DOWNTOWN SOUTH TOWNHOUSE RESIDENTS AND A PLACE FOR SPACE: A MODEL, PLANNED, POST-INDUSTRIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

by

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BA, SFU 1985

PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF URBAN STUDIES

In the
Urban Studies Program

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Summer, 2008

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ABSTRACT

The Downtown South is a "new" neighbourhood created through the reduction in size of Vancouver's Central Business District through rezoning done under the rubric of the Central Area Plan (CAP) in 1991. The neighbourhood is one of Metro Vancouver's regional growth centres; developed within a planning context of managed growth and densification. Also significant in the Downtown South is the building form of the podium tower with street-fronting townhouses seen as one of Vancouver's contributions to contemporary urban design.

Downtown South is presented as a critical case study. It is recognized in North America as a model of successful mixed-use redevelopment of an urban core. Seventeen years after the articulation of the CAP, the Downtown South built out more than 10 years ahead of schedule. This research proposes an examination of how space is understood and a sense of place constructed among townhouse residents in a model, planned, post-industrial neighbourhood.

Keywords:

Downtown South
Vancouver
Central Area Plan
Townhouse

Subject Terms:

Modernism
Post-modernism – social aspects
Space
Place
Communities

DEDICATION

Irene Matheson Brooks has been my Downtown South co-worker, friend and an intellectual mentor. She demonstrates a love of learning, debate and honest intellectual enquiry on a day-to-day basis. She has not only inspired me to be clear and useful in my writings, she has insisted on it.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1: INTRODUCTION

This research proposes an examination of how place and space is
understood among townhouse residents in the Downtown South - a model,
planned, post-industrial[1] neighbourhood. Downtown South was taken as a critical
case study as it is recognized in North America as a model of successful mixed-
use redevelopment of an urban core. It was created through the reduction in size
of Vancouver's Central Business District through rezoning done under the rubric
of the Central Area Plan (CAP) in 1991.

Although now 17 years old the Downtown South was identified as one of
Vancouver's "new" downtown neighbourhoods as part of the rezoning process.
The neighbourhood is one of Metro Vancouver's regional growth centres and
developed within a context of provincial legislation for a region-wide strategy to
manage growth.[2] Fifteen years after the articulation of the CAP, Downtown South
has built out more than 10 years ahead of schedule.

Three of the seven goals of the CAP are particularly relevant to this study
including: a place for all people to live and visit regardless of age, ethnicity or
income; an alive downtown where public streets are the primary scene of public
life; and a walkable central area where pedestrians move safely, easily and
comfortably on all streets and where walking is the primary means of moving
around (see page 18).[3] The goals of the CAP are more about movement through
the public realm rather than lingering in place. There is more focus on land use

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[1] In *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society,* Daniel Bell outlined the replacement of industrial
  society with a post-industrial society with three significant components: a shift from
  manufacturing to services; the centrality of the science-based industries; and the rise of new
  technical elites and the advent of a new principle of stratification.
[2] Growth Strategies Act (1995) B.C.
[3] Central Area Plan: Goals and Land Use Policy. December 1991 page 4

planning than on usage of the space compared with the work of Jan Gehl in Copenhagen. Gehl focuses on the importance of lingering in place and opportunities for increased social interaction as a measure of the success of urban design.[4]

Awards and articles from across North America have recognized various land use and transportation planning initiatives within Vancouver's downtown core. Awards include:

- The Planning Institute of B.C. annual award in 1992, 1993 and 1996 for planning achievements with the CAP;
- The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements – Habitat II awarded the Waterfront Planning Process and Plans as one of the World's 100 Best Planning Practices 1996;
- The Canadian Institute of Planners awarded the Downtown Transportation Plan with its award for planning excellence in 2003;
- The International Downtown Association (Washington D.C.) recognized the Living First Strategy for the downtown core with a special achievement in planning award in 2006; and
- The Planning Institute of B.C. gave an award of excellence for Vancouver's New Neighbourhoods in 2003.

Articles have appeared in the academic literature (Urban Studies, Journal of Urban Design and the Institute for Urban Research), the popular press (Vancouver Sun, Globe and Mail, Georgia Straight, Seattle Post-Intelligencer etc.) as well as several books including those by David Ley, John Punter and Tom Hutton.

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[4] Public Spaces – Public Life, Danish Architectural Press, Jan Gehl, 1996 page 11

Since 1991, the City of Vancouver has invested over $12 million dollars in planning costs and significantly more in community amenity investments[5] in Downtown South. The lived experience of townhouse residents of Downtown South can assist with understanding the successes and the limitations of this neighbourhood as a model for future high-density mixed-use planned communities in other areas of Vancouver including South East False Creek, East Fraser Lands and Little Mountain. As well, the construction of the Canada Line along the Cambie St. corridor will certainly result in high-density developments similar to the development that has occurred along the Expo line. Hugh Kellas, Manager, Policy and Planning, Metro Vancouver has commented on how census information has shown "that population has increased ... adjacent to SkyTrain lines, areas close to the Joyce Station, Metrotown, New Westminster and downtown."[6]

Given the significant resources invested in planning Downtown South and the continuing investment the City is making with major redevelopment sites across Vancouver, it is important to assess the successes of this investment. The condominium complex of a point tower with a podium base of street-fronting townhouses is the signature building form in Downtown South. This is one of Vancouver's contributions to contemporary urban design.[7] The residents of these street-fronting townhouses have been chosen as the subject population for this research study as the occupants of the signature housing form of central core redevelopment in Vancouver. The manageable sample size and access for delivering information were secondary considerations. This study explores and analyzes residents' positive and negative perceptions of this urban physical and social space.

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[5] Including: Emery Barnes and Helmcken Parks; Dorothy Lam, Creekside and Library Square Childcare Centres; Gathering Place Community Centre; and Helmcken St. Greenway

[6] 'New Urbanism' Works in Vancouver, Census Vindicates, Vancouver Sun, March 16, 2002, page 1, Frances Bula

[7] The Vancouver Achievement, John Punter, UBC Press 2004, page 358

2: DOWNTOWN SOUTH AND THE CENTRAL AREA PLAN

2.1 Research Outline

My research plan entailed the following steps, with the ethics submission completed before primary data collection: Research statement; Methodological framework; Research Methods - Develop rationale for the choice of the quantitative and qualitative methods used for data collection; Ethics Approval; Theoretical basis and key terms; Neighbourhood profile; Data analysis and Conclusions. These are explained in the following subsections.

2.2 Research Statement

With 17 years of planning initiatives focussed on urban design and liveability how has the dynamic of place[8] and space been understood by townhouse residents of the Downtown South neighbourhood? As a case study on urban design and place creation, this research will identify the perceived strengths and weaknesses of this high-profile space.

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[8] Place is space made meaningful. In terms of developing the resident questionnaire place was examined for three qualities: form, function and time.

Yi Fu Tuan has suggested that place is security (modernist[9]) and space is freedom (post-modernist[10]): we are attached to the one and long for the other.[11] For me security refers to an understanding of how the universalizing concepts of race, class and gender are understood in a society and each member of society knowing 'their place' both socially and geographically. Freedom is the opposite in that we have individual freedom from these universalizing concepts. There is the sense that we are not restricted by the rules of others and can step out of our place and have space for individual definition. The discussion of the theories of Zygmunt Bauman[12] places this research within the larger academic discourse on space and place as well as to frame the research data collection. Bauman's[13] writings on modernism and post-modernism describe modernism having as its project a search for universals, while post-modernism seeks the importance of individual interpretation. The irony of our age for Bauman is that post-modernism's search for individual expression has become one of the universalizing concept to which we are compelled to adhere.

2.3 Methodological Framework

The proposed research was conceived within a constructivist framework. The research did not propose to discover a universal truth. The research was based on the notion that "meaning is constructed not discovered, so subjects [residents] construct their own meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon."[14] Post-modernism (similar to social constructivism) argues

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[9] Based in the logic of the Enlightenment, modernism concerns itself with generalizations of social experience. Empiricism, with its emphasis on experience, is one methodological approach that is modernist in form. The quantitative methods used in this study (census data analysis) would be considered empiricist.

[10] In this paper post-modernism's concern with individual experience and its connection to existentialism in philosophic thought are most relevant. The tendency to concentrate on surfaces and blur the distinctions between high and low culture is evident by the use of irony, an example of this in the Downtown South would be the condominium named 'The Iliad' on Homer St.

[11] Yi Fu Tuan, Ibid page 8

[12] Zymunt Bauman, Liquid Modernity, page 21

[13] Ibid page 21

[14] Page 27 Doing Research in the Real World, David Grey 2204

that rationality is neither as sure nor as clear as rationalists supposed, and that knowledge is inherently linked to time, place, social position and other factors from which individuals construct their views of knowledge.

Central to the debate is the concept of 'objectivity' and what it means. Social relationships and interactions create knowledge and reality. In the broadest sense, both the postmodernist and constructivist position deny the practical possibility of objectivity, and hold a clear bias to subjectivity and social context.

The 'objective' reality of the Downtown South is that it is an award-winning planned community. As a case study, the research methodology will develop quantitative and qualitative data to test whether or not it is well-planned and meeting the goals of the CAP. Residents' opinions of this neighbourhood would be more 'subjective.' The data collected on the residents' [subjects] interpretations of the social and physical space are used to develop an understanding of the sense of place for a representative sample of townhouse residents in this highly planned community.

The population sampled is small in number. Stanley Lieberson, outlines in *Small N's and Big Conclusions* that despite a small sample size probabilistic assumptions are possible with the use of the 'method of difference.'[15] Here the survey design assumes that there are no interacting effects among the independent variables on the dependent variable; the significant dependent variable being tested was the level of neighbourhood satisfaction and the independent variables included transportation use, sense of safety, public design evaluation etc.

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[15] Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases. Stanley Lieberman. University of North Carolina Press. December, 1991

The Downtown South has a post-industrial service economy as described by research compiled through the City of Vancouver's Metropolitan Core Jobs Study (MCJS).[16] Hutton and other academics have labelled the planning for the public realm as post-modern.[17] Quantitative data will describe the "post-industrial" label given to the Downtown South.

Bauman sees this modernist/post-modernist divide as an action/reaction of the Enlightenment - part of a larger whole rather than two distinct periods (roughly as pre and post World War II) and prefers the terms "solid" and "liquid" modernism as he finds modern/post-modern a false dichotomy.[18] Bauman writes that about the solid and liquid phases existing in an iterative process, the same body, found in different states. Perhaps a useful analogy is the human body. Awake, it integrates with the universalizing aspects of race, class and gender; asleep, it is adrift in a dream-like state, individual and freely associating. The same body exists in different states.

Other theorists, such as Jurgen Habermas and David Harvey, also reject the modern/post-modern distinction viewing postmodernism, for all its claims of fragmentation and plurality, as existing within a larger "modernist" framework. Habermas argues that "postmodernism" does not exist, but that it is no more than a development within a larger, still-current, "modern" framework. The critical theorists who hold onto the false-dichotomy argument are concerned that postmodernism's undermining of the Enlightenment's values makes a progressive politic difficult. These conflicting thoughts make a political point.

Habermas compares postmodernism with conservatism and the preservation of the status quo rather than perceive it as a radical departure from modernism. How can we make any progress with a philosophy that is sceptical of the notion of progress, or of unified perspectives? How can we (if there is no

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[16] http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/corejobs/index.htm
[17] Hutton p.1955
[18] *Key Thinkers on Space and Place* Hubbard P, Kitchin R & Valentine G (Eds.) page 98

universalized "we") effect any change in people's living conditions, in inequality and injustice, if we do not accept universals such as the 'real world' and 'justice' in the first place?

The tensions of 'justice' and 'local/global space' are shown in the neighbourhood with increasing homelessness, connected with the loss of single room occupancy (SRO) hotel rooms to more profitable tourist accommodation.[19] Hutton describes, "... the dislocations associated with the increasing globalization of the core's property market."[20] In the Downtown South, the rapid construction of new condominiums with a concurrent decline in the low-income housing stock is a representation of Hutton's description. Bauman describes the tension between local and global space in an age of globalization. We see in the Downtown South townhouse residents who are awaiting the Skytrain connection to the airport while in the alleys 'other' residents are sleeping in doorways trapped in place.

2.4 Research Methodology

This study uses both quantitative and qualitative data. The City of Vancouver's Planning Department and Housing Centre and Statistics Canada were sources for existing quantitative data. In addition, original quantitative data was collected through a web-based survey developed and administered by the researcher. As well, there is demographic information on education, income, tenancy, gender and age. Reviews of articles about the Downtown South from the press are contained: news reports, commentaries, and opinion pieces.

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[19] The City of Vancouver's *2007 Survey of Low-Income Housing in the Downtown Core* reports that monthly SRO rentals in the Downtown South average $452 per month per room, while hostel accommodation can generate over $2,000 per month per room.

[20] *Post-Industrialism, Post-modernism and the Reproduction of Vancouver's Central Area*, Urban Studies, Vol.41. No. 10, September 2004, page 1964

The SFU web-survey tool was used for the web-survey of residents. Yi-Fu Tuan's sociological concept of place was used in formulating the web-survey questions. "Elements that turn space into a place are memories, feelings, social connections and the presence of others, cultural rules and conventions."[21] The survey obtained both quantitative and qualitative information with both closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions facilitated tabulation of the results. The open-ended questions provided an opportunity for individual residents to provide information that is more detailed. The open-ended questions were incorporated to augment the information provided given the potentially small sample size.

Given the sample size issue, individuals who would not be part of the sample population were chosen to test the draft survey. Five staff members of the City's Housing Centre completed the survey and after reviewing comments from them a number of questions were deleted and some wording modified for clarity. A number of individuals within this group had previous experience conducting public surveys. The survey took from 10 – 15 minutes, depending on the amount of time spent on open-ended questions. An estimated time to complete the survey was included in the covering letter to residents. Inconsistency is a factor in survey responses and can be minimized when survey questions are developed for clarity with consideration for a clear standpoint among respondents.[22]

A letter, introducing both my research and myself was hand-delivered to the door of every townhouse in the Downtown South area on June 2, 2007. There were six responses after this letter. A second letter was delivered door to door on June 16, 2007 with an additional six responses. A final letter was delivered on July 2, 2007 – with a banner of 'two days left' in the introduction – with an additional 10 responses. In total, 22 resident households participated in

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[21] Space and Place: the Perspective of Experience. Yi-Fu Tuan. Page 6
[22] Reliability, Validity and True Values In Surveys. Anders Wikman. Social Indicators Research 2006

the survey. It appears that eight units were unoccupied (either vacant or the occupant away) as the original letter from June 2, 2007 was still stuck in the door when the third letter was delivered on July 2, 2007. See Appendix A. The overall response rate was 18% with 22 of the 125 occupied units completing surveys.

To access the web-survey residents had to take the information from the hand-delivered letter and manually type in the web link. The response rate may have been higher if a complete email contact list was available for townhouse residents and an electronic web link could have been provided. One resident made the effort to contact the researcher saying that she wanted to complete the survey but had trouble with accessing it on line. Other residents may have had similar difficulty. Almost all surveys were fully completed; one survey had two questions unanswered.

Within the comment section respondents were asked for contact information for follow-up interviews. Six respondents provided follow-up email addresses. After the tabulation and the analysis of initial results, a brief summary was sent to the six respondents in September 2007. After this, a follow-up set of ten questions was sent more specific to the issues of transportation, social contacts and urban design perceptions. Three of the six residents responded to the ten follow-up questions that were sent in September. There was no response received from the other three contacts after the initial email and two follow-up reminders/requests.

Why use a web-based survey tool rather than a mail-in or door to door survey method? With a mailed questionnaire, there was a concern with the rate of return as well as the cost factor to the researcher. A mailed survey would have been more expensive and less hands-on in terms of visiting and viewing the townhouses. The method used combined a door to door delivery of a letter of introduction three times during the month which allowed the researcher time to visit each individual townhouse and to observe the physical alterations or

adornments present. The hand-delivery provided more of a physical context and sense of place to the researcher.

Qualitative data from elite interviews[23] was collected after the resident survey so that survey information could be presented and feedback and additional analysis could be obtained to both inform the researcher and also 'double-check' assumptions and conclusions of the researcher.

An open-ended conversation format was used for the elite interviews in order to get a cross-section of opinion on a selected range of topics. However, the most significant effort in data collection was the web-based survey of residents. No data was·collected from anyone under the age of 19.

Another form of qualitative data collection was through an ethnographic observation of the public realm. Specifically, how were terraces, as an important required public design feature, personalized by Downtown South residents including plantings, furniture, doorbells, mailboxes, knockers, art etc. A standardized form was used to inventory elements of personalization to minimize researcher subjectivity. This type of information could be different from that obtained in interviews, as it was restricted to independent observations of the public realm rather than resident opinion. Data would be more phenomenological than hermeneutic with this form of data collection in that it would involve the 'objective' observations of the researcher rather than the 'subjective' opinion being asked of residents.

Elite interviews focussed on intended [planned] places and the web-survey and follow-up interviews revealed unintended [unplanned] places. Representatives of City of Vancouver Planning, Engineering and Parks

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[23] Elite interviews were conducted with Jill Davidson, Senior Housing Planner, City of Vancouver; Michael Gordon, Senior Planner, City of Vancouver; Doug Louie, Engineer, City of Vancouver.

Departments and Strata Councils were approached for elite interviews. These interviews served as a double check on information from the two data sources.

No original research data collection was commenced before ethics approval through the Office of Ethics, including the web-survey, elite interviews and ethnographic observation.

3: NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILE

3.1 Redevelopment Background

Over the last 30 years, the City of Vancouver has invested staff and financial resources in the rezoning and redevelopment of its downtown core for mid- to high-density residential development.[24] The initial redevelopment of Vancouver's inner-core focused on the former industrial lands of the False Creek basin. In the 1970's and 80's, through the combined efforts of the City of Vancouver, the Province of B.C. and the federal government through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the south shore of False Creek was created as a largely residential mixed-income community.

In the early 1990s, starting with the *Central Area Plan* (see Figure 1), redevelopment has also occurred within the existing low-income neighbourhoods of the Central Business District - the Victory Square area of the Downtown Eastside and Downtown South.

In the last 20 years, the City of Vancouver has seen both provincial and regional planning initiatives concerning growth management. At the provincial level, the Government of B.C. passed the *Growth Strategies Act* (1995) which created a context for the development of regional plans in a coordinated fashion among municipalities, regions and the province. The *GSA* introduced three aspects to regional plans - regional growth strategies, regional context statements and implementation agreements. Subsequently the provincial government also amended the *Local Government Act*, Part 25 to establish the procedural requirements for adopting *Regional Growth Strategies*. Every municipality is required to prepare an *Official Community Plan* (*OCP*) and

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[24] Mid-density is described in planning documents as four to eight stories, high-density is generally more than eight stories.

Regional Context Statement. The *Regional Context Statement* identifies how local actions will contribute to achieving the *Regional Growth Strategy* goals.

In 1990, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD)[25] endorsed the *Creating Our Future: Steps towards a More Liveable Region (1990).* The GVRD is one of 28 regional districts in B.C. and has a governing board with representatives from the 21 member municipalities of the regional district. The GVRD has regulatory jurisdiction over water, sewage and air quality. Planning is not a jurisdiction and relies on the cooperative efforts of the 21 municipalities.

Figure 1   Map of Boundaries of Central Area Plan
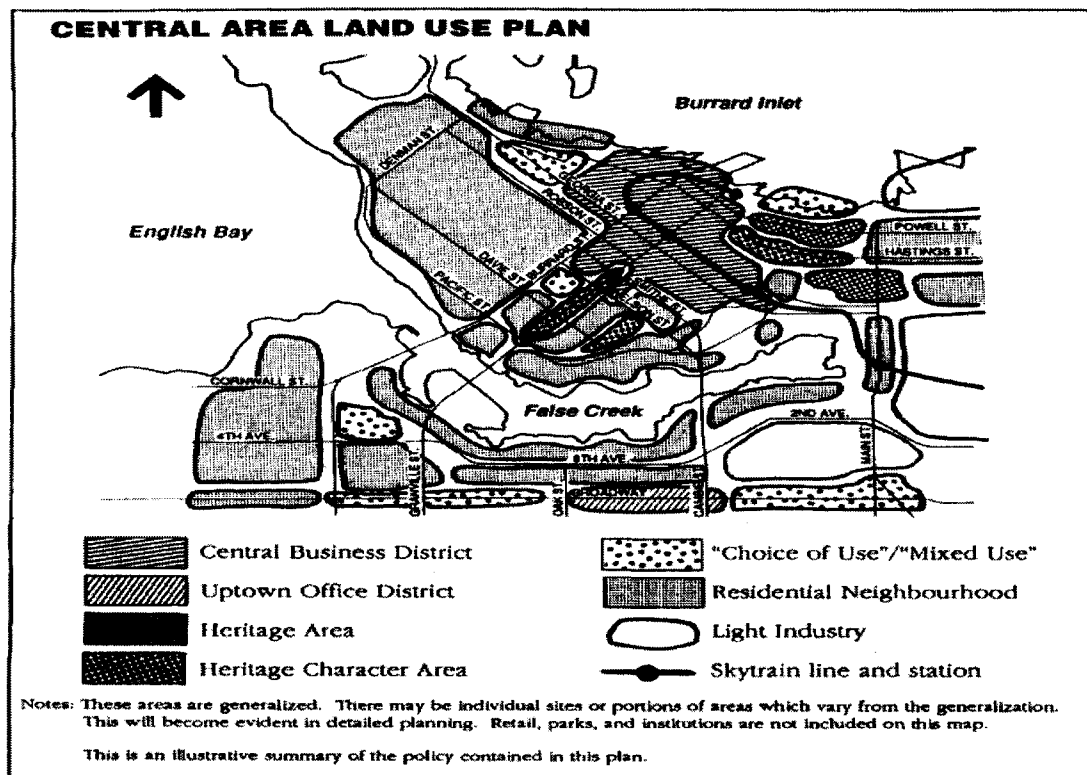
The Liveable Region document identified five themes including healthy environment, conserving land resources, serving a changing population, the

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[25] November, 2007 the Greater Vancouver Regional District Board voted to change the region's name to Metro Vancouver. The provincial government did not ratify this change in March, 2008 as its requires 'regional district' as part of the name. The legal name remains GVRD

region's economic health and managing the region. Part of the implementation process was the creation of a regional growth management plan. The plan eventually evolved into the *Liveable Region Strategic Plan (1996)*, which makes a commitment to focus population growth in regional town centres. One intention of this pattern of growth was to encourage mixed-use development and higher-density housing, and to reduce vehicle traffic. Downtown South is one of the identified regional growth centres. Further work is currently being done with regional consultation meetings on the *Sustainable Region Initiative*.

At the civic level, the City of Vancouver adopted the *Central Area Plan (CAP)* for the downtown core in 1991. As well, the City initiated a citywide planning process in 1991 that culminated in the adoption by City Council of *CityPlan (1995)*. Thomas Hutton, in his article *Post-industrialism, Post-modernism and the Reproduction of Vancouver's Central Area: Retheorising the 21st-century City*, describes "the [City of Vancouver's] commitment to post-industrialism as a tenet of policies for urban structure and land use." At the same time, the condominium towers are an example of modernism's construction forms. The street grid system of the Downtown South is consistent with modernist principals of order.

The original Skytrain Expo line has seen high-density development near the following stations: Terminal Avenue; Joyce St; Patterson; Metrotown; Edmonds; Columbia; New Westminster; King George; and Surrey Centre. More recently, the Millenium Line has seen similar high-density developments near the following stations: Gilmore; Brentwood Town Centre; Holdom; Sperling-Burnaby Lake and Lougheed Town Centre.

With up to 12 new stations[26] along the Canada Line south of the downtown core the potential development impact could be significant along the

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[26] Nine currently in development with three additional stations planned, two in Vancouver and one in Richmond.

Cambie St. corridor and into Richmond to the Vancouver International Airport. There is significant development activity currently underway near the future Broadway-City Hall station. The City of Vancouver is in the midst of a planning review for increased density near the future Langara and Oakridge stations.

As well, mid-density low-rise rental apartments surround the Marine Drive station. In other areas of the City close to the Cambie corridor, such as in the Fairview neighbourhood, similar buildings have been subject to higher density redevelopment within the last number of years. Both of these areas have the same RM3 zoning.[27] The intent of RM3 zoning is to permit medium density residential development, including high-rise apartment buildings, and to secure a higher quality of parking, open space and daylight access through floor-area bonus incentives.[28] Vancouver City Council unanimously enacted the Rate-of-Change Regulations in April 2007 in order to manage these development pressures. This regulation will expire on December 31, 2009.[29] Without these regulations, which require an equal number of replacement rental units in new developments, much of the existing three and four-story walk up apartments would be redeveloped.

3.2 Physical Description of Neighbourhood

The Downtown South is comprised of a 27-block area in the downtown core adjacent to the Central Business District (CBD). The area became known as the Downtown South during the development of the *CAP*. Figure 2 shows the boundaries of the Downtown South It is largely a square area, roughly bounded by Burrard St. on the west, Pacific Ave on the south, Homer on the east and Nelson on the north. The warehouse district of Yaletown and the old Theatre Row of Granville St. are the remaining vestiges of the originally developed area.

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[27] City of Vancouver, Zoning and Development By-law (No. 3575), RM 3 District - Schedule
[28] Ibid page 1
[29] *Protection of Rental Housing Stock: Rate of Change Regulations,* City of Vancouver, April 17, 2007

Figure 2   Map of Downtown South Boundaries
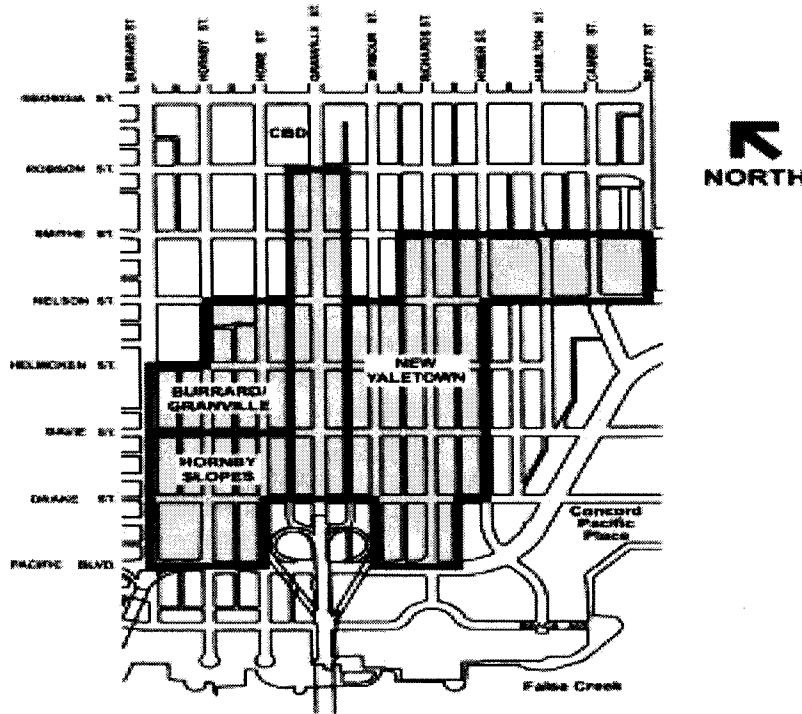
Downtown South residents live with a wide mix of uses. The mixed-use nature is more significant than in False Creek South with residential, retail and entertainment often found on the same block if not the same building. The residential community co-exists with a citywide entertainment district, a regional commercial centre and citywide art, community and sports facilities.

The *CAP* had a broader geographic scope than previous policy documents. *CAP* covered the area west of Main St, north of Broadway and east of Granville St., so that it included the West End, Central Business District, Uptown office district, Victory Square, Gastown and Chinatown and the Mount Pleasant industrial area (see Map 1). The *CAP* had seven goals including:

1.   the economic generator that would provide a focus for the region's special economic growth – head offices and their services and tourism associated with the centre of a major metropolitan area;

2. an alive downtown where public streets are the primary scene of public life;

3. a place for all people to live and visit regardless of age, ethnicity or income;

4. a spirit of place retaining heritage resources, character areas, liveable neighbourhoods and active public spaces;

5. a central area in nature reflecting a strong connections to the natural setting;

6. a walkable central area where pedestrians move safely, easily and comfortably on all streets and where walking is the primary means of moving around; and

7. an accessible central area ensuring that growth does create an unacceptable transportation burden on central area streets

There is minimal focus on place-making within these goals. Goal 3 gives equal weight to those who "live" and those who "visit." Goal 4 is the only one with specific mention of a 'spirit of place [and] liveable neighbouroods'.

To achieve these goals the *CAP* had five land use topics described within it, the discussion of these land uses focused on achieving the above seven goals outlined in the plan. The land use topics included:

- Office space;
- Support activities;
- Housing;
- Liveability; and
- Retail

Within the *CAP* land use topics liveability is limited to "those aspects which are most affected by the adjacencies of buildings and different users. Specifically these are privacy, noise, odours, shadowing and private views."[30]

The seven overarching goals of the *CAP* were realized though the use of area-wide design guidelines. On July 30, 1991 the City of Vancouver adopted the Downtown South Guidelines[31] This is a 43-page policy document outlining everything from building massing, streetscape treatment detailing, sub-ground parking requirements, building treatments including townhouse doorway, terrace and landscaping, sidewalk width and plantings, rear and side yard set backs, light penetration, dimensions of terraces etc. These design guidelines have been amended several times since 1991 including September 29, 1994, October 7, 1997 and June 10, 2004.

The public realm design guidelines are often a point of considerable description both with academic and planning documents.[32] Examples include changes in the traffic pattern to reduce the number of one-way streets, include bike lanes and make streets more residential in character, the planting of double rows of trees along sidewalks, the building forms of condominium complexes with a townhouse podium and a tower above. These are examples of the planned spaces of the public realm. Are these spaces effective in place-making? Are these effective increasing the potential for social interactions? How is the public space of the Downtown South understood and appreciated?

A major 'plank' of the *CAP* was the reduction in size of the Central Business District to provide a more focused form of development geared to head

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[30] Central Area Plan: Goals and Land Use Policy. December 1991 page 23

[31] *Downtown South Guidelines*, Land Use and Development Policies and Guidelines, City of Vancouver, July 30, 1991

[32] Street-facing Dwelling Units and Liveability: The Impacts of Emerging Building Types in Vancouver's New High-density Residential Neighbourhoods. MacDonald, Elizabeth. Journal of Urban Design, Vol. 10. No. 1, page 17, February 2005

office development and support businesses and to provide for a highly walkable business area focused on transit nodes. There was a concern that under existing zoning there was excess office space capacity to provide for adequate transportation service through existing and future plans for transit. An additional rationale for this was to support the development of new office space in the regional town centres designated under the *Liveable Region Plan* of the GVRD. Office space that would be closer to residential uses and was not deemed essential for the metropolitan core CBD.

The office space zoning capacity of the CBD reduced from 52 million square feet to 45 million square feet. The 7 million square feet removed resulted from rezoning to predominately residential uses. This re-zoning was central to the intention of the *CAP* to create a downtown core that was alive after businesses closed at night. There were three "new" communities created by this change including: the new Triangle West neighbourhood centred on West Georgia (14% of the reduction), the Victory Square neighbourhood (14% of the reduction) and the Downtown South neighbourhood (72% of the reduction).

The existing Central Business District had three reconfigured areas now including a reduced CBD, three new predominately residential neighbourhoods, and a transition zone between them where City staff had discretionary power to approve office and/or residential and/or hotel space. Hotels were considered a residential surrogate in the transitional area.

There have been revisions to the *CAP* over the last 17 years. In 2003, the Director of Planning reported to City Council that development of commercial space had slowed to almost zero due to the higher land values attainable through residential development. Under advice from the Director of Planning City Council

voted to impose a moratorium on any further residential developments in the transitional areas within the *CAP*. [33]

There is little physical diversity in the building form in the area. There are 20 condominium towers, 8 social housing projects, and 6 single-room occupancy hotels. Most of these buildings have a large number of units, with almost all of them in the range of 100 to 230 units. There is also a seniors' care home and a youth emergency residence. Most of the social housing and community facilities pre-date the Downtown South design guidelines. Only the recently constructed condominium towers have a podium base with street-fronting townhouses with a point tower above as a building form (see Figure 3). This is an example of eclecticism in post-modern architectural form; the combination of a modernist condominium tower with a late 17th century town house form freed from its historical context.

Figure 3   Townhouses on Seymour St

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[33] *Downtown District: Interim Policies for New Residential in areas C and F; and for Conversion of Existing Office Space to Residential*, Policy Report, April 19, 2004, City of Vancouver, page 1

The neighbourhood has a remnant low-income core of residents in SRO hotels and social housing projects amongst the much more affluent residents of the newly constructed condominiums. With escalating land values and minimal funding for new affordable housing from senior levels of government, the mixed-income nature of the 'new' communities (Goal 3 of the CAP) has required the development of policies and regulations aimed at the retention of the existing low-income housing stock of single room occupancy hotels and rooming houses. One such regulation is the SRA By-law (2005) which requires City Council approval of any SRO hotel conversion based on specific considerations spelled out in the by-law.

The social housing projects are unique in that they do not follow the 'new' housing form promoted in the Downtown South – the street-fronting townhouse. All social housing projects have a single joint entry for all apartments, with most having no retail or other interactive street presence. The exceptions are the New Continental and Seymour Place that both have social service agencies for disadvantaged residents on the main floor.

Currently, there are 133 townhouses in the Downtown South area. Some of these are commercial live/work spaces, but for the most part, they are residential units only. From observations made during the door-to-door delivery of letters it appears the residents of a minimum of eight of the units were not present. There are a number of new projects in construction as well so eventually there will be approximately 200 units in the area, when current approved projects are completed within the next year. A significant number of the new units are currently in construction along Seymour St. giving the street a transitional feel.

The first townhouse units were built 14 years ago. Over this time, there have been variations in the form from project to project. From ethnographic observation, some of the units' designs are more successful in terms of how the

space has been personalized. John Punter in *The Vancouver Achievement* outlines some of these design details. Depth of terrace, planting, street entrance as back door or front door etc. are some of the differences. The original design guidelines in the Central Area Plan were revised in 1997 to improve the overall design including a required step up to terraces in front of townhouses to provide for a transitional semi-public space.

From the visual inventory conducted for the research there is a significant variation in the level of personalization from townhouse to townhouse with the same complex. One townhouse may have a doorbell, letterbox and open gate creating an inviting front entrance while next door there may be no buzzer, no letterbox and a gate with a two-sided lock that requires a key to get either in or out of the terrace space. Delivering a letter to the door, or just saying hello, would require either having a key to the gate or climbing over the fence to get to the door.

Some terraces were devoid of any personal touch, not even a mat. Others had flowers, furniture and bits of art work. This must partly result from building design, with some complexes having more personalized terraces than others do. However, it definitely varies from neighbour to neighbour. It does not seem to be simply a function of age of the complex and by implication length of residence as some of the earliest complexes on Richards St. have no personalization from the street level and the units remain largely anonymous.

In another complex, I had to search for the gate to get in. I knew there was a townhouse because of the terrace, but the gate was so completely covered with ivy that the gate was effectively hidden and the terrace had a level of privacy the others did not.

3.3 Demographic Profile

Since the approval of the *CAP,* the Downtown South neighbourhood has seen rapid change, much more rapid than was envisioned in 1991. The population projections made by the City's Planning Department in 1991 when the area was rezoned was to have 11,000 people living in the area by 2016. This estimate was reached twice as quickly as expected. As of the 2001 Census, there are 13,400 residents in the area. The rapid construction of condominium towers has had an obvious growth effect, while the loss of low-cost housing has received less attention in the Downtown South.

SRO hotels have historically made up most of the low-cost housing stock in the neighbourhood; since the 1970's there has been a gradual loss of rooms through conversions and demolitions, this accelerated in 1986 during the time of Expo 86.

The provincial government passed enabling legislation in 1998 for the City of Vancouver to regulate the conversion of SRO residential hotels to other uses. The City chose not to create such a by-law. Within the year hotel owners evicted close to 400 residents from hotel rooms along Granville St. as they converted from residential to tourist use. Due to the lack of an organized low-income community this conversion of units did not receive the public attention that Downtown Eastside conversions have received.

Current population estimates by the City of Vancouver for the area are 21,000 residents by 2021 – almost twice what was envisioned 16 years ago. This has required additional planning work concerning public amenities and changes to the Development Cost Levies (DCL) charged to developers. DCLs are fees paid by developers to cover some of the neighbourhood infrastructure costs including childcare, parks and social housing. The current fees are set at $9.75 per square foot of development. DCLs rates vary from neighbourhood to

neighbourhood. The scope of DLCs will continue to continue to fund childcare, parks, and social housing with the addition of street improvements now as well.

All of the statistical information presented in the following tables was drawn from the 2001 Canadian Census data. Hutton describes a new urban middle class as well as the growth of the service sector as post-modern attributes of this neighbourhood.[34] The ahistorical architectural references are post-modern as are the "new" economy employment of many residents. From the income information, it would appear that the service sector is more highly represented in the overall neighbourhood than the new middle-class. The MCJS describes technology-based knowledge employment as part of the "new economy" and recognizes this importance through future zoning capacity estimates for office space, live/work space, new technology needs. Statistics are included here in Table 1 - 4.

There is not a complete agreement with the boundaries of Downtown South for either the larger Census Tract units of the Census or the more detailed Enumeration Districts, so the Census Tract area was used. The boundaries of the Census Tract 53.01 are Burrard St., Pacific Blvd., Homer St., and Nelson St. Other than a slight overlap into the Central Business District, these approximate the boundaries of the Downtown South.

Over a five-year period, the neighbourhood population more than doubled with the addition of 7,800 units of housing through the construction of condominium towers. This represents about 2.5% of the population of the City of Vancouver. The rate of home-ownership is slightly less than the 42% rate of the City of Vancouver as a whole. (See Table 1) The density for the Downtown South neighbourhood is three times as high as the City of Vancouver: 4,750 people/sq km for the City and 14,809 people/sq km for the Downtown South.

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[34] Ibid p. 1964

Table 1   Population Change 1996 - 2001

Total Population	13,328
Population Change between 1996 and 2001	160.8%
Population Density	14,809 people/sq km
Percentage of Tenant Households	62.2
Percentage of Owner Households	37.8

Compared to the City of Vancouver, there are a lower percentage of people in Downtown South less than 24 years old or over 65 years old. (See Table 2) Within the Downtown South, the vast majority of residents are in the ages of the most active workforce participation - 25 to 64 years old. This is particularly true for the men, at 82.8 percent.

Table 2   Population by Age Group

Age Group - Male	Total	Percent Aged 15+ in DTS	City of Vancouver
15-24	655	9.4	12.9
25-44	4030	57.9	38.2
45-64	1735	24.9	36.0
65-74	360	5.2	12.9 (65+)
74+	180	2.5	
Total	6960	100	100
Age Group - Female	**Total**	**Percent Aged 15+ in DTS**	**City of Vancouver**
15-24	720	13.1	12.9
25-44	2995	54.3	38.2
45-64	1270	23.0	36.0
65-74	285	5.2	12.9 (65+)
74+	240	4.4	
Total	5510	100	100

The single largest demographic unit in the neighbourhood is men between the ages of 25 and 44, representing 57.9 % of all men in the area. Generally, North American cities have a growing percentage of 25 to 35 year-olds in the

urban core. A Brookings Institution study of USA downtowns shows an increasing residential component, with the younger adult demographic in particular.[35] In 44 cities (selected to be regionally and demographically representative of the 243 cities in the USA of more than 100,000) in 2000, a quarter of the downtown population are 25 to 34-year olds population—up from 13 percent in 1970.

In terms of income levels, less than 20% of households earned more than $60,000 per year according to census information. See Table 3. (This is the most striking difference between Census information and the web-survey population sample.) Most residents of the Downtown South earn less than $40,000 per year, with a significant number earning under $20,000 per year. The social housing projects and SRO hotels account for about 1,500 people, which leaves still leaves significant numbers of people with lower income levels living in the condominium towers. If the population in the non-profit buildings is removed from the census population 60% of households make less than $40,000 per year.

Downtown South demographic information from the census and the web-survey are consistent with the Brookings Institution study that found Downtowns in the USA were home to some of the most and least affluent households of their cities.[36]

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[35] *Who Lives Downtown*, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institution, November, 2005, Eugenie L. Birch page 1
[36] Ibid, p. 1

Table 3   Resident Income Levels

Income Range	Population Aged 15+ with Income	Percent of Population Aged 15+ with Income
Under $20,000	4505	38.0
$20,000 to $39,999	3060	25.8
$40,000 to $59,999	1995	16.8
Over $60,000	2305	19.4
Total	11865	100

At the same time, there is a high level of education in the Downtown South with over 85 per cent of residents having attended some post-secondary education and over a third having a university degree. Again this is similar to the findings of a Brookings Institution study of 44 USA cities where forty-four percent of downtown residents had a bachelors degree or higher. [37]

Table 4   Highest Level of Education Attained

Education Level	Population 20+ years	Percent of Population 20+ years
Some High School	1220	9.0
High School Diploma	780	5.8
Some College	800	5.9
College Degree	2135	15.8
Some University	2905	21.5
University Degree	4700	34.9
Trade	945	7.0
Total	13485	100

Even if one presumed that all of the residents with no post-secondary education (15 per cent) earned less than $39,999 per year this would still leave 48.8 per cent of residents with some post-secondary education earning less than $39,999 per year. An interesting dichotomy of the Downtown South is the

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[37] Ibid p, 1

contradiction of generally high education levels combined with low to modest

income levels.

4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Typical Resident

The 'typical' resident of the Downtown South townhouses, according to this web-survey, is a Caucasian man or woman, with a graduate degree and a household income of over $100,000 who thinks he/she lives in one of the best neighbourhoods in Vancouver, believes that their neighbourhood is convenient and quite safe, owns their home and is between 30 – 39 years old. This differs from the Census Canada information for this area in terms of income (web-survey is much higher), tenure (fewer renters), and education (higher amongst the web-survey respondents). The Census questionnaire does not ask for opinions of the neighbourhoods therefore could not be compared. The age group and gender cross-section is similar to the Census.

As well from information from the web-survey the 'typical' resident:

- felt the street trees, park and retail activities were the most important public design features and that daycares and public art and transit were significantly less important
- spoke to few neighbours (0-3 per week) and socialized with them on the street rather than in their home
- had personalized their front terrace with planting and furniture but was worried about theft
- generally trusted people (82%)
- thought more green space and trees were needed in the area

4.2 Data Analysis

In the following charts and graphs, I will present the quantitative data from the web-survey. In the analysis, the responses to questions of safety, transportation changes and ranking of neighbourhood attributes will be compared for correlations.

Figure 3 shows the length of residence of respondents. Over 36% have been in the area less than a year, over 18% for more than 6 years. The length of residence of the respondents to the web-survey reflects the redevelopment history of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood was re-zoned through the Central Area Plan in 1991. The first condominium towers were completed in 1993 – 14 years ago. The longest term of residence was 12 years and the shortest was 1 month.

Figure 4   Years of Residence
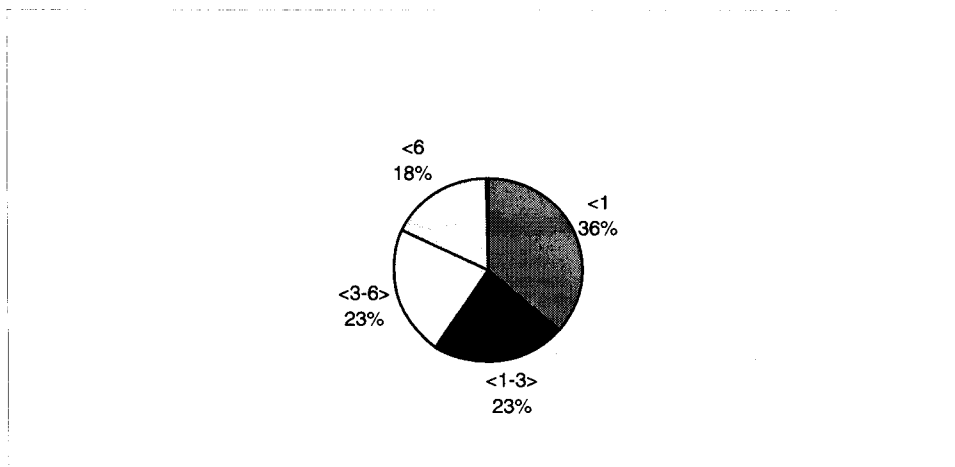

Figure 4 shows the previous location respondents moved from to the Downtown South. The greatest number is from within the Greater Vancouver area (68%). A significant number have moved to the neighbourhood from other parts of Canada and the world (32%) and almost one quarter of respondents have come from other 'global' cities such as Seattle, San Francisco, Toronto, London and Las Vegas.

Figure 5   **Previous Neighbourhood**

Outside Canada
18%

Canada
14%
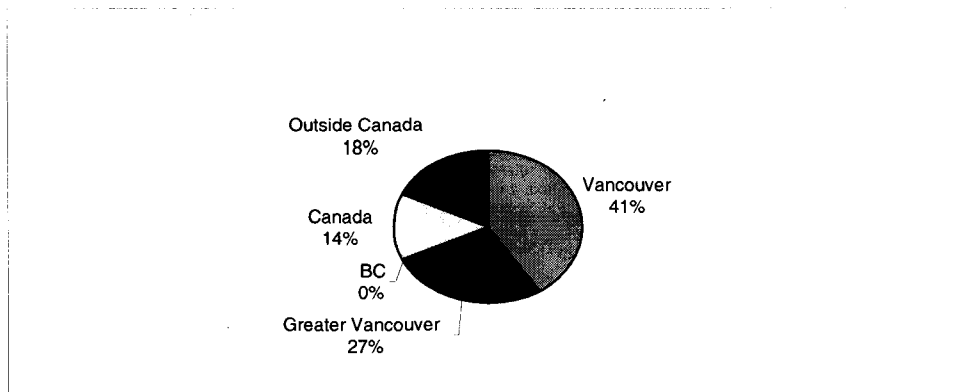
BC
0%

Greater Vancouver
27%

Vancouver
41%

Figure 5 shows how respondents rated the neighbourhood in comparison with other City of Vancouver neighbourhoods. When given the choice of ranking their neighbourhood as one of the best, average or worst neighbourhoods in the City, the vast majority of respondents ranked it as one of the best neighbourhoods. If the 19% of people who stated no definite opinion are removed from the sample, and only the respondents who ranked the neighbourhood as best, worst or average - then 85% of people thought it was the best neighbourhood in the City. One respondent thought that it was one of the worst neighbourhoods. This resident moved to the neighbourhood within the last three years from Las Vegas. He drives less, walks and takes transit more, is very concerned about the level of traffic in the neighbourhood and considers the neighbourhood quite unsafe. A comparison of neighbourhood rating with other demographic information from the survey will be analyzed later.

Figure 6   **Rating of Neighbourhood**

None 14% — Average 9% — Wors t 5% — Don't know 5% — Best 67%
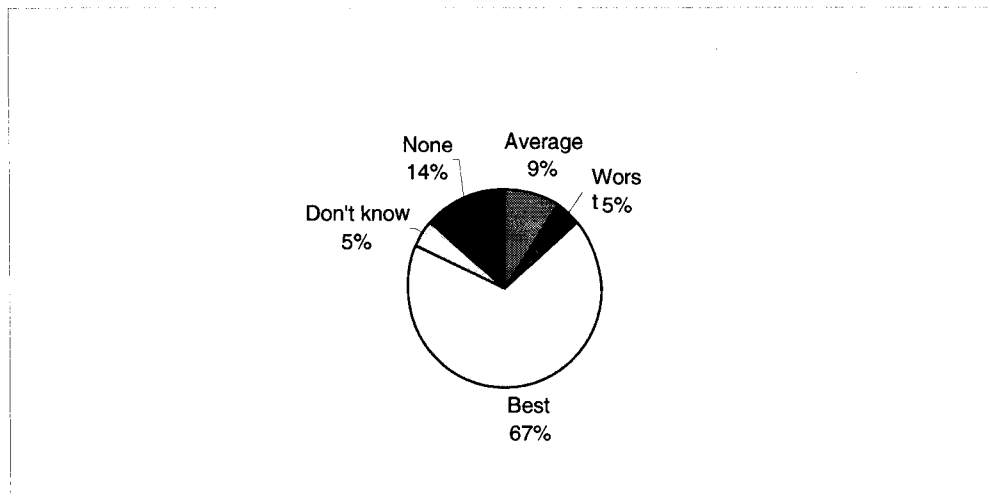
There appears to be no correlation between rating the area and the length of residence of respondents (Figure 6). The few people who do not think it is the best area have been residents from three months to 12 years. However, the people who have lived in the neighbourhood the longest are generally the most likely to have stated no opinion.

Figure 7   Years Residence versus Rating of Area
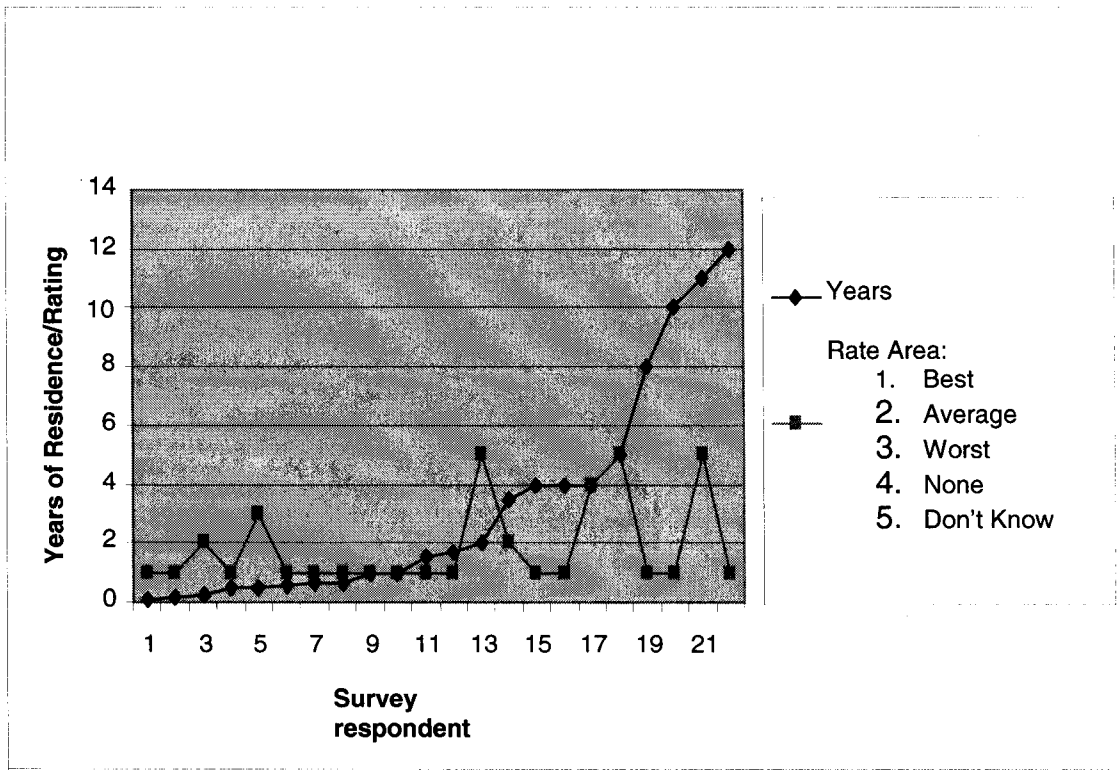
Figure 7 shows the ranking of the neighbourhoods attributes by respondents. The top two attributes refer to the individual convenience of the area as a mixed-use community – retail needs and entertainment being within walking distance of home. The third most highly rated feature is the type of housing. Given the complete lack of any form of traditional single family home in the neighbourhood, this is a high level of support and appreciation for housing forms limited to condominiums (97% of new construction) and townhouses (3% of new construction). It must be noted that as a signature housing form of the neighbourhood it provides for a minimal amount of the over-all housing stock. The community aspects of friendliness, street activity, a good place for kids or pets are much less significant in terms of rankings by respondents.

Figure 8   Rating of Neighbourhood Attributes

- 22 Shops and restaurants   ■ 18 Close arts/entertainment   □ 17 Type of housing
- □ 12. Parks/green space   ■ 9 Friendly neighbourhood   ■ 7 Density
- ■ 4 Street activity   □ 4 Good place for pets   ■ 2 Job opportunities
- ■ 2 Good place for kids
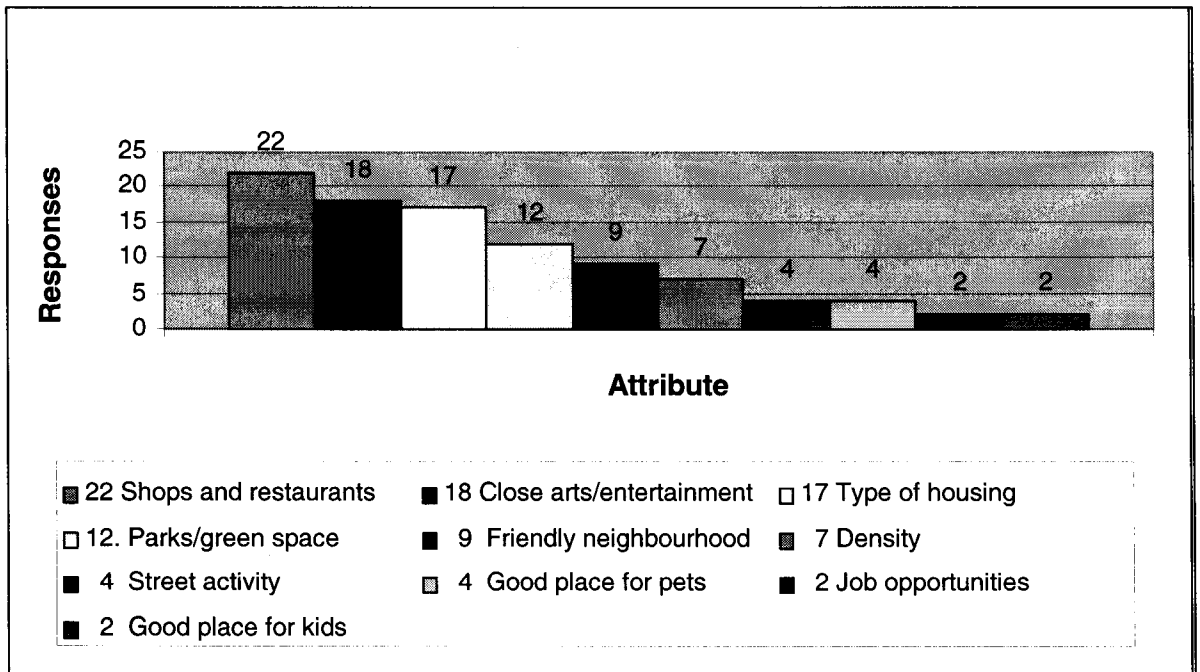
The web-survey found satisfaction with the sense of safety in the neighbourhood as a valued attribute for residents. Figure 8 shows most respondents rating the area as safe – 15 of 18 people who stated an opinion rated the area as very safe or quite safe. Two residents rated the area as quite unsafe, these residents also ranked the neighbourhood as average or one of the worst. There is a strong correlation between safety and neighbourhood ranking, however the sample size is small.

Figure 9   Rate Area versus Rate Safety
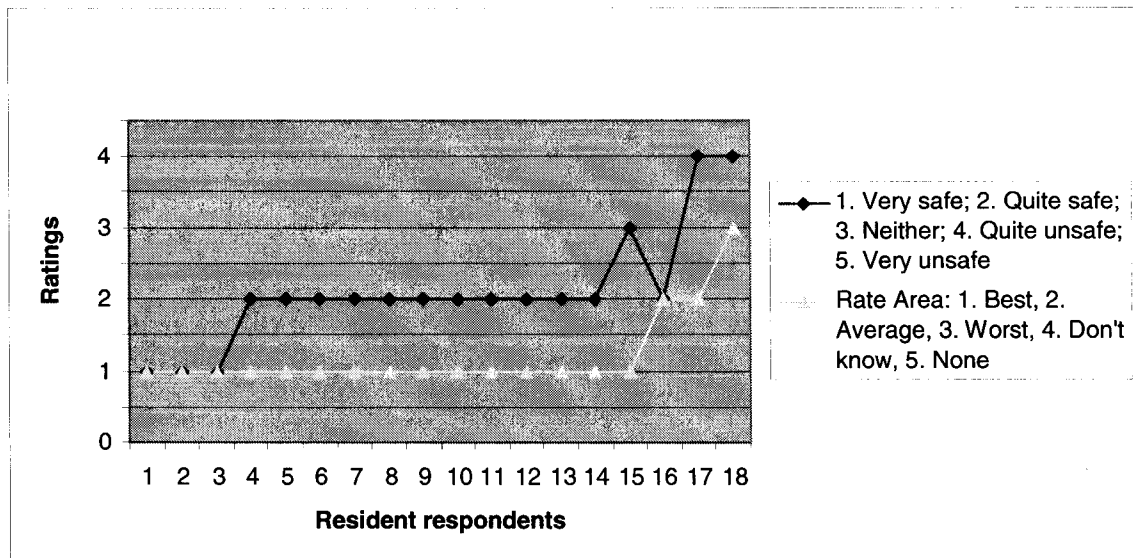
Figure 9 shows no correlation between gender and rating of the neighbourhood safety level. Amongst men and women both, residents' opinions range from very safe, quite safe (the most common response) and quite unsafe (one man and one woman). However, comments made to open-ended questions give a fuller brush to this issue, with women making more extensive and frequent comments about safety issues with regard to bar patrons and "yahoos" on the street late at night.

Figure 10   Rate area versus Gender
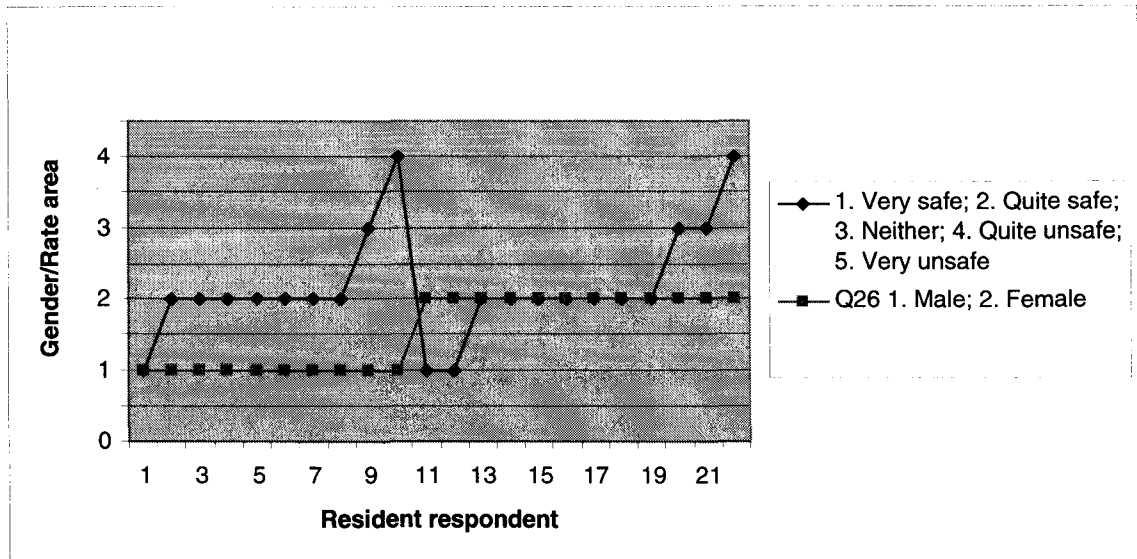
In the Downtown South the press coverage of the area has spoken of the issues of pedestrian-safety, panhandling, break-ins, drug dealing and noise from bar patrons and traffic. These are the issues of the public realm most commonly discussed by the local press, non-profit and government agencies and the local business improvement associations (BIAs).

Lorne Mayencourt, Member of the Legislative Assembly for Vancouver Burrard, introduced the Safe Streets Act, a private members bill regarding panhandling, which was passed by the provincial legislature in 2005. The Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association (DVBIA) conducted a survey of their members in 2004 and 2005 on street safety issues. Information from the DVBIA surveys was used in arguments made to City Council for the approval of $700,000 in new City funding for the Downtown Ambassadors.[38] The local Neighbourhood Integrated Services Team (NIST) frequently discusses noise complaints, incidents of crime and public nuisances in the entertainment district of Downtown South.[39] The Vancouver Police Department (VPD) has

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[38] Council report, December 17, 2007

[39] Neighbourhood Integrated Services Team (N.I.S.T.) meeting minutes November, 2004 and April, 2005

undertaken number of initiatives to deal with late-night bar patrons in the Granville Entertainment district on Granville St.[40]

The next series of tables will compare changes in transportation choices since moving into the neighbourhood with other opinions expressed in the survey. Another important aspect of Bauman's work that I will refer to is his discussion of globalization and its effect on the local; he coined the term "glocalization."[41] He speaks of global and local citizens in terms of mobility and whether they have access to the power of time, for example the instantaneous flow of capital. He postulates that the ability to use time to overcome space is the right of the "globals": "Some inhabit the globe and some are chained to place."[42] Globalization has an anti-modernist, anti-universalizing tendency, in that rather than "homogenizing the human condition, the technological annulment of temporal/spatial distances tends to polarize it."[43]

This was reflected in the answers to a number of the survey questions regarding transit use. The only positive mention of transit was the specific reference in an open-ended question to the Canada Line extension to the airport. Three people mentioned this and one said that they would "get rid" of their remaining car when it was completed (as they had already downsized from two cars).

Figure 10 shows changes made in driving, transit use and walking habits since moving to the Downtown South from the respondents' previous neighbourhood. In general, most people are walking more and driving less. Changes in transit usage are much more mixed. The driving and walking lines are almost mirror images as respondents shifted from driving to walking once they moved into the area. With open-ended questions, there are frequent

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[40] Ibid, NIST minutes June, 2005 and July, 2005
[41] 1998 page 23
[42] Ibid page 17
[43] Ibid page 24

comments about the convenience of the area, how everything was within walking distance and the resulting changes made in car usage. The walking nature of the area was a significant positive for residents.

While one would expect a correlation between level of social interactions with neighbours and increased levels of walking this was not found in the data. Comments suggest that walking trips tend to be purposeful (getting somewhere) rather than social meanderings (wandering around the neighbourhood) and this may explain the minimal increase in social interactions from walking. This strongly meets Goal 6 of the *CAP* of "a walkable downtown where ... walking is the primary means of moving around."

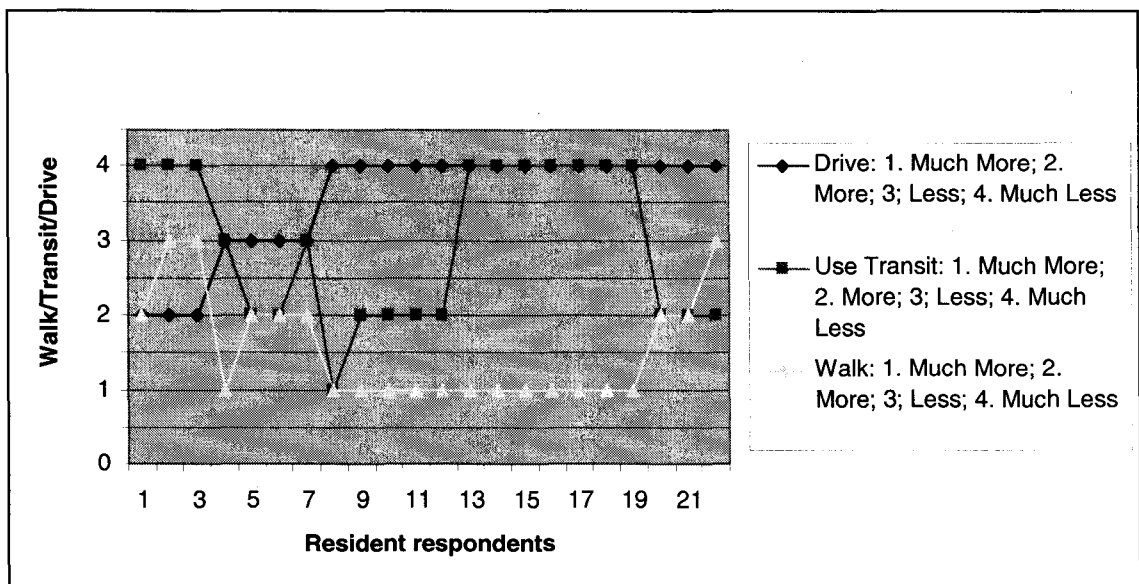**Figure 11   Transportation Changes Compared**

Figure 11 through 13 compares changes in transportation usage with ratings of the neighbourhood by respondents. Everyone who is driving 'much less' ranked the neighbourhood as one of the best. With one exception, everyone who is walking much more ranked the neighbourhood as one of the best. Transit usage changes are much more diverse than walking and driving.

Figure 12   Rate Area versus Car Usage
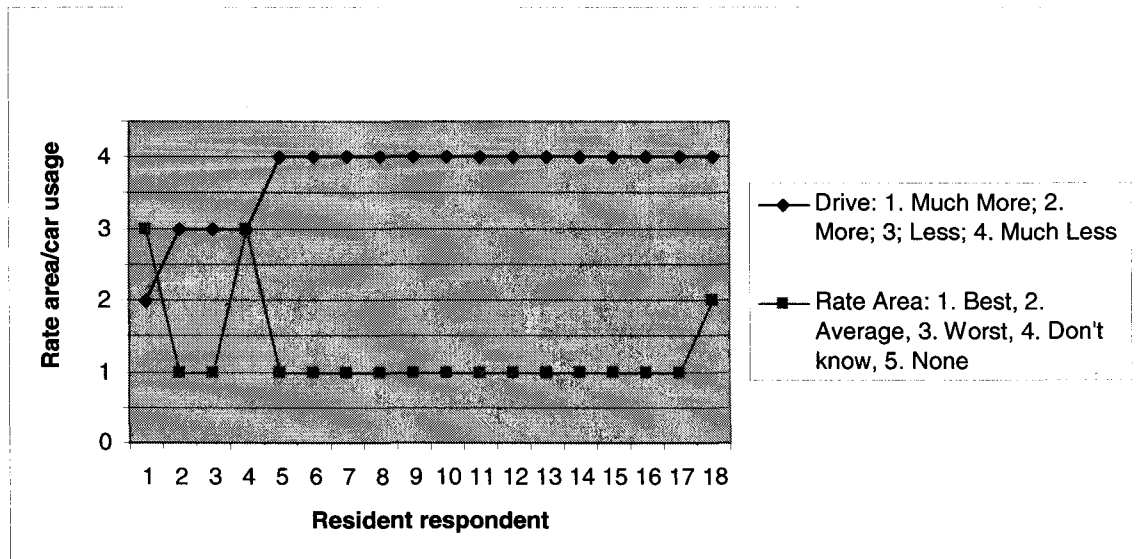
There does not appear to be a correlation between rating the neighbourhood and transit use (Table 12). Eight residents said they use transit more now that they live in Downtown South and ten residents who use it less. This may mean people are moving from cars to transit and from transit to walking, but it is unclear from the question. There is no information whether transit usage is with bus or SkyTrain. Given that the only specific comments made by residents to the open-ended questions were regarding the convenience of SkyTrain service, this may be significant. However, whether they use transit more or less there is an across the board ranking of the area as one of the best.

Figure 13   Rate Area versus Transit Usage
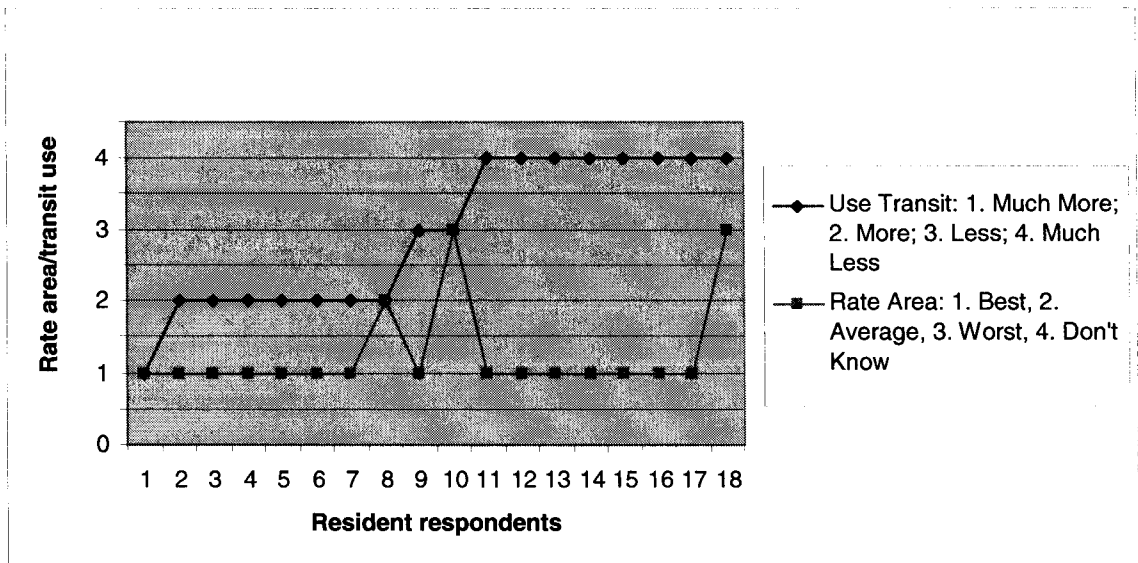
Figure 13 compares rating the area versus walking. There are two people who rank the area as one of the worst, one who walks much more and the other who walks much less (and drives more). From the walking factor perspective, two residents are walking less than in their previous neighbourhood. One of them ranks the neighbourhood as one of the best and the other as one of the worst. All other residents are walking more since moving to the neighbourhood.

Figure 14   Rate Area versus Walking
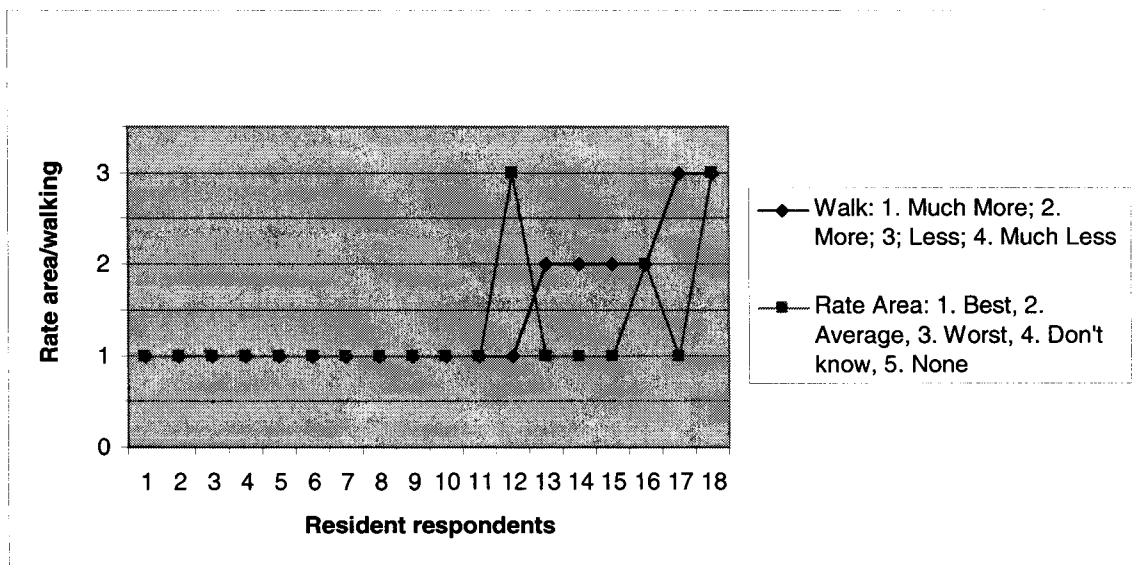
The next set of graphs compares demographic information such as tenure, income and education levels with the rating of the neighbourhood by survey respondents. In Figure 14, all renters rank the area as one of the best. With owners, there is a range of opinion, still heavily weighted to one of the best areas.

Figure 15   Rate Area versus Tenure
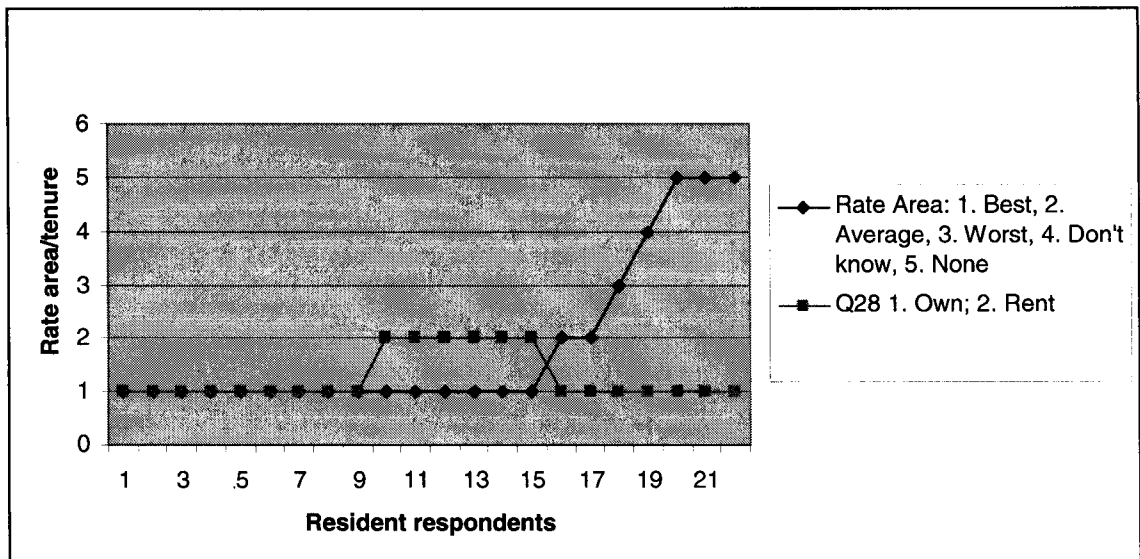
All of the respondents have at least some post-secondary education with over one-third having graduate degrees (Figure 15). The level of education does not appear to influence the ranking of the area – but the data is uniform.

Figure 16   Rate Area versus Education
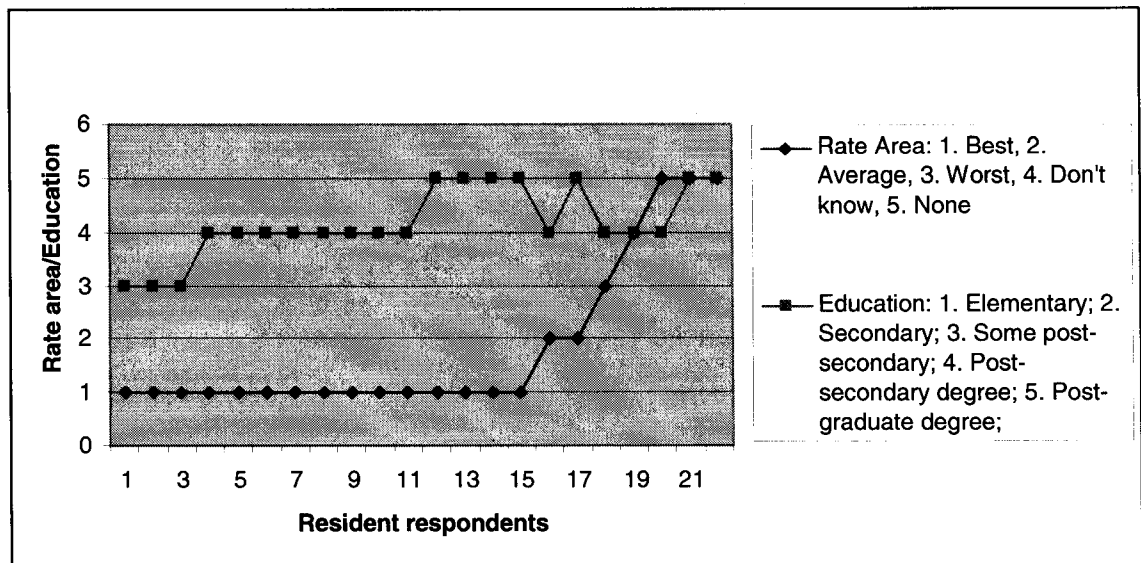
Household income is generally high. Over 75% of respondents reported household incomes of over $100,000 (Table 16). With so few individuals ranking this area poorly it is hard to identify any trends with this income data.

Figure 17   Rate Area versus Income
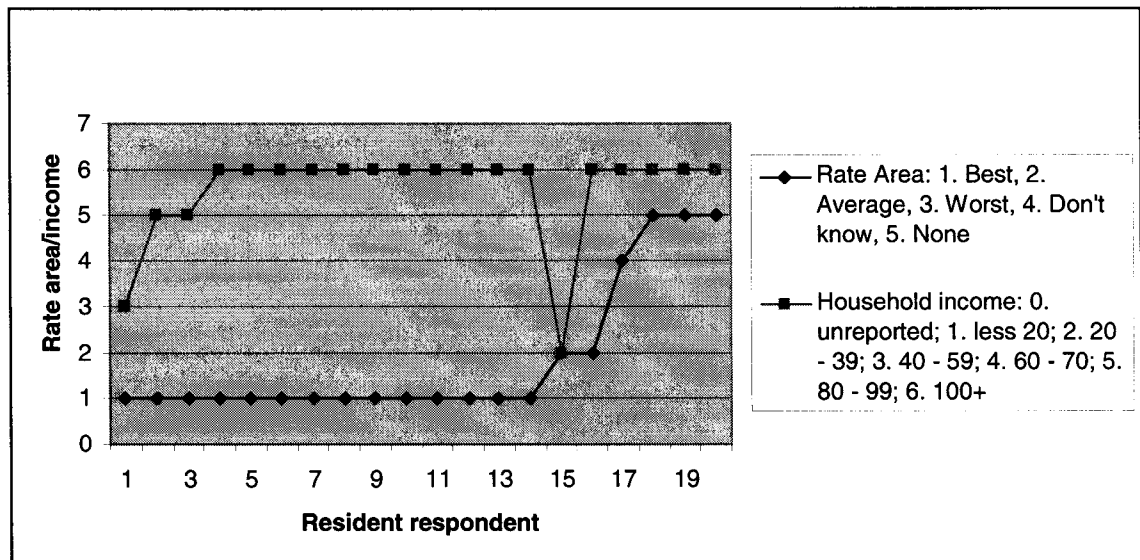
While it may not be statistically significant, it does seem the ranking of the neighbourhood as one of the best is most highly affected by the individual convenience of the neighbourhood – the mixed-use nature of the area with both

residential, retail and entertainment functions. The quality of the pedestrian experience is also noted, with the high ranking of public design features of trees and wide side walks.

Some aspects of the public realm and its usage are subject to debate. An unexpected example of the debate concerns dogs that are mentioned more frequently than bar patrons, homeless people, trash or traffic. They are recognized as a positive as there is increased pedestrian traffic and eyes on the street from dog walking and as a negative as there is damage done on the landscaping. People either want more facilities for dogs, including a separated dog sidewalk (there is a dog run along the Ambleside Park seawall in West Vancouver separated by a chain link fence from the sidewalk) or mini-park with urine-resistant artificial grass. There were numerous complaints about dog urine in the open-ended survey questions.

Other comments talked about too much traffic, people just passing through with no reason to stop, a sense of polite distance, anonymity and a lack of activity on the street. The comments leave the sense that the 'polite distance' is a mild critique of the neighbourhood rather than a value cherished. These comments lead to the important significance of questions 17 – 20 of the web-survey asking residents about their social interactions with neighbours, including how often they interacted with neighbours on a weekly or monthly basis and where these interactions took place – on the street, on their terraces or in their homes.

Are neighbours known intimately as individuals or more generally understood from a distance in their role of "neighbour" or "store owner" or 'dog walker'? Are they considered at all? How are strangers understood in an instant planned neighbourhood? Bauman in his discussion of modernism and post-modernism describes the concept of the 'neutral stranger.' Bauman describes the presence of strangers next to us as a characteristic of modern day life.

"Strangers are neither neighbours nor aliens but rather they are both. Aliens within physical reach; neighbours outside social reach."[44]

Our modern world has created a situation where neutral stranger interactions have thrived through our monetary mediation of social relations; we do not need to trust each other in exchanges as we have mutual trust in our currency or credit system. The question that has emerged from this research is: Has the planning attention to detail in the public realm and a pedestrian oriented community resulted in a socially interactive neighbourhood with a strong sense of place or a successfully neutral space compatible with neutral stranger interactions?

The spatial analysis used to give structure to his discussion of modern social relations includes the terms: cognitive space, aesthetic space and moral space. Cognitive space shares modernism's quest to find knowledge that will bring order to strange social terrain and put everything in its place – to create a cognitive map, a grid system. "Cognitive space is constructed intellectually by acquisition and distribution of knowledge."[45] There is a metaphoric looking upward to the universalizing authority of government, law, social norms etc. from this space.

Aesthetic space shares post-modernism's individual reflection in the enjoyment of the strange and unknown. "Aesthetic space is plotted affectively by attention guided by curiosity and the search for experiential intensity."[46] There is a metaphoric looking inward from this space with concern for individual experience and concerns. Moral space is constructed through an uneven distribution of felt/assumed responsibility.

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[44] Bauman 1993 page 153
[45] Bauman 1993 page 145
[46] Ibid page 145

There is a tension between cognitive and aesthetic space. Cognitive space has a normalizing tendency that is incompatible with an unconditional demand to recognize the needs of another. There is an element of repression of the "other" in this process. Aesthetic space does not promote the serious attention required of moral responsibility. It uses a seductive approach to eliminate the "otherness" of strangers. Yet, Bauman remains hopeful of our community cohesion and capability: "Being with others opens up a possibility for the ethically prior mode of being for others." However, he also notes:

> Together with the orientation in social space constructed on these three levels, people require and use a special technique in their everyday social life - "mismeeting" – where we don't live together with our fellow citizens, but quite often pay no attention to them even if they are nearby. So it happens that large parts of potentially social space are de-socialized and we live in semantically empty space.[47]

The web-survey looked at both the individual experience of the social space with the social interactions between residents and the physical space. For example: How often do you socialize with your neighbours? What aspect of the public space in the neighbourhood do you enjoy the most?

Half of townhouse residents socialize regularly or infrequently with their neighbours, leaving half indicating no interactions with their neighbours. Almost 70% of residents who have lived in the neighbourhood for two years or more interact with their neighbours on the street. Only 25% of residents who have lived in the area for less than two years interact with neighbours. Most social interaction takes place on the street, fewer on terraces and even fewer in people's homes.

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[47] Bauman 1993 page 154

Figure 17 compares data from these questions with length of residence in the neighbourhood. Only residents who indicated they are walking 'much more' indicated they interact with their neighbours 'frequently.' This correlation is consistent with the planning guidelines promoted by Jan Gehl.[48] However, there is an unexpected correlation between length of residence and social interactions. The shorter length of time residents have lived in the neighbourhood the more likely they are to interact with their neighbours. This cannot be an indicator for successful place-making.

Figure 18   Comparison of Location of Regular Social Interactions
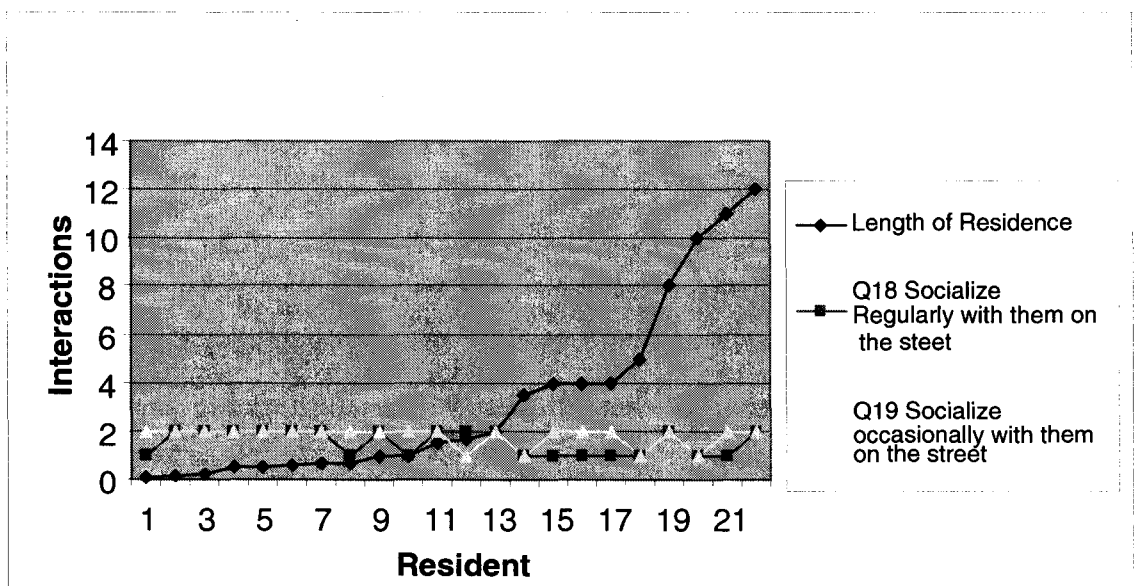
There were frequent comments about the impact of townhouses on the streetscape. There is an impact on the sense of security for individuals.

- "Looks more homey more like a traditional neighbourhood rather than just towers."

- "Makes the streets feel much friendlier. Also allows for nice landscaping along the street which makes it more attractive."

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[48] Public Spaces – Public Life, Danish Architectural Press, Jan Gehl, Copenhagen 1996

- "Having townhouses on the street is a visual reminder that the area has a residential purpose. You can look in and see people living, socializing and going about their lives. You do not have that effect when the homes only start on the second or third floor. Is there a difference between walking down a street in suburbia and looking in to see a Christmas tree and having the same experience in Yaletown? They both give a lovely feeling and warmth. You feel close to people."

The townhouse form is popular with residents as a visible reminder of the residential nature of the neighbourhood. The reaction to neighbouring townhouses seems a bit like an insurance policy in that you do not really want to engage but it is nice to know the security is there.

Questions 20 and 21 asked residents if they saw a social divide in the neighbourhood and how would they describe it. To the researcher the obvious divide was an economic one with people living on the street. However, on the survey residents discussed cultural and ethnic divides more frequently than economic ones. It seems that there may be a significant level of parallel existence among groups of residents in the neighbourhood based on class and ethnic background.

- "Not a social divide but definitely a cultural one. Asian people seem to not socialize with non-Asians despite efforts to the contrary."

- "People aren't here to meet friends; it's just where we live. Many of our friends moved downtown so we maintain those friendships."

- "Living in a townhouse compared to apartment, you never run into neighbours as there is no lobby/gym/other social areas to meet

them. When the townhouse is on a busier street you see even less of them as no one spends time on their patio/balcony."

The relative wealth of some residents is mentioned as an economic divide as often as homelessness is identified as an issue, although the impacts on the public realm of homelessness are mentioned more often. Female survey respondents are more likely to mention and have extensive comments on the impacts of homeless people than male respondents. The same is true with the behaviour of bar patrons.

In terms of social and community development impacts the townhouse form seems to have had limited effect for townhouse residents. Residents mentioned socializing with existing contacts rather than meeting new ones and mentioned no 'lingering' spots to pause in the public realm.

5: CONCLUSION

I undertook this research to understand more fully a community that I worked in and watched change for 14 years. While Director of the Gathering Place Community Centre, a City of Vancouver-operated facility, my work involved providing services for the lowest income residents in the neighbourhood as well as managing relationships with the newer, high-income residents. My original research interest was to understand more fully the community perspective of the new, higher-income residents through an understanding of place-making in Downtown South. My intention has been to provide a critical case study that can assess lessons learned in Downtown South for future neighbourhood redevelopments. The research left me with conclusions that I did not expect and which I do not particularly welcome.

Over the last 17 years, the City of Vancouver has dedicated millions of dollars to the development of design guidelines, zoning schedules, traffic planning, public consultation, and community facility development in the Downtown South. The City of Vancouver has received numerous accolades from planning organizations and from local architects, developers and business groups. While the Central Area Plan does have stated social goals, it is essentially a land use plan with accompanying design guidelines. The implication is that good public-realm design will be sufficient to achieve the stated social goals.

In critical theory, the public sphere is a concept that contrasts with the private sphere, and is the part of life in which one interacts with others and with society at large. In the Downtown South, the public realm where this interaction happens is defined by 43 pages of design guidelines with three types of large

building forms: condominium tower, social housing project and SRO hotel. The streetscape has 20 condominium towers with a base of virtually identical mid-priced townhouses – a bit like a row of Monopoly houses in the mid-range properties from Kentucky Ave to Marvin Gardens. The stage directions are clearly scripted by the guidelines are minimal if one compares them to the range of design present in more incrementally developed neighbourhoods such as the West End, Kitsilano or Grandview Woodlands.

With 13,400 residents, living in Downtown South, and with more high-density neighbourhoods on the drawing boards (Southeast False Creek and the Cambie St. corridor) it is worth asking how this pubic space in this neighbourhood is understood by residents?

Bauman describes modernism as disassociating proximal and social space and develops the social construct of the "neutral stranger", a person who is physically close and yet intimately distant. Strangers need not be invaders or threats, but those who are simply unknown. With so many people within a 27-block area, the Downtown South is a space of strangers who belong and may be unknown.

The success of the Downtown South public realm, as defined by the satisfaction of townhouse residents, may involve the modernist transformation of place to neutral space (neutral stranger). Place as intimate neighbour can be seen as security: space as neutral stranger can be seen as freedom. When the public realm is a safe, convenient, mixed-use space, it is unthreateningly and welcomingly neutral – though not intimately known. In that way, it is a success. A fuller understanding of the neighbourhood as a neutral space can be used to inform the development of best practices for other densifying communities within the region.

Townhouse residents ranked the neighbourhood as one of the best in Vancouver by a large margin. The residents described the mixed-use walkable neighbourhood as convenient, and they gave high marks to the design elements of the public realm as well as the traffic calming measures. All of these elements speak to the individual experience of the neighbourhood.

The design guidelines are less successful in terms of encouraging social interactions in the public realm. The townhouse form with its street-fronting entrances in close proximity to neighbours did not seem to have assisted with consistent interactions among the residents of townhouses nor in the social aspects of the public realm. Little more than a third of respondents interact with neighbours regularly on the street outside their homes.

When asked to identify public spaces that were meaningful, residents did not identify any within the Downtown South. The 'spirit of place' envisioned by Goal 4 of the CAP has not been met. Indeed, beyond the planning goals I think there has been a shift from place-making to neutral space-making amongst this sample population. Place-making involves an external process of affecting one's environment while space-making is more of an internal process concerning control over how one's environment impacts on oneself. The highly educated, high income, townhouse residents, many of whom have moved here from other international cities, enjoy a high-degree of control over how their living environments impact on them and report that they are satisfied in this neutral space. I believe it is importance to understand this shift as a current post-modern expression of the experience of urban space.

Although the townhouse residents may be satisfied with creation of neutral space, a city of neutral spaces lacks social cohesion, and creating such a city seems a very limited planning goal. If applied more broadly, what would be the impact of this type of 'success' on the future functioning and health of Vancouver as a dynamic social entity? A city where success is measured by

stranger interactions that are polite but distant may be award-winning but isn't it also alienating? The townhouse in the Downtown South may be successful for crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) but the planning strategies in the Downtown South may not make a city of places, where people linger in the public realm and there is meaning within the spaces we share with others.

These conceptualizations are useful for a discussion of how we understand space in a post-modern, post-industrial community in a globalizing city such as Vancouver. Residents of Downtown South townhouses described social interactions as infrequent, polite but distant and anonymous. The streetscape was not described as a place to linger and interact with neighbours. "If space is thought of that which allows movement; then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place."[49] Downtown South residents may be moving through space more than staying in place.

In addition to design issues, urban planners need to consider the potential social and political implications of neutral-space making in terms of community engagement and participation in the wider-community. How does Vancouver's civic life engage with a declining attachment to place? After 17 years there are no resident community groups in the neighbourhood with the exception of the BIA and strata councils. It remains unclear to me if this is a reflection of the demographic of the sample population surveyed or an emerging social construction.

The most positive impact of street-fronting townhouses may be on liveability for those passing through the space rather than those who are in place. From the web-survey there are frequent positive comments made by residents of the townhouses in creating a residential streetscape and making the residential

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[49] Ibid p. 7

nature of the neighbourhood apparent. As much as these are people's homes, they are also design features of the public realm. The sample population surveyed saw them as such with frequent comments about the impact of the townhouse form on the streetscape. Further research may be useful on the impact of townhouses on place-making for those who use the street rather than the residents themselves.

The Downtown South planning process and design guidelines focused on the physical space. This is welcome and when we plan our communities we need more than a post-modern 'taming of the urban jungle' through award-winning attention to public design. We need attention to the social sphere of the lived community.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Dear Downtown South/Yaletown Resident:

RE: How Residents Make a Place in the Downtown South/Yaletown Community

My name is Peter Greenwell. I am a graduate student in the Urban Studies Program at Simon Fraser University and I am conducting research as part of my final major project.

I am surveying local residents who live in the townhouses in the Downtown South/Yaletown neighbourhood. The use of the townhouse is one of Vancouver's unique contributions to recent urban redevelopment. The townhouse is a unique and important form of architecture for re-developing urban cores.

As well, the City of Vancouver's "living first" redevelopment of the downtown core supports the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Liveable Region Plan and local sustainability.

My research concerns how "space" is made meaningful and becomes a "place" for residents. Now that the neighbourhood has been developed, how is it working for the residents who have chosen to live here in the Downtown South/Yaletown neighbourhood? What effect does the townhouse form of development have on social interactions among neighbours? How has dense urban living affected transportation choices and usage among local residents?

The survey will take about 15 – 20 minutes. It is a completely anonymous; no questions will identify you as an individual. Please skip any questions you are not comfortable in answering. The survey can be returned in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope. If it is more convenient to do the survey on-line, it is available at www.sfu.ca/urban/...

All survey information will be kept for 6 months after which time completed surveys will be shredded and disposed of. If you have any questions of me, I can be reached at pgreenwe@sfu.ca. If you have any concerns about this research project please contact my academic advisor mholden@sfu.ca. Thank you for your attention.

Peter Greenwell
Graduate Student
Urban Studies Program
Simon Fraser University

Appendix B

Resident Web-survey - How Residents Make a Place in the Downtown South/Yaletown Neighbourhood

The Meaning of Space in Downtown South

- This preview shows all your questions on one page, the actual survey delivery will display one question per page for clarity
- Answer the required questions and click "Submit" to see what the "submitted" questions look like
- Click Edit to change an answer
- Click Close when you are finished previewing **The Meaning of Space in the Downtown South: a model, planned, post-industrial neighbourhood**

The survey is encrypted to provide anonymity and security to all participants. The survey will take about 10 minutes. No questions will identify you as an individual. You must be over the age of 19 to complete the questionnaire. Please skip any questions you are not comfortable answering. The survey will be live from June 4, 2007 to July 4, 2007. This survey will close on July 4, 2007. By filling out this questionnaire, you are consenting to participate. If you have any concerns about this research project please contact Hal Weinberg, Director of Research Ethics Office, SFU, at hal_weinberg@sfu.ca or 778-782-6593. Thank you for your assistance, your opinion is important to this research.

Q1 . How long have you lived in the Downtown South/Yaletown neighbourhood?

Q2 . What do you like about living in this area?

- the number of people
- the type of housing
- friendliness of the neighbourhood
- close to arts and entertainment
- job opportunities
- local shops and restaurants
- street activity
- parks and green space
- good place to have kids

☐ good place to have pets

☐

Q3 . How do you think this area compares to other parts of the City of Vancouver?

☐ It's about average

☐ It's one of the worst areas

☐ It's one of the best areas

☐ Don't know

☐ None of these

The following eight questions concern public design features and places in the neighbourhood - such as sidewalk landscaping, parks, community centres, daycares etc.

Q4 . Name and describe the most significant public space in your neighbourhood to you?

Q5 . The following public design features in your neighbourhood are important for the overall attractiveness and liveability of the neighbourhood.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Street trees :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wide Sidewalks :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Townhouses with front doors on the street :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seymour and Richards St. are now two-way streets :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of Transit Service :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Park Space :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Public art :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Retail activity such as stores, restaurants and patios :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Daycares :	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q6 . What design features do you feel are lacking in the area's public space?

a. : [   ]

b. : [   ]

c. : [   ]

Q7 . Please comment on the appearance of your street e.g. safe, attractive, historic, clean etc.

[   ]

Q8 . Please comment on the activities on your street e.g. fun, dull, active, special, real, empty

[   ]

Q9 . Please comment on the access and linkages e.g. connected, workable, convenient, inconvenient etc.

[   ]

Q10 . Please comment on the sociability of your street.

[   ]

Q11 . Would you say your local area is:

☐ Very safe

☐ Quite safe

☐ Neither safe nor unsafe

☐ Quite unsafe

☐ Very unsafe

The following four questions concern your transportation choices in the Downtown South area compared with your previous neighbourhood.

Q12. **What neighbourhood/city did you previously live in, before the Downtown South/Yaletown ?**

Answer : |

Q13. **Compared to your previous neighbourhood do you now use your car;**

☐ Much more

☐ More

☐ Less

☐ Much Less

Q14. **Compared to your previous neighbourhood do you use transit (bus and Skytrain);**

☐ Much more

☐ More

☐ Less

☐ Much less

Q15. **Compared to your previous neighbourhood do you walk;**

☐ Much more

☐ More

☐ Less

☐ Much less

The following six questions are about interactions with your neighbours

Q16. **How would you describe your interactions with your neighbours who live within 200 feet of your home?**

☐ Frequent

☐ Occasional

☐ Selective

☐ None

Q17. **How many of your neighbours do you speak with on a weekly basis**

☐ 0 - 3

☐ 4 - 6

☐ 7 - 10

☐ more than 11

Q18. **If you socialize with your neighbours regularly (more than once per month) do you:**

☐ Socialize with them on the street

⌐ Socialize with them on your terrace/front balcony

⌐ Socialize inside your home

⌐ Socialize somewhere else in the neighbourhood

⌐ Not applicable

Q19 . If you socialize with your neighbours occasionally (less than once per month) do you:

⌐ Socialize with them on the street

⌐ Socialize with them on your terrace/front balcony

⌐ Socialize inside your home

⌐ Socialize somewhere else in the neighbourhood

Q20 . Do you see a social divide in this neighbourhood?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q21 . How would you describe it?

Personal Space

The next three questions are about whether or not you make your terrace/front balcony space, which is visible to the public, more individual and/or personalized.

Q22 . Have you made changes at the front of your townhouse that makes it more personalized and individual?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q23 . If yes, which of the following have you added?

⌐ Gardening/planting

⌐ Furniture

⌐ Lights

⌐ Decorations

⌐ Other

Q24 . If you haven't added a personal touch to the space, why not?

⌐ Strata council rules

⌐ Not interested

┌ Worried about theft

┌ Other reason

Q25 .   Please describe what you may feel is the most important impact of townhouses on neighbourhood liveability

About you

The final eight questions are general questions about you.

Q26 .   Are you?

┌ Male

┌ Female

┌ Transgendered

Q27 .   Do you generally trust people?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q28 .   Do you?

┌ Rent your home

┌ Own your home

Q29 .   Which group best describes your age?

┌ 19 - 29

┌ 30 - 39

┌ 40 - 49

┌ 50 - 59

┌ 60 - 69

┌ 70 - 79

┌ 80+

Q30 .   How would you describe your ethnic origin?

Answer :

Q31 .   What is your occupation?

Answer :

Q32 .   What is the highest level of education you have attained?

┌ Elementary school

- ⌐ High school
- ⌐ Some college
- ⌐ College degree
- ⌐ Some university
- ⌐ University degree
- ⌐ Graduate degree
- ⌐ Trade certification

Q33 . What income range describes your household income?

- ⌐ Less than $20,000
- ⌐ $20,000 - $39,000
- ⌐ $40,000 - $59,000
- ⌐ $60,000 - $79,000
- ⌐ $80,000 - $99,000
- ⌐ $100,000+

Q34 . I welcome any comments that you have and can be reached at pgreenwe@sfu.ca If you are available for a short follow-up interview please include an email address.

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Please Comment:
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Thank you for your participation in this survey. Surveys must be completed by July 4, 2007.

Submit

Appendix C

No original research data collection was commenced before ethics approval through the Office of Ethics, including the web-survey, elite interviews and ethnographic observation. The ethics risk was deemed as minimal, as only adults over the age of 19 participated. The required ethics forms were submitted to the Ethics office in May, 2007. There were a number of specific requests for additional information concerning the use of a web-based survey even though the tool used was the SFU web-survey tool. Concerns were raised in regards to inscription of the survey to ensure anonymity and that each IPN computer address could only fill the form out once. As well there were specific wording requirements included in the web-survey in regards to an assurance of privacy of information and contact information for the ethics office. A number of revisions were required of both the survey tool and the ethics forms. Final approval of the research was provided by the Ethics Office in June, 2007

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