the secondary rental market, which has been demonstrated to be more expensive than secured market rental rates. I conducted a cursory review of rents within Metrotown using a scan of Craigslist postings on September 3rd, 2018 and a vast majority of the postings within the Metrotown area were well beyond the purpose built rental rates found in figures 46 and 47. The *Burnaby Now* conducted its own analysis of unsecured rental rates using Padmapper and found that 1 bedroom units were renting anywhere from $1,599 to $1,800 while 2 bedroom units were in excess of $2,000 in Metrotown (Connolly, 2018).

A common theme in my interviews with Ken Cameron and Christina Demarco was the idea that complete communities need to connect local jobs to the local housing market. Demarco called this the spatial match, which is the concept that local area jobs and factors like their wages need to be connected to the type of housing being built in the nearby community (Demarco, 2018). Communities are incomplete when there is a disconnect between local area incomes and housing prices. Individuals thrive when they are able to work close to where they live. This is because they are likely to spend less on transportation and feel a greater connection to their community (i.e. support the community and greater economic development). Metrotown is still a community of low to moderate income earners; however, the housing stock that Burnaby’s Metrotown Downtown plan envisions is very much a luxury product.

There are a few policy steps that Burnaby can follow to ensure that they are connecting housing prices to local incomes, and ultimately ensuring the historically
affordable neighbourhoods remain affordable and complete while also ushering in developments that do not hinder Burnaby’s commitment to the regional plan.

- Burnaby should explore a policy that enables Mayor Corrigan’s statement in a 2018 *Burnaby Now* article in which he said: “The ultimate goal is to have one-to-one replacement – with every apartment torn down replaced by a new apartment at similar monthly rent” (Gawley, 2018a). Corrigan further backed up his comment in a July 2018 *Burnaby Now* article in which he stated: “We’re hoping to be able to achieve a one-to-one ratio right through the Metrotown redevelopments and, if we can do that, that would be at least part way to accommodating people who are displaced and people who will need that housing in the future” (Gawley, 2018a). This commitment made by Corrigan could be made into reality by the new Mayor Mike Hurley and Burnaby’s acceptance of a rental only zoning policy.

- In the City of Vancouver, a pilot program has been launched which incentivises developers with density and other bonuses, to set aside 20% of all residential floor space in new rental builds for moderate income units. The City of Vancouver has defined moderate incomes as those earning a household income between $30,000 to $80,000 a year. Initial rents in these pilot projects would be within these ranges: studio: $900, 1-bedroom: $1,200, 2-bedroom: $1,600, and 3-bedroom: $2,000 (City of Vancouver, 2017). This program could be amended onto the S-Zoning policy which already sees developers receive density bonuses on no other grounds expect that projects are close to transit – this moderate income rental unit program, if amended to the S-Zoning policy would require at least some housing affordability performance to be exhibited by developers to ensure their density bonus.

**Recommendation Three:** Ensure the success of a new sustainable downtown by applying key complete community principles that focuses on helping new and existing residents thrive economically and socially.

With Metrotown, Burnaby sees a second regional downtown equipped with new civic infrastructure, and highly dense mixed-use communities. There is criticism that
Burnaby is pushing the concept of a downtown rather than letting it occur organically. In my media scan of newspaper articles, there were opinion pieces that expressed concern around the belief that Burnaby was fast tracking the downtown concept at Metrotown without letting time naturally develop a downtown (Granger, 2017). The creation of a modern downtown is an ambitious endeavour and the rules and frameworks that created historic downtowns in the past would likely not be applicable in today’s modern context. Historic downtowns were created as a means of addressing economic needs and opportunities. Take for example the City of Vancouver’s and New Westminster’s downtown development, which were based on the movement of goods to the region and the development of its ports and waterfronts. Burnaby believes that it can create a sustainable downtown through land use planning. Through its Metrotown Downtown Plan, what Burnaby will likely find challenging is attracting the businesses and economies of scale that will help create the downtown identity Burnaby is seeking to create at Metrotown.

Burnaby’s sustainable downtown vision at Metrotown relies on the continual appetite for developers to build the high-density housing forms that have been the norm since the development of the Crystal Mall site in the year 2000. Burnaby will also be relying on a strong commercial sector to fill in the mixed uses it is expecting in Metrotown’s sustainable downtown vision. The reliance on the development and commercial sectors is a high-risk high-reward game for Burnaby to play; there are other options like a phasing approach of development at Metrotown to ensure that the vision of a downtown in Metrotown comes to fruition.

Burnaby can ensure that it is setting the foundation for complete communities that invite families to stay and raise their children by incentivizing and approving projects that create housing products that families desire (e.g. ground oriented, low rise housing that offers two or more-bedroom units and focuses on indoor and outdoor communal and amenity spaces). Burnaby can achieve these suggestions by making sure developers meet certain requirements (i.e. a certain percentage of units in new condo buildings will need to be two, or more, bedrooms). Examples of incentivizing developers to create family friendly housing already exists in the City of Vancouver and New Westminster (City of Vancouver, 2012; City of New Westminster, 2016).
Development is clearly booming in the City of Burnaby. In the 2018 to 2022 Financial Plan, the City of Burnaby stated that in the year 2017 alone the value of buildings permits was $1.3 billion dollars with Brentwood and Metrotown Town capturing most of that value (City of Burnaby, 2018). With Burnaby’s financial reserves, there should be an engagement and public consultation effort that looks at amending the priority community amenity policy which has earmarked specific council chosen amenity projects in various town centers. In Metrotown the priority amenity is an events centre, however, the community ought to have greater say in a significant amenity that will have impacts on creation of a future downtown. Burnaby planning staff should examine the Town Centre amenity priorities and consider using Burnaby’s housing fund to support the creation of more city owned child care spaces, ensuring that community schools like Maywood can absorb the added demand that will come with Metrotown’s population growth and consider how more public amenities and gathering spaces can bring together a community that is dominated by high rise towers.

**Recommendation Four: Apply the lessons learned from Metrotown in future community planning processes.**

Within the last five years, Burnaby has begun developing underutilized land at Edmonds Town Centre. This is important because Edmonds shares many of the same urban characteristics that I’ve highlighted at Metrotown. One key difference is in the lower connectivity that Edmonds has with the Skytrain system compared to what we see at Metrotown; however, the similarities between the two town centres outnumber the differences. Both Town Centres have a high proportion of refugee and immigrant populations along with a very similar housing stock. Edmonds is made up of the same type of affordable secured rental housing stock mainly in the form of low and mid-rise walk ups, developed between the 1950’s and 1980’s, as Metrotown. Given the problematic social and economic outcomes of the Metrotown Downtown Plan that my thesis has highlighted, I posit that Burnaby is in a position to right some wrongs in future planning processes across the city. With future planning processes in Edmonds, Burnaby should consider the following lessons to avoid negative potential outcomes like demovictions and displacement in Edmonds.

- Communicate early and often with residents – ensure that any public consultation processes which contribute to a new community plan are thorough and thoughtful.
• Understand the community both qualitatively and quantitatively. Understand the impact of displacement on a wide range of demographics, especially focus on the impact that displacement will have on vulnerable groups including low income families and refugees. Stagger development to avoid mass displacement which puts pressure on housing affordability in the area (e.g. higher rents, lower vacancies).

• Use indicators to guide growth and development. UBC researcher Craig Jones’ Rental Housing Disadvantage Index is an excellent way of measuring areas of a neighbourhood that are up for redevelopment. After identifying these areas, limits to development goals can mitigate the impacts of development on low income and vulnerable tenants.

• Understanding that redevelopment is part of a healthy urban economy, there still should be a degree of sensitivity and compassion from planning staff and council when making decisions that could result in the displacement of tenants. From my media scan it was clear that residents felt that council and planning staff have abandoned them in favor of development. Burnaby City Council should seek a more positive and productive relationship with housing advocates.

Summary of Recommendations:

The four recommendations that I have put forward in this section are a result of the issues that have surfaced during the course of my research on the intersection of housing affordability and complete community principles at Metrotown. The recommendations are meant to address specific policy shortcomings I had discovered through this research. The housing trends I analyzed in chapter 11 show a community that is trending away from delivering housing affordability to its current and future residents. These recommendations are also meant to address how Metrotown is increasingly losing its way as a complete and affordable community.

12.5. Retooling the Complete Community Concept

My research revealed that the complete communities concept is imperfect in its current application and understanding. It is not evident whether Burnaby’s drive towards
creating complete communities at Metrotown has resulted in the serious socio-economic issues playing out in that community today. With my research, I suggest that academia and the professional urban planning field should consider retooling the complete community theory. I suggest examining and rethinking four complete community elements in order for the theory to remain relevant in today’s urban planning discourses.

1. Use quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure complete communities and their social, economic, and environmental performance. Metro Vancouver has already provided the base work for this, however, the application of Metro Vancouver’s Metro 2040 evaluation framework is currently incompatible at the community / neighbourhood level.

2. Define the scale and scope of complete communities. Throughout my research the complete communities concept was measured at the municipal scale (Merlin, 2014; Metro Vancouver, 2017), I suggest that complete community measurements be applied within the boundaries set out in a community plan (e.g. Burnaby’s Metrotown Downtown Plan). Complete communities are meant to be smaller in scale, and at the political level of community planning, policy implementation can be better focused to meet community needs rather than the city at large. In my interview with Christina Demarco, she referenced how the Australian Cities often have urban directors or managers overseeing specific Town Centres or complete community developments. This could be something Burnaby should explore to help better deal with local issues within its four Town Centres.

3. Draw inspiration from established public information systems like dashboards (Salt Lake City, 2018; City of Surrey, n.d). These dashboards can be used to inform policy decisions towards creating complete community, as well as setting up a means of political accountability.

4. As shown at Metrotown, the application of the complete community concept is problematic when applied to existing mid to high density
communities. The complete community concept should consider how to make communities more complete without unintentionally promoting displacement. Moving forward, the complete communities concept needs to consider the social implications of its implementation, examples of how this could be achieved should include: promoting phased developments in existing medium and high-density communities to ensure that displacement is limited, and those that are being displaced can have the opportunity to find housing in their existing community.

5. Finally, the complete community concept must recognize what makes a community incomplete. In understanding what makes a community incomplete the theory and its implementation will be better suited to foresee and address issues like displacement and income inequality. With my research I found that issues like displacement, income inequality, housing unaffordability, and a disconnect between local area incomes and local area job types were symptoms of an incomplete community at Metrotown. In recognizing these, and many other incomplete community symptoms, future complete community planning processes should promote policy tools that can help address these issues.
Chapter 13. Conclusion

I first set out to understand what a complete community is and how communities become more complete. The Region and City of Burnaby have been working for over 70 years to create a complete community at Metrotown and my research examined the outcomes of these planning processes. I specifically focused on the outcomes of housing affordability at Metrotown. As my research progressed I began to realize that I could not complete this project without recognizing the issue of demovictions.

Demovictions are a by-product of a broken housing affordability system and complete community framework. Metrotown for decades was an affordable and complete community, however around the year 2000, development increased dramatically and the nature of Metrotown began to change from an affordable rental enclave to a community marred by demoviction processes. Rather than create and implement policy that would deal with demovictions in a proactive way, Burnaby created policies that would exacerbate the issue of demovictions and displacement. Specifically, two policies have facilitated, intensified, and sped up the process of demovictions: the Supplementary Community Benefit Bonus Density Policy, and the 2017 Metrotown Downtown Plan.

The work I have presented in this thesis is meant to support the research that Craig Jones and David Ley have done on Metrotown and the impacts of Burnaby’s S-Zoning policy on low income rental households in Metrotown. To their work and the current body of knowledge surrounding Metrotown and its housing affordability issues, I add the following issues to consider in regard to complete communities, housing affordability and demovictions in Metrotown:

- The impact that the Metrotown Plan has had on increasing land speculation, demovictions, and changing the community identity of Metrotown.

- The impact of Burnaby’s and Metro Vancouver’s Town Centre growth model which has focused majority of growth into communities like Metrotown without attempting to densify single family neighbourhoods.
• A lack of a Standards of Maintenance Bylaw which is used to justify the replacement of aging housing stock.

• Burnaby’s approach to community planning which centres around a land use plan rather than integrating land use planning and other social, environmental, and economic policies at the same time.

I am thankful that I have been able to conduct my thesis research on a community that has had a major impact on my personal growth and development both as a professional and academic. Using sound research methodologies to dig deeper into the change I felt I was seeing at Metrotown was validating and helped me arrive at my conclusions as to why I felt Metrotown was changing and whether this change was leading to positive or negative socio-economic outcomes for the residents of Metrotown and Burnaby.

The future of Metrotown is uncertain. One of my interviewees stated that Metrotown has good ‘bones’ for a complete and successful community to be built upon. Metrotown has a high number of community amenities, is well serviced by transit, and although threatened, Metrotown still retains a significant amount of secured market rental and affordable housing stock. An analysis of housing affordability reveals that Metrotown is trending away from meeting housing affordability and complete community principles. However, opportunities exist for Metrotown and Burnaby to create a truly vibrant, affordable and sustainable downtown. These opportunities include a newly elected Mayor with a different outlook on housing, the possibility of a rental only zoning policy, an upcoming Burnaby housing strategy, and a reserve fund that could fund complete community projects like child care spaces and community schools. How Burnaby capitalizes on these opportunities will determine what kind of community Metrotown turns out to be in 40 years.

13.1. Usefulness of Research

This research will be useful for City of Burnaby planners and city council members who wish to see the legacy of complete communities and housing affordability continue in Metrotown and other communities like Edmonds. The wider reach of this research will be important for those working and studying within the suburban realm.
Metrotown is only the beginning of a wave of high-density development in Burnaby’s Town Centres.

By exploring and evaluating the concept of housing affordability within a complete community I hope to contribute to political and social conversations around the role of governments and their ability to address housing affordability challenges in rapidly developing and densifying suburban communities in North America. This research examines one single neighbourhood in a larger developing suburban municipality, however, the lessons from my case study will be relevant to other suburban communities which are beginning or going through their own urban intensification processes which may require the redevelopment of an occupied and aging rental housing stock and displacement of tenants.

13.2. Research Limitations

This research does not provide a comprehensive claim for all complete communities and this research does not draw definitive statistical conclusions between the implementation of complete communities and housing affordability. This research does however, provide a case study that examines how housing affordability trends are playing out in a complete community, as well as offering a narrative on the outcomes of a suburban community undergoing significant changes in form and functionality.

13.3. Future Research

Future research into the complete communities concept could highlight how complete communities are understood and perform in highly compact urban areas, specifically historical and well developed downtown cores, as well as explore the qualitative and quantitative similarities and differences between urban complete communities and suburban complete communities. Further research into complete communities and housing affordability should explore an analysis of a much wider range of identified complete communities across North America. Specifically, a regression analysis between housing affordability and complete community indicators could be conducted to reveal any statistically significant relationships between complete communities and housing affordability. Examining the relationship between housing affordability and complete communities across various jurisdictions and scales could
potentially reveal any connections that demovictions have as a result of a government’s development of complete communities and pursuit of housing affordability principles.
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155


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