Encouraging Family-Friendly Condominium Development and Creating Complete Communities in Downtown Toronto

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the idea of complete communities and discusses how condominium development in downtown Toronto can be made more family friendly by focusing on the proposed 'Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children' (OPA) that is currently before City Council.

In order to address this issue, the study employed a detailed policy review of the current planning policies for the City of Toronto and an overview of the planning policies in the City of Vancouver, as well as in-depth interviews with key informants in the planning and development field and parents who have lived in or are currently living in a downtown condominium with at least one child.

The findings indicate that there is a growing segment of the population choosing to live in downtown condominiums after having children and that housing and community policy must better address the needs of this population. The proposed OPA would require new high-rise condominium development in downtown Toronto to contain a minimum percentage of three bedroom units suitable for families. This policy would be a significant step towards meeting these needs and creating the desired complete communities; however, it is a contentious issue and there are requirements beyond bedroom counts that need to be addressed to create the supportive family-friendly infrastructure.

From these findings, this thesis proposes recommendations and changes to the proposed OPA that would clarify and refine its intentions and implementation. As well, the concept of the family life cycle is reconsidered and an updated model of housing requirements based on the "condo family" is proposed. This research contributes to the literature on families living downtown, condominium living, and the family life cycle.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Cities across North America are seeing their central cores repopulated by a new breed of urbanites. In Canada, this is especially true in large cities like Toronto and Vancouver. With growing populations and provincial and municipal plans to curb urban sprawl, efforts in planning and development need to ensure that city expansion is achieved through intensification and infill development that is suitably oriented to accommodate a diverse set of residents. This diversity is essential to creating complete and viable communities, and as such must include a range of ages, and this means families with children.

In Toronto, a provincially initiated growth boundary surrounding the Greater Golden Horseshoe will put strain on greenfield development in the Greater Toronto Area as growth will need to be accommodated within the existing urban boundary. Intensification makes efficient use of land, it can revitalize areas by making them more "people-focused and livable", and even "breathes new life into downtowns" (Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Renewal, 2006a). Downtown Toronto, an identified *Urban Growth Centre*, is being targeted for intensification of 400 jobs and residents per hectare by 2031 (Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Renewal, 2006b). Further intensification efforts are established in the City's Official Plan and growth vision. Condominium development will play an important role in meeting this intensification target as Toronto has one of the largest condominium markets in North America (Marr, 2007). However, research shows that current residents of downtown condominiums are largely young professionals, either single or couples, or older baby boomers (City of

Toronto, 2007a). For the City of Toronto to successfully create a viable neighbourhood out of the downtown area, it needs to attract a diverse set of residents, especially those diverse in age.

The future of downtown living and the coincident boom in condominium development is currently at a crossroad. Over recent years, the vast majority of condominium units built in the core of the city have been one and two bedroom units. In the Downtown and Waterfront areas, between 2003 and 2007, projects in the development pipeline consisted of 51.5% one bedroom and 36.1% two bedroom units, while only 4.1% were for three bedroom or larger (City of Toronto, 2008). Although a single family home with a backyard typical of the suburbs has traditionally been the preferred housing choice for families with young children, urban living has increasingly become attractive to young professional singles or couples; therefore, this unit mix may seem appropriate. However, with commutes becoming more costly, in terms of gas prices, time consumption, and environmental impact; an increasingly global awareness of the green movement and sustainability; and government initiatives to promote intensified, dense urban living in lieu of destroying agricultural and green space by sprawling suburbs, this is a cohort who, given the option to remain living downtown to raise a family, may choose the three bedroom condominium downtown where they can walk to work instead of the three bedroom house in the suburbs with the hour long commute. Demographic changes in family composition and size are redefining the traditional family life cycle and the corresponding housing demands; it is possible for young couples or singles living downtown to maintain an active, vibrant urban lifestyle after having one or two children. Maintaining the urban lifestyle, however, needs to be made more

practical and planning initiatives need to consider that housing requirements demanded at different life stages are changing. Although certain amenities already exist, such as cultural, recreational and entertainment facilities, public transit and shorter commuting times to central city workplaces, other elements like appropriate unit sizes, daycares, schools, community centres, parks and playgrounds need to be planned to accommodate the children of the young professionals who choose to remain in the city.

For an example of family-friendly downtown neighbourhoods, one must only look as far as Vancouver, where the False Creek Basin has been transformed into a diverse high-density, family-friendly community that has set the global precedent in downtown family living. The *Vancouver Model* will be explored in this thesis to garner an understanding of the strategies which could be employed to encourage family-friendly development in Toronto's own downtown core. One initiative currently under consideration in the City of Toronto is the proposed 'Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children' (OPA). This policy would require development projects in the downtown to include a minimum number of three bedroom units, a unit size that is drastically underrepresented in the downtown core. The policy is founded on long-term planning goals of creating diverse, balanced communities in the downtown area by building greater housing options for tomorrow, today. However, the idea of mandating such a policy is a contentious issue in the planning and development field – a matter that will be explored in this thesis.

1.2 Research Question and Objectives

This thesis will consider the dream of the quintessential single family home on a large lot and whether it can be transformed to one of a three bedroom condominium on a subway line with a daycare, public school and community garden around the corner. In particular, as the City strives to meet the intensification plans and density targets outlined in the Places to Grow Act, 2005, as well as meeting the goals of intensification and sustainability outlined in the Official Plan, the purpose of this study is to attempt to provide a timely answer to the question:

How can downtown condominium development be more accommodating to families?

While answering this question, this study will also address four specific research objectives:

1. To understand what policies and strategies are in place to make residential condominium development more accommodating to households with children;

2. To determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium development to be more family-friendly;

3. To provide an updated model of housing requirements under the family life cycle concept; and

4. To make recommendations for the City of Toronto on making condominium development more family oriented in downtown Toronto.

In order to address the objectives and answer the research question, this thesis will focus on the City of Toronto. However, as the City of Vancouver has set the precedent on family-friendly central city living, a portion of the research will examine this achievement, and what lessons Toronto can learn from the Vancouver experience.

1.3 Methodological Overview

This study will employ two qualitative research methods: policy review and in-depth personal interviews with key informants and parents. Literature relating to condominium living, the family life cycle model as it relates to housing requirements, and the experience of children in the city will be reviewed to establish a body of knowledge pertinent to the issue of family-friendly housing in a central city area. A review and analysis of current and proposed planning policies and strategies in the City of Toronto will be conducted to determine what *is* being done and what *might* be done to accommodate families living downtown. Additionally, the planning policies that shaped the success of Vancouver's downtown neighbourhoods will be examined in order to determine what lessons may translate to the Toronto experience. Furthermore, an idea of the strategies which could be used to make downtown living more family-friendly will be investigated through in-depth interviews with key informants in the planning and development field. Interviews will also be held with parents who have lived in or are living in a downtown condominium with at least one child to understand the factors involved in the decision to live downtown with children and their experience of the lifestyle. All interview participants will remain anonymous. From the results of these methodological undertakings, recommendations will be made in regard to family-friendly condominium development in downtown Toronto and the strategies that can be used to encourage it. The methodological practices of this study will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.4   Research Significance

This study will be largely exploratory in nature and will contribute to the body of knowledge pertaining to condominium development and related planning policy. Specifically, it will help fill the apparent gaps in the literature concerning families living downtown; provide an update to the antiquated family life cycle model to better reflect current demographics and housing choices; and create a thorough record of planning policies in Toronto and other jurisdictions, in order to suggest possible directions for further accommodating households with children in the downtown core. Moreover, it will share the experiences of parents living in downtown condominiums with children to better assess the needs of family-friendly housing.

1.5   Thesis Organization

This introductory chapter provides an overview of the research question and objectives, methodology and significance of the thesis. Chapter 2, Literature Review, establishes the body of knowledge relating to condominium living, housing demands of the family life cycle, and children living in the city. It also acknowledges the inherent gaps in and limitations of such knowledge. Chapter 3, Methodology, details the qualitative research methods used in this study. Chapter 4, Background, provides a brief overview of the City of Toronto, the primary focus of this research. It also looks at the issue of family-friendly housing as it appears in the popular media. Chapter 5, Toronto Policy Review, describes the current and proposed planning policies in the City of Toronto. Chapter 6, Vancouver Policy Overview, illustrates the success of the Vancouver Model and the strategies used to encourage family-oriented housing. Chapter

7, Interview Findings, presents the results of the key informant and parent interviews.

Chapter 8, Conclusions and Recommendations, summarizes the key findings of the study

and proposes recommendations to address the research question and objectives.

2   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

The literature review is divided into five sections based on relevant areas of study. The first will provide a brief overview of the evolution of downtown. The second will look at downtown as a place to live and the relevant planning programmes that have contributed to the residential impetus downtown. The third will explore the family life cycle and how it applies to housing requirements. The fourth will discuss the literature on children in the city, with particular attention on raising children downtown and in high-rise housing. The last will address the limitations of and gaps in the research. While the review is divided into sections and sub-sections, this is done so for organizational purposes only – the subject areas are integrated and overlap; therefore, the review should be considered as a cohesive whole.

2.2   Downtown: An Overview

The following section provides a brief overview of the concept of downtown and how it has evolved over the course of a century, cycling through different periods of dominant use and planning approaches.

The *downtown*[1] of a typical large North American city has cycled through stages of residential living. Following the industrial revolution, downtown living was "efficient, functional, and desirable" (Moulton, 1999, p. 6), allowing people to live near work and shops. It was where transportation converged, where office buildings grew tall, and

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[1] *Downtown* is defined, for the purpose of this section, as the central business district of a town or city, and refers to a generalized downtown of a large North American city, not any one city in particular unless otherwise specified. Although there are distinctions between the American and Canadian context, for the purpose of this general overview a broad description is accepted. Where distinctions are significant, they are addressed.

where people came to shop; it was "*the* business district" (Fogelson, 2001). People would flood downtown on a daily basis, especially during the hours of seven and nine in the morning and five and seven in the evening – later to be known as rush hour (Fogelson, 2001). As the primary function of downtown at this time was business, residences were less common. No longer were people required to live near work and shops, and downtown, "once the most densely populated part of the city..." (Fogelson, 2001, p. 18) was losing residents. Developments in transportation, mainly the streetcar and the automobile, freed those who could afford it to live in the growing suburbs and live in a "bourgeois utopia" (Fogelson, 2001, p. 19).

In the 1920s, downtown was more concentrated than it had ever been. Industry moved to peripheral areas and was replaced with service sector businesses housed in tall office buildings instead of factories and warehouses (Fogelson, 2001). Land values were rising, residential development was becoming infeasible, and the upper classes were hesitant to raise their families in the downtown setting (Fogelson, 2001). As well, public improvements to cities displaced some residents when homes were destroyed to expand transportation networks and city buildings (Birch, 2006; Fogelson, 2001). This was the beginning of the *Urban Renewal Movement*, characterized as "the era of the bulldozer" where slum clearance was purported to make "better use" of urban land (Carmon, 1999). The government had little to no role in the redevelopment of the razed land, giving the private sector control to build commercial, office, or entertainment space generally aimed at the middle and higher classes. When housing was built, it tended to be "inhumane multistory blocks which were unfit for family life, and certainly not suitable for poor families" (Carmon, 1999, p. 146).

During this era of downtown's history, the inevitable decline due to massive traffic congestion issues caused by an increasing obsession with the automobile marred the image of downtown. As the state of congestion grew worse in downtown, a new phenomenon began, beginning largely in the late 1920s: businesses followed residents to the periphery and the suburbs (Fogelson, 2001). As department stores began to decentralize, so did other businesses. The primary reason, some cite, was due to advances in technology, including transportation and communications (Fogelson, 2001). The automobile allowed people to drive further to reach a destination; however, it also led to massive congestion in downtown. Subsequent advances in communications allowed people to conduct business without the traditional requirement of face-to-face transaction, leading to decentralization of certain business practices (Fogleson, 2001). As the Great Depression in the 1930s marked the end of the roaring 1920s, growth slowed tremendously and created grave distress for downtown (Fogelson, 2001). Office space went vacant, construction starts diminished, and land values dropped drastically. Although evidence of a mild recovery started in the mid 1930s, downtown did not return to normal right away (Fogelson, 2001). The outlying districts saw more growth in retail services; people did not frequent downtown as much after the Great Depression, and land values in downtown did not rise despite glimpses of recovery (Fogelson, 2001).

In the first half of the 1940s, World War II worsened the problems of downtown. Decentralization continued and after the war it boomed, especially in the United States, with housing construction to accommodate expanding families. The postwar era of further decentralization was supported by the belief that through highway expansion, making downtown more accessible, people could live in the suburbs, still frequent the

core, and essentially have the best of both worlds. Housing stock was generally one and a half storey single-detached homes, growing larger over the years following the war (Miron, 1988). This form of housing was fuelled by the "postwar baby boom": a result of men returning from war, and women no longer being needed in the workforce. This allowed couples to get back to the natural progression of their family life cycle, essentially living the American dream of moving to large low-density, family-oriented suburban housing with their growing families (Miron, 1988).

Although massive decentralization was occurring following the war, downtown still remained an important component of cities, and over the following decades it became apparent. Housing stock began changing as condominium and apartments became more common (Miron, 1988). Some cities took to neighbourhood rehabilitation programs in the 1960s to improve housing, provide community services, and encourage public participation (Carmon, 1999). This was done under the belief that residences needed to be recentralized, and that attracting the upper classes back to the city would fill a void in the economy (Fogelson, 2001). Urban redevelopment projects were supported by many as a means to reduce city expenditures and improve the tax base by creating middle and upper class neighbourhoods surrounding downtown (Fogelson, 2001).

During the 1960s and 1970s, older residential neighbourhoods surrounding downtown began to be repopulated with middle class residents (Sager, 1976; Gale, 1979; Sumka, 1979). These neighbourhood rehabilitation efforts were a major influence on the downtown housing boom of today (Birch, 2006). Although the rehabilitation efforts of the 1960s and 1970s were short lived as governments and public were less than impressed with the results of these social programmes (Carmon, 1999), their failure led to

the proliferation of the *Urban Revitalization Movement* of the late 1970s and 1980s. Low

land and housing prices in central city areas attracted private investment in two forms:

private-individual investment, in one of three forms: gentrification by *Yuppies* and

Dinks[2], upgrading by incumbent residents, or upgrading by immigrants – generally taken

on by individual investment; or public-private partnerships, involving partnering between

private investors and public authorities (Carmon, 1999). Though resulting in positive

improvements for some areas, these efforts tended to create "islands of revitalization

within seas of decline" (Carmon, 1999, p.154).

Since the 1970s revitalization efforts, downtown has continued to show signs of

repopulation. Evidence of the continued residential boom in downtowns across North

America is expanding (see Sohmer & Lang, 1998; Moulton, 1999; Birch, 2006; Breen &

Rigby, 2004; and Hinshaw, 2007). In Toronto, for example, the condominium has

become a dominant force in downtown repopulation, with its presence growing since the

enactment of the Ontario Condominium Act in 1967 (Miron 1988; Kern, 2007). After

booming in the 1980s, slowing in the early 1990s, and taking off again in the late 1990s,

the explosion of condominium construction has been "a phenomenal transformation in

residential morphology" (Kern, 2007, p. 660). According to Miron (1988), apartment

construction became a major type of postwar housing; accounting for over one third of

the housing stock by 1981.

The growth of the condominium market and subsequent repopulation of

downtown is in part a result of environmental and political pressures for *urban

intensification*. Having gained prominence in urban development and planning policy in

the 1990s, *Smart Growth* has been an initiative in many North American cities, resulting

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[2] *Yuppies* refer to young, urban professionals, and *Dinks* refers to dual income, no kids (Carmon, 1999).

in more compact development with an emphasis on brownfield redevelopment, infill, and

intensification. Smart Growth is founded on ten principles:

1. Housing choice
2. Vibrant, walkable complete communities
3. Smart building design
4. Renew existing communities
5. Green infrastructure
6. Green space, farmland and ecologically sensitive areas
7. Broad-scale, integrated planning
8. Transportation options
9. Community involvement
10. Focus on implementation
(Smart Growth Canada Network, 2007)

The primary goal of these policies has been to spare the diminishing greenfields

surrounding cities and control sprawl, while making the best use of existing infrastructure

(Stephenson, 1999; Smart Growth Canada Network, 2007). Intensification is achieved by

increasing residential and commercial densities in built up areas of cities, such as

downtowns (Jenks, Burton, & Williams, 2000). As more and more cities embrace the

language of Smart Growth in their planning policy, residential growth will continue in

city centres – this includes Toronto, which is a major intensification target under the

Places to Grow Act and Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (see Bunce,

2004). Residential development in city centres generally consists of condominium

development, a form of housing that is:

> expected to fulfill expanding housing needs, curb suburban
> sprawl, lift the spaces of deindustrialization to their highest
> and best use, respond to a cultural shift in favor of urban
> living, and stimulate the economy by providing sites for
> capital investment. (Kern, 2007, p.659)

Cities have evolved a great deal over the past 100 years. Rapid growth and

expansion of cities has changed the urban landscape incredibly. As cities try to limit the

physical outward expansion of their borders, they will continue to grow vertically, and become more prominent as a place of residence. This idea is discussed in the next section.

2.3   Downtown: A Place to Live

This section will first focus on the characteristics of the urban population and the evidence of the *back to the city movement*. The second part will focus on the policy prescriptions that have contributed to the repopulation of downtown, including urban intensification schemes.

2.3.1   The Urban Population

Living downtown is not for everyone, but there are people who choose to live the urban life. The *urban revitalization* movement was generally driven by middle class residents who were drawn to the lifestyle that living in the heart of the city could provide, a sentiment echoed by those living in cities and many researchers. Studies dating back to the 1970s consistently maintain that the population is often characterized by two cohorts: young, urban professionals, and retired, empty nesters (see Sager, 1976; Gale, 1979; Moss, 1997; Moulton, 1999; Birch, 2006; Karsten, 2003, 2007). The notion that the "lifestyle" is the *raison d'etre* for living downtown is echoed in more recent research on the renewed interest of central city living (see Preston, Murdie, & Northrup, 1993; Sohmer & Lang, 2001; Karsten, 2003, 2007). The following section will examine the evidence of the back to the city movement, what characterizes this cohort of urbanites, why they have made the choice, and what challenges exist in maintaining the lifestyle.

The 1976 article "The Remarkable Comeback of Our Downtown Areas" by Leon B. Sager provides an example of early research into the new life of downtown. Sager identifies the need for downtown to be a pleasant place for people to interact with each other and with their environment (1976). In order for this to be achieved, four essential factors are required:

> a strong city government, a vigorous organization of business interests willing to invest heavily, comprehensive planning and marketing studies, and the enthusiastic backing of a concerned citizenry. (Sager, 1976, pp. 12-13)

Sager also notes that a growing number of downtown residents are generally one or two person households that find it "fits their life-style perfectly" (1976, p. 13): it alleviates the need for depending on an automobile, an element of the downtown lifestyle that Sager deems not only a financial saving but also "a more exciting and fulfilling way of life" (1976, p. 13). However, it is noted that there are certain downsides to downtown living that will continue into the future regardless of drastic improvement efforts; these "unpleasant conditions" include pollution, crowding, few natural settings, and crime (Sager, 1976). Despite the apparent downsides of downtown living, Sager concludes that by the end of the 1990s, over 200 million people would live in or very near the urban core of America (1976). With the strengthening of downtowns and the subsequent residential development immediately surrounding downtown, the entire city benefits (Sager, 1976). Although the suburban lifestyle will always be desired by some, there is an evident trend towards downtown regeneration (Sager, 1976).

This *middle class resettlement* was characterized by households that are "childless and composed of one or two white adults in their late twenties or thirties" (Gale, 1979, p. 121), often college educated professionals with a graduate degree. This group is not

comprised of reformed suburbanites; largely, they are previous renters from somewhere within city boundaries who "consciously embraced inner-city living and/or rejected a suburban location when looking for a house to purchase" (Gale, 1979, p. 123). Gale, in predicting the future of this phenomenon, states that "the extent to which it can reach beyond young singles and couples and attract families with children is related primarily to the future quality of inner-city public education" (Gale, 1979, p. 140).

Further evidence of the urban revitalization movement in the 1970s is provided by Sumka (1979). Sumka notes that there are evident signs it has occurred in many cities and that revitalization projects are a sign of hope for attracting middle and upper class households back to the city (1979). Furthermore, Sumka discusses the benefit of this redevelopment as achieving an improved housing stock, increased tax base, attracting business, and improving service and infrastructure quality (1979). In order to understand the movement, one must be aware of who is the driving force behind it. In line with Gale's description of the main proponents of revitalization, Sumka describes "the parents of revitalization ... [as] the children of the postwar baby boom" (1979, p. 150), noting that they entered the housing market when construction was low and suburban prices were high.

High-density, high-rise living is not for everyone, but for some people it works. Mackintosh (1982) found two groups who preferred it because it can be a very satisfying option with no drawback to family dynamic: households (typically middle income) with both partners employed, and those who grew up in high-rise buildings.

The residents who are attracted to downtown living tend to share certain similarities. One of these traits is a concern with issues of maintenance and amenities. In

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a comparative study of condominium owners in the City of Toronto, Preston, Murdie, and Northrup (1993) found that owners of condominiums who were the primary occupants placed great importance upon lifestyle considerations when choosing the condominium form of homeownership, especially in relation to reduced maintenance requirements. Additionally, convenient access to employment, amenities and facilities were cited as prominent decision factors. This is further supported by the results of the *Living Downtown Survey* conducted by the Toronto City Planning Department in 2006, which note the top reasons for choosing to live downtown as "Proximity to work/school, public transit, entertainment, shopping and others aspects of an 'urban lifestyle'" (City of Toronto, 2007a, p. 9).

Regardless of lifestyle concerns, some researchers have identified certain issues that must be dealt with before downtown will become the thriving residential neighbourhood that others claim it to be. Downs (1997) outlines four major obstacles that need to be dealt with before the reversing of past middle class outflows can take place in declining American cities: "high rates of crime and insecurity, poor-quality public schools, white resistance to living in racially mixed neighbourhoods, and ineffective public bureaucracies" (p. 389). When Downs speaks of crime rates he is largely referring to fear of crime being the biggest obstacle to attract middle class residents back to the city (1997); fear linked to "middle-class antipathy to big-city public schools" (1997, p. 390). This relates to the second obstacle, and one mentioned in research by Gale (1979) and Varady (1990): the state of inner-city public schools. According to Downs, the quality of education in inner-city schools is much lower than suburban schools, a claim that is backed up by "higher dropout rates, lower test scores,

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lower college placement rates, and greater social disorders" (1997, p. 391). Improving

the quality of education in downtown is vital to attracting residents back to the area. The

third obstacle essentially pertains to the idea that white middle class households should

not hold prejudice to moving into areas characterized by mixed races (Downs, 1997).

The remaining obstacle, dealing with ineffective public bureaucracies, is the most likely

to be improved because progress can most easily be attained due to the nature of the

problem (Downs, 1997). Such things as renewed leadership and pressure from private

interests groups can have an impact on city bureaucracies, and progress can be made

(Downs, 1997). Downs notes that these challenges cannot easily be reversed, and the

prospect of attracting middle class households to settle downtown in order to rejuvenate

the city is not bright (1997).

Contrary to Downs, Moss (1997) identifies that the "'back to the city'

[movement] is fundamentally a resettlement in and a renewal of older neighbourhoods

mainly by middle class people who are presently residents in the city in other

neighbourhoods as renters" (p. 472). Moss (1997) focuses primarily on changes in

typical household structure: the traditional 1960s nuclear family of the working father,

domestic wife and two kids is lost in the 1990s. Changes in family structure, such as

fewer or no children, dual income earners, lone parent, and single-sex families are more

common today, and according to Moss, these "unconventional cultural groups" (1997, p.

477) have found a mecca in living downtown. In particular, Moss focuses on the gay and

lesbian experience in the city. Shifting demographic patterns and lifestyles provide new

opportunities for cities in their revitalization efforts. In such, cities must become

attractive as places to live and work, not just to visit, if they are to have a viable future

(Moss, 1997). Accommodating the increasingly diverse "unconventional cultural groups", according to Moss, "may well turn out to be a locational advantage that few suburban and rural settings can match" (1997, p. 486). Essentially, Moss refers to the idea that conditions of economic development are created by the "social milieu" of the city (1997, p. 486). This notion is echoed in Richard Florida's concepts of the *creative class* and the *bohemian index* founded on the idea that creative economy talent fosters economic development and prosperity in cities that offer a culturally diverse, open, and tolerant environment (see Florida 2002, 2005, 2008).

In 1998, the Brookings Institution Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy and the Fannie Mae Foundation released the preliminary results of the Rouse Forum survey *A Rise in Downtown Living*. Overall, the results showed that many American downtowns are experiencing a population boom or resurgence, even those that had been losing population in the latter half of the 20th Century (Brookings Institution, 1998). The report also outlines some of the benefits of this downtown growth. In particular, a high residential population within downtown would ease traffic congestion through eliminating the need to commute, promote the 24 hour a day life of the city, with entertainment, stores and restaurants contributing to an active night life, and a better downtown for everyone who works, lives, and visits the area because of the demand and provision of higher quality and more diverse services and stores (Brookings Institution, 1998). Although only a preliminary report, it provides evidence that downtown growth at the end of the millennium was holding strong in many North American cities.

In order for downtown to provide a competitive market for residential development there are two conditions that must be met: "a safe, quality environment and

investor confidence" (Moulton, 1999, p. 11). There are also ten steps to a living

downtown that should be acknowledged by all cities as they grow in the future:

1. Housing must be downtown's political and business priority
2. Downtown must be legible
3. Downtown must be accessible
4. Downtown must have new and improved regional amenities
5. Downtown must be clean and safe
6. Downtown must preserve and reuse old buildings
7. Downtown regulations must be streamlined and support residential growth
8. City resources should be devoted to housing
9. The edge of downtown should be surrounded by viable neighbourhoods
10. Downtown is never "done"
(Moulton, 1999, pp. 12-19)

All of these steps provide an essential basis for consideration when planning cities.

Furthermore, in 2001, Sohmer and Lang published a census note entitled

Downtown Rebound based on a study of twenty-four cities in the United States following

the 2000 Census. Although it was noted that the trend of living downtown has taken off

slowly[3], it is a good indicator of future growth (Sohmer & Lang, 2001). By strengthening

the downtown through residential repopulation, the potential for neighbourhoods

surrounding it will strengthen as well (Sohmer & Lang, 2001). This is evident from the

results of the study. Between 1990 and 2000, 75% of the twenty-four cities saw an

increased density in their downtowns (Sohmer & Lang, 2001). In order to explain this

"downtown rebound", Sohmer and Lang identify a number of factors. Primarily, there is

one cohort that has a significant impact on the growth in downtown: the baby boomer

generation (Sohmer & Lang, 2001). Empty nesters free of their now adult children are

downsizing and taking advantage of the leisure and cultural amenities that go hand-in-

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[3] In the Canadian context this growth has occurred more quickly than in the United States (England & Mercer, 2006)

hand with a downtown condominium (Sohmer & Lang, 2001). Additionally, there is

another cohort that is comprised of young professionals, mostly in their 20s and 30s, who

have yet to have children and desire the advantages and convenience of downtown living

(Sohmer & Lang, 2001). These two populations played a significant role in the

repopulation of downtown throughout the 1990s and continue to do so into the 21st

Century. Another key aspect of many downtowns that is identified as attractive to

residents is the historic character that offers a more fulfilling sense of place than

expanding and monotonous suburban developments (Sohmer & Lang, 2001).

Furthermore, downtown residents are in the market for "low-maintenance, urbane

housing convenient to work and amenities" (Sohmer & Lang, 2001, p. 9). The findings

of this study predict that downtown growth will continue into the 21st Century as a result

of the historical character and proximity to transportation, business, and other amenities

and facilities (Sohmer & Lang, 2001).

In a more in-depth investigation of downtown living in the United States, Birch

(2002) discusses six key findings from a more detailed examination of 2000 US census

data. One, there is no standard definition of downtown; it varies in time and place and is

constantly changing (Birch, 2002). Two, although some downtowns have seen a rise in

residential population, it is small compared to overall city population increases, and

varies significantly between cities (Birch, 2002). Three, recent achievement of higher

densities and population growth in downtowns is rooted in years of planning policy to

promote revitalization and housing investment to make them "competitive and attractive"

places to live (Birch, 2002). Four, downtown residents tend to be more affluent, educated

and racially homogeneous than the rest of the city population. Typically they are singles,

childless couples, empty nesters, or homosexuals, though there are some families with children. Increasingly, as couples move into later stages of the family life cycle, they are demanding schools, open spaces, and community facilities so they can remain living downtown with children (Birch, 2002). Five, there is an increase in private downtown groups such as business improvement districts working with cities to encourage housing development to create a 24 hour downtown (Birch, 2002). Six, downtown population growth is contributing to overall city growth in many places, and in some it is offsetting population losses in other areas of the city (Birch, 2002). These findings illustrate the complexity and constantly changing nature of downtown, which now includes downtown living (Birch, 2002).

Breen and Rigby (2004) consider the impact that intensification and city-oriented growth can have on curbing suburban sprawl by looking at eight "pioneering" cities. They suggest that *urbanity* – walkability, density, diversity, hipness, and public transit – is the main contributor to a city's success in attracting residents. In terms of the success of attracting families to city life, Breen and Rigby (2004) note that they were surprised at how many young families were living in their sample cities and that schools are a key element to this phenomenon. They go on to suggest: "Without these families, neighborhoods can indeed flourish, but they lose something by not having young children about" (Breen & Rigby, 2004, p. 229). In Hinshaw (2007) the idea of *true urbanism* is explored. Cities that exhibit true urbanism are dense, diverse, energetic, and sociable, and bode well for the future of cities (Hinshaw, 2007). Motoro Rich suggests that the move toward building more condominium units than single-detached homes is the start of a *new* American dream: "a two-bedroom condominium with a gym in the basement and a

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skyline view from the living room" (in Hinshaw, 2007, p. 8). Hinshaw (2007) also

suggests that immigrants may be willing to forego the American dream and live

downtown.

It is important to note that there are differences between cities in Canada and the

United States. According to England and Mercer (2006), "Canadian cities are

characterized as having more vital central cities and as being more compact and less

dispersed than their US counterparts" (p. 25). This is founded on a Canadian tradition of

public-oriented investment to better serve the collective citizenry, and elicit a high quality

of public services, such as public transit systems, schools, community centres, and parks

– achieved through stronger planning systems and less fragmented local governments

(England & Mercer, 2006). As a result, in Canada, social infrastructure is strong, the

climate for urban planning and design is much less polarized and politicized, and public

welfare is paramount (Punter, 2003). Punter (2003) suggests Canadian cities differ from

many US cities in that they have:

> a much more even distribution of affluence, better social
> and community services, and a better public school system
> ... have not been driven by racial tension and ghettoization,
> not least because urban ethnicity is more diverse, social
> minorities are smaller and more affluent, and there is less
> crime, especially of the violent sort. (p. xxii)

Furthermore, urban renewal and the growth of the suburbs did not occur in

Canadian cities with the ferocity that it did in American cities. In Canada, following the

Second World War, large-scale immigration helped balance the population loss to the

suburbs (Filion & Bunting, 2006). Gentrification of neighbourhoods surrounding the

downtown core happened more naturally in Canada, in a far less prescribed manner than

in American cities. High-density, inner-city housing, largely in the form of high-rise

condominiums, has kept the cores of large Canadian cities populated (England & Mercer, 2006). Households living in central cities, in both Canada and the US, tend to be more diverse than in the suburbs, but in Canada this diversity often includes families with children (England & Mercer, 2006). This is partially due to a more diverse set of housing stock in Canadian cities, with fewer single-detached homes built – in part because of smaller highway networks and more prominent public transportation systems, which have helped keep cities more compact (England & Mercer, 2006). As many Canadian and American cities try to curb further suburban sprawl and promote higher-density development, it remains to be seen if Canadian and US cities will differ even more in the future or become more similar and support ideas of the "North American City" (England & Mercer, 2006).

2.3.2   Urban Intensification

The population growth in downtown areas is largely a result of planning and development efforts. In recent years, environmental protection and sustainable growth have been key concepts in planning policy. In order to curb urban sprawl and eliminate development on greenfield land, cities are looking to intensification and brownfield redevelopment to encourage sustainable, compact cities (Jenks et al., 2000; Heath, 2001; Howley, Scott, & Redmond 2009). With the onus on cities to encourage compact, sustainable development, ways to achieve such growth and methods of implementation are needed.

Urban intensification, through "intensification of built form, such as the development of undeveloped land and the redevelopment of existing structures in cities,

as well as an intensification of population activity" (Bunce, 2004, p. 178), is a planning

tool that can be used to mitigate transportation stresses arising from commercial

development (Nowlan & Stewart, 1991). According to Nowlan and Stewart (1991),

residential intensification in downtown Toronto "should be regarded as a major policy

tool bearing on commercial development and transportation planning" (p. 165),

particularly in terms of how commercial growth can be accommodated without incurring

all of the environmental costs linked to the necessary transportation needs like

commuting facilities and road networks.

　　　Heath (2001), in studying the public's attitudes and preferences toward city centre

living in the United Kingdom, outlines three pertinent issues facing planning today: "how

to accommodate substantial growth in the number of households, how to revitalize cities,

and how to create more sustainable urban areas" (p.464). One suggestion for solving

these problems and creating a *living city* – a solution that might "kill three birds with one

stone" (Urban and Economic Development Group (URBED), 1998, p. 15) – is to

encourage people to move back to the centre of the city, where intensification and

redevelopment can contribute to urban revitalization and more sustainable city growth

because living in close proximity to local amenities, public transit, and employment

centres will eliminate the need for a car-dependant, commuter lifestyle, completely

decentralized from the urban core (Heath, 2001). Although urban sprawl and suburban

living have been the norm in many cities for decades, there is evidence of a growing

trend in the return to the city and an increased awareness of the need to encourage

residents back to the city (Moss, 1997; Moulton, 2000; Sohmer & Lang, 2000; Birch,

2002). Additionally, although housing norms typically revolve around attaining a single-

family home, usually in a suburban locale, Heath (2001) argues, along with others, (see Smith, 1996; Montgomery, 2006; Hinshaw, 2007; Florida, 2010) that younger generations are trading in their parent's dream of a suburban life for an urban one, a phenomenon that is fuelled by lifestyle and life cycle changes, such as fewer or delayed marriages, changes in family size and structure, and modernized gender roles.

Heath's study offers encouragement to those cities seeking to attract residents, though not necessarily families. Of those surveyed, singles in the eighteen to twenty-five age category and single divorcees of all ages were most likely to consider city centre living, preferably in apartments, and preferably in two or three bedroom units; only 10% expressed a desire for a one bedroom, while 81% prefer two or three bedrooms (Heath, 2001). On the other hand, married couples were less likely to consider city centre living, citing it as inappropriate for raising a family and lacking in space. However, contrary to other studies (see Gale, 1979; McAuley & Nutty, 1982; Varady, 1990; Downs, 1997), the inherent quality of education facilities was found to be only a minor deterrent (Heath, 2001). Heath also notes that the family's stage in the life cycle and lifestyle play a role in residential location preferences; the presence of children is related to very low willingness to consider living in the central city (2001).

Marketing schemes to promote downtown living typically focus on "convenience, lifestyle, and environmental amenities", as the stronghold for private sector advertising (Peirce, 2001, p. 966). Peirce finds that in looking at the British Government's *Urban Renaissance Vision*[4] that the sceptical suburbanites will be hard to convince and that policy is needed to distinguish whether urban renaissance is about urban vitality –

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[4] Britain's Urban Renaissance Vision is founded on the principles of urban revitalization through high-density development on existing urban lands, such as brownfields, in order to contain sprawl. It is similar to the North American vision of Compact Cities and Urban Intensification (Peirce, 2001).

promoting urban living and the lifestyle – or environmental concerns – reducing the need to develop greenfields. Downtown development needs to determine which aspect to focus on to convince residents to succumb to advertising and move downtown. Lang, Hughes, and Danielsen (1997) suggest targeting "suburban urbanites": suburban dwellers who already demonstrate an attraction to the city.

Environmental concerns are discussed by Howley, Scott, and Redmond (2009), with particular attention on how adhering to the principles of the *Compact City Model* can conserve greenfields, reduce car dependence, support alternative modes of transport, utilize existing infrastructure more efficiently, and aid in revitalizing city centres. Urban intensification is a positive trend as young, affluent, and single people are attracted to the convenient lifestyle that goes hand-in-hand with central city, high-density living (Howley et al., 2009). Consequently, as this segment of the population still desires a house in the low density suburbs when it comes time to start a family,

> The challenge remains to convince residents that relatively high-density urban areas can be an attractive destination throughout all stages of their life-cycle. (Howley et al., 2009, p. 5)

In an extension of this study, Howley (2009) used a logistic regression model to further understand respondent's intentions to locate to lower density areas. The most significant finding is that of *family life cycle*. Younger respondents living in high-density dwellings are more likely to move within five years than any other age group because of their position in the family life cycle. Howley suggests that urban planners and designers need to create residential areas that accommodate all stages of the family life cycle and provide a high level of stability and quality of life for residents of all ages (2009). This is

the idea behind a *complete community*[5]: one where people of all ages and at all stages of the family life cycle can live, work and play in a familiar neighbourhood. In doing so, cities can move ahead in a more sustainable manner that can alleviate social, economic and environmental pressures. The idea of the family life cycle will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

2.4   The Family Life Cycle

This section of the literature review will address the concept of the *Family Life Cycle Model* and how it relates to housing requirements.

2.4.1   The Family Life Cycle Model

The *family life cycle* is often cited in early housing choice and residential location literature as a concept for modelling residential mobility. The relationship between households and their housing values changes with age and family size. Typically, young couples prefer small dwellings in high-density areas close to the heart of the city; however, as they marry and have children, preferences change to larger dwellings in low density, suburban areas (Rossi, 1955; Doling, 1976; Birch, 2002; Heath, 2001).

The two most common frameworks for the family life cycle, according to McLeod and Ellis (1982), are those of Wells and Gubar (1966), where stages are defined in terms of the youngest child, and Duvall (1971), where stages are defined by the oldest child. Most studies use Duvall's stages defined by the oldest child as it provides the basis for school requirements; however, there is a marked inconsistency in the defining variable for each stage.

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[5] Referred to as *balanced community* in the United Kingdom.

The stages of Duvall's family life cycle are outlined in Table 2.1. These stages

are based on the age and school placement of the oldest child in the family. If a family

consists of more than one child, it simply "repeats" a given stage with the younger child

(Duvall, 1971). Because each stage has no fixed beginning or end, and is cyclical in

nature, families move through the cycle on their own time; when they marry, when they

choose to have children, and how much time between births are all factors that come into

play and individualize the flow of the cycle for each family (Duvall, 1971). Although

Duvall discusses issues inherent to defining the number of stages in a family life cycle –

be it that a two stage model is too rigid; a twenty-four stage model is too complex; or that

an eight stage model neglects the effect of having more than one child – the family life

cycle "is a productive way of studying the complexities of contemporary American

families" (Duvall, 1971, p. 129). Duvall even notes that the family life cycle provides a

"superior" explanation of family behaviour (1971).

Table 2.1 Duvall's Family Life Cycle Model

Stage in Life Cycle	Description
1	Married couples without children
2	Childbearing families (oldest child birth to 30 months)
3	Families with preschool children (oldest child 2 ½ to 6 years)
4	Families with school children (oldest child 6 to 13 years)
5	Families with teenagers (oldest child 13 to 20 years)
6	Families as launching centres (first child gone to last child's leaving home)
7	Middle-aged parents (empty nest to retirement)
8	Aging family members (retirement to death of both spouses)

Note: adapted from Duvall (1971)

The family life cycle models of Wells and Gubar (1966) and Duvall (1971) are

based on the traditional family and neglect the increasingly prominent non-traditional

household (Schaninger & Danko, 1993). Consumer behaviour theorists have incorporated non-traditional or non-family households into the life cycle framework, including Murphy and Staples (1979) and Gilly and Enis (1982) (see Schaninger & Danko, 1993 for evaluations). However, with a growing number of non-traditional families, such as lone-parent and blended families, childless, divorced and remarried couples, as well as delayed marriage and child-bearing, the family life cycle models are seemingly outdated, especially in regard to housing consumption at each stage and by each category of household.

The significance of the family life cycle as it applies to this research is in the housing demanded by families at each stage of the cycle. Different family types and sizes will demand different types and sizes of housing. Housing demands also reflect wider societal changes, in terms of housing norms (Chilman, 1978). As such, cities must be planned in order to accommodate such demands within residential communities.

The family life cycle as it applies to housing requirements is illustrated in Table 2.2 as a six stage model, largely based on the presence or absence of children, and therefore compresses Duvall's eight stages into six. The cycle occurs when a person leaves his or her parent's home, stage one; subsequent stages occur as a person couples and has a child/ children, resulting in a growth in family size and space requirements (Short, 1984). As family size and space requirements change, families relocate in order to obtain housing that meets their space requirements (Short, 1984). This concept is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Table 2.2 Traditional Family Life Cycle Housing Requirements

Stage in Life Cycle	Housing needs/ aspirations
1 pre-child stage	Relatively cheap, central city apartment
2 child-bearing	Renting or single-family dwelling close to apartment zone
3 child-rearing	Ownership of relatively new suburban home
4 child-launching	Same area as (3) or perhaps move to higher-status area
5 post-child	Marked by residential stability
6 later life	Institution/ apartment/ live with children

Note: from Short (1984)

2.4.2   The Family Life Cycle and Housing

Most of the literature on the family life cycle and mobility dates back to the mid

to late 20th Century. The seminal study on family moving behaviours and preferences is

Rossi's 1955 study *Why Families Move*. Further evidence of the family life cycle in

mobility and housing preference research is found in studies such as Chevan (1971),

Doling (1976), Michelson (1977), McLeod and Ellis (1982), McAuley and Nutty (1982)

and Lodl, Gabb and Combs (1990). These studies will be reviewed below.

Rossi (1955) studied residential mobility in Pennsylvanian families to determine

why families move, and therefore how planning can achieve residential stability as

mobility is an extremely important factor of urban change. Family life cycle is a major

determinant of whether a household is residentially stable or mobile; particularly with

relation to space requirements of families at different stages in the life cycle (Rossi,

1955). As households move through the stages of the family life cycle, space

requirements change: "the larger the housing unit, the more it is able to accommodate the

changing needs of the family" (Rossi, 1955, p. 227). Small apartments[6] are the typical

form of housing occupied by the most mobile populations, generally in areas that do not

contain the amenities or facilities to accommodate family living (Rossi, 1955). Large

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[6] Generally rental at the time of Rossi's study.

homes in the suburbs are typical of families "in the most stable of their life cycle stages" (Rossi, 1955, p. 228). This represents the fundamental idea of the family life cycle as it applies to housing: families strive for the suburban dream. One of the most imperative findings of Rossi's study and one that is quoted in much of the subsequent literature follows:

> *The findings of this study indicate the major function of mobility to be the process by which families adjust their housing to the housing needs that are generated by the shifts in family composition that accompany life cycle changes* [emphasis in original]. (Rossi, 1955, p. 61)

Therefore, as families adjust their changing housing needs, they may be required to move. Whether they can fulfill their changing needs within their familiar neighbourhood is determinant upon the ability of that community to accommodate different stages in the life cycle within the housing options and amenities provided – as a *complete community* would.

Chevan (1971), with a study of the relationship between moving and family life cycle in the Philadelphia-Trenton area in 1960, finds, "The family life cycle effect on moving stemming from the birth and growth of children is clearly evident" (p. 455). As families progress through the life cycle, there are changes in the space requirements which trigger moves. Findings indicate that it is often the first child born that impacts the need for more space and hence the move to a larger dwelling (Chevan, 1971).

Housing needs are also equated with cultural norms for housing; thereby, housing needs "derive from cultural standards against which actual housing conditions are judged" (Morris & Winter, 1975, p. 82). The vast majority of literature suggests that the single-family house is the most preferred type; a family residing in anything but would be

going against the cultural norm for housing. However, there is a growing body of literature that suggests some cohorts may defy this norm and opt for others types of housing (see Section 2.3.1).

Other studies on the family life cycle, like that of Doling (1976), equate wealth with mobility in the family life cycle, stating that growing space requirements due to changes in family composition tend to coincide with an increase in income, making the move from a small dwelling in a high-density area to a larger dwelling in a lower density neighbourhood more financially obtainable. Doling also notes that at later stages in the family life cycle, couples do not typically downsize; rather, they stay in the same home they purchased when they were an expanding family (1976).

Michelson's 1977 study of Toronto families' moving patterns and housing decisions found life cycle stage to be an important factor in residential mobility and location decisions. In general, the findings indicate that while the eventual housing goal of most is a single-family house, those in the pre-child stages opt for downtown apartments; families with one or two young children sometimes opt for suburban apartments; and families with two or more children opt for suburban houses – as family size increases, adjustments are made for space requirements. Although the move from downtown to suburbia is not always a given when children are introduced, the findings echo other researchers that suburbia is synonymous with familism and downtown with careerism (Michelson, 1977).

The family life cycle and mobility is not limited to the North American context. A study conducted by McLeod and Ellis (1982) in Perth, Australia, found the family life cycle to be important in analysing housing consumption decisions, but not location

decisions. The two most significant stages in terms of changes in housing consumption are coupling and children entering school. Unlike Doling (1976), McLeod and Ellis find "clear evidence of a reduction in household consumption in the final stage once child rearing is completed" (1982, p. 185; McLeod & Ellis, 1983). In an extension of this study, McLeod and Ellis (1983) look at alternatives to the family life cycle in analysing housing consumption. Looking at two family life cycle typologies, Wells and Gubar (1966) and Duvall (1971), McLeod and Ellis (1983) determine both to be useful in explaining patterns of housing consumption, especially in relation to per capita consumption; however, neither is better than the other and neither is superior to the approach of "including age of household head, marital status, and family size to account for family life cycle effects" (p. 705).

The relationship between family life cycle and residential decision making is explored by McAuley and Nutty (1982). By using age, presence and age of children, and marital status as indicators of a six staged family life cycle, McAuley and Nutty investigate ten dimensions of residential preferences of Pennsylvania residents in a 1974 state-wide survey. The results indicate that couples in stages three and four – those with children – place greater emphasis on factors relating to child-rearing and institutional supports, with quality of schools ranked in the top three variables of importance.

Skaburskis (1988)[7] observes two submarkets in the Canadian condominium market: young households and older households with "peaks in the 30 to 40 and the

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[7]At the time this study was undertaken, condominiums were much larger on average than they are today. Skarburskis' (1988) survey of nine Canadian cities revealed "two out of three condominiums have three or more bedrooms and dens, and more than half of the high-rise condominiums have at least three bedrooms" (p.114). This is significantly different from the scenario today; in Toronto only 6% of units built in the downtown since 2001 have three or more bedrooms (City of Toronto, 2007a).

preretirement age categories" (Skaburskis, 1988, p. 115). Skaburskis' correlation

analysis suggests that this age variable is:

> The single most important characteristic that helps identify
> submarkets and starts to develop a view of the role
> condominiums play in helping people adjust their housing
> and location with life cycle induced changes in housing
> needs. (1988, p. 115)

A centrally located condominium, for example, would allow the trade-off between space

requirements and locational advantage (Skaburskis, 1988). Condominiums will change

the "spatial structure" of cities and improve the efficiency of urban land use (Skaburskis,

1988). This is repeated by Kern (2007):

> condominiums are expected to fulfill expanding housing
> needs, curb suburban sprawl, lift the spaces of
> deindustrialization to their highest and best use, respond to
> a cultural shift in favor of urban living, and stimulate the
> economy by providing sites for capital investment. (p. 659)

Many factors affect the family life cycle as it applies to housing demand. Miron

(1988) indicates that a compression of the child-rearing stage is caused by later

marriages, fewer children, and children leaving the family home sooner than before. This

means "that child-rearing considerations [have become] less important in housing

demand" (Miron, 1988, p. 7). As the traditional family becomes more of an exception

than the norm, housing considerations and requirements will evolve along with the

defining elements of the family life cycle.

Lodl, Gabb and Combs (1990) look deeper into the relationship between family

life cycle and housing preference by surveying residents in Nebraska to evaluate the

importance of specific housing features, hypothesizing that the importance of each would

differ based on family life cycle stage. While low maintenance, environmental quality[8], and attractive interior are important across all stages, there are some features that are more important at different stages. For example, those in child-rearing stages place more importance on "space for children's play", while those in early stages of coupling and marriage (pre-child rearing) place more importance on "space for entertaining small groups" (Lodl et al., 1990). These findings support earlier research on changing space requirements forcing residential moves in connection with staging of the family life cycle (see Rossi, 1955; Chevan, 1971; Doling, 1976).

Looking at city-to-suburb and suburb-to-city movers, Sanchez and Dawkins (2001) determine that life cycle is a factor in moving, but that these two groups of movers share significant similarities. They suggest that the success of urban revitalization is the key to attracting diverse residents to the city (Sanchez & Dawkins, 2001). Ensuring that intensification efforts in central city areas accommodate a diverse population and avoid the creation of a monoculture of young singles and retired couples lies in the success of planning and development efforts.

The family life cycle model indicates that families will make the necessary moves to satisfy housing needs. It is common in many cities for this to mean moving from a centrally located apartment, condominium, or small house to a larger, less centrally located space. This is due in part to the lack of appropriate spaces and amenities within the central neighbourhoods to accommodate all ages and all stages of the family life cycle. If cities are in fact creating livable, vibrant, complete communities within central residential areas, the need to move farther afield may not be necessary – this is the central premise of this thesis and will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

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[8] This refers to energy efficient construction and consistency of interior temperatures (Lodl et al., 1990).

2.5   Children in the City

Children are often seen as outsiders in city planning although they are significant to the urban makeup (Spencer & Woolley, 2000). Their position in the city is often ignored in policy discussion as cities are planned for the adult experience, making them feel "out of place" in public spaces (Malone, 1999; Gleeson et al., 2006); however, there is a growing body of research encouraging the building of cities with children in mind (see Michelson, Levine & Michelson, 1979; Michelson, Levine & Spina, 1979; Fowler, 1992; Christensen & O'Brien, 2003b; Gleeson & Sipe, 2006). The literature on children in the city is not vast, especially in the North American setting, and especially not in the Canadian context; however, the studies pertinent to this research are reviewed in this section to establish a basis for the body of knowledge. They are divided into two parts: Children in the *central city* and children in *high-rise.*

2.5.1   Children in the Central City

Children are rarely considered in the planning of cities, especially when it comes to inner city and downtown areas. However, as many large cities begin to emphasize intensification and high-density development in place of sprawling, low-density growth, children will inevitably have a more prominent presence in central cities as families opt for the urban life. The experience of families living downtown with children has not been widely examined in the academic realm, but there are a few contributing studies.

Caulfield (1992), in a study of gentrification in downtown Toronto, observed that the culture of everyday life was the driving force behind downtown living. In interviews with middle-class residents of downtown Toronto neighbourhoods, four perceptions of

the quality of life of inner-city living were consistently addressed: a sense of community; demographic diversity; non-traditional political and cultural attitudes viewing downtown as a more congenial and tolerant setting; and the spatial and architectural features (Caulfield, 1992). Of the sample of residents interviewed, parents were consistent in naming two key advantages to downtown living: the benefit for their children of being exposed to demographic diversity, and the convenience of the "inner-city spatial field" on the "spatial triangle of child rearing" – home, work, and essential services (Caulfield, 1992, p. 83). As well, they responded that *familism* was not compromised by inner-city living; in fact it could be strengthen by spending more time as a family than commuting to and fro. Although most participants were against "high density, modernist housing" (Caulfield, 1992, p. 81), they were drawn to living downtown for the perceived benefits the lifestyle affords.

Lia Karsten has conducted a large amount of research on family life and children in cities, particularly in the Netherlands (see Karsten, 2003, 2007, 2009). Her work is integral to this area of academia and has provided a pivotal framework of study for other regions of the world. Karsten suggests that housing preference goes beyond economic and demographic considerations: housing preference is rooted in "daily activity patterns, social networks and identity construction" (2007, p. 95). In a 2003 study of gentrification in Amsterdam, Karsten finds the "urban way of life" has been typical of *yuppies: young urban professionals*, and more recently typical of *yupps: young urban professional parents*. This growing segment of the urban population is characterized by those (largely middle-class families) who negate the typical family life cycle stage of moving to the suburbs to raise a family and choose to integrate *familism* and *careerism* in an urban way

(Karsten, 2003). Changing gender roles have played a part for these families: combining work and child care is less onerous when commuting is reduced by the proximity of work, home, and external facilities; a value stressed predominantly by working women (Karsten, 2003, 2007). The success of urban living depends on issues that need to be addressed by urban policy: "The lack of childcare, safe places to play, traffic safety and children's clubs are all issues that need to be worked on" (Karsten, 2003, p. 2583). The easier it is for families to live in central urban areas, the less those families will have to be constantly defending their lifestyle choice: that they are "real city people" and really do prefer to raise their children in the city (Karsten, 2007).

Karsten (2009) furthers the discussion of families in cities by scrutinizing three common urban discourses – the attractive city, the creative city, and the emancipatory city – and proposing an alternative discourse – *the balanced city* – in order to include the daily experience of families in cities. The findings of the analysis are presented in Table 2.3. Karsten suggests that families need to be considered because they make up a large segment of the population and are increasingly choosing to live in cities (2009). In all three of the common urban discourses, families are often neglected, even if the dominant population consist of parents or soon-to-be parents. For example, the creative city is driven by well-educated, middle-class workers of the creative class who demand leisure amenities to supplement their working lives; children are not considered to be participants in this city, despite that "a considerable part of the creative class has (or will have) children at some point" (Karsten, 2009, p. 320). Based on the findings from interviews with middle-class families in Rotterdam, Karsten (2009) proposes *the*

balanced city as a tool to guide planning practice toward accommodating families in

cities and adding age to the definition of diversity that so many cities strive for.

Table 2.3 Karsten's Urban Discourse Analysis

Urban Discourse	Description
The attractive city	• A place based on tourism, culture, shopping, and entertainment • Little awareness of families as residents
The creative city	• A place based on production, primarily by the creative class, and urban lifestyle • Members of the creative class who are parents are overlooked as children are not considered in the creative city
The emancipatory city	• A place where people work to rise in social status, making progress in life, but not life course • Families are neglected because it is seen as a temporary space, emphasized by a housing stock composed of small, compact units
The balanced city	• A place where different categories of households, different domains of life, and different geographical scales are integrated • A place that values reproduction tasks, children's culture, and family housing on top of production, consumption, and leisure • Families are accommodated but not made the focus of the city

Note: adapted from Karsten (2009)

Churchman (2003) focuses on children in the city "because their needs are the

least considered by planning and design in cities" (p. 99). Different cultures have

different views on children in cities and:

> Whether they are welcomed, tolerated or unwelcome in
> public space, and ... whether the independence of children
> is a goal, a necessity, or something to be discouraged.
> (Churchman, 2003, p. 100)

Often cities are not planned in a way that allows them to be easily used by children, or

even by families (Churchman, 2003). Churchman outlines positive and negative aspects

of cities which create opportunities or limitations for children based on a study of

families in different Israeli cities; these are listed in Table 2.4. Churchman argues that these problems need to be addressed in city planning so that children can "function relatively on their own and take advantage of what the city has to offer" (2003, p. 104).

Table 2.4 Positive and Negative Aspects of the City for Children

Positive Aspect	Advantage
Public and private services	• Greater in number, variety and quality of services • eg: cultural, commercial, recreational, health, educational, psychological support, religious and municipal services
Basic services	• Provided at a higher level in cities than rural areas • eg: water, electricity, sewage and communications
Compact built environment	• Shorter distances between parts of the city and within neighbourhoods allow for travel by walking or cycling
Public transportation	• Likely available, accessible, comfortable, frequent and affordable
Heterogeneous population	• Opportunities for meeting different kinds of people
Variety of stimuli	• Greater in cities than elsewhere • Provide better opportunities for personal development • eg: sensory, cognitive, social and emotional

Negative Aspect	Disadvantage
Danger of violence	• Adults, other children and traffic pose threats of danger
Lack of open spaces and parks	• Fewer places to play in and experience
Noise	• Noise likely higher in certain areas and can cause distraction
Variety of stimuli	• May be too much stimuli for young children to cope with
Air pollution	• High levels of pollution in cities pose as health treats to children

Note: adapted from Churchman (2003)

Living in dense, walkable neighbourhoods offers opportunities for such initiatives as a *walking school bus*, where children walk to and from school with adult "drivers" along a set route with designated stops for children to "embark or disembark" (Kearns & Collins, 2006, p. 106). In Auckland, New Zealand, walking school bus programmes are

increasingly prevalent as the city undergoes major urban intensification: walking school

buses are operated in 17% of all primary schools in the Auckland region (Kearns &

Collins, 2006). They are also catching on in Canadian cities and in Britain (Kearns et al.,

2003), where some programmes are sponsored by Kia, a major automobile manufacturer

(Kia, 2010).[9] The perceived benefits of such a programme include exercise for children,

alleviate traffic congestion, reduce stranger danger, injury prevention, save parents time,

safety from bullying, and safety from dogs (Kearns & Collins, 2006). Additionally, they

promote healthy activity and create a greater sense of community for children and parents

living in dense neighbourhoods. From studying the programme in the Auckland context,

Kearns and Collins (2006) recommend lessons for other cities looking to promote

walking school bus programmes: monitoring and evaluating on a regular basis is crucial

for success; providing incentives can encourage children to participate; and

neighbourhood improvements may result from the increased demand for safe walking

routes.

Having adequate play space is also an issue in cities, but providing parks and

playground space should be a high priority for residential neighbourhoods because they

are "social assets of the community, providing a place where adults can meet while their

children play, and where senior citizens can observe this play and feel part of the wider

community" (Walsh, 2006, p. 137). Hinshaw (2007) suggests older cities like New York

and Chicago are examples of how quality can trump quantity when it comes to providing

child-friendly parks – they do not need to be huge if they are designed well. According

to Walsh (2006), "Children are part of the 'residential package'" (p. 142) and need to be

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[9] For examples of this programme see www.transport.wa.gov.au/14915.asp (Australia);
www.walkingbus.org (Britain); www.saferoutestoschool.ca (Canada); and www.walkingschoolbus.org
(United States).

considered in design and planning of neighbourhoods so their needs can be met at all ages and stages of development.

Creating "child friendly cities" is not a new idea. In 1996, the Child Friendly Cities Initiative was started by UNICEF to provide a framework for promoting good governance of children's rights on the local level in accordance with the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child in order to "provide an alternative to how cities have been conceived and built by and for adults" (Riggio, 2002, p. 47). The framework is based on the guarantee to every child the right to:

- Influence decisions about their city
- Express their opinion on the city they want
- Participate in family, community and social life
- Receive basic services such as health care, education and shelter
- Drink safe water and have access to proper sanitation
- Be protected from exploitation, violence and abuse
- Walk safely in the streets on their own
- Meet friends and play
- Have green spaces for plants and animals
- Live in an unpolluted environment
- Participate in cultural and social events
- Be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability (UNICEF, 2004, p. 1).

This framework is not a regulatory model but a way of improving and realizing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in any given city (Riggio, 2002). In Canada, the most prominent example of a child friendly initiative is the Society for Children and Youth in British Columbia's Child and Youth Friendly Communities project on child friendly housing (see www.scyofbc.org). The project, focused on children in multi-family housing, addresses such issues as adequacy of facilities and amenities for families and accessibility to children and youth (Fronczek & Yates, 2003; UNICEF, 2004).

In 1997, Growing Up in Cities[10] interviewed over 100 youth in the Braybrook suburb of Melbourne, replicating an original 1972 study. Interviews and follow-up workshops revealed that many youth feel disconnected from the physical, natural and social environment they live in (Malone, 1999). Participants created a list of what it would take to feel engaged in their community (this list is presented in full in Malone, 1999, p. 21). Overall, what they want are safe places in the community where they are free to congregate and socialize in a "just and equitable manner", and to have a say in the planning process (Malone, 1999). Youth-friendly neighbourhoods are vital to making young people feel valued and part of their communities. "Too old for playgrounds, too young to be valued community members" (Malone, 1999, p. 22) and too often made to feel alienated and excluded from public spaces: communities must involve their youth in the planning process and address power relations to better the culture of community (Malone, 1999).

Christensen and O'Brien (2003b) compiled a body of work built on the idea of child friendly cities. The extent to which cities can become "generationally inclusive" depends on the ability of planning to perform with the need of all users in mind (Christensen & O'Brien, 2003a). Furthermore, Gleeson and Sipe (2006) examine a body of literature relating to children in the city and the forces that shape child friendly cities, especially the institutional and professional undertakings of urban change. This process requires sensitivity to children's perceptions of, and social and environmental needs in, the built environment (Gleeson et al., 2006). They conclude:

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[10] Growing Up in Cities is a participatory research and planning project focusing on youth between 10 and 15 years in Australia. It was originally created in the 1970s as part of a UNESCO project that was published in 1977 by Kevin Lynch. It is dedicated to involving youth in the planning of their communities to eliminate the resentment towards youth by the adults for whom communities are typically planned.

> The journey to the child friendly city must soon begin in earnest. The destination we seek is not an exclusive wonderland for children. Our destination is a diverse city that places children at its centre because it is committed to universal human values, including care, respect and tolerance. This is no vision of a theme park. It is a vision of human sustainability. (Gleeson et al., 2006, p. 157)

2.5.2   Children in High-Rise

Raising children in high-rise apartments is a contentious issue in the literature and is mainly divided into two camps: whether it is or is not appropriate. This area will be reviewed in this section.

The effect of living in high-rise housing is reviewed by Conway and Adams (1977) in the British setting[11]. It is determined that whether the advantages will outweigh the disadvantages is dependent on the characteristics of the resident population, varying by such distinctions as age, sex, income, stage in life cycle, and even personality; however, they state very clearly that "For some groups, [such as] ... families with small children, all the evidence shows without doubt that this is an unsuitable form of accommodation" (Conway & Adams, 1977, p. 612). This is a common conclusion in much of the related research. Generally, results indicate that behavioural and developmental disorders are more common in high-rise residences, largely due to the lack of unrestricted play, crowdedness, isolation, and fear (Gifford, 2007). However, Conway and Adams note that some of the apparent downsides of high-rise living can be mitigated by middle and upper income families, because they are able to compensate in such ways as taking children to state parks, vacation spots, or camps, and in providing cleaner and better maintained units (Oscar Newman, 1972, in Conway & Adams, 1977).

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[11] High-rise buildings at this time were typically rental tenure.

Yeung (1977) investigates four general myths about high-rise living, one of which is "high-rise living has adverse social and psychological effects". Evidence suggests that it is not necessarily the physical element of high-density living that is negative; negative social and cultural factors can play a significant role. For example, academic performance may not be affected by high-density living alone; if noise and lack of parental involvement are also at play, achievement may suffer, but not solely because of the physicality of high-density housing (Yeung, 1977).

Michelson and Roberts (1979) suggest that the urban environment plays a significant role in children's development, but cities tend to be inherently adult centred and often neglect the needs of children of various ages. Additionally, in looking at the child's experience in high-rise housing, Michelson and Roberts (1979) suggest that such housing can be restrictive to children because of generally small unit sizes confining play to small areas and dictating types of activities because of noise issues; elevators can pose problems for children; child-friendly amenities within buildings are typically lacking, leading to informal play in shared public areas; the scale of buildings can provide large groups of children which can provide numerous opportunities for play, but with less control by parents; and children may exhibit lower levels of fitness and development. However, Michelson and Roberts (1979) suggest that while these are real issues they are "not impossible to deal with" (p. 449) and "there does not ... appear to be a solid empirical basis for such blanket condemnation of high-rise buildings for children as has come from some quarters" (p. 450).

Van Vliet (1983) suggests that apartment living will become more common as family sizes are decreasing, more women are working, and environmental pressures lead

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to higher density development; the suburban house can be replaced with the urban abode

in close proximity to schools and employment, with quality services and better efficiency.

In reviewing the literature of children living in apartments, Van Vliet (1983) suggests that

the negative effects are supported by anecdotal evidence and personal experience, and

lack scientific rigor and operationalization.

Churchman and Ginsberg (1984), in a study of the experience of families living in

owner-occupied high-rise buildings in Israel, indicate that the image and experience of

high-rise housing consists of both advantages and disadvantages, and does not mirror the

image presented in the literature. The list of the advantages and disadvantages of high-

rise housing, based on two defining elements – height and large number of people – is

provided in Table 2.5. Churchman and Ginsberg find that the advantages relate to the

large number of people and the disadvantages relate to the height, concluding that "this

housing type can neither be condemned nor hailed unequivocally" (1984, p. 40).

Table 2.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of High-Rise Housing

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Height	• Fresh air, light, sun, view, and quiet	• Dependency on elevator • Restrictions on children's outdoor play • Fear of children falling out of windows
Large number of people	• Greater variety of people from which to make friends • Greater possibility for privacy and anonymity	• Noise • Feeling of crowdedness • Loneliness and difficulty making contact with people • Security issues • Lack of control of children's friends • Problems of coordination between residents

Note: adapted from Churchman & Ginsberg (1984)

Cooper Marcus and Sarkissian (1986) suggest that high-density clustered housing (preferably low rise) can benefit parents and children socially and economically, by providing more opportunities to socialize with peers of the same ages, as well as more accessible shared facilities and amenities, easier maintenance, and reduce energy and commuting costs. They provide a detailed set of site planning guidelines for low-rise, high-density clustered housing; what they cite to be an attractive alternative to single-family, detached housing and more reasonable than high-rise housing for families – especially as traditional, nuclear families are decreasingly common (Cooper Marcus & Sarkissian, 1986).

In 1994, the Metro Toronto Planning Department conducted a study, *Choosing the Higher Densities: Survey of Metro's Family Condo Owners*, as intensification was a major goal of the City. Metro Toronto determined then that condominiums would play a primary role in the City's housing future as intensification and a lack of developable land force densities upwards (Metro Toronto Planning Department, 1994). These higher density developments will need to house more than young, childless households and older, empty nesters; their success:

> may depend also on more middle-income families making the choice made by families in this survey, to live in a condo in Metro instead of the low-density suburban alternative. (Metro Toronto Planning Department, 1994, p. 26)

The findings of the 1994 Metro survey reveal that families who choose to live in condominiums generally do so as an interim step, often because a single-family home is financially unattainable as a first home buy, when children are young and few, and when transit accessibility is essential. A centrally located, transit-oriented condominium is an

acceptable choice for moderate-income first-time buyers. This idea echoes Diamond's (1976) determination that high-density apartment units have been considered "the most acceptable alternative" to single-family homes by municipalities.

In Melbourne, Australia, high-rise apartment living dates back to the 1960s when it was developed to house a large inner-city slum population. Perceptions of high-rise housing have since been tainted with the view that they are unhealthy ghettos for the "social and economic margins" of society and unhealthy for children and families (Costello, 2005). However, in recent years, growth in high-rise residential buildings has occurred in response to sprawl and the need for urban consolidation; they are now "celebrated as a symbol of affluent living" (Costello, 2005, p. 50). The return to high-rise living is still embedded with an "anti-child sentiment" and a "reluctance to plan with children in mind", ideas that are heavily dominant in the narratives and discourse of planners and developers in Melbourne, as demonstrated by Costello (2005).

Fincher (2004) interviewed high-rise housing developers in Melbourne, Australia, about how "gendered ideas of the life course" (p. 326) played a part in the development of their buildings in the late 1990s. Specifically, the narratives explored relate to the rising presence of middle class groups taking up high-rise living. The theme that is common amongst the narratives is the role of "lifestyle shifts" on the housing market (Fincher, 2004). Two groups dominate the urban housing market:

> empty nesters ... and young childless couples ... [for whom] the developers identify a rejection of suburban home-ownership in favour of inner city living in a high-rise apartment, where the latter is exciting, 'European' and less burdensome. (Fincher, 2004, p. 331)

Additionally, Fincher notes that *family* is not positively seen in the market, rather children are prohibited and relatives are a burden (2004). Moving to an urban high-rise is seen as a reward for those without children, where couples have escaped the burden of dependants, and can fool around in their playground in the sky (Fincher, 2004). Many of the developers interviewed maintain that families belong in the suburbs, consequently treating this view as a justification for not building family or child supportive infrastructure[12] in the city centre; amenities that are now in growing demand (Fincher, 2004).

In 2007, Fincher extended the analysis based on the initial narratives, emphasizing the contradictions among the developers' claims and reality. Many narratives consider empty nesters as a new "family-household type"; however, it is one based on the housing requirements of a family life cycle that has not changed in decades (Fincher, 2007). Diversity among households is only seen as those "with 'family' or without it" (Fincher, 2007, p. 647). These narratives are limited in scope because there was no political framework at the time to require them to be more encompassing and "there was no regulatory requirement that developers participate in planning for the development of community facilities" (Fincher, 2007, p. 648).

Mitrany (2005), in studying the experience of high-density living in Israel, identifies positive and negative aspects of high density, which population groups benefit from high density, and what effects it has on social interaction. A key finding of Mitrany's work is that women aged 31 to 40, many mothers of young children, found significant advantages to high-density living, including "accessibility of services located within walking distance of home", "variety of friends for their children", and "the

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[12] This includes such facilities as grocers, libraries, daycares, schools, community centres and playgrounds.

possibility of reaching an open space by walking" (2005, p. 136). Findings indicate that residents find high-density a negative in the actual housing forms but positive in the public spaces of the neighbourhood; there is an overall quality of life ascertained from the "well-designed public spaces that allow access to enough open space and services of good quality" (Mitrany, 2005, p. 138.)

Appold and Yuen (2007) investigate the suitability of high-rise flats for families with children in Singapore because, "whether rooted in evaluations based in life cycle or lifestyle, city high-rise housing has long been seen as inappropriate for such households" (in Appold & Yuen, 2007, p. 570). Appold and Yuen outline three challenges for families in high-rise flats relating to size of units, logistics, and competing use of time (2007); however, their findings indicate that despite challenges, families living in flats are able to overcome the challenges, fulfill family roles, and demonstrate a "functional 'fit' between apartment living and family life" (p. 585).

2.6   Gaps in the Research

This section will identify the limitations to and gaps in the research in order to substantiate the need for further research and provide a foundation for this thesis.

Recent research on downtown living shows a repopulation trend. However, some researchers have identified certain issues that must be dealt with before downtowns will become "thriving" residential neighbourhoods. Downtown living is not a new phenomenon; however, it is a concept that is mounting in importance as urban sprawl is forcing city boundaries outward. The City of Toronto Official Plan has for years provided direction for the intensification of the downtown area. The growth plan set out

by the Province of Ontario for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is an example of more recent policy that is placing a greater emphasis on downtown living, as infill and intensification in cities like Toronto is encouraged and required. However, little research into areas such as the impacts such growth boundaries have on the characteristics of downtown resident demographics have been conducted. The gaps in research pertaining to current condominium development, and especially in the family orientation of it – or even the family experience in it – are large. Chilman notes that "the impact of housing and neighborhoods on children, adolescents and youth and their levels of satisfaction or relationships within the family ... is a badly neglected area of study" (1978, p. 109).

Additionally, many of the studies completed on the effects of high-rise living tend to focus on rental tenure and public housing; however, today tenure has largely shifted towards ownership, especially in Canada. This suggests that there is a need for further research into the area of owner-occupied condominium high-rise housing because studies in housing preference are scarce especially when they involve high-rise buildings. Gifford (2007), in a review of high-rise living and the consequences of such housing form, concludes that the methods used in previous research are not without methodological issues. Additionally, he addresses the severe lack of research since the mid-1980s and notes that "progress cannot be made toward understanding the effects of living in tall buildings unless research is undertaken" (Gifford, 2007, p. 11). Similarly, Karsten (2007) acknowledges that "classical studies on housing preferences are not capable of explaining why some middle-class families opt for an urban residential location" (p. 84); a detail that opens the door to further study in this area. Karsten (2009) suggests a new urban discourse that acknowledges the family experience in cities, but

acknowledges that this is just the beginning of including family life in urban discourse and that more research is needed – drawing attention to the growing prominence of families in cities.

The lack of academic research in the area of family life cycle as it applies to housing and neighbourhood needs is also an obvious gap in the literature. According to McLeod and Ellis (1982), the family life cycle concept is recognized as "an important influence on the pattern of household consumption and earnings" (p.177); however, the concept does not receive much attention in housing studies (Doling, 1976; McLeod & Ellis, 1982). The major limitation is that the family life cycle is an antiquated concept for planning. According to Ritzdorf (1986), land use planning is "aimed at the preservation of a 'traditional family lifestyle'" (p. 26) in which creating "an ideal environment for the raising of children" (p. 26) is the basis for single-family development. This planning model is based on the assumption that families consist of a working husband, a domestic wife, and two kids. This means that those living in child free rental units or condominiums do not have to support facilities for children, like schools, because of exclusionary zoning, and they are "asserting their rights to live a child free lifestyle" (Ritzdorf, 1986, p. 26). Today, the traditional family structure is increasingly *not* the norm, and the American dream is starting to be replaced by the multitude of other options (Hinshaw, 2007); the growing numbers of alternative family types require alternative planning methods. McAuley and Nutty (1982) identify limitations in the defining variable of each stage in the family life cycle. It is suggested that a broadened definition be used "to include [at least] such characteristics as number of children, work status, and length of marriage" (McAuley & Nutty, 1982, p. 308). As well, modernizing the

definition to include non-traditional and non-family households is needed to keep pace

with changing demographics (Schaninger & Danko, 1993). Doing so would consider the

"net effects" of each family life cycle characteristic on residential preferences and the

chances of moving (McAuley & Nutty, 1982,). Housing requirements at each stage of

the family life cycle are evolving alongside the very definition of the family life cycle

stage, and planning needs to keep pace.

Furthermore, current research in the area tends to be qualitative discourse heavily

grounded in opinion or personal experience. Research design in studies like Sager

(1976), Gale (1979) and Moss (1997) rely mostly on descriptive commentary on the state

of various cities in the United States, with little mention of data collection techniques.

The perceived limitations of this research design are partly overcome in McAuley and

Nutty's 1982 study of housing preferences during the family life cycle, in which

methodological gaps in the literature are lessened by the statistical method behind their

survey sampling technique and quantitative analysis. Additionally, Sohmer and Lang

(2001) use a quantitative method in studying 2000 census results in the United States.

The fact that many of the studies relating to this topic are grounded in qualitative

methods is not a major issue. Downs' (1997) qualitative policy analysis bridges some of

the gaps by employing a strong qualitative method. This is further evident in Costello

(2005), where discourse analysis is used with primary and secondary source analysis.

The use of qualitative urban policy analysis and discourse analysis is discussed by

Maginn (2006) and Jacobs (2006). Maginn (2006) discusses the lack of critical

discussion on the use of qualitative research methods in urban studies; suggesting "the

need for a research methodology that can assist policymakers develop insightful

understandings as to 'what works' within localised governance structures and area-based initiatives situated within culturally diverse neighbourhoods" (Maginn, 2006, p. 2). Jacobs (2006) suggests that the proliferation of discourse analysis in urban policy research is met with an abundance of criticism and its future utility depends on researchers more clearly justifying its use in urban policy studies because it does have "considerable capacity to generate particular insights within urban policy" (p. 48); if its methods are substantially justified, "studies that draw upon the methods of discourse analysis will continue to be valued for the insights generated and the lucidity of arguments advanced" (p. 49). Gifford (2007) discusses the methodological limitations to many studies on housing preference and calls for further research on the subject because most conclusions drawn can only be done so with a hazard of certainty. Therefore, the method behind many of the relevant studies is in itself an inherent limitation in the body of knowledge; however, it is one that can be bridged with further research.

The greatest limitation in the body of knowledge in this area is the lack of current academic research. However, there is a growing body of literature in popular media such as newspapers and magazines pertaining to families living downtown. Perhaps because of the immediacy of the topic and its growing presence in popular media discourse, its absence in the academic realm is only temporary. Accordingly, the possibility for future study is large and would certainly help close gaps in an area of mounting importance. The prospect for exploratory research into the state of downtown condominium development and the family orientation of such development is bright. This is especially true for the City of Toronto, where a large downtown residential population, a recently initiated growth plan, and one of the largest condominium markets in North America

creates a setting ripe for study into how development can be made more accessible to the growing and diverse population the city prides itself on. This study will attempt to help close the gap by looking at the issue of family-friendly condominium development in the context of Toronto.

3   METHODOLOGY

This chapter establishes the methodological undertakings of this study and
provides a justification for the use of such research methods.

3.1   Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative research method in order to best address the
research question and objectives. As established in Chapter 1, the primary research
question is: ***how can downtown condominium development be more accommodating to
families?*** In preparing an answer to this question, four specific research objectives will
be addressed:

1. To understand what policies and strategies are in place to make residential
   condominium development more accommodating to households with
   children;

2. To determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium
   development to be more family-friendly;

3. To provide an updated model of housing requirements under the family life
   cycle concept; and

4. To make recommendations for the City of Toronto on making condominium
   development more family oriented in downtown Toronto.

Because the nature of this research is to explore the idea of family-friendly housing and

to seek an explanation as to *how* it can be achieved, a qualitative method will be suitably

effective. Whether a solely qualitative strategy or mixed-method approach is most

appropriate is determined by the overall intent and objectives of the study (Ritchie,

2003). Additionally, factors relating to the nature of the subject will influence the use of

a qualitative method, such as when an issue lacks clear definition or general

understanding (Ritchie, 2003). In such cases, "the open and generative nature of

qualitative methods allow the exploration of such issues without advance prescription of their construction or meaning as a basis for further thinking about policy or theory development" (Ritchie, 2003, p. 32). As this is a highly exploratory study, looking at an issue that lacks thorough understanding, qualitative data is pertinent to developing new conceptions and understanding (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

Qualitative research is about establishing an understanding and interpretation of a phenomenon in a natural setting (Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2003); it is about quality, not quantity – qualifying *who*, *what*, *why* and *how*, not quantifying *how many* (Merriam, 2003); and describing and interpreting, not measuring and predicting (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). According to Rossman and Rallis (2003), qualitative research:

- Occurs in a natural setting
- Employs multiple interactive and humanistic methods
- Requires a focus on context to maintain a holistic, interactive view
- Is an emergent and evolutionary process
- Is primarily interpretative in nature

Its purpose, generally speaking, is to describe, compare/ contrast, and forecast (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Qualitative research is about depth and detail (Patton, 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), and the social context surrounding the central focus must be presented (Neuman, 2004).

Qualitative research methods are not defined in an absolute manner; they are based on a multitude of factors, but all ultimately serve the goal of providing a greater understanding of the social world and thereby enhance theoretical knowledge (Snape & Spencer, 2003). According to Patton (2002), there are three types of qualitative data: interviews, observations, and documents. In most cases, the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection. In this study, the focus is on *naturally occurring data* from

a literature review and policy review, and *generated data* from in-depth interviews (Lewis, 2003; Snape & Spencer, 2003).

Creswell (2003) reiterates the notion that qualitative research is largely exploratory in nature and often utilized when underlying variables and theoretical basis are unknown. Often there is a theoretical aspect to qualitative research, whether it is a top-down, deductive use of theory to guide research or a bottom-up, inductive development of theory or generalizations; however, it is not necessary to employ any explicit theory if a thorough description of a central phenomenon is provided (Creswell, 2003). Patton (2002) emphasizes the exploratory nature of qualitative research and the idea of inductive analysis and creative synthesis, in which one starts with specific observations and moves toward establishing existent general patterns of a phenomenon.

Qualitative research tends to address four categories of question, generally in some combination: contextual, diagnostic, evaluative, and strategic (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002) – see Table 3.1 for descriptions. The research questions and objectives of this study are considered contextual, evaluative, and strategic. The data generated through policy review and in-depth interviews will be analyzed in order to establish association, explain phenomenon, and develop strategies (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002).

Table 3.1 Objectives of Qualitative Research Questions

Method	Objective
Contextual	Identify the form and nature of what exists
Diagnostic	Examine the reasons for, or causes of, what exists
Evaluative	Appraise the effectiveness of what exists
Strategic	Identify new theories, policies, plans or actions

Note: Adapted from Ritchie & Spencer (2002).

3.2   Research Design and Framework

This study is exploratory in nature and seeks to broaden the understanding of housing for families within the context of the City of Toronto. As such, a case study approach is used to focus the context of analysis to the case of Toronto, most specifically downtown Toronto.

A case study is an approach to research in which a particular case is explored in detail (Creswell, 2003), providing "an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). According to Lewis (2003), case studies generate "a multiplicity of perspectives which are rooted in a specific context" (p. 52) and lead to a "very detailed in-depth understanding" (p. 52). The use of a case study approach is about "particularization" as opposed to "generalization" (Stake, 1995). In this study, the specific case study site is Toronto, for which the basis of understanding will be contextualized; however, a portion of the study will focus on Vancouver, in order to provide some comparison through the lessons learned from the Vancouver experience. The value in comparison studies is in providing understanding, not measuring difference (Lewis, 2003). Like other approaches to qualitative research, case studies are bounded in the "search for meaning and understanding" and are based on inductive methods culminating in information rich descriptions (Merriam, 2009).

This study focuses on the case of downtown Toronto, where the issue of family-friendly housing in the central core is gaining prominence in planning discussions because of the proposed 'Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children' (OPA). In order to adequately consider possible strategies of accommodating families in the downtown, a small portion of the policy

review will consider the case of Vancouver; however, the predominant subject is Toronto, to which the final recommendations will be focused. More detailed information on the City of Toronto is provided in Chapter 4 to provide a background and justification of focus.

There is an underlying element of grounded theory involved in this study, though it is not the dominant approach. Grounded theory is a framework in which one attempts to generate or expand general theory grounded in the findings from multiple data collections methods (Creswell, 2003). Although the overall goal of this study is to address the issue of family-friendly housing in the policy context within the City of Toronto, one of the underlying objectives is to provide an updated consideration of housing requirements under the family life cycle model. The literature review revealed that planning tends to promote housing demands of a traditional family life cycle; however, this model is increasingly antiquated in today's society. Therefore, in the concluding section of this study, an updated model will be proposed.

3.3   Data Collection

The research design of this study follows a qualitative method in which data collection and analysis take place simultaneously. Two research methods are employed: policy review and in-depth interviews with two categories of participants, key informants and parents. This method respectively allows for the concurrent collection and analysis of secondary and primary source data. Each method is discussed below along with a justification for the use of each.

As this study involves multiple methods of data collection, it employs

triangulation – a technique of employing multiple methods in order to generate a more

comprehensive array of data (Patton, 2002). Some researchers argue that by using

different types of data collection, research validity is strengthened; however, Ritchie

(2003) argues that the value of triangulation is not necessarily in measuring validity, but

in providing "a fuller picture of phenomena" (p. 44).

In this study, from the data collected under these two methodological

undertakings, interpretations will be made, conclusions drawn and answers to the

research question – *how can downtown condominium development be more*

accommodating to families? – will be generated. This will be done with particular

attention to the research objective of making recommendations to the City of Toronto in

regard to family-friendly condominium development in downtown Toronto and the

strategies that can be used to encourage it.

3.3.1   Policy Review

The first method used is policy review. It is, in essence, a document review – a

very common qualitative method – but because its focus is on planning policy, it is

referred to as *policy review* in this thesis. Creswell (2003) considers a document review

to be a convenient means of undertaking qualitative research because it allows for the

analysis of a text that has been thoughtfully and attentively prepared by knowledgeable

authors. The reason for undertaking the policy review is to establish a thorough record

and understanding of the planning policies and strategies currently in place and the

possible future changes to such policies. As such, by reviewing planning policy

documents, Staff and Council reports and meeting minutes, and related reports, a breadth of data will be considered and interpretations made.

The policy review portion of this study occurs in three stages. The first phase is presented in Chapter 5, Sections 2 and 3. In order to address the first research objective, *to understand what policies and strategies are in place to make residential condominium development more accommodating to households with children*, a review and analysis of the current Toronto Official Plan and corresponding Secondary Plans was done. The focus of the policy review is on housing and community development in downtown Toronto, with the criterion of analysis on the family-friendliness of such policies. By establishing the value that current planning policies place on accommodating families in the downtown core, suggestions will be made for future policy. The end result is a comprehensive record of pertinent planning policy in the City of Toronto

The second portion of the policy review is presented in Chapter 5, Section 4, and involves a review and analysis of the Staff Reports, Council meeting minutes, and evidentiary reports related to the proposed OPA. This proposed policy change could have a large impact of the concept of family-friendly housing in the city core, and as such is the basis of discussion in the key informant interviews. The purpose of this review is to establish an understanding of the issue – how it has taken shape and what it will mean for planning and development if passed – and contributes to the second research objective: *to determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium development to be more family-friendly*. This review is important to understanding the issue because it is the primary topic of discussion with the key informants.

The final segment of policy review is similar to the first, but focuses on the City of Vancouver's planning policies and achievements in family-friendly housing. Vancouver is globally recognized as the forerunner in attracting families to live in new downtown developments. Therefore, the reason for this review is to elicit comparison between the two cities and to draw conclusions and establish lessons learned from the Vancouver experience in order to aid in meeting the fourth research objective, *to make recommendations for the City of Toronto on making condominium development more family oriented in downtown Toronto*. Furthermore, strategies from other cities pertaining to the accommodation of families in downtowns are briefly reviewed in order to allow for some comparison and suggestion. However, these comparisons do not form the basis of the analysis as it focuses primarily on the City of Toronto context.

In conducting the policy review portion of this study, the research objectives will be addressed and the data collected will contribute to providing an answer to the general research question.

3.3.2 In-depth Interviews

Interviews are one of the mostly widely used qualitative research methods (Ritchie, 2003) – they are the "hallmark" of qualitative research (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In-depth interviews allow for exploring sensitive and complex issues, and gathering detailed accounts and perspectives (Lewis, 2003). The values of interviewing are summarized by Rossman and Rallis (2003, p. 180):

- To understand individual perspectives
- To probe or clarify
- To deepen understanding
- To generate rich, descriptive data

- To gather insights into participants' thinking
- To learn more about the context

The key informant interviews take the shape of elite or expert interviews. Although expert informants can be difficult to access because of the position they hold in their field, time constraints, and scheduling demands, it is *because* of their positions that interviews can offer unique and valuable perspectives (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

In this study, interviews were conducted with two groups of interviewees: (1) key informants in the planning and development field and (2) parents who currently live in or previously lived in a downtown condominium with at least one child. The basis of qualitative sampling is "to find cases that will enhance what the researchers learn about the process of social life in a specific context" (Neuman, 2004, p. 137). Therefore, this study employs a non-probability, or non-random, sampling technique to elicit participants. The two types of interviews vary in approach and objective, and as such are discussed as separate research methods below.

3.3.2.1 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with five categories of informants in order to gain insight into the planning and development of Toronto, to generate an idea of the strategies which could be used to make downtown living more family friendly, and to provide expert perspectives on the proposed OPA. The five categories of informants are urban planner, urban developer, politician (including City Councillors and staff), school board planner, and development and marketing consultant. The focus on these five categories of informants is to gain an insider's perspective of the industry and on the possible ways of accommodating families living downtown. This generated data based

on expert opinion from individuals who are active and experienced participants in the planning and development setting and has allowed for a formal discussion of potential strategies and policies to be employed to make development family-friendly. The data collected also expands on the knowledge gained in the policy review stages of this study, and address two of the research objectives: *to determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium development to be more family-friendly*, and *to make recommendations for the City of Toronto on making condominium development more family oriented in downtown Toronto*.

All of the interviews were semi-structured with the use of an interview guide and open-ended questions pertaining to the issues of planning and family-friendly housing in the downtown core (see Appendix 5 for interview guide). A large portion of discussions focused on the proposed OPA and other possible strategies of encouraging family-friendly housing. The use of open-ended questions allows for the key informant to provide in-depth explanations and delve into areas outside of what is prescribed by the interview guide (Rossman & Rallis, 2003; Creswell, 2003). It also allows for a less structured, more conversational tone; thus allowing the interviewer to follow-up on comments and explore topics raised by the participant. Interviews were conducted between December 2009 and May 2010. They were conducted in person at the informant's workplace and ran for approximately 45 minutes on average.

Informants were selected through a non-probability, purposive sampling method in order to cover an array of experts active in the planning and development of Toronto. In some instances, this method led to additional participants through a snowballing technique as initial informants recommended additional informants. Neuman (2004)

suggests using purposive sampling for exploratory research because it allows the researcher to select information rich cases and gain in-depth understanding as opposed to generalizations of a larger population. According to Patton (2002), "The logic and power of probability sampling derive from its purpose: generalization. The logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding" (p. 46). Small sample sizes are common in qualitative research because the breadth of data gathered from such methods as interviews is information rich (Patton, 2002). In this study, eleven (11) key informants were interviewed.

Potential interview candidates were contacted via email with an information letter and request to voluntarily participate (see Appendix 2 for sample information and consent letter). Appointments were then scheduled and participants were sent a consent letter and interview guide in order to prepare for potential topics of discussion. It was requested that interviews be audio recorded and transcribed to allow for the use of anonymous quotations – all participants consented in writing and were guaranteed anonymity. Additionally, they were given a choice of being coded by specific category – urban planner (PL); politician (PO); urban developer (UD); school board planner (SB); or development and marketing consultant (DM) – or as general key informant (KI). In total, eleven (11) interviews were conducted and all were coded by specific category.

Following completion, interviews were transcribed and the findings categorized and grouped into prominent themes and concepts. The data was then analyzed to address the research objectives and contribute to providing an answer to the research question.

3.3.2.2 Parent Interviews

The second group of interviewees included parents. Parent interviews were conducted with a parent of at least one child who is currently living in or has previously lived in a downtown condominium in order to understand the factors that are involved with the decision of living downtown with children and the perceived pros and cons of the experience.

The interviews were conducted between February and June of 2010 over telephone and lasted approximately 10 minutes on average. In some cases, correspondence by email occurred prior to the telephone interview, in which case both an information and consent letter, and interview guide were sent in advance to provide an idea of the topics and questions to be covered (see Appendices 3 and 6 respectively for samples). Because interviews did not occur in person, written consent was unobtainable; however, verbal consent to audio recording and the use of anonymous quotations was obtained at the start of each interview. Parent participants are coded as PA. Questions were open-ended and allowed for an informal two-way, conversational interview. Topics included such areas as the likes and dislikes of condominium living and possible recommendations to improve the lifestyle, in terms of building features and amenities and community facilities.

Recruiting parent participants was a major challenge of this study. Several attempts to recruit parents were utilized with very little success. Initially, attempts were made to include recruitment notices (see Appendix 4 for sample) in two downtown community association newsletters and the local ward newsletter asking for volunteers to partake in the short telephone interviews. The associations were contacted but responses

were negative. Following this failed attempt, recruitment messages were posted on various groups and pages on Facebook, an internet-based social networking site. If an administrator was listed they were contacted for permission to post a message; all of those contacted obliged. Some interest in the study was generated, but response rates were extremely low. Additionally, downtown daycare and community centres were contacted with the intention of gaining permission to post a recruitment notice on the premises. Responses were negative and only one obliged. Eventually enough interest was established and further expanded by a purposeful sampling technique, which generated a sample of parents primarily through snowballing. In total, thirteen (13) parent interviews were conducted.

Upon completion, interviews were transcribed and the findings categorized and grouped into prominent themes and concepts. The data was then analyzed to expand the understanding of the needs of families living in condominiums and their experience in such housing. These results contribute to addressing the research objectives and help generate an answer to the research question.

3.4   Ethics Approval

The Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo granted full ethics clearance for this study on March 13, 2009. A modification was submitted and accepted on April 5, 2010 in order to expand the methods of recruiting candidates for the parent interviews.

4 BACKGROUND

4.1 Introduction

This section provides a general overview of important information relating to the City of Toronto and the issue of family-friendly housing in order to establish the context of the case study. Firstly, it provides a profile of the City of Toronto, the primary study site of this thesis, and then it establishes the issue of family-friendly housing as it appears in local news media.

4.2 Study Site: The City of Toronto

The City of Toronto is the largest city in Canada, and a part of the largest metropolitan region of Canada – the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), composed of Toronto, and the four regions of Halton, Peel, York and Durham, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. It is located along the shore of Lake Ontario and is part of the Greater Golden Horseshoe – one of the fastest growing metropolitan regions in North America (Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, 2006b) – composed of the GTA and eleven surrounding regions. As of 2006, the population of the City of Toronto surpassed 2.5 million, with the Greater Toronto Area over 5.5 million and the Greater Golden Horseshoe over 8.1 million.

Figure 4.1 Greater Toronto Area
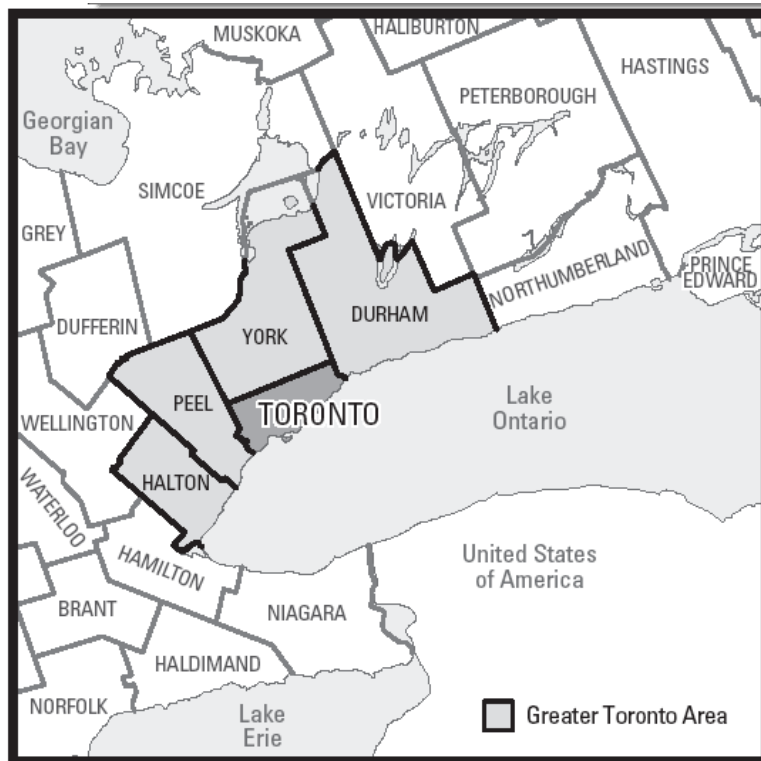
Note: from City of Toronto (2002)

In 2006, the Province of Ontario's *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* was released under the authority of the Places to Grow Act, 2005. The Plan provides a vision for 2031, with a set of policies to direct where and how the area should grow. The vision is founded on:

- Revitalizing downtowns to become vibrant and convenient centres
- Creating complete communities that offer more options for living, working, shopping and playing
- Providing greater choice in housing types to meet the needs of people at all stages of life
- Curbing sprawl and protecting farmlands and greenspaces
- Reducing traffic gridlock by improving access to a greater range of transportation choices
  (Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastrucutre Renewal, 2006a)

Under forecasted levels, the population of the Greater Golden Horseshoe is expected to reach 11.5 million people, with the population of the City of Toronto expected to grow to 3,080,000 people by 2031 (Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastrucutre Renewal, 2006b, schedule 3). The Growth Plan designates certain areas as *Urban Growth Centres*. In the City of Toronto, Downtown Toronto and the Yonge-Eglinton Centre are designated as such, and will be subject to a minimum density target of 400 residents and jobs combined per hectare (Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastrucutre Renewal, 2006b). Toronto's Official Plan delineates areas best suited for accommodating growth, including *Downtown* (including the Central Waterfront), and *Centres* (including Yonge-Eglinton, among others). These areas will be the foci of concentrated growth and infrastructure investment, especially the *Downtown*, where the remaining brownfields and waterfront area are ripe for redevelopment.

The City of Toronto has one of North America's largest condominium markets, with record sales achieved in 2007 (Marr, 2007) and 2010 sales just 3% shy of that record, at 37,041 units sold (Urbanation, 2011). The booming condominium market in Toronto has contributed to population growth, especially in the central city. Since 1965, the downtown population has grown by 65%, with the largest increase between 2001 and 2006 (City of Toronto, 2007a). In large part, this residential building boom is the result of planning policy to promote residential development in the downtown core that initially dates back to the 1976 City of Toronto Central Area Plan (City of Toronto, 2007a). This is further evident in subsequent Official Plans implemented for the growing city. Acknowledging an increasingly diverse downtown population of 169,000 residents in 2006 (City of Toronto, 2007a), the current Official Plan includes policy to support the

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growing demands of the residential market in the downtown core through intensification

and infill development to provide a broad range of housing opportunities for a socially

and economically diverse population (City of Toronto, 2002).

With evidence that the downtown population of Toronto will continue to grow,

the question of what lies ahead for downtown living is critical. In the case of Toronto,

and many other cities, a large portion of the downtown population is young and childless

(City of Toronto, 2007a). Furthermore, recent Canadian census data revealed that

families composed of few or no children are becoming more common (Statistics Canada,

2007b). The traditional nuclear family is on the decline; delays in marriage and

childbearing, common-law partnership, childless couples, lone parent, and single sex

families are on the rise (Milan, Vézina, & Wells, 2009). As well, the total fertility rate of

Canada has decreased in recent decades; in 2007 Statistics Canada reported it to be 1.66

children (Statistics Canada, 2009), considerably lower than the 1955 rate of 3.7 children

(United Nations, 2007). Currently, families with children make up just under 10% of

those households living downtown (City of Toronto, 2007a). As the population increases

and remaining greenfield lands are developed, the proportion of downtown households

with children could grow. Therefore, it is of increasing importance to consider the

possibility that when a young couple living in a downtown one bedroom condominium

have children they may consider upgrading to a two or three bedroom condominium as

opposed to a suburban home.

This consideration is part of the foundation for a recent push by Councillor Adam

Vaughan to require a prescribed number of three bedroom units suitable for families in

downtown development, because having children present in downtown neighbourhoods

is vital to creating *complete communities* and supporting social infrastructure like schools, libraries, and community centres. This initiative is in the form of an Official Plan Amendment, and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. This lifestyle choice of living downtown has also been gaining prominence in media reports of "urban pioneers" foregoing the suburban dream and opting for the convenience of vertical living. The issue as it is presented in such popular media will be highlighted in the following section.

4.3   Family-Friendly Housing in the Media

The concept of downtown family living is increasingly prominent in news media across Canada and the United States. In Toronto, over recent years as the condominium market has expanded, the number of articles about families opting for the vertical life has multiplied, especially as Councillor Adam Vaughan urges City Council to approve the proposed OPA that would see a prescribed minimum number of three bedroom units be built in downtown condominium developments. A plethora of articles have been published in various Toronto newspapers, highlighting families that have opted for raising families in downtown condos. These accounts help illustrate the growing awareness of the trend of urban family living. Examples of headlines include:

- *Here come the high-rise kids* (Lorinc, 2007)
- *Downtown baby boom* (Bielski, 2007)
- *1 BR condo, lake vu, no rm 4 kid* (Byers & Gombu, 2007)
- *Condo kids 'have the pulse of the city'* (Laporte, 2007a)
- *Meet the kids in the block* (Newman, 2008a)
- *Families seek the high life again* (Hume, 2008)
- *Buy a condo. Bring the kids* (Ireland, 2009)
- *Welcome to the vertical 'hood* (Wallace, 2009)
- *Bringing up baby* (Weir, 2009)
- *Room in the sky* (Winsa, 2010)

A number of these articles highlight the lifestyle attraction to downtown living – the convenience, the buzz, the walkability, the amenities, and the security – and the "urban pioneers" of parents opting to raise children in downtown condos (see Laporte, 2007b, 2007c; Lorinc, 2007; McMahon, 2011; Mehler Paperny, 2010; Weir, 2009; Winsa, 2010). Lorinc (2007) discusses the lack of amenities like playgrounds and schools – questioning if they can keep up with a growing demand brought about by intensification. In September 2007, a major cover story in the *Condos* section of the Toronto Star ran several articles relating to families living downtown, addressing the lack of appropriately sized units being a deterrent to staying in the area and the timely need for a school that the City is committed to building (Laporte, 2007a, 2007c). One article even highlights the experience of a family homeschooling two children, aged 11 and 13, in their downtown loft (Laporte, 2007b).

An article published in the National Post in October 2007 addresses the growing trend of families opting for central city living in Britain, suggesting that cities need to provide housing opportunities for families in the core to prevent them being forced out of the centre and consequently creating a city segregated by age (Welcome to the family flat, 2007). Hume (2008) highlights several urban pioneers in the Toronto context and notes that developers are starting to include this market in some amenity features and unit mix, but the demand is still not significant. However, several industry experts interviewed suggest in time the demand will grow: "We are on the cusp of profound change" (Ken Greenberg in Hume, 2008, p. ID3). One prominent Toronto urban parent,

Sybil Wa – founder of *The Parent Network*[13], is quoted in Newman (2008a) as saying: "Five years ago, we were a fringe group in the eyes of neighbours and management, a kind of foreigner in the vertical condo culture. Now we're the heart of it" (p. CO6). This growing cohort of urban parents is referred to as "Gen-Con" – condo generation – parents by Weir (2009).

McMahon (2011) highlights a family who fled the suburbs and moved into a two bedroom condo in the downtown core because they preferred the lifestyle, including the sense of safety and walkability. The article discusses safety concerns in urban and suburban settings, highlighting high-density areas as having lower rates of traffic and pedestrian fatalities and injuries. A University of Virginia Professor of Planning, William Lucy, suggests that families with children will be the last to demand downtown housing, but it will happen (McMahon, 2011). Another parent living in a downtown Toronto condo is quoted: "Wherever you're raising your children, it demands the same sort of vigilance. There's a sort of artificial sense of safety in the suburbs" (in McMahon, 2011, p. A6).

As the "condofication" of downtown Toronto is revitalizing the area (Gee, 2009) – made evident by the booming condo market – the "familyfication" of the city is occurring as young urban professionals living in the core are choosing to remain there after having children – enhanced by the trend of women delaying their child-bearing years (Bielski, 2007). A prominent example of the revitalization taking place in Toronto is in the Railway Lands West at Concord CityPlace, soon to be home to close to 15,000 residents with a school, park, library, and multiple daycare centres – when built out it

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[13] *The Parent Network* is network of families or "vertical villagers", mostly living in the same building founded by Sybil Wa in 2002. The network held *The Urban Family Workshop* in June 2008 to discuss with key players the need to include families in the mix (Newman, 2008b).

should become a complete community, a concept discussed in several articles. Byers and

Gombu (2007) examine the proposed OPA and the reasons behind trying to

accommodate family-sized housing in the core. In the article, *1 BR condo, lake vu, no rm*

4 kid, the City's then Chief Planner, Ted Tyndorf, is quoted on the idea of complete

communities:

> one of the principles we've held dear is the creation of
> complete communities. You can't have a complete
> community if you don't have families; you can't have a
> complete community if you don't have seniors. You can
> have a collection of people who are 30-somethings living in
> apartment buildings, but is that a complete community? (in
> Byers & Gombu, 2007, p. E2)

Councillor Adam Vaughan is interviewed in many articles and constantly argues that

families need to be considered in planning. In Ireland (2009), Vaughan discusses the

intent of the proposed OPA as providing opportunities and incentives for young couples

to remain downtown after having children. He suggests that "It doesn't work to have

builders determining the shape of future communities based on what they can sell today.

The market can't do the planning in Toronto. Toronto has to do the planning" (in Ireland,

2009, p. G4). Part of the real problem is that condos can only support young families

when children are infants; as children get older or family size grows beyond one child, it

is harder for families to stay in the core (Winsa, 2010).

The increasing amount of press that the issue of family-friendly housing is

receiving is significant and raises issues justifying further investigation. Although some

of the claims may be exaggerated, such as "the lack of family-sized condominiums in the

Toronto area may prove as effective a birth control measure as China's one-child policy"

(Belford, 2008, p. G14), they nevertheless draw attention to an important issue. The

abovementioned articles are only a sampling of the kind of material being printed on the matter. Similar stories are being published throughout many large North American cities.

4.4   Summary

The purpose of this section has been to provide an overview of the case study, the City of Toronto, and a brief summary of the issue of family housing as it is portrayed in popular media to set the context for this study. In the following chapter, the issue is further examined in terms of the planning policies relating to the family-friendly housing and community development, as well as an in-depth review of the proposed OPA.

5   TORONTO POLICY REVIEW

5.1   Introduction

In order to provide a thorough understanding of the context of planning within the City of Toronto, an examination of the policies that guide planning decisions is needed. This section will look at two areas of planning policy in the City of Toronto and comprises part of the policy review.

First, the current planning policies contained within the City of Toronto Official Plan and relevant Secondary plans will be reviewed in order to address the first research objective: *to understand what policies and strategies are in place to make residential condominium development more accommodating to families with children*. As discussed in Chapter 3, the focus of the policy review will be on housing and community development in downtown Toronto, with specific attention to family friendliness. The end result is a comprehensive record of pertinent planning policy in the City of Toronto.

Second, the proposed policy of the 'Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children' (OPA) that is currently before Council will be reviewed. This review will address the second research objective: *to determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium development to be more family-friendly*. This review is important to understanding the issue – how it has taken shape and what it will mean for planning and development if passed – because it is the primary topic of discussion with the key informants.

5.2   Toronto Official Plan

The Toronto Official Plan was adopted by City Council in November 2002 and

approved, in part, with modifications by the Ontario Municipal Board June 2006 and

September 2007, and most recently with the October 2009 consolidation (to be referred to

in this section). The Plan is a statutory document that provides City Council with the

direction needed for decision making, through visions, goals, and policies for the growth

of the city over the next thirty years, with an emphasis on sustainability and re-

urbanization. It is founded on four principles: diversity and opportunity (where "housing

choices are available for all people in their communities at all stages of their lives" (p. 1-

3)); beauty; connectivity; and leadership and stewardship. The vision of the Plan is to

create:

> An attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a
> sense of belonging – a city where people of all ages and
> abilities can enjoy a good quality of life. A city where:
> - vibrant neighbourhoods that are part of complete communities;
> - affordable housing choices that meet the needs of everyone throughout their life. (p. 1-2)
> *[The plan lists nine more points to the vision which are not specific to housing. Please refer to Appendix 1 for the complete list].*

Chapter 2, Shaping the City, contains a descriptive section on downtown and its

position as "the heart of the city". The boundaries of Downtown, as defined in the

Official Plan, are presented in Figure 5.1. The area includes the Financial District and the

Central Waterfront. Section 2.2.1, Policy 1, suggests that in regards to housing,

downtown development will be such that it "provides a full range of housing

opportunities for *Downtown* workers and reduces the demand for in-bound commuting"

(p. 2-9). The plan acknowledges that more people are choosing to live downtown and

that there is diversity in residential characteristics as well as in housing types, tenures, and affordability. However, over the past decade this diversity is seemingly less true – housing types are increasingly limited to small condominium units which are becoming exponentially more expensive and populated primarily by young professionals and retired baby boomers.

Figure 5.1 Boundaries of Downtown Toronto
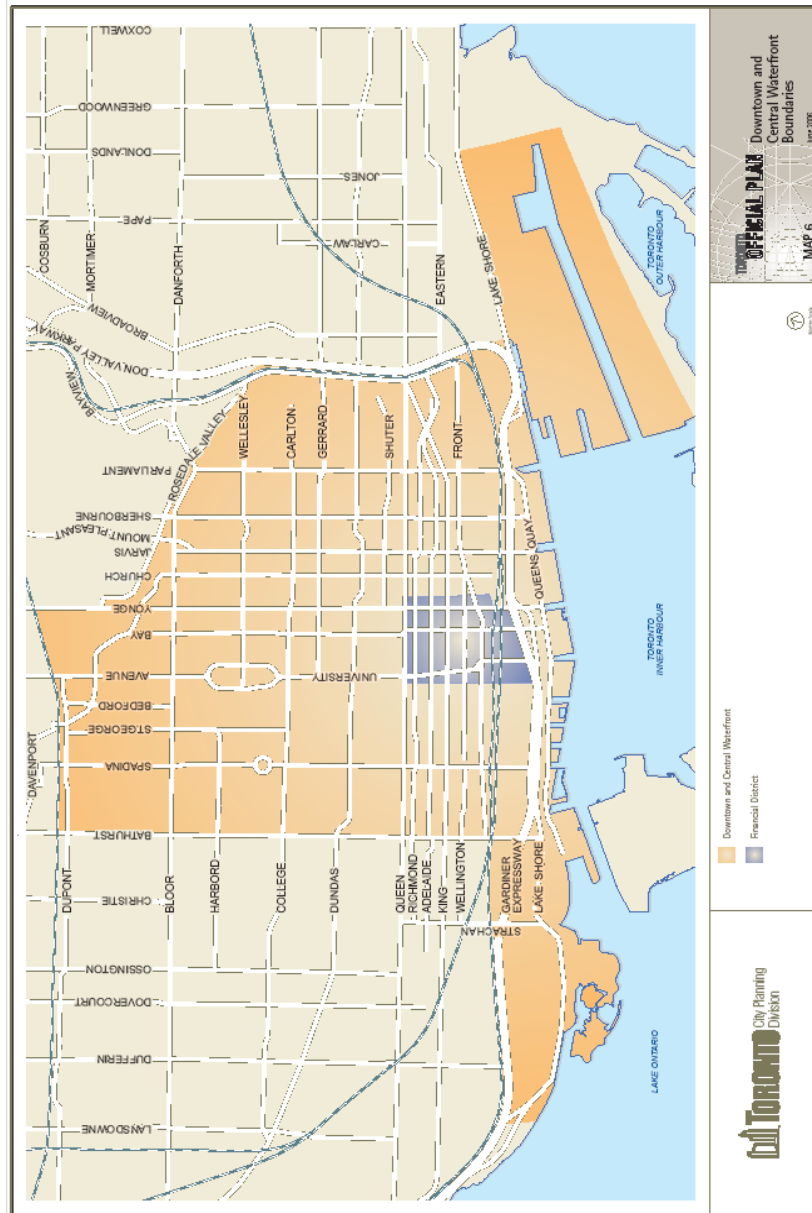
Note: from City of Toronto (2002)

Chapter 3, Building a Successful City, delineates how the city can be successfully built. It contains a section on the human environment, a large part of which is housing policy contained within Section 3.2.1. Housing policy makes no specific concession to households with children; and the majority of policies relate to rental and affordable housing. Section 3.2.1, Policy 1, reads:

> A full range of housing, in terms of form, tenure and affordability, across the City and within neighbourhoods, will be provided and maintained to meet the current and future needs of residents. A full range of housing includes: ownership and rental housing, affordable and mid-range rental and ownership housing, social housing, shared and/or congregate-living housing arrangements, supportive housing, emergency and transitional housing for homeless people and at-risk groups, housing that meets the needs of people with physical disabilities and housing that makes more efficient use of the existing housing stock. (pp. 3-13 – 3-14)

Currently, there is a proposed OPA that would see the words "dwelling units suitable for households with children" inserted after the words "at risk groups", in addition to a Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policy for the Downtown. This proposed amendment is discussed in detail in Section 5.4 of this paper. In keeping with the language of intensification, Section 3.2.1, Policy 2, stipulates that "new housing supply will be encouraged through intensification and infill that is consistent with this Plan" (p. 3-14). Other policies regard the protection of affordable or mid-range rental units and social housing properties. Policy 9 relates to the provision of affordable housing and community benefits and, in part b, must be read in accordance to Section 5.1.1 of the Plan. This is such that community benefits in terms of an affordable housing contribution will be prioritized when height and/or density bonuses are sought by the developer under Section 37 of the *Planning Act*.

Chapter 3, Section 3.2.2 and 3.2.3, address community services and facilities, and parks and open spaces respectively. The policies for community services and facilities illustrate the City's commitment to providing social infrastructure across the board; including community and recreation centres, arenas, community health clinics, community gardens, and publicly funded schools and libraries. Section 3.2.2, Policy 7, stipulates such facilities may be encouraged through development incentives and public initiatives. As well, Section 3.2.3, Policy 4, illustrates the parkland dedication requirement for all development. However, under neither the Community Services and Facilities nor the Parks and Open Spaces headings are there policies relating to the adequate provision of age-appropriate playground equipment, despite a commitment to providing support to the people of Toronto and despite a role in advancing the principles laid out in the *Toronto Children's Charter*, which brings the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to a local level[14].

Chapter 3, Section 3.3, Building New Neighbourhoods, describes the general guidelines for planning new neighbourhoods, with policy stating that they will be "viable as communities" and have "a housing mix that contributes to the full range of housing" (p. 3-23). This last policy does not clearly specify that *each* neighbourhood should have a full range of housing, only that the city as a *whole* should; however, this goes against the general concept of a *complete community* – one where people of all ages and at all stages of life have access to jobs, services, and housing within the familiar neighbourhood (Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, 2006b, p. 41). It also

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[14] The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a set of standards and obligations established to guide governments in upholding basic human rights to persons under the age of 18 so they can live life healthily, safely and to their full potential (UNICEF, 2008).

does not advance the principle of diversity and opportunity, where "housing choices are available for all people in their communities at all stages of their lives" (p. 1-3).

Chapter 4, Land Use Designations, describes the policies and land uses that will direct the growth of the city. There are four land use designations to support the existing physical character of the city: *Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods, Parks and Open Space Areas,* and *Utility Corridors*; and four uses to encourage growth in employment and population: *Mixed Use Areas, Employment Areas, Regeneration Areas,* and *Institutional Areas*. The majority of downtown Toronto is designated as a *Mixed Use Area* as it will be the locale for commercial, residential, institutional, and open space. Areas designated as *Neighbourhoods* are focused on lower scale buildings; residences are limited to single- and semi-detached, row and townhouses, duplexes and triplexes, and walk-up apartments no higher than four storeys; small-scale commercial uses, for example retail and home offices; and low scale institutions, including, amongst others, schools, libraries, and places of worship. No new higher scale apartment buildings may be constructed in *Neighbourhood* designated areas. *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, on the other hand, tend to have already been built out with a higher density and taller buildings. According to the Plan, these established areas will be the focus of amenity improvement and selective infill. The foci of new growth will be in *Mixed Use Areas*, where people will be able to "live, work, and shop in the same area, or even the same building, giving people an opportunity to depend less on their cars, and create districts along transit routes that are animated, attractive and safe at all hours of the day and night" (p. 4-10). The highest density *Mixed Use Area* will be the *Downtown*, with lower scale development in the *Centres* and along *Avenues*. Policy for these *Mixed Use Areas* states that they will

"have access to schools, parks, community centres, libraries, and childcare" (Section 4.5, Policy 2(g) p. 4-11); however, there is no mention of providing housing that would accommodate families with the children who would be the obvious users of these facilities – all that is mentioned is a "balance of high quality ... residential uses ... that meets the needs of the local community" (p. 4-10). The proposed OPA makes no changes to this policy (see Section 5.4 of this paper for more detail). Lastly, *Regeneration Areas* will accommodate growth in areas of the city that are no longer productive because of economic changes, including the *Central Waterfront*[15]. These areas will accommodate a mix of commercial, residential, live/work, institutional, and light industrial uses, in shared blocks or buildings. The general policy for this designation makes no specific mention to housing for households with children; however, each area will have its own Secondary Plan to establish how it will be developed. Overall, despite the language of intensification and diversity, and housing policies to establish a balanced mix of housing form and tenure, there is no specific housing provision for households with children.

Chapter 5, Implementation: Making Things Happen, lays out the methods and tools for implementation as established in the *Planning Act*. These include:

- alternative parkland dedication standards
- height and density incentives in return for key community benefits and facilities to accompany development
- holding provisions to ensure that community infrastructure is in place prior to development
- site plan control to ensure that trees and landscaping are provided and that development is well designed, functional and integrated into the urban fabric (p. 5-1)

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[15] The *Central Waterfront* is part of the *Downtown* area, as illustrated in Figure 5.1¸ and constitutes Exhibition Place, Ontario Place, Fort York, the existing Bathurst-Strachan, Central Bayfront and Harbourfront neighbourhoods, the East Bayfront, the West Don Lands, Lower Don Lands, and the Port Lands.

Section 5.1.1, Height and/or Density Incentives, describes the ways in which the City can

take advantage of Section 37 of the *Planning Act* to secure community benefits by giving

developers more height and/or density than is zoned for. Section 37 community benefits

are capital facilities and/or cash contributions towards facilities. In terms of housing

benefits, replacement or protection of rental housing is included, but there is no specific

mention of housing suitable for families; however, other local improvements established

in Secondary Plans are included. Section 5.1.7, Development Charges, describes the use

of development charges on new development to secure funds for capital infrastructure[16]

needs resulting from city expansion, so that tax payers are not burdened with the cost of

growth. The City's development charges are presented in Table 5.1 below. It is

important to note that development charges are no higher for a three bedroom unit than

they are a two bedroom unit.

Table 5.1 Schedule of Development Charges, February 2010 to January 2011

Category – Residential (per unit)	Feb 1, 2010 to Jan 31, 2011
Single- and semi-detached dwelling	$11,737
Multiple dwelling unit	$9,340
Apartment unit – two bedroom and larger	$7,613
Apartment unit – one bedroom and bachelor unit	$4,731
Dwelling room	$3,032

Category – Non-Residential (per m^2)	
Industrial use	-
All other non-residential uses*	$94.25

Note: from City of Toronto (n.d.)
*The non-residential charge applies to the non-residential gross floor area located on the ground floor only.

The Official Plan is the governing body of work that guides all City actions, as

established in the *Planning Act*. Under Section 5.3.1 policies, all municipal by-laws must

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[16] Capital infrastructure includes child care, civic improvements, development-related studies, emergency medical services, fire, health, library, parks and recreation, pedestrian infrastructure, police, roads and related, sanitary sewer, Spadina subway extension, storm water management, subsidized housing, transit, and water (City of Toronto, n.d.)

conform to the Plan and all City Council and Staff decisions and actions must be in line with the Plan. Additionally, under Section 5.3.2, implementation plans, strategies, and guidelines will be adopted to effectively implement the visions, objectives, and policies established in the Official Plan. Over time, these will include such plans as regular Municipal Housing Statements, urban design guidelines, green design guidelines, cultural and recreational facility strategies, and a parks acquisition strategy, among many others. Secondary Plans also play a large role in providing more detailed policy for specific neighbourhoods; they will be reviewed in Section 5.3.

5.2.1   Summary

The overall language and policy direction of the Official Plan is in support of creating an intensified, diverse city, complete with a "full range" of housing options and ample amenities and facilities to foster complete communities. However, this really only applies in a broad manner, across the city as a whole. What is lacking is attention at the local level, where the goal is to achieve vibrant, livable, complete communities that can support residents of all ages and at all stages of their lives. Furthermore, what constitutes a "full range" of housing is open to a fair amount of interpretation and may lack clear enforceability. Directing the development of child-supportive infrastructure, such as schools and community centres, but not the housing that can accommodate them is an issue which could pose a threat to the long-term vision if certain types and sizes of housing are neglected.

5.3 Toronto Official Plan: Secondary Plans

There are currently twenty-nine approved Secondary Plans for the city, including plans for the *Downtown* areas of the Railway Lands (East, West, and Central – see Figure 5.2), King-Spadina, and King-Parliament; and the *Nearly Downtown*[17] areas of Fort York Neighbourhood, and Garrison Common North. As well, the Central Waterfront Plan has been partially approved by the Ontario Municipal Board for the precincts of the East Bayfront, West Don Lands, and the Keating Channel Precinct of the Lower Don Lands. These plans will be reviewed below with a focus on housing policy and community services and facilities, emphasizing family-friendly measures.

Figure 5.2 Railway Lands
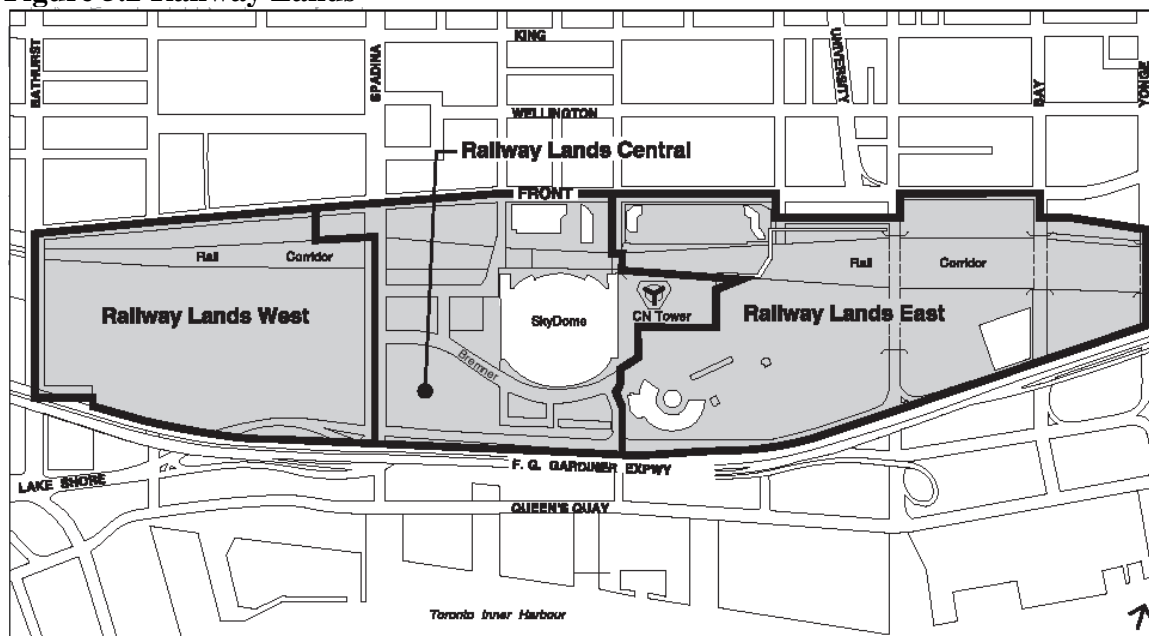
Note: from City of Toronto (2004)

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[17] Although not within the City's delineation of *Downtown*, they neighbour *Downtown* and are increasingly popular areas for development because of the accessibility to the core.

5.3.1 Railway Lands West

The Railway Lands West is the land area of the Bathurst Spadina Neighbourhood of downtown Toronto, bounded by Front Street to the north, Lakeshore Avenue to the south, Bathurst Street to the west, and Spadina Avenue to the east. Composed mostly of the former Canadian National Railway lands, it is now largely owned by Concord Adex and is undergoing massive redevelopment (See Figure 5.3 for the site boundary and block division).

Figure 5.3 Railway Lands West Block Division
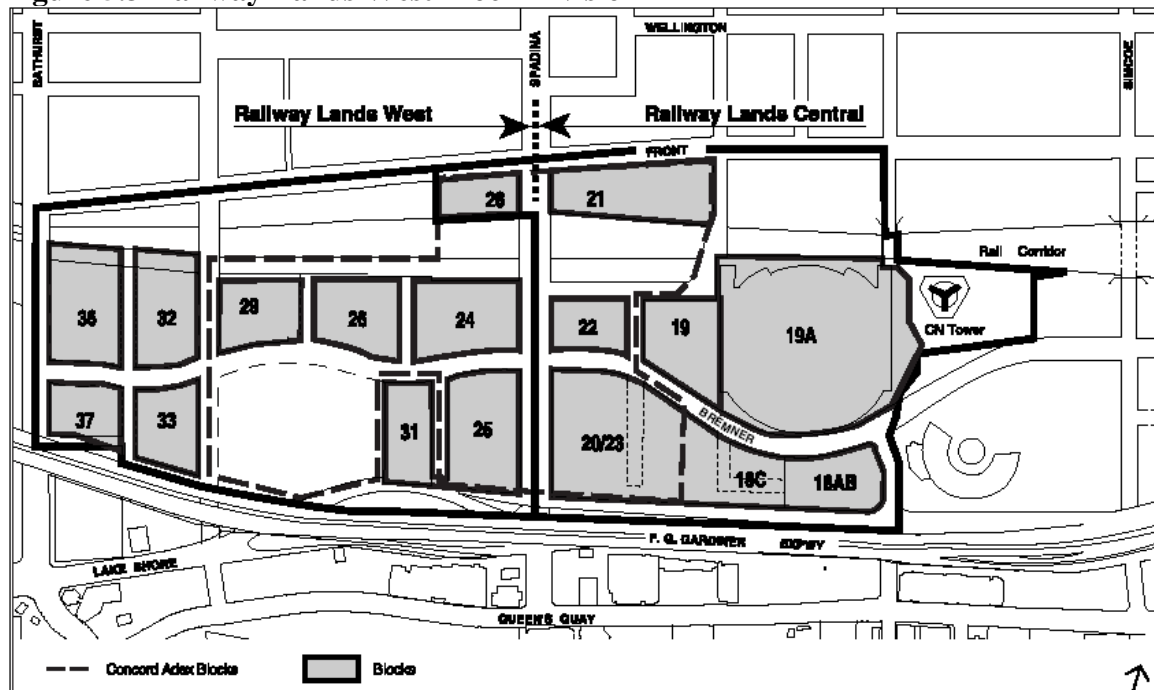
Note: from City of Toronto (2004)

The Railway Lands West Secondary Plan, referred to in this section, along with the corresponding urban design guidelines, establishes the area as *Mixed Use*, with *Parks and Open Space Areas* comprising a large portion of the land tract. One of the main objectives of redevelopment is to "take full advantage of the opportunities presented by [the site's] size and central location to satisfy a broad range of commercial, residential,

institutional, cultural, recreational, parks and open space needs" (p. 1). Most blocks are

designated as the Bathurst Spadina Neighbourhood, a *Mixed Use Area* that will be

medium and high density residential with local street-related retail and community

service and facility space; while two blocks fronting Spadina Avenue are designated as

Mixed Use Areas suitable for residential and non-residential uses with strong street-

related commercial and service use.

The housing policies for the area are based on the goals established in the Official

Plan, including Policy 4.1, which states that:

> Housing will be developed in the Railway Lands West both
> to assist in meeting the City's housing goals and to ensure
> that new development has a mixed-use character. Housing
> in the Railway Lands will be available to a wide range of
> households, ages and incomes in a variety of residential
> unit sizes. (p. 4)

Policy 4.3 requires 25% of total dwelling units in the Bathurst Spadina Neighbourhood be

suitable for households with children; half of which will be provided on the lands

outlined in Policy 4.4 that have been acquired by the City for the provision of affordable

housing by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC). There is no mention

as to what type or size dwelling unit is suitable for households with children. The lands

conveyed to TCHC consist of blocks 31, 32, and 36 (see Figure 5.3).

Section 5 outlines the required community services and facilities that shall be

provided, including, at minimum: an integrated public/ separate elementary school(s); a

community centre facility; one library; and daycare facilities. Policy 5.6 stipulates that

such facilities and services provided primarily for the residential population of the area

should be within walking distance to buildings containing family-friendly housing.

Currently, Block 31 is planned to accommodate an integrated Public and Catholic Board elementary school, a community centre, and daycare facility, in addition to 325 units of affordable housing (TCHC, n.d.). Blocks 32 and 36 will be developed first as family-oriented, high-density housing, and will house a public library facility and child care centre, and 650 dwelling units – 60% of which will be affordable housing aimed at lower income families with children, with the remainder as market housing (TCHC, n.d.). According to the Blocks 32 and 36 Public Realm Plan, public sector intervention in providing family-friendly housing is required because of market constraints (TCHC, 2008). Both Blocks 32 and 36 are currently under construction; however, it appears that Block 32 will consist of a public library, daycare centre and a point tower of market condominiums built by a private developer and currently for sale. While Block 36 will be developed by TCHC and consist of family-sized units, the market condominium on Block 32 is being marketed with the largest unit as a two bedroom, two bathroom, 888sqft unit, despite sharing a site with such family-friendly amenities as a library, daycare, and park space, and neighbouring a larger park and school site.

Additionally, an eight hectare park was planned for in Section 6 of the Plan and was opened in early 2010 as Canoe Landing Park. There are also concessions established in the Plan for an additional park site at the northwest corner of Block 36 and along the railway corridor at the north end of the site. Canoe Landing Park is known for the giant red canoe overlooking the Gardiner Expressway that was designed by Canadian author and artist Douglas Coupland. The park is also home to sports fields and a running trail named the Miracle Mile, in honour of Terry Fox. Unfortunately, there is no children's

playground equipment, despite the vision of the area becoming a complete community with households with children.

5.3.2 Railway Lands Central

The Railway Lands Central, outlined in Figure 5.2, consists of the lands surrounding the Roger's Centre (formerly the Skydome) and is to be redeveloped along with the Railway Lands East and West to connect the downtown core to the waterfront. Like the Railway Lands West, the site is a *Mixed Use Area* and will be developed in a similar manner, with shared urban design guidelines.

The Railway Lands Central Secondary Plan, referred to in this section, contains housing policy for development to meet the City's housing goals and to create a mixed-use character through the provision of housing for "a wide range of households, ages and incomes in a variety of residential unit sizes" (p. 4). However, unlike the specific policies established in the Railway Lands West, there is no prescription for housing suitable for households with children. As well, affordable housing obligations will be met by helping secure land in the Railway Lands West for such use, as outlined in Policy 4.3.

A full range of community services and facilities will be provided for through agreement levies and will include at a minimum, an elementary school, community centre, one library, and daycares. As per Policy 5.4, funding for such facilities will be generated through "the payment of a fixed amount on a per residential unit and non-residential square metre basis" (p. 5). Additionally, on some blocks, non-residential gross floor area may be increased in return for a daycare facility, pursuant to Policy

10.7.1. As well, over 3.5 hectares of park land and open space will be secured for public use. Currently there are three Downtown Montessori child care facilities in the area that serve children ages 0-6 years. Space is very limited as all are running at or very near capacity

5.3.3   Railway Lands East

The Railway Lands East form the eastern portion of the former Canadian Pacific Railway lands which border the south side of the financial district, as outlined in Figure 5.2, and is currently undergoing major revitalization to integrate the downtown core with the city's waterfront, minimize the barrier effect of the railway corridor, and create a vital *Mixed Use Area* similar to the Railway Lands Central and West.

The Railway Lands East Secondary Plan, referred to in this section, contains general housing goals to provide for "a wide range of households, ages and incomes with a variety of residential unit sizes" (p. 4), as well as to meet the City's requirements for the inclusion of affordable housing and low-to-moderate income rental housing. However, there is little detail in the Secondary Plan because it calls for the creation of a Precinct Plan to contain a more precise level of policy and a Concept Plan for each building site. The Plan also outlines the need for a Community Services and Facilities Strategy, in order to facilitate the timely provision of a "full range" of amenities, including at minimum contributions towards elementary school facilities, community service space, and daycare facilities.

5.3.4 King-Spadina

The King-Spadina area is bounded by Queen Street to the north, Front Street to the south, Simcoe Street to the east, and Bathurst Street to the west. As established in the King-Spadina Secondary Plan, referred to in this section, it is a *Regeneration Area* that is largely built out. It is a vital employment and entertainment area in the city core with strong architectural heritage. The Plan does not contain specific housing goals, but contains one guideline for residential use in Section 10.1:

> To complement King-Spadina's role as a business and entertainment area, and as an incentive for the retention of existing buildings, especially those of architectural or heritage merit, new residential uses, including live/work units have been introduced into the King-Spadina Area. (p. 6)

In terms of community services and facilities, Policy 7.1 calls for regular monitoring of the community services and facilities inventory to assess potential need. As well, the use of Section 37 benefits for the provision of such services and facilities, including daycare centres, is encouraged in Policy 7.2. Additionally, there are four *Areas of Special Identity*, including St. Andrew's Playground, for which all new development in the area "will respect the integrity and the potential for increased use of the park" (p. 2). There are no specific concessions to promote housing for families or related amenities.

5.3.5 King-Parliament

The King-Parliament Secondary Plan, referred to in this section, applies to the areas outlined in Figure 5.4. The area contains the West Don Lands, a large tract of undeveloped land planned for major revitalization. The area is divided into *Mixed Use Areas* and *Regeneration Areas*. The Plan does not contain any specific policy for

housing and community services and facilities; however, it does contain concession for the inclusion of new residential units and live/work units and the timely provision of additional community services and facilities as needed with growth.

Figure 5.4 King-Parliament Secondary Plan Area
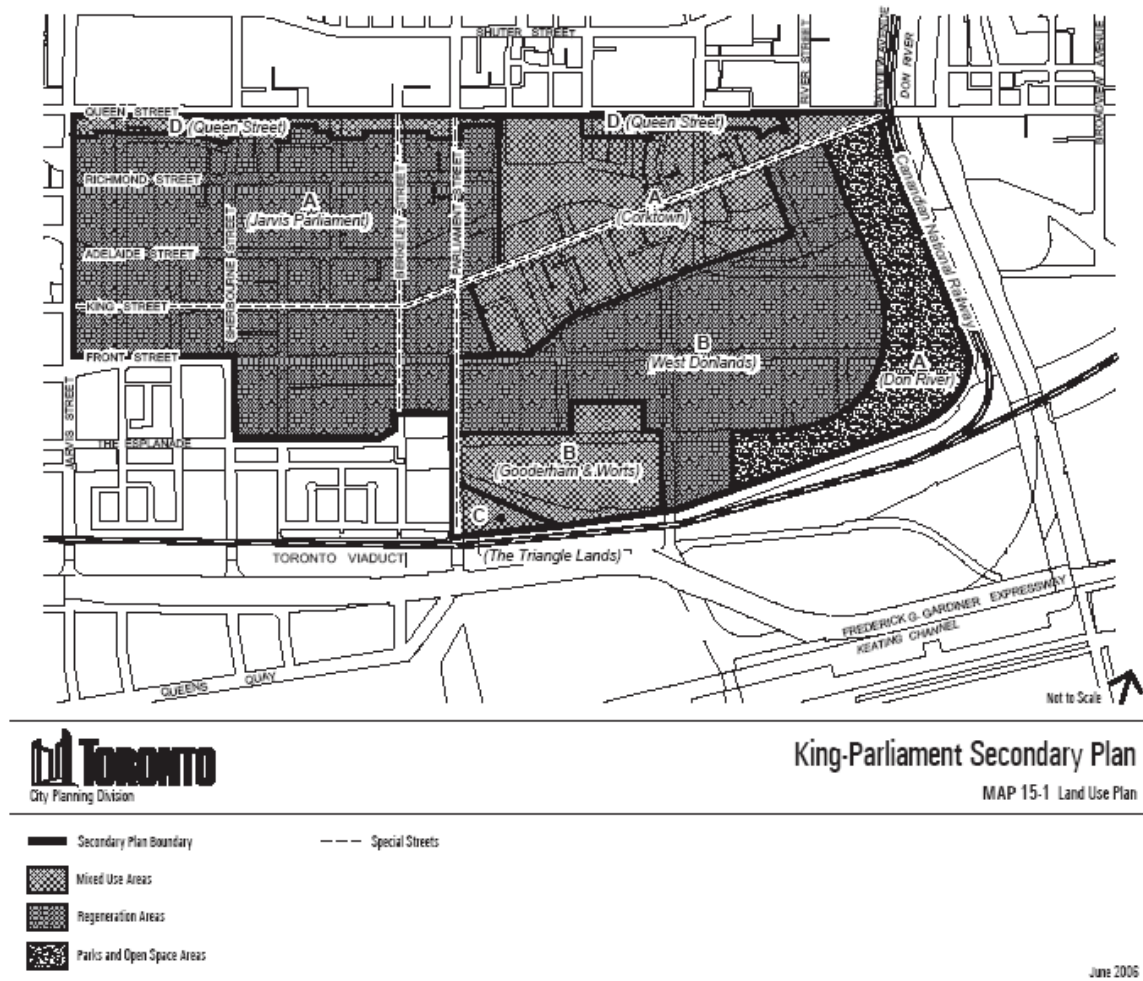
Note: from City of Toronto (2002)

Regeneration Area 'B' (West Don Lands) is the largest area and is made up of former industrial and underutilized lands that will be redeveloped and reintegrated back into the city as a mixed use neighbourhood as a part of the larger Waterfront Toronto Revitalization initiative. As such, the area is part of the former City of Toronto Central

Waterfront Plan, and the West Don Lands Precinct Plan has been created with a more detailed level of policy.   These will be reviewed in the next section.

5.3.6   Central Waterfront

The Central Waterfront Plan covers 800 hectares (2000 acres) of Toronto's waterfront and is currently the largest urban development project in North America (Waterfront Toronto, 2011). In 2001, Waterfront Toronto (formerly the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation) was created by the Government of Canada, the Province of Ontario, and the City of Toronto as the agent responsible for the redevelopment project. Funded by three tiers of government, the project is expected to run into 2025; current policies and development plans will be implemented over time. The Plan was approved as an Official Plan Amendment in April 2003 but was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Despite this appeal, as it pertains to the East Bayfront, West Don Lands, and Keating Channel Precinct of the Lower Don Lands, it has been approved.

The Central Waterfront Part II Plan, "Making Waves" (2001), referred to in this section, contains guidelines and policies to guide development. It is centred on four core principles: removing barriers/making connections; building a network of spectacular waterfront parks and public spaces; promoting a clean and green environment; and creating dynamic and diverse new communities. It is the fourth principle that is of interest to this study because it calls for a "critical mass" of people to live in the new, diverse community. In order to meet this objective, Policy 39 establishes that:

> A mix of housing types, densities and tenures will accommodate a broad range of household sizes,

composition, ages and incomes contributing to the vitality of the Central Waterfront as well as the opportunity for residents to remain in their communities throughout their lives (p. 46).

Additionally, Policy 40 encourages a goal of 25% of all dwelling units be affordable rental housing, at least one quarter of which will be two bedroom or larger. Policy 35 calls for community services and facilities to be provided, including at full build out of the whole waterfront area:

- six to ten elementary schools
- one secondary school
- at least one local park per residential community
- ten to twelve daycare centres
- one to three libraries
- four to six recreation centres
- one community service/human service space per community

In order to implement these policies and to secure such community services and facilities, development charges and Section 37 contributions will be considered to secure funding from landowners, with possible height and/or density increases pursuant to Section 37 of the *Planning Act*. Additionally, areas designated *Development Areas* will have Precinct Implementation Strategies to guide development with a higher level of policy and implementation goals, allowing the City to move from Official Plan policy to Zoning By-law provision. At this point, plans for East Bayfront, the West Don Lands, and the Keating Channel Precinct of the Lower Don Lands have been approved, and plans for the Port Lands, the remaining Lower Don Lands, and the existing Central Waterfront are underway.

5.3.6.1 West Don Lands

The West Don Lands is an 80 acre parcel of underutilized land at the mouth of the Don River and is part of the waterfront revitalization project. The West Don Lands Precinct Plan (2005) and the West Don Lands Block Plan and Design Guidelines (2006) were created to guide development of the area as a mixed use neighbourhood, with an emphasis on the public realm and sustainability.

The West Don Lands Precinct Plan (2005), referred to in this section, outlines the division of the area into four neighbourhoods, each to be developed with a range of housing options. In total, the housing targets are for the provision of 6,000 units; 20% are to be affordable rental units, and 5% are to be low-end market housing; a portion of which shall be suitable for households with children. Residential development will be primarily mid-rise buildings with at-grade commercial space; live/work units; lofts; townhouses with private courtyards; and a few point towers. The River Square Neighbourhood will be the first to be developed, with the River City development, complete with family-friendly townhouses and apartment units, though currently only offered in the two bedroom plus den range. There are also two blocks in this area to be developed by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC), which will contain larger sized family-friendly affordable units. The Don River Neighbourhood will contain mid-rise apartment buildings and townhouse mews with private, interior courtyards, in order to create "safe, family-oriented streets and open space" (p. 46). Community facilities are to include, at build-out, an elementary school, recreation centre and community facility, multiple daycare facilities, and a library.

The West Don Lands Block Plan and Design Guidelines (2006), referred to in this section, provide further detail for the implementation of the Precinct Plan. It states that:

> The West Don Lands is designed to nourish families in all phases of life. A variety of housing options and community services will suit a broad market segment and enable residents to be comfortably accommodated from youth to senior years. (p. 5)

In order to achieve this goal, "An affordable mix of housing for families will include 20% of the total units for affordable rental housing" (p. 5) and "A variety of units in elevator buildings will appeal to a broad market segment" (p. 5). Ground-related townhouses and apartments will provide family-oriented housing choices throughout the River Square and Don River Neighbourhoods. Affordable rental housing, as discussed in the Precinct Plan, will be coordinated with the City and the TCHC. One of the related guidelines states that "All affordable housing for families with children should be ground-related to provide direct access to the outdoors, as well as dedicated shared play spaces, to the degree possible" (p. 35).

In neither Plan is there a policy or guideline for a prescribed amount of market rate family-oriented housing or a description of an appropriate size for such housing, despite the claim that "[the] West Don Lands will be one of Toronto's next great neighbourhoods – a community that is people focused, family friendly, environmentally sustainable and designed for urban living" (Waterfront Toronto, 2010h, p. 1).

In November 2009, the City of Toronto won its bid to host the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games. The Athletes' Village has been designated to the West Don Lands, which will accelerate the development of a large portion of the area, in order to accommodate 10,000 athletes and officials, along with the necessary facilities. The

Athletes' Village will be built on the principles established in the Precinct Plan, and will be converted to housing following the Games.

5.3.6.2   East Bayfront

The East Bayfront is a 55 acre underutilized site originally extending from Jarvis Street in the west to Cherry Street in the east, Lakeshore Boulevard to the north, and Lake Ontario to the south. The East Bayfront Precinct Plan applies to the western portion, between Jarvis Street and Parliament Street. The eastern portion, from Parliament Street in the west to Cherry Street in the east, is now a part of the Lower Don Lands, and has its own Precinct Plan which will be discussed in Section 5.3.6.3 of this paper. The lands are largely publicly-owned and divided into four parcels: Dockside, Parkside, Bayside, and Quayside. The remaining land portions are privately owned.

The East Bayfront Precinct Plan, referred to in this section, establishes the objective to be socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable. In order to do so, it must be a "truly mixed use" community catering to a broad range of households – different ages, backgrounds, lifestyles, and incomes – as well as a range of employment, recreation, entertainment, and cultural uses built in the most sustainable manner. Collaboration from many stakeholders and the public was emphasized in the creation of the Plan: one of the key points emphasized through this process is to "ensure a diverse housing mix that accommodates families as well as singles" (p. 9). This is furthered by Waterfront Toronto's commitment to attract "many different types of households from a wide range of incomes, particularly families with children, seniors and downtown workers" (p. 16). The affordable housing targets established in the Plan are consistent

with those of the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan: 20% of units are to be affordable rental housing, and an additional 5% of units are to be affordable ownership housing. This means that of the estimated 6,000 new units in the East Bayfront, at least 1,200 will be affordable rental and 300 will be affordable ownership. Community services and facilities will be provided to support the neighbourhood, including an elementary school site to support the projected 900 school-aged children (at completion), at least two daycares, and a community centre. Parks and open space will be prominent in the area, with 25% of the site dedicated as such, with planned features to include children's playgrounds in multiple areas.

In September 2006, the East Bayfront Zoning By-law was passed for the lands west of Small Street (the lands established in the Precinct Plan) and development has begun. One key element of this by-law is a prescription of unit sizes, including that at least 5% of all ownership dwelling units be built as a combination of three bedrooms units in the tower and three bedroom townhouse/stacked townhouse units. At the west end of the site, the Dockside parcel is underway with Sugar Beach and Sherbourne Common – public parks – and Corus Quay – a mid-rise office building built by the City which is home to Corus Entertainment – which have been completed. Additionally, development has been approved for the Parkside and Bayside parcels. Parkside will be the first private sector development in the East Bayfront, and has been awarded to Great Gulf Homes. In keeping with the tenets of the Precinct Plan, the development will be mixed-use and attractive to a diverse set of residents – downtown living for families will be encouraged with the inclusion of an onsite daycare facility and a minimum of 5% of units in the three bedroom plus range (Waterfront Toronto, 2009). Development at

Bayside has been awarded to Hines Interests Limited Partnership. In keeping with the Precinct Plan, it will include 20% affordable rental units, at least 7.5% market rate rental units, and a target of 5% low-end-of-market ownership units. It will also include a provision of family residential units (Hines Interests Limited Partnership, 2010).

5.3.6.3 Lower Don Lands and Keating Channel

The Lower Don Lands is a 308 acre area located to between the East Bayfront and the Don Roadway, south of the West Don Lands. The site is planned to be redeveloped as a mixed-use community and urban estuary, with close to 13,000 new homes, major commercial space, and 130 acres of parkland. Additionally, the mouth of the Don River is to be redirected and re-naturalized to reduce flood risk and restore it to its former wetland state. The Keating Channel will be preserved and the area to the north, the Keating Channel Neighbourhood, will be the first of the Lower Don Lands to undergo development. The Lower Don Lands Framework was created to express the development goals and objectives for the area, and to provide direction for more specific plans and studies. In keeping with the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, the Lower Don Lands will provide housing to a broad range of household types, sizes, ages, and incomes; will provide a minimum of affordable housing; and will include community services and facilities, including three schools with recreation centres, three cultural centres, five child care facilities, and one library (Waterfront Toronto, 2010f).

The Keating Channel Precinct Plan, referred to below, was created to express the development ideas outlined in the Lower Don Lands Framework Plan, in order to guide development of the Keating Channel Neighbourhood, the first phase of development in

the Lower Don Lands. For the most part it is in keeping with the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan; however, there are some discrepancies pertaining to the regeneration of the mouth of the Don River, though it can be amended as the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan is still before the Ontario Municipal Board. One of the objectives of the Plan is to create diversity through "an intensity and mix of use and program – including a wide range of residential types and affordable housing – that will be sufficient to support a vibrant community" (p. 14); one that is home to "people of all stages of life and involved in a wide range of fields of work" (p. 14). In total, the Keating Channel Neighbourhood will contain approximately 4,700 residential units. In order to meet the objective of a diverse community, family-friendly housing and necessary daycares and schools will be provided – population projections estimate 330 school-aged children and 210 pre-school-aged children. There is no specific size or percentage target for the provision of suitable family-friendly housing; however, affordable housing targets are consistent with the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan.

5.3.7   Fort York Neighbourhood

The Fort York Neighbourhood is located just west of the *Downtown* boundary, borders the Railway Lands West, and is within the *Central Waterfront* as delineated in the Official Plan. The Fort York Neighbourhood Secondary Plan, referred to in this section, designates the area to be developed with *Parks and Open Space*, *Apartment Neighbourhoods*, *Mixed Use*, and *Institutional Areas*. In terms of housing policy, Section 4.2.1 states that "housing in the Fort York Neighbourhood will be available to a wide range of household types, age groups, accessibility levels and income levels in a variety

of residential unit sizes" (p. 2). There is no mention as to how this mix will be achieved or even what it will consist of, but gross floor areas, heights, densities, and built form are all outlined.

There are concessions for the provision of, or financial contribution toward, community services and facilities to service the residential and working population of the neighbourhood, including such possibilities as an elementary school, a community centre, non-profit daycare and workplace daycare, health services, a library, and community meeting facilities; however, they may be located outside of the neighbourhood boundary. Section 6.4 suggests that the City and both the Toronto Public and Toronto Catholic School Boards will collaborate in the planning of a potential school site. Section 9 outlines the development strategy for the area, including a requirement that, prior to gaining approvals, landowners will be responsible for submitting a Community Services and Facilities Strategy which will include such things as an inventory of existing and proposed facilities and demand; a profile of the anticipated residents and workers; an outline of the proposed amenities and their location; and an implementation plan of how and when they will be provided.

5.3.8 Garrison Common North

The Garrison Common North is an area just to the west of the *Downtown* border, and just north of the Fort York Neighbourhood. It is bounded by Bathurst Street to the east, Queen Street to the north, Dufferin Street to the west, and the Gardiner Expressway and CN Railway to the south. The Garrison Common North Secondary Plan, referred to in this section, contains an objective to "provide for a range of housing types in terms of

size, type, affordability and tenure, to encourage household of all sizes" (p. 1). In order to achieve this, Policy 3.1(b) states that "new developments will provide for a range of dwelling types, with an emphasis on grade related units that are suitable for households with children" (p. 1). Community services and facilities will be delivered using Sections 37 and 45 of the *Planning Act* in order to meet the needs of current and future residents and workers.

There are five Site and Area Specific Policies that apply to the area, and contribute to its truly *mixed* use. Area 4 is of most interest to this study because it comprises the lands of King Liberty Village, a vibrant neighbourhood that has been under development since 1999 after lying vacant for nearly twenty years. *The King Liberty Urban Design Guidelines* were adopted in May 2005 to guide development of the area. A large part of the area has been redeveloped with stacked townhouse condominiums, pursuant to the aim of providing "grade related units that are suitable for households with children" (p. 1), with occupancy dating back to 2004, and construction under way for a number of other projects. The King Liberty Village has been a very successful undertaking and is one of the notable up and coming neighbourhoods in the city.

5.3.9   Summary

The level of detail contained in the Secondary Plans illustrates a more refined commitment to creating *complete communities* and creating neighbourhoods that can accommodate a broader range of residents. As is evident in the language and policies of the Plans, this broad range of residents increasingly includes households with children, especially in the Central Waterfront Plans. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the housing

policy of each Secondary Plan, as it relates to family-friendly and affordable housing. Although the Plans suggest the city will grow in a manner that will accommodate all ages and all stages of the life cycle, there is an evident disconnect between what is presented in these Plans and what is actually occurring on the ground. Perhaps what is needed is a more detailed level of policy similar to that of the proposed OPA. This idea is discussed in the next section.

Table 5.2 Summary of Family-Friendly Housing Policy in Secondary Plans

Secondary Plan	Family-Friendly Housing Policy
Railway Lands West	• Housing for "a wide range of households, ages and incomes in a variety of unit sizes" (p. 4) • 25% of units suitable for households with children, half to be provided as affordable housing by TCHC (no specification of size)
Railway Lands Central	• Housing for "a wide range of households, ages and incomes in a variety of unit sizes" (p. 4) • No mention of target for households with children • Help secure land in Railway Lands West for affordable housing
Railway Lands East	• Housing for "a wide range of households, ages and incomes in a variety of unit sizes" (p. 4) • No mention of units for households with children • Goal to meet City's affordable housing targets
King-Spadina	• No specific housing goals
King-Parliament	• No specific housing goals
Central Waterfront	• Housing for "a broad range of household sizes, composition, ages and incomes" (p. 46) • 25% of units to be affordable housing, one quarter of which are to be two bedroom or larger
West Don Lands	• A range of housing units • 25% of units to be a mix of affordable housing, a portion of which shall be suitable for households with children • Family-friendly units to be ground-oriented for access to outdoors • No specific mention of how much or what size family-friendly units
East Bayfront	• Housing for a broad range of ages, backgrounds, lifestyles, and incomes, particularly families with children and seniors • 25% of units to be a mix of affordable housing

	• No specific mention of how much or what size family-friendly units
	• Parkside planned for minimum 5% of units three bedroom or larger
	• Bayside planned for some family units, but no specific target or size
Lower Don Lands – Keating Channel Neighbourhood	• Housing for a broad range of ages, stages of life, and employment background, including families with children • 25% of units to be affordable housing, one quarter of which are to be two bedroom or larger • No specific mention of how many or what size family-friendly units
Fort York Neighbourhood	• Housing for "a wide range of household types, age groups, accessibility levels and income levels in a variety of residential unit sizes" (p. 2) • No specific mention of what percentage or what size family-friendly units
Garrison Common North	• Housing for a broad range of household types • Range of dwelling types, including ground-oriented units for households with children

5.4 Proposed Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children

In order to address the second research objective, *to determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium development to be more family-friendly*, this section provides an in-depth look at one possible strategy: the OPA which has been proposed to Toronto City Council. This proposed policy change would be a significant step toward ensuring more housing is built to accommodate families in the downtown area. The progression of the policy issue is presented in the Table 5.3. The key stages in its development will be discussed below.

Table 5.3 Timeline of Actions for the Proposed Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children

Date	Action
August 16, 2007	Staff Report to Planning and Growth Management Committee "Encouraging New and Protecting Existing Family-Sized Units"
September 5, 2007	Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting • August 16, 2007 Report from Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning presented • Request to City Planning to report back on three related issues by the end of 2007
October 4, 2007	"Profile Toronto : Living Downtown Survey" released
November 7, 2007	Staff Report to Planning and Growth Management Committee "Update on the Development of a Strategy for Encouraging and Protecting Family-Sized Units"
November 29, 2007	Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting • November 7, 2007 Report from Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning presented • Item deferred to January 10, 2008 meeting
January 10, 2008	Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting • November 7, 2007 Report from Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning presented and received by Council
August 27, 2008	Staff Report to Planning and Growth Management Committee "Request for Direction – Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children"
September 10, 2008	Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting • August 27, 2008 Report from Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning presented • Report recommendations amended by Council
May 14, 2009	Staff Report to Planning and Growth Management Committee "Proposed Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children: Authorization for Circulation"
June 4, 2009	Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting • May 14, 2009 Report from Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning presented • Report recommendations adopted by Council
October 13, 2009	Staff Report to Planning and Growth Management Committee "Final Report – Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children"
November 4, 2009	Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting • October 13, 2009 Report from Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning presented • Item deferred until April 21, 2010 meeting • Request for report from the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) on the proposed changes

	and recommendations, and for Staff to report on several issues
April 21, 2010	Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting • Item deferred until June 16, 2010 meeting
May 2010	BILD Report "City of Toronto's Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children" released
May 20, 2010	Staff Report to Planning and Growth Management Committee "Revised Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children"
June 16, 2010	Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting • October 13, 2009 and May 20, 2010 Reports from Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning presented • Items referred to Chief planner for further consideration • Request for further recommendations to be submitted in 2011 alongside the upcoming Official Plan Review and Living Downtown Study

The issue of family-sized housing dates back to 2007 when discussions arose surrounding the supply of large, family-sized housing units, particularly in relation to protecting existing rental stock and providing additional units in new construction in order to promote and maintain the city as a "thriving and diverse" metropolis. Stemming from discussions on the matter in early 2007, the Chief Planner called for a report on the issue and possible policy directions to be presented at the September 5, 2007 Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting. A Staff Report, "Encouraging New and Protecting Existing Family-Sized Units", was released August 16, 2007, containing pertinent information and establishing direction for future discussion on the matter. The definition of the typical family is changing and what is deemed appropriate or suitable housing for families is variable; however, the focus of the matter is in the provision of *large* family-sized units, and as such is aimed at three bedroom units because it is the least commonly built unit size – averaging roughly one to two percent of all new condominium units for sale in the City of Toronto since 2002 (City of Toronto, 2007b).

The report addresses three possible actions: prescribing a minimum percentage of three bedroom units to be built in new development; using knock-out panels and flexible design to allow units to be combined as needed; and protecting large family-sized rental units through new by-law guidelines. One of the prominent indications of the report is that although the Official Plan contains general policy goals for family-oriented housing, a "broader based strategy to create family-oriented housing in the City is recommended in order to implement the Official Plan housing policy" (p. 1). However, the report concludes that "it would be a challenge to demonstrate at this time in the Toronto market that intervention to require three bedroom apartments in new developments is appropriate" (p. 12) and that although knock-out panels are possible, their use would be "extremely limited" (p. 13). This report was presented to the Planning and Growth Management Committee at the September 5, 2007 meeting. By a motion moved by Councillor Adam Vaughan, it was requested that the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning report back on three issues: creating a strategy to promote more family-oriented housing; secure knock-out panels in new developments through possible density increases; and accommodate the protection of existing family-sized rental units through the implementation guidelines of the Municipal Code.

In October, 2007, the results of the Living Downtown Survey (conducted in December 2006) were released. The survey was completed to provide a more in-depth look at the downtown residential population, in both existing (pre 2001) and new (post 2001) housing. Of particular note is the finding that the period between 2002 and 2007 saw the largest increase in downtown population in the last 30 years, with 14,800 new residents (10% growth) in the core (City of Toronto, 2007a). Of the households in new

units, 9% were families with children; however, of the 84% who are singles or couples without children, the vast majority were between the ages of 20-39 (City of Toronto, 2007a) – in or entering the child-bearing stage of the family life cycle. In terms of unit size, in existing and new housing, three bedroom and larger are the least common sizes; this is especially true in new housing, with far fewer of these larger units built nowadays (City of Toronto, 2007a). The report concludes that the majority of downtown residents are young singles and couples without children, but notes that "many new dwellings are being occupied by families with children, working age persons and the elderly" (p. 12).

On November 7, 2007, another Staff Report, "Update on the Development of a Strategy for Encouraging and Protecting Family-Sized Units" was released. The report acknowledges that there is a shortage of family-friendly housing in the downtown core and, because it is an essential component of the "full range" of housing that the City contends to provide, changes must be made to ensure family-friendly housing is available in the short- and long-term.

August 27, 2008, a more in-depth Staff Report, entitled "Request for Direction – Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children", was released. After further analyzing the results of the Living Downtown Survey and investigating the strategies used in other cities to accommodate family housing, the report suggests that a draft Official Plan Amendment be compiled for consideration, and that discussions be held with the development community and other key stakeholders about possible directions. This recommendation is based on a few key findings. Between 2003 and 2007, development applications show that in Etobicoke York, North York, and Scarborough three bedroom plus units make up 13.4%, 10%, and

111

14.8% of proposed units respectively, while in Toronto and East York the number is only

5.3% (City of Toronto, 2008).   In the Downtown and Waterfront area, only 4.1% of units

in the pipeline were three bedroom plus (City of Toronto, 2008). This discrepancy

illustrates the inherent lack of large, family-sized units in the downtown core.

Additionally, the 2006 Census results indicate that in the City of Toronto only 9% of

apartment units in buildings of more than five storeys are three bedroom or larger, but

that 62% of these large units are occupied by households with children (City of Toronto,

2008). The affordability of such units is an issue as three bedroom units are the highest

priced, and tend to be out of reach for many families with children (City of Toronto,

2008, p. 10). One suggestion is to use *inclusionary zoning*[18] as a measure of securing

affordable housing – a practice that is used in many other North American cities,

including Vancouver (City of Toronto, 2008). It is also suggested that an amendment to

the Official Plan apply to the *Downtown* area (not including the *Central Waterfront*,

because it is subject to its own Secondary Plan) and be focused on family-sized units in

the three bedroom range, as two bedroom units are already commonly built (City of

Toronto, 2008, p. 14). As well, concessions for related facilities and amenities to attract

families downtown are needed. This report was presented to the Planning and Growth

Management Committee at the September 10, 2008 meeting, where the recommendation

of stakeholder consultation was amended to include school board representatives.

The proposed OPA was drafted and presented to stakeholders for comment. A

summary of comments was compiled in the May 14, 2009 Staff Report, "Proposed

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[18] Inclusionary zoning is a regulatory instrument to encourage or require a provision of affordable housing within market rate development projects.

Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with

Children: Authorization for Circulation". The various stakeholder groups consisted of:

Internal Stakeholders	**External Stakeholders**
• Affordable Housing Office	• Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD)
• Shelter Support and Housing Administration	• Federation of Metro Tenants' Association
• Toronto Building	• Toronto District School Board
• Legal Services	• Toronto Catholic District School Board
• Public Health	• Ratepayers and neighbourhood associations
• Social Development, Finance and Administration	• City Parents Network
• Children's Services	• Home Ownership Alternatives Non-Profit Corporation
• Parks, Forestry and Recreation	

Many comments were received in support and opposition to the proposed policy change

(see City of Toronto, 2009b for full list of comments). As it was put forth, the proposed

OPA would see the words "housing suitable for households with children" added to

Official Plan Policy 3.2.1.1, to read:

> A full range of housing, in terms of form, tenure and affordability, across the City and within neighbourhoods, will be provided and maintained to meet the current and future needs of residents. A full range of housing includes: ownership and rental housing, affordable and mid-range rental and ownership housing, social housing, shared and/or congregate-living housing arrangements, supportive housing, emergency and transitional housing for homeless people and at-risk groups, *housing suitable for households with children*, housing that meets the needs of people with physical disabilities and housing that makes more efficient use of the existing housing stock. (City of Toronto, 2009b, p, 13, *emphasis on proposed amendment*)

Additionally, a clause would be added to Policy 2.2.1.4 to be read as:

> 4(c) requiring, where appropriate, in new developments with 20 or more dwelling units in the Downtown, that at least 10% of those units contain three or more bedrooms suitable for households with children.
> (City of Toronto, 2009b, p. 13,)

Following the initial stakeholder consultation, changes were made to the clause added to

Policy 2.2.1.4, as follows:

> 4(c) requiring in new developments with *100 or more* dwelling units in the Downtown, that at least 10% of those units be provided as units suitable for households with children in the following manner:
>
> i) *the units be built to contain three or more bedrooms; or*
>
> ii) *the units be built to contain a lesser number of bedrooms if requested by the initial purchaser, provided that such units retain the ability to be converted to contain three or more bedrooms through relatively minor changes to internal bedroom wall configurations; or*
>
> iii) *any combination of (i) and (ii) above.*
>
> *Transitional, supportive or seniors non-profit or co-operative housing that is subject to recognized government funding programs and municipal housing agreements is not subject to this requirement.*
>
> (City of Toronto, 2009b, p. 31, *emphasis on changes to original amendment proposal*)

The recommendations summarized in the report call for: further stakeholder consultation

to gain feedback on the rewording of the proposed changes to Policy 2.2.1.4; a public

consultation meeting; and a statutory public meeting of the Planning and Growth

Management Committee in November 2009. These recommendations were brought to

the June 4, 2009 Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting and adopted by

Council through a motion moved by Councillor Adam Vaughan.

A community consultation meeting was held in September 2009, with comments

from the meeting documented in the October 13, 2009 Staff Report, "Final Report –

Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with

Children". The general themes emerging from both the stakeholder and community

consultation processes relate to: policy threshold by unit type; exceptions to the policy;

affordability; need for incentives; demand for three bedroom units; amenities and

services; built form and building design; flexible unit design; rental tenure; geographic

area of focus; and applications in process (for summaries and full comments, see City of

Toronto, 2009a, 2009b). This consultation led to further changes to the proposed

amendment. Refinement of the proposed change of Policy 3.2.1.1 would see the words

"housing suitable for households with children" replaced with "dwelling units suitable for

households with children", meaning Official Plan Policy 3.2.1.1 would read:

> A full range of housing, in terms of form, tenure and
> affordability, across the City and within neighbourhoods,
> will be provided and maintained to meet the current and
> future needs of residents. A full range of housing includes:
> ownership and rental housing, affordable and mid-range
> rental and ownership housing, social housing, shared and/or
> congregate-living housing arrangements, supportive
> housing, emergency and transitional housing for homeless
> people and at-risk groups, *dwelling units suitable for
> households with children*, housing that meets the needs of
> people with physical disabilities and housing that makes
> more efficient use of the existing housing stock. (City of
> Toronto, 2009a, p. 8, *emphasis on proposed amendment*)

Furthermore, the proposal to add a clause to Policy 2.2.1.4 would be replaced with an

amendment to Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies, through the addition of:

> 336. Downtown Area
> New developments, including infill, containing 100 or
> more dwelling units within the area shown, will
> ensure at least 10 percent of the new dwelling units
> are suitable for households with children in the
> following manner:
>
> a) 10 percent of the units to be built in the
>   development will contain three or more bedrooms;
>   and

b) for the purpose of this Policy, a unit will be deemed to contain three or more bedrooms if it is constructed with a fewer number of bedrooms and thereafter maintained in a manner that ensures it can be converted to contain three or more bedrooms through minor changes to internal wall configurations.

Transitional, supportive or seniors non-profit or co-operative housing that is subject to recognized government funding programs and municipal housing agreements is not subject to this requirement.
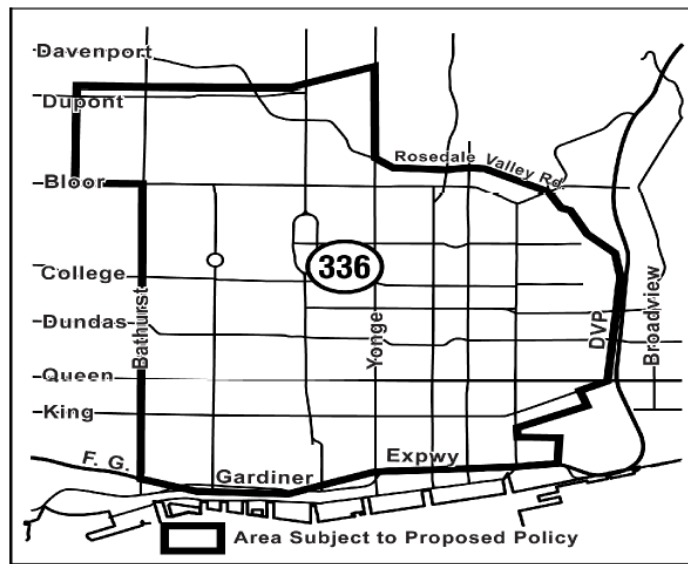
(City of Toronto, 2009a, p. 11)

The report recommends that the aforementioned changes be made to the proposed OPA, and that stylistic and technical changes be made as necessary. The report was presented at the November 4, 2009 Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting. Based on a motion moved by Councillor Adam Vaughan, the item was deferred until April 21, 2010 and a request for a meeting with the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), other stakeholders, and families living in condominiums was put forth, in order for a more detailed study (to be funded by BILD) on the proposed changes and recommendations, as well as for Staff to address the following concerns:

- Development size threshold
- Area of application: city-wide or specified school districts
- Affordability and possible funding strategies
- Amenity space requirements
- Knock-out panels between units
- Exempt rental housing projects
- Explore zoning options

At the April 21, 2010 meeting, consideration of the item was once again deferred until the June 16, 2010 meeting.

On May 20, 2010, Staff Report "Revised Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children" was circulated following the release of the BILD Report, *City of Toronto's Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children*. The report released by BILD consists of a review of the proposed OPA and a summary of the discussions stemming from two focus groups held in March of 2010. In total, the focus groups brought together seven participants[19] and fourteen staff[20] members over the two meeting times. Questions related to neighbourhood amenities, building amenities, and unit elements. Based on the results of the focus group discussions and the review of relevant research on the topic, the BILD report does not recommend the approval of the proposed OPA. The reasoning behind this decision is based on the content of existing policies in the Toronto Official Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe that already "support the intent of the proposed Amendment without adding a new policy condition" (BILD, 2010, p. 7). In place of an OPA, BILD makes the following recommendations presented in Table 5.4.

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[19] Participants were Toronto residents, either current or previous condominium dwellers, typically with an interest in the matter
[20] Staff were representatives from the City (Council and Planning divisions), development firms, BILD, and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation

Table 5.4 BILD Report Recommendations

Recommendation	Description
Process-Based Planning	Use Section 37 Agreements on a project-by-project basis to negotiate for family-sized units
Incentives	Use incentives to improve affordability of family-sized units, such as reduced development charges and reallocation of Section 37 funds
Functional Suite Designs	Provide design plans for units that are more functional to the needs of a family, even if they consist of fewer than three bedrooms
Researching Functional Suite Designs	Support further research on how to achieve functional units and how they can adapt to the changing needs of occupants over time
Flexible Suite Designs (knock-out panels)	Support and promote the use of knock-out panels by including them in unit design and demonstrating to potential buyers how they may be used
Incentives for Flexible Suite Designs	Encourage the City to create development and consumer-based incentives, such as marketing campaigns and financial incentives to buyers who combine two units to increase the affordability of such units
Stronger Market Campaigns for Families	Partner with the City to promote downtown living as family-friendly

Note: adapted from BILD (2010)

Although the BILD Report does not support the proposed OPA, it is emphasized that they would like to be involved in future discussion on the matter if the City continues to pursue the policy change.

The May 20, 2010 Staff Report maintains that the proposed OPA is still required because, despite language to provide a full range of housing in current policies, larger units suitable for families are limited and action is required to stimulate construction. In response to the BILD Report, the Staff Report suggests attention will be given to: the idea of knock-out panels for flexible design; the issue of affordability; the use of incentives; and better marketing of downtown living to families. The report also addresses several concerns raised by the Planning and Growth Management Committee on the proposed OPA, summarized in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Concerns Regarding the Proposed Official Plan Amendment Policy Direction

Concern	Proposed Direction
Development Size Threshold	Continue to apply to buildings with 100 or more units as they are best able to absorb potential design and construction related costs of building larger units, and are better able to provided appropriate amenity space, including areas specifically designed for children.
Percentages of Units Required	Despite the success of negotiating with developers to provide 10% three bedroom units on a case by case basis in Ward 20 (Councillor Adam Vaughan), the policy has been reduced to 5% three bedroom units to recognize industry concerns. The 10% prescription will still apply where convertible units are provided instead of actual three bedroom units.
Area of Policy Application: City-wide or Specified School Districts	Changes to Policy 3.2.1.1 will apply across the city; however, *Downtown* will be the focus of the Site Specific Policy 336 because this is where larger units are most needed. The *Central Waterfront* is not included because its Secondary Plan already contains policy to provide at least 5% family-sized units. The policy will not be subject only to school districts with declining enrolment because housing is only one factor – simply having family-sized housing does not guarantee enrolment.
Affordability and Possible Financial Incentives (Funding Strategies)	These units are not likely to be considered as *affordable housing*, but there are other housing programs in place to provide such housing, including affordable family-sized housing. Larger units can be made more affordable through flexible and convertible design options. No financial incentives will be provided because the policy is not meant to ensure that families occupy the larger units, only that they are built as an option. Furthermore, development charges are the same for three and four bedrooms units as they are for two bedroom units, therefore not acting as a disincentive.
Amenity Space (and Community Service) Requirements	Policy exists to ensure amenity space is provided in all developments. The City will work with developers to ensure adequate family related amenity and facility space is provided on a per project basis. As well, flexible design can allow amenity space to be adapted to suit the needs of changing residents.

Knock-out Panels Between Units	Combinable units have potential to provide suitable options for creating family-size units so long as they are well designed and adequately provided.
Exempt Rental Housing Projects	All new developments, either rental or ownership tenure, are subject to the proposed changes in order to provide more options for families; however, transitional, supportive or seniors non-profit or co-operative housing is exempt.
Explore Zoning Options	Should the policy amendment gain approval, a general zoning amendment for the downtown area is recommended.

Note: adapted from City of Toronto (2010c)

In response to these concerns, and in conjunction with the findings of the BILD Report and comments from earlier stakeholder and community consultation, further refinements to the proposed OPA were made in regards to the Chapter 7, Site and Area Specific Policies:

336. Downtown Area
New developments, including infill, containing 100 or more dwelling units, will ensure that a specified percentage of the new dwelling units are suitable for households with children in the following manner:

a) 5 percent of the units to be built in the development will contain three or more bedrooms; or

b) 10 percent of the units may be built as convertible units that may initially contain fewer than three bedrooms, provided that such units retain the ability to be converted to contain three or more bedrooms through relatively minor changes to internal wall configurations; or

c) 20 percent of the units may be built as combinable units that may contain fewer than three bedrooms, provided that such units may be combined with adjacent units through the removal of knock-out panels in demising walls to create larger units consisting of three or more bedrooms; or

d) any combination of (a), (b) and (c) above which provides the equivalent number of units at the rate

of 1 three-bedroom unit being equal to two
convertible units, or 4 combinable units.

Transitional, supportive or seniors non-profit or co-operative housing that is subject to recognized government funding programs and municipal housing agreements is not subject to this requirement.
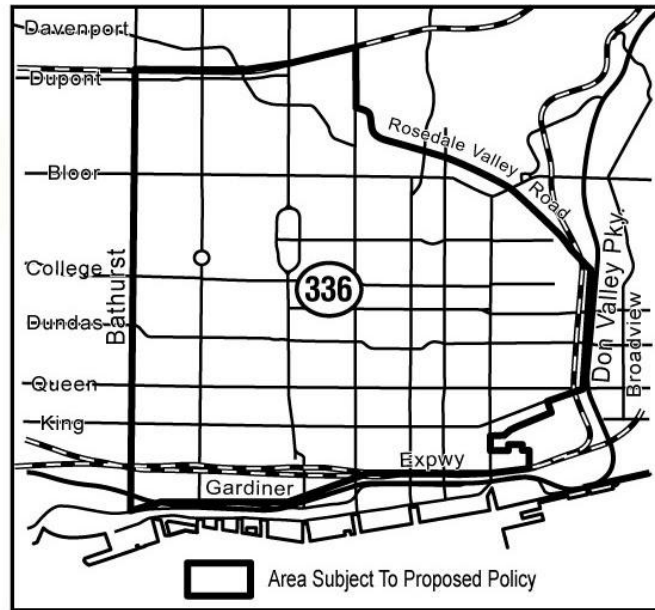
(City of Toronto, 2010c, p. 20, *emphasis on changes
to previous proposal*)

At the June 16, 2010 Planning and Growth Management Committee meeting, the October 13, 2009 and May 20, 2010 reports were presented to Council with the revised proposal for the OPA as established in the May 20, 2010 report. By a motion moved by Councillor Adam Vaughan, the item was referred to the Chief Planner for consideration and further consultation with stakeholders. Additionally, further recommendations are requested to be submitted to the Planning and Growth Management Committee in 2011, alongside the forthcoming Official Plan Review and Living Downtown Study.

5.4.1 Summary

The inherent purpose of the proposed OPA is to guarantee housing options in the future and prevent the creation of a monolithic subculture of young professionals residing in one bedroom condominiums downtown. There may not be many families living in downtown condominiums now, but by not building suitably sized units today, there will not be a choice for families to live there tomorrow.

As the matter stands today, the proposed OPA is still under consideration. If it is passed, it would be a significant step forward in creating a sustainable, diverse downtown area with a full range of housing and amenities that can accommodate people at all ages and at all stages of their lives. However, it is a contentious issue among many key players in the planning and development field. The issue will be further explored in the in-depth key informant interviews, presented in Chapter 7.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the planning policies guiding growth and development in Toronto. It has also presented a significant proposed policy direction that is at the heart of the matter of family-friendly housing. Now that a thorough understanding of how planning is conducted in Toronto, and what might be the case in the future, has been established, it is important to look at what is occurring in other cities. Doing so will provide a better idea of possible strategies that can be employed, as well as lessons learned from various experiences in housing policy. Vancouver is the most notable example, and will be the basis of exploration in the following chapter.

6   VANCOUVER POLICY OVERVIEW

6.1   Introduction

The following section will look at what various North American cities have done through planning policy to encourage residential development in the urban core and to tackle the issue of family-friendly housing. The focus is primarily on Vancouver because it is considered by many as the foremost example of how a city can encourage families to move back to the core. Following the detailed evaluation of Vancouver's policy initiatives and brownfield redevelopments is an overview of what several other cities have tried. This section forms part of the policy review and will help address the second research objective, *to determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium development to be more family-friendly*, and contribute to the fourth research objective*, to make recommendations for the City of Toronto on making condominium development more family oriented in downtown Toronto*, through the lessons learned from the Vancouver experience.

6.2   Vancouver

Vancouver is often touted as one of the most livable cities in the world; for the last five years it has ranked first (with a score of 98%) in the Global Liveability Report published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2011) – Toronto ranks fourth. What qualifies the city is the commitment to maintaining livablitiy and sustainability while accommodating rapid growth. Since the 1970s, the city has grown under the reigns of "an environmentally conscious planning regime"; one that has allowed Vancouver to achieve "an urban renaissance more comprehensively than any other city in North

America" (Punter, 2003, p. 3). Dedication to high urban design standards and public

participation throughout the planning process has led to much praise and recognition of

the City's planning and development accomplishments (see Punter, 2003; Harcourt et al.,

2007). The *Vancouver Model*, or *Vancouverism*, has become an international

phenomenon in urban planning, one that has been called "the greatest urban experiment

since the 1950s" (Montgomery, 2006, p. 44). It can be looked at as something to strive

for, and provides many lessons for other cities. The planning achievements that have led

to Vancouver's success are discussed in the succeeding sections, with particular attention

to housing policy. Based on this review, possible strategies can be highlighted for

application to Toronto.

6.2.1   Planning Achievement Background

Vancouver's "urban renaissance" seemingly began in the 1970s, when planning

reform swept council; discretionary zoning, official plan development, and urban design

review took precedence in planning; and The Electors Action Movement (TEAM) was

voted into power in 1972. The election of TEAM was credited to voters who demanded

that the growth and development of the city undergo major reconstruction (Punter, 2003),

which it did with a new planning agenda focused on creating a livable city. Changes to

the way planning was conducted were most notable through the creation of the Urban

Design Panel, and the Development Permit Board and Advisory Panel in the mid 1970s

to assess development proposals. City Council, which is comprised of ten officials

elected at-large[21], does not regularly intervene in the planning process. By giving power

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[21] Vancouver is not based on a ward electoral system like the City of Toronto; rather, councillors are elected to represent the city as a whole.

to the panels and the Director of Planning, discretionary review, professionalism and

transparency became the norm in planning (Punter, 2003). Another accomplishment of

TEAM was the creation of various official development plans to guide development in

different areas of the city, under the Vancouver Charter[22]. False Creek South Shore was

the first area to have an official development plan, adopted in 1974 – an early example of

a successful mixed-use development on former industrial lands. According to Harcourt,

Cameron, and Rossiter (2007), the defining element is "the diversity of residents" (p.99).

In the 1970s it was realized that something had to change in the way Vancouver was

being developed to avoid becoming an "executive city" – it needed a mix of incomes

(Harcourt et al., 2007). For urban renewal to work for the whole population, planning

needed to accommodate the whole population. So, in the 1970s, and still in force today,

it became a requirement that development on City property be inclusive to a variety of

income levels.

In the 1980s, when the Non-Partisan Association regained power, the City took on

a pro-development stance and loosened some of the planning reform established under

TEAM. However, by 1990 it became clear that the people were not supportive of this:

the debate raged on pitting the "livable city" against the "executive city" and the move

was made to re-establish the planning reform adopted under TEAM in the 1970s (Punter,

2003). In 1991, the City of Vancouver completed the Central Area Plan. One of the key

housing policies of this plan (Policy 3.4) is to "seek opportunities for housing diversity in

new areas ... and encourage housing for families with children wherever possible" (City

of Vancouver, 1991, p. 1). During this time, ways to create safe, livable neighbourhoods

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[22] The Vancouver Charter is the provincial statute governing the City of Vancouver, which is not a part of the Municipalities Act of British Government.

were tested, with the rowhouse and apartment model becoming the preference because it allows for a diversity of households at high densities, while creating a street presence and the much touted "eyes on the street" (Punter, 2003; Macdonald, 2005). In 1992, Council adopted the *High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines* to provide criteria for meeting family housing goals. This set of guidelines is to be used alongside an official development plan or zoning by-law for housing designed for families with children at a density of 75 or more units per hectare, and addresses elements of site, building, and unit design (see City of Vancouver, 1992b for complete list of guidelines). Examples of guidelines include: grouping family units together within a building; providing play space for children of all ages; and providing private outdoor open space in each unit, at a minimum size of 1.8m by 2.7m (City of Vancouver, 1992b). As defined in the guidelines, family-sized housing is considered two or more bedrooms.

In keeping with the idea of livability, Council adopted CityPlan in 1995, a vision for Vancouver's growth for the next twenty years. Created by thousands of residents, the vision for Vancouver is one of a "city of neighbourhoods" based on increased housing opportunities within the core in order to reduce sprawl (Punter, 2003). Housing goals would create diversity in housing stock to allow for people of various ages and stages of life cycle to meet their changing housing needs within their familiar neighbourhood (City of Vancouver, 2003a). In 1996, the Greater Vancouver Regional District Board adopted the *Livable Region Strategic Plan*. The City of Vancouver then created a Regional Context Statement to explain how the City's various plans would be in accordance with the principles of the regional growth strategy. The regional plan is founded on four key points:

1. Protect the Green Zone
2. Build complete communities
3. Achieve a compact metropolitan region
4. Increase transportation choice
   (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1996, p. 9)

A part of this plan designates the *Metropolitan Core* of downtown Vancouver to be a

high-density commercial, cultural, and residential centre (Greater Vancouver Regional

District, 1996). The notion of "Living First" became the chosen method of developing

the city's core with an emphasis on residential development (Beasley, 2000). This has

become the basis of the *Vancouver Model* and coupled with a more recent focus on

environmental sustainability, continues to be the foundation for planning today.

6.2.2   The Vancouver Model

The *Living First* strategy is based on a set of planning principles that guide

residential development in Vancouver (see Table 6.1 for a summary). A key component

of the model is that the developer bears the cost of providing the sought-after amenities:

"the city avoids burdening the existing taxpayer with the costs of this growth ... [and

prevents] ... a taxpayers' revolt, closing the door on housing growth" (Beasley, 2000, p.

2). This commitment from developers to provide community benefits has led to the

success of Vancouver's planning.

Table 6.1 Living First Planning Principles

Planning Principle	Description
Promote vehicular alternatives	• Limit commuter access into downtown • Prioritize public transit, pedestrianism and cycling • Promote the congestion free urban lifestyle
Develop complete neighbourhoods	• Focus on the pedestrian scale • Provide mixed, mutually supportive uses and activities • Provide a full range of amenities, including daycares, schools, community centres, parks, and playgrounds

	• Create a local commercial high street and phased-in ancillary amenities as needed • Include "third places" for neighbourly gatherings outside of home and work
Create a diverse housing mix	• Offer both market and non-market housing • Provide for a mix of incomes • Accommodate a mix of households including families with children • Include seniors and special needs housing • Supply an array of housing options
Integrate new and old neighbourhoods	• Extend existing city character into new areas • Integrate public realm and street life
Link parks and open spaces	• Incorporate a high standard of parks and open spaces in each neighbourhood • Include walking and cycling path systems • Improve waterfront paths, amenity and access

Note: adapted from Beasley (2000).

Vancouver's success in creating a livable city, especially in high-density, high-rise development, is due to many reasons. One major contributing factor is the geographical boundary surrounding the central city, specifically the ocean and mountains, which limit the physical size of the city. Another factor is the lack of major highways connecting core and edge areas, which limits access to the city (Beasley, 2000). The West End and Downtown are accessible by only three bridges, which severely limit commutership. Vancouver's physical constraints are coupled with a "comprehensive integrated strategy", according to Larry Beasley, former Planning Director of Vancouver, based on:

> • pushing for housing intensity;
> • insisting on housing diversity;
> • structuring coherent, identifiable, and supportive neighbourhoods; and
> • fostering suitably domestic urban design and architecture. (Beasley, 2000, p. 1)

The City sought to avoid "differentiated ghettos" that plague many cities by ensuring a strong mix of housing through the livable city concept (Beasley, 2000). The mix of housing is quite possibly the most important key to the success of the *Vancouver Model* because it allows for the *urban lifestyle* to be played against the *suburban lifestyle*. What Vancouver sought to achieve was "an attractive surrogate for the single-family dwelling in the single-family suburb" (Beasley, 2000, p. 3); and it did so through the inclusion of rowhouses with street-oriented entrances, often referred to as "city homes" (Macdonald, 2005), with narrow towers setback above. This type of housing form has "become a cornerstone of Vancouver's strategy to reclaim its streets as part of the public realm" (City of Vancouver, 2003b) and is a major contributor to creating the urban dream.

Vancouver's commitment to the public realm and urban design goals are also contributing factors. The City works with developers to ensure that an adequate provision of community amenities is achieved and that the public realm is not neglected. One of the most significant public realm achievements has been the creation of the Seaside Route and Seawall[23] with over 30km of walking and cycling paths along the shore of central Vancouver (Beasley, 2000). Urban design guidelines are pertinent to the goals of development and to ensure appropriate height and floor plate design, adequate provision of street-related retail, underground parking, sun and view access, and maximum pedestrian access (Beasley, 2000; Punter, 2003).

Vancouver's development achievements would not have been possible without the cooperative planning process that governs the city's growth. The governing

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[23] The Seawall (also known as the Seaside Route) is a 30km recreational path lining the waterfront, connecting neighbourhoods, parks, and community centres. For the most part it is divided into a section for walking and jogging, and a section for cycling and inline skating. It is a major tourist attraction and "the most popular recreational facility in Vancouver" (City of Vancouver, n.d.).

framework is highly discretionary and based on guidelines and incentives instead of rigid policy (Beasley, 2000). This approach allows for public and private sector and citizen involvement, dialogue and cooperation in all planning decisions. As well, planning is in the hands of planners not city councillors, which allows long-term goals to be reached without the interference of councillor re-election to get in the way.

Over the years various official development plans and policy statements and broadsheets have been created for areas of the city undergoing redevelopment. Most notable are those for former industrial lands on the downtown waterfront, including False Creek South Shore, False Creek North, Coal Harbour, and Southeast False Creek. These areas represent some of Vancouver's most successfully planned neighbourhoods and are the primary examples of the *Vancouver Model*. These areas will be discussed in the following sections with regard to their housing policies, planning achievements, and relevant evaluations.

6.2.3   False Creek South Shore

False Creek South Shore is the initial example of Vancouver's inner city residential planning. Redevelopment began in the 1970s and was largely completed by the early 1990s. The strategy was to create a socially mixed neighbourhood, both in terms of incomes, housing types and tenure, with a foundation of community amenities and open park space, an emphasis on pedestrianism, and a particular priority on families with children (City of Vancouver, 2001, 2003b). Although the area was an enormous success as an alternative to the sprawling single-family residential suburbs, over time the low densities proved to be an underutilization of the land area and ultimately led to a

lower than expected level of sustainable urban living (City of Vancouver, 2003b). In addition, although the area is a successful socially-mixed neighbourhood, according to the report *False Creek South Shore: Evaluation of Social Mix Objectives*, published in 2001, the social mix is not at the level that was targeted in the initial planning process. The report looked at 1996 Census data and determined that although significant, the social mix did not reach targets and has seen an increasing divergence from the intended goals; however, the area is still more mixed than neighbouring areas. As well, the report notes that social circumstances have changed since the policy was established in the 1970s: many households today have two income earners; many of the original residents have aged, including their children, and moved out; and the area has become a more sought after neighbourhood (City of Vancouver, 2001). This helps account for the age and income mix discrepancies over time.

Despite the lower than expected social mix, and the inappropriate densities, a key lesson was learned: "mixed residential neighbourhoods can be successful living environments and are, in fact, essential to achieving truly diverse communities" (City of Vancouver, 2003b, p. 4). These lessons are evident in the policies guiding more recent redevelopment projects in Vancouver, including False Creek North, Coal Harbour, and Southeast False Creek.

6.2.4 False Creek North

False Creek North is one of the most prominent examples of Vancouver's success in planning and development. The site is 200 acres and largely consists of the former Canadian Pacific Railway lands. After playing host to Expo'86, it was sold for

redevelopment in 1988 and is almost entirely built out at this point. The area is divided

into three large tracts that were developed by different firms: Granville Slopes, Concord

Pacific Place (developed by Concord Pacific, it is the largest area and subject of focus),

and CityGate. In a strong effort of cooperative planning, the redevelopment of the area

as a *complete community* increased the population of downtown Vancouver by one third,

contributed over fifty acres of public parks, three kilometres of seawall, daycares, school,

and community facilities. This was achieved through a planning programme for the False

Creek Basin set out in the False Creek Policy Broadsheets and the False Creek North

Official Development Plan. These two documents provide a framework for the

development of the area and outline the responsibilities of the developer in providing

public amenities and a mix of housing (Punter, 2003). They will be reviewed below.

6.2.4.1   False Creek Policy Broadsheet

The False Creek Policy Broadsheet (1988), referred to in this section, establishes

policies to be used by the City and developers to guide development in the False Creek

area. It outlines the issues, facts and past policies which influence present policies. Of

particular interest are the policies relating to housing and the need to accommodate

households with children in order to achieve complete communities.

The primary issue with regard to residential household and income mix was

whether the City should intervene with the market in order to achieve a desired range of

household types or leave it to market forces and developers (City of Vancouver, 1988).

The City of Vancouver decided on the former and established policies which set out

minimum targets for units suitable for households with children (25%) and units available

for core-need households[24] (20%) (City of Vancouver, 1988). As established in the *High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines*, units of at least two bedrooms are considered suitable for households with children. These policy targets were coupled with appropriate densities and provided a guide for the policies established in the False Creek North Official Development Plan.

6.2.4.2   False Creek North Official Development Plan

The False Creek North Official Development Plan (1990), referred to in this section, establishes planning directions for the area, in accordance with the False Creek Policy Broadsheet. The plan sets out seven organizing principles, listed in Table 6.2; the last principle is presented in full and discussed in detail as it is relevant to housing for families.

Table 6.2 False Creek North Official Development Plan Organizing Principles

Organizing Principles
1. Integrate with the city
2. Build on the setting
3. Maintain the sense of a substantial water basin
4. Use streets as an organizing device
5. Create lively places having strong imageability
6. Create neighbourhoods
7. Plan for all age groups with a particular emphasis on children "To achieve robust neighbourhoods which have flexibility to accommodate all residents and to achieve the City objective of accommodating families with children, planning and designing for the needs of children should be emphasized. The following should be considered: • safety and security without sanitizing the environment; • parks, school, day care and other facilities needs; and • public settings for socializing"

Note: adapted from City of Vancouver (1990c)

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[24] Core-need Households are defined by the City of Vancouver as "a renter household – Downtown older singles, seniors, disabled and family with children households – who must pay 30 percent or more of their gross income on shelter, including utilities, for an average market rental unit in the community, adequate and suitable to their basic needs (City of Vancouver, 1990a).

In order to achieve the planning goals for the area, land use intentions are established. Two key elements of the residential land use are that 25% of total units are to be family-sized and roughly 13% are to be affordable, of which 50% are to be family-sized affordable. In addition to the provision of suitable child-friendly housing, the Plan establishes a number of cultural, recreational, and institutional uses to be provided by the developer, including:

- one K-7 community school with community space and gymnasium
- one K-7 school
- one community centre with gymnasium
- eight daycare facilities
- one multi-purpose room
- one library facility
- one field house

Because the onus of providing such facilities was on the developer, they came to fruition quite successfully and timely.

Development of False Creek North followed these plans and what was achieved is a complete community which incorporates mixed uses and a diverse population, avoiding a sub-culture of young professionals and baby boomers in largely single use, high-rise neighbourhoods.

6.2.4.3 False Creek North Post-Occupancy Evaluation

In 2007, a post-occupancy evaluation of False Creek North was conducted by graduate students from the School of Community and Regional Planning at the University of British Columbia. The report, *Living in False Creek North: From the Residents' Perspective* (Wenman et al., 2008), elicits the findings of questionnaires, workshops and interviews with residents of the area. Although the results indicate a

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positive and successful assessment of the False Creek North development, it presents

several recommendations and areas of improvement for future policy planning. The

findings are broken down into eight topic areas:

- parks and public open space
- shops, services and amenities
- mobility and transportation
- community safety
- the residential building
- the residential unit
- sense of community
- perceived sustainability of the neighbourhood

A general overview of the findings pertinent to this thesis is outlined below.

Among one of the major successes of False Creek North is the socio-economic

mix of residents. Renters, which make up about forty percent of households, and owners,

unite as a strong community, in part because buildings of different tenure are

indistinguishable from one another (Wenman et al., 2008). The cultural diversity of the

area is valued by many residents, as is the mix of households by age – in fact, it is evident

that seniors in the area highly value living in a neighbourhood with children (Wenman et

al., 2008). Another major success is the "almost 'suburban'-like qualities" that residents

find in the area, including the numerous parks and open spaces, an active yet relaxed

lifestyle, and the presence of school-aged children (Wenman et al., 2008). The provision

of local shops, community space and amenities has been a harbinger for the complete

community and sense of belonging that residents feel, and the parks and open space in

False Creek North is "one of the neighbourhood's strongest attributes" (Wenman et al.,

2008, p. 7).

Although the development of False Creek North is seen as a major success, there

are some areas of improvement that residents reveal. Of note is the desire by residents to

have more space for relaxation, such as benches and chairs; more space for pets, such as designated off-leash runs; and a greater diversity in playground equipment to accommodate children of different ages. Additionally, the success of high-density living for families with children in False Creek North has come with one caveat: even with the new schools and daycares, demand has exceeded space and the new facilities are running at capacity (Groc, 2007; Wenman et al., 2008). This lack of school space, albeit unfortunate, is of particular interest because it calls attention to the fact that there is a growing cohort of parents choosing to raise children in an urban environment and they need to be accommodated with adequate provision of amenities.

The aforementioned caveats to downtown living in Vancouver are incredibly important lessons for other cities attempting to mimic Vancouver's success – they resonate soundly with comments made from local Toronto parents living downtown, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 of this paper. In summarizing the findings, the False Creek North Post-Occupancy Evaluation lists five key recommendations that should be taken into consideration in any future planning:

1. Articulate more strongly policy guidelines framing implementation of social infrastructure, such as schools to ensure that sufficient facilities are available before the first families move in. Ensure that these facilities are available within growing neighbourhoods such as FCN [False Creek North] as the number and concentration of families increases.

2. Guide the allocation of space for daycare facilities with a realistic sense of the demand and projected growth. Identify and address any loopholes that might weaken such a framework.

3. Design more diverse public spaces catering to the specific recreation and play needs of older children, as well as younger children, rather than simply treating

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children as an homogenous group with common play and recreation needs.

4. Aggressively foster affordable housing schemes targeting middle and modest income earners to ensure a diverse socio-economic mix, an environment appropriate for families and a strong sense of community.

5. Target the incorporation of more appropriate and affordable retail outlets from the early stages of the development to meet the needs of residents from a variety of socio-economic grounds. Focus on families, in particular. (Wenman et al., 2008, p. 25)

These recommendations provide invaluable lessons for other cities: "[False Creek North] provides for a great source of learning as planners around the world work to make their downtown cores attractive to households of all types and sizes" (Wenman et al., 2008, p. 5).

6.2.5 Coal Harbour

Coal Harbour is a further example of Vancouver's success at central city waterfront redevelopment. Encompassing the northern edge of the Downtown peninsula, the site, once a major industrial area, has been transformed into a "mixed use, high-density neighbourhood of exceptional livability and amenity" (City of Vancouver, 2003b, p. 26). The area is divided into two waterfront areas, the Marathon Coal Lands and the Bayshore Gardens, and was redeveloped as a *mega-project* under a cooperative planning regime – one that emulated the success of such a programme with the redevelopment of False Creek North (City of Vancouver, 2003b). The guiding framework for the development of Coal Harbour is established in the relevant Policy Statement and Official Development Plan, which are reviewed in the following sections.

6.2.5.1 Coal Harbour Policy Statement

The Coal Harbour Policy Statement (1990), referred to in this section, sets out policies for the development of Coal Harbour, in accordance with public input, staff review and Council advice, into "a broadly-mixed residential community for all ages and incomes ... [with] an array of community facilities to serve the residents, workers and visitors" (City of Vancouver, 1990b, p. iii). The issue of residential household and income mix outlined in the Policy Statement is whether the area would be suitable for families with children and if there would be enough children to support the necessary schools and daycare facilities. Accompanying this issue is whether or not the City should intervene in the market and set out prescriptions for development to accommodate a mix of households and incomes (City of Vancouver, 1990b). The policies established in the Policy Statement support the notion of a prescribed mix of households and sets targets for a mix of ages, including children, and the accompanying social infrastructure.

6.2.5.2 Coal Harbour Official Development Plan

The Coal Harbour Official Development Plan (1990), referred to in this section, provides a framework for development in the Coal Harbour area under the authority of the Vancouver Charter and in accordance to the policies established in the Coal Harbour Policy Statement. The Plan establishes seven organizing principles to guide development, listed in Table 6.3. These organizing principles are similar to those set out in the False Creek North Official Development Plan with only a few differences. The last organizing principle is defined in full as it is pertinent to the issue of accommodating families with children.

Table 6.3 Coal Harbour Official Development Plan Organizing Principles

Organizing Principles
1. Maintain the sense of a diverse urban waterfront
2. Build on the setting
3. Integrate with the city
4. Use streets as an organizing device
5. Create distinctive and lively public places
6. Create neighbourhoods

7. Plan for all age groups and incomes
"To achieve robust neighbourhoods which have flexibility to accommodate all residents and to achieve the City objective of accommodating families with children, planning and designing for the needs of children should be emphasized. The following should be considered:
   a) Safety and security needs should be met without sanitizing the environment;
   b) Parks, school, day care and other facilities needs should be provided;
   c) Public settings for socializing should be accommodated; and
   d) Accommodation suitable for all age groups and income levels should be provided."

Note: adapted from City of Vancouver (1990a)

Residential development is emphasized in the vision for Coal Harbour, and as such, various policies have been established to ensure it is achieved in an appropriate manner. Section 3.2.1 establishes that permitted unit counts and floor areas in each area are reliant upon "livability for various household types" and "compatibility with adjacent development" – if these two criteria are appropriately met, the total number of units and floor area allowance will be increased by up to 10% above the maximum for each area (City of Vancouver, 1990a). This technique of providing a bonus to developers in exchange for the provision of planning goals has contributed to successful development in Vancouver. In addition, 25% of the basic residential unit allowance must be appropriate for families with children, as outlined in the *High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines*, and 21.61% of the basic residential units allowance must be provided as affordable housing – with an emphasis on core-need households – half of which are to be designated for families with children (City of Vancouver, 1990a).

The emphasis on making the area an inclusive, livable neighbourhood is stressed throughout the plan. Cultural, recreational, and institutional uses are promoted within the area to accommodate the mixed residential population – at a minimum, there is to be:

- one full elementary school
- one community centre
- four daycare facilities
- one multi-purpose room

These facilities, much like in False Creek North, are to be provided by the property owner (City of Vancouver, 1990a).

6.2.6   Southeast False Creek

Southeast False Creek is the most recent example of Vancouver's ambitious waterfront redevelopment plans. Deemed as the City's response to the United Nations' report *Our Common Future*, it is focused on being a sustainable, complete community (Montgomery, 2006). The site is an 80 acre area of former industrial and commercial lands, some privately-owned and some City-owned, and is divided into three major precincts for development. In 1997, planning for the redevelopment commenced, and in 1999 the Southeast False Creek Policy Statement was approved by Council. Public consultation was a key component of the planning programme for the area, with goals of creating a social, economic, and ecological livable and sustainable neighbourhood with an emphasis on residential development and family housing (City of Vancouver, 1999). In 2005, the Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan was approved by Council. Construction started soon after as the City-owned, former public works lands, were turned into the Olympic Athletes' Village for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Units in the completed buildings are currently being sold and construction on the remaining land

parcels will be completed over the coming years. The planning prescriptions for the area

are discussed below.

6.2.6.1   Southeast False Creek Policy Statement

The Southeast False Creek Policy Statement (1999), referred to in this section,

establishes the guiding planning principles for the redevelopment of the area. However,

this Policy Statement has gone beyond convention and includes policies to address the

sustainable factor of the development of the site: ecological, social, and economic aspects

of creating a sustainable community are addressed. The guidelines driving the area's

development are:

1.   Implementing sustainability
2.   Stewardship of ecosystem health
3.   Economic viability and vitality
4.   Social and community health

The Policy Statement acknowledges that many of the sustainability policies are far-

reaching – the responsibility of achieving such goals lies with "the developer ... the City,

landowners, financiers, the public, senior levels of government, and ultimately, SEFC

[Southeast False Creek] residents" (City of Vancouver, 1999, p. 5). As such:

> It is the developer's responsibility to challenge
> conventional thinking by progressing toward as many of
> the social and environmental objectives identified as
> reasonable within the limits of economic viability. (City of
> Vancouver, 1999, p. 5)

In terms of housing, the issues relate to the determination of appropriate densities

and heights for the livability and sustainability of a community composed of mixed

incomes, ages, and household types. Much like the surrounding neighbourhoods of False

Creek, policy to include a certain amount of family-suitable housing is established;

however, in specific areas of Southeast False Creek, the prescribed policy goes beyond

previous goals: "a minimum of 35% of the total units on the land north of 1st Avenue

should be suitable for families with children" (City of Vancouver, 1999, p. 13). Previous

policy statements typically require 25% of units to be appropriate family housing, as is

such in other areas of Southeast False Creek. As well, like the policies for other areas,

there is a heavy component of providing low income and core-need housing, both regular

and family-oriented. These guiding policies are reflected in the Official Development

Plan for the area, which is discussed in the following section.

6.2.6.2   Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan

The Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan (2005), referred to in this

section, follows the guidelines set out in the policy statement and establishes urban

design and sustainability principles to guide development (see Table 6.4). These are the

principles created to govern and guide the development of a sustainable community.

Table 6.4 Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan Urban Design and Sustainability Principles

Urban Design Principles
1. Overall basin form legibility
2. Distinct neighbourhood precincts
3. Integrated community
4. Street hierarchy
5. Connected public open spaces and parks
6. Integrated transit
7. Vibrant commercial heart
8. Waterfront animation
9. Clustered community services
10. Heritage recognition
11. Incremental varied development
12. Demonstrated sustainability

Sustainability Principles
1. Implementation of sustainability
2. Stewardship of ecosystem health
3. Economic viability and vitality
4. Priorities
5. Cultural vitality
6. Livability
7. Housing diversity and equity "Development is to promote opportunities for housing for a range of income groups along with social and physical infrastructure that is accessible to the whole community, especially children."
8. Education
9. Participation
10. Accountability
11. Adaptability
12. Integration
13. Spirit of the place
14. Complete community

Note: adapted from City of Vancouver (2005)

In addition to these guiding principles, the Official Development Plan establishes land use policy to direct the development. With residential land use at the forefront, Policy 4.3.1 lays out very comprehensive regulations to address the needs of families with children, affordable housing, modest market housing, and market housing. The family housing goals for the site go beyond precedent set in previous development projects for some areas of Southeast False Creek. The pertinent elements of Policy 4.3.1 are outlined below in Table 6.5 (see Figure 6.1 for a map of the Southeast False Creek areas).

Figure 6.1 Southeast False Creek Areas
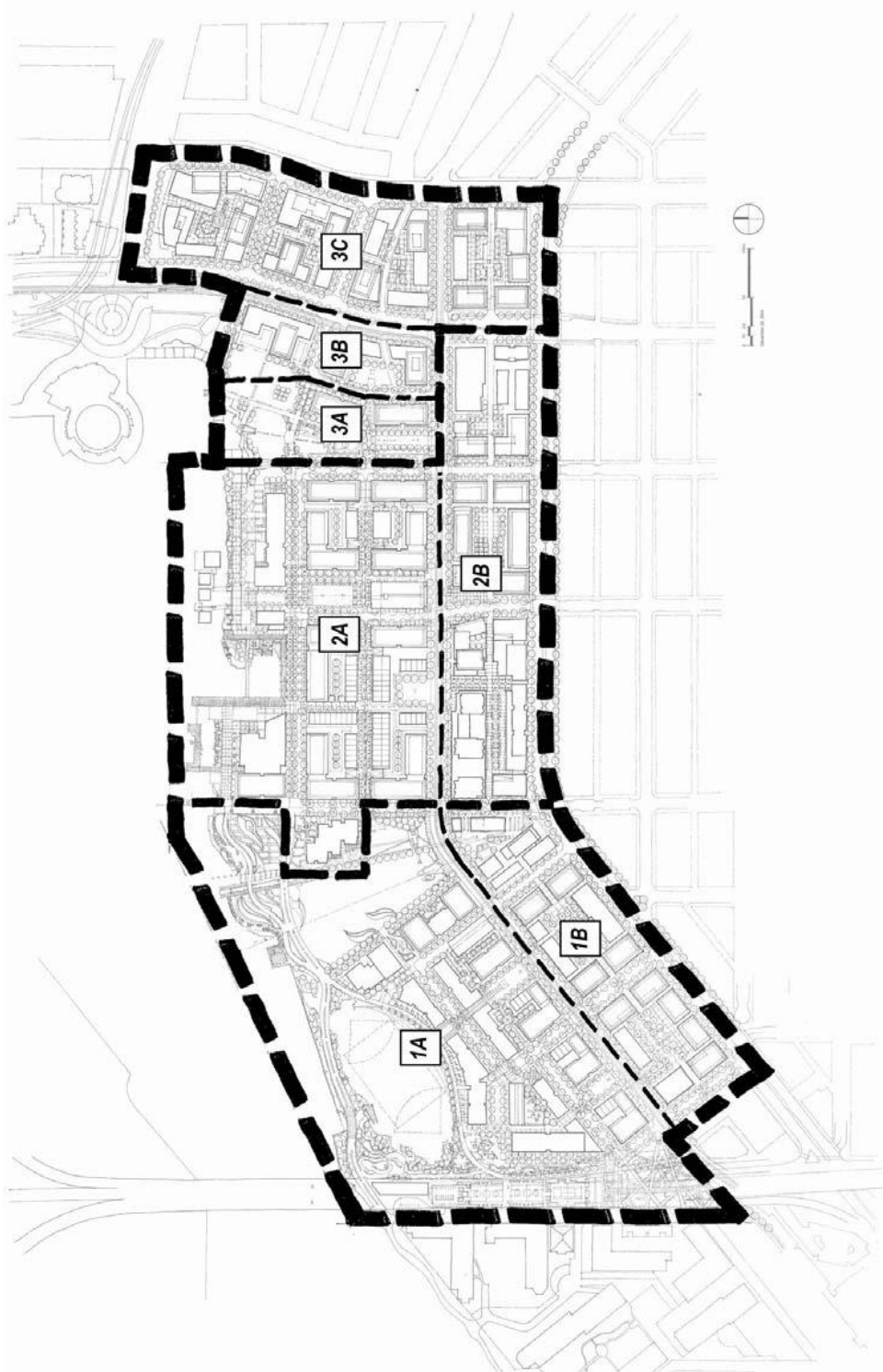
*Areas 1A, 2A and 3A are owned by the City; area 3B is owned by Translink; area 3C is owned by public and private persons; and areas 1B and 2B are privately-owned.

Note: from City of Vancouver (2005)

Table 6.5 Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan Policy 4.3.1 Family Housing Elements

Land Use Policy 4.3.1: *Residential uses*
Development is to be predominantly residential with a diverse housing mix and a focus on families with children, and:

(c) in areas:
    (ii) 1A, 2A, and 3A combined, at least 20% of the residential units are to be available for affordable housing,
    (iii) 1A, 2A, and 3A, integration of individual sites for affordable housing is to occur throughout the areas, and
    (iv) 1A and 3A combined, 33% of the residential units are to be available for modest market housing;

(k) 25% of the market housing in areas 1A, 2A, and 3A, and 25% of the modest market housing in areas 1A and 3A, are to be suitable for families with small children; and
(l) the city encourages housing forms designed with the flexibility to incorporate defined space for potential rental accommodation within a single dwelling unit in order to contribute to a wider range of housing options.
(i) with respect to families, 35% of the residential units in areas 1A, 2A, 3A, and 3B, and 25% of the residential units in areas 1B, 2B, and 3C are to be suitable for families with small children, in accordance with the *High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines* adopted by Council on March 24, 1992;
(j) with respect to the affordable housing units in areas 1A, 2A, and 3A, priority is to be on family housing, with 50% of the non-market units to be suitable for families with small children, and integration of the units into each residential area;

Note: adapted from City of Vancouver (2005)

In addition to these family housing policies, the Official Development Plan requires complementary cultural, recreational, and institutional facilities. In Southeast False Creek, this is to include:

- one K-7 community elementary school
- one community centre
- three licensed child care facilities
- two out-of-school care centres
- eight family daycare centres
- one interfaith spiritual centre

Requirements for supportive commercial and retail space, parks and open space, and improvements to the shoreline and Seaside Route are also specified. As well, all buildings are to be built to a minimum green standard of LEED™ silver equivalent.

Building heights and densities will be lower than in False Creek North and Coal Harbour, with an emphasis on mid-rise and ground-oriented medium densities. The goal is that at build-out it will be a complete community.

6.2.7 Summary

The *Vancouver Model* has gained global recognition for its success in redefining urban living. What was achieved in the False Creek and Coal Harbour areas is an excellent example of how a city can aptly maximize waterfront redevelopment and, with the creation of quality neighbourhoods, bring residents back to the downtown (Punter, 2003). The planning and development achievements provide lessons for other cities on the matter, especially in encouraging families to live in high-density downtown neighbourhoods.

Some of the lessons were realized through the course of redevelopment and carried forward. The densities of False Creek South Shore were eventually determined to be too low; subsequent development in the areas of False Creek North, Coal Harbour, and Southeast False Creek saw much higher levels of density. The cooperative planning approach to the redevelopment of False Creek North, which included a large amount of public participation was deemed a huge success and carried forward in the redevelopment of many areas of the city, including Coal Harbour and Southeast False Creek.

What marks Vancouver's success in urban redevelopment is the emphasis on creating livable, complete communities that are suitable and attractive to families. By incorporating prescriptions for the inclusion of family-sized units and affordable housing, as well as embracing what Punter (2003) calls "the new Vancouver vernacular, the

townhouse and apartment-and-townhouse perimeter blocks punctuated by slim towers"
(p. 233), a full range of housing options are said to be provided. However, it is important
to note that as defined in the *High-Density Housing Families with Children Guidelines*,
family-sized units need only be two bedrooms in size. Therefore, although many families
are choosing downtown condominium life, options for larger units are minimal. This is
the defining difference between what has occurred in Vancouver and what is proposed in
Toronto – the proposed policy in Toronto is for the requirement of three bedroom units.

Although Vancouver has been lauded by most for its recent residential
development and sustainable, livable neighbourhoods devoted to the public realm, there
are critics. There are people who question the sanctity of living in high-rise condos so
close to downtown; there are people who deem recent development as too formal,
orderly, and sanitizing of the aesthetic and public realm; there are people who call for
more social mix within the newly formed neighbourhoods; and there are those that
question if the city is actually better off as a whole (Punter, 2003; Quastel, 2009).
Whether these arguments are believed to be true, one cannot deny that these
developments have created a quality of public amenity and infrastructure that was
severely lacking (Punter, 2003); have brought residents back to the city; and fostered a
new definition of urban living.

In a 2008 article, *Want a new urban model? Go west*, Hume proposes five key
lessons learned from the Vancouver experience (p. ID3):

1. Shrink city council and create councillors-at-large who represent everyone's interests
2. Get rid of the Ontario Municipal Board
3. Let planning professionals control the approval process
4. Value the natural world. It's irreplaceable
5. Establish a detail city plan. Clarity is key

Whether any of these lessons are put into practice is likely a long shot, but they do provide starting points for discussion. The City of Toronto could stand to follow some of the lessons learned from Vancouver's experience. Foremost, the planning process itself is integral to the success of redevelopment. Vancouver's depoliticized planning regime is focused on following established regulations, embedded in public participation, transparency, and accountability; whereas, according to Hume, Toronto's politicized planning system "where developers and their hired guns routinely run roughshod over planning regulations ... [is a] ... recipe for disaster" (Hume, 2008, p. ID3). In Toronto, matters of planning are often guided by politicians and the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB). Furthermore, involving more design review is something that Toronto could emphasize, although it recently has established more of this practice. Unfortunately, the OMB may counteract the efforts of planners. The creation of urban design guidelines for family-friendly housing would also help garner success in Toronto; as well as incorporate street-oriented rowhouses in the podiums of taller point towers – an idea that is proposed in plans for the Central Waterfront redevelopment. The use of inclusionary zoning for both family-friendly and affordable housing is a method that could be explored in Toronto.

Although Toronto could stand to learn a few things from Vancouver, Toronto is going one step further in the provision of family-friendly housing. If the proposed OPA is passed to incorporate a minimum 5% of units to be three bedrooms, it would fill a niche that has been left relatively vacant in Vancouver.

6.3   Initiatives from Other Cities

There are other North American cities wrestling with the same issue of encouraging urban family living. While Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco are the most discussed examples of cities taking initiative to encourage urban family living, articles about families who are choosing to live in downtown condominiums are found in news media throughout the United States. For example, in downtown Minneapolis there is a small but growing number of households with children living in condominiums, lofts and townhouses – enough to warrant investment in a large children's playground: the one thing local parents said was the most in need to make the neighbourhood livable (Tillotson, 2010). Tillotson suggests the trend is in part driven by "a generational attitude shift: Many millennials and younger Gen-Xers say their American dream is not a big house and yard in the suburbs. It's walking to work, no lawn mowing, more family play time and culture at their doorsteps" (Tillotson, 2010, para. 5). In Columbus, Ohio, the "urban upbringing" is still rare, but is drawing more attention as residential development in the downtown takes off (Fiely, 2007). One developer interviewed predicts that some of the young, urban singles currently living downtown may choose to stay and be young, urban parents in the future (Fiely, 2007). In Seattle, the topic displayed prominence in newspaper articles following the success of urban family living in Vancouver, providing anecdotal evidence of the new trend. Articles highlight the experiences of some of the "pioneers" of urban family living, suggesting that the lack of family-friendly amenities like parks and schools are major deterrents (see Benotto, 2004; Cohen, 2006; Dietrich, 2008; Hinshaw, 2003).

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The Cities of Portland, Seattle, and San Francisco are the most prominent examples of cities looking to follow in the footsteps of Vancouver. Policy initiatives in each city will be briefly reviewed in the following sections to provide further lessons learned for Toronto.

6.3.1   Portland

The City of Portland, Oregon is one prominent example of a city that is struggling with keeping families in the urban core. Current planning policy for the city is contained in its Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 1980 and last amended in 2006. Work is underway for a new plan, the Portland Plan, to guide the growth of the city for the next 25 years. The 1980 Comprehensive Plan contains general housing policy to create *balanced communities* founded on diversity in resident mix and housing form, size, tenure, and affordability. In order to achieve this balance, Policy 4.7 'H' suggests the city must attract "a proportionate share of the region's families with children in order to encourage stabilized neighborhoods and a vital public school system" (City of Portland, 2006, p. 4-3). Furthermore, Policy 4.10 call for *housing diversity* through the "creation of a range of housing types, prices, and rents to 1) create culturally and economically diverse neighborhoods; and 2) allow those whose housing needs change to find housing that meets their needs within their existing community" (City of Portland, 2006, p. 4-4). To meet this goal, one of the objectives ('A') is to "Keep Portland inviting to households with children by ensuring through public and private action the availability of housing that meets their needs throughout the city" (City of Portland, 2006, p. 4-4).

In 2006, the Portland Development Commission hired Ferrarini & Associates to examine the potential of building family-oriented housing in the city centre, following years of anecdotal evidence that young families are struggling to stay in the area because of a lack of suitable housing. Currently the central area caters to a narrow mix of residents, primarily young, childless singles and couples and older empty nesters – households with children do not factor into the mix. The primary area of study was the Pearl District, which neighbours the downtown core. The report, *Market Assessment for Family-Oriented Condominiums in Portland, Oregon*, addresses the viability of building family-oriented housing in the core and what the profile of potential buyers is. Based on expert interviews and a survey of over 200 potential consumers, the results indicate there is a significant market potential for family-oriented housing, particularly larger units of at least two bedrooms plus den or three bedrooms – currently the most under-built unit sizes. The study focuses on those families who have children, or are expecting to have children, and have the financial means to purchase a condo in the city centre. Findings suggest 15-21% of this cohort would consider central city condominium living if the units available are the appropriate size and price. Whether the current lack of families living in downtown condominiums is due to a demand or supply issue is commonly asked throughout the field. The findings of this study suggest it is a matter of supply; more precisely, the lack of suitable units is a deterrent and that "there is a large market of potential buyers, but existing projects do not contain the right combination of unit types and prices to attract this demographic" (Ferrarini & Associates, 2006, p. 12).

It is yet to be seen if changes to the development of downtown Portland and the Pearl District will reflect the findings of the report; however, the findings support the

intent to encourage a broader mix of housing options in these areas. A study of this kind could be beneficial to the City of Toronto as it employed a much more thorough and statistically valid methodology than the BILD Report, *City of Toronto's Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children*, conducted in March 2010 (see Section 5.4 of this study for an overview of the BILD Report). Many of the key informants interviewed for this thesis suggest that the City has not provided any statistical foundation for requiring three bedroom units to be built; a study like the Portland market assessment could provide such evidence.

6.3.2 Seattle

The City of Seattle is another significant example of a city looking to bring families into the broader mix of downtown residents. The City's Comprehensive Plan, originally adopted in 1994 with official amendments made in 2004 with the ten year review, is founded on the creation of livable neighbourhoods with a wide variety of housing stock and diversity of incomes and households. Part of the Plan's vision is for Seattle to be "a city for families" where households with children can be accommodated and people at all stages of life can live in their familiar neighbourhood (City of Seattle, 2005). Two housing goals pertain to family-friendly housing: "[HG4] Achieve a mix of housing types that are attractive and affordable to a diversity of ages, incomes, household types, household sizes, and cultural backgrounds" and "[HG5] Promote households with children and attract a greater share of the county's families with children" (City of Seattle, 2005, p. 4.5). Housing Policy 13 provides specific attention to family-friendly housing: "Accommodate and encourage, where appropriate, the development of ground

related housing in the city that is attractive and affordable to households with children" (City of Seattle, 2005, p. 4.5). The *Downtown Urban Center* includes five urban villages: the Commercial Core, Belltown, Denny Triangle, Chinatown-International District, and Pioneer Square. Overall, the housing policies for these areas established in the Plan consist of creating livable neighbourhoods with a wide variety of housing stock and diversity of incomes and households (City of Seattle, 2005). However, for Chinatown-International District, Policy 7 states "seek to diversify housing stock to include more moderate income and family housing" (City of Seattle, 2005, p. 8.75).

Planning for the *Center City*, which includes the downtown core and nine neighbouring communities, is underway through the *Center City Seattle* strategy to create "a new urban identity for Seattle – a place with enormous energy, remarkable variety and dramatic potential" (City of Seattle, 2007, p. 2); one that is "committed to providing housing in Center City for a wide range of ages and incomes" (City of Seattle, 2007, p. 3). In 2006, as part of the Center City Seattle project, changes were adopted to downtown zoning legislation, including an affordable housing contribution requirement, for which bonusing is one method of implementation. Of note is the City Housing Director's authorization to require a prescribed amount of unit sizes and bedroom counts, in order to include units suitable to households with children (City of Seattle, 2006). Another element to the Centre City project is the focus on families. The *Family-Friendly Urban Neighborhoods Initiative* (FUN!) was established in 2006 with a workbook for city staff on "places and spaces for families and children in Seattle's center city" and provides a foundation for future policy opportunities to attract and encourage households with children to live, work, and play in, not just visit, the central area. The FUN!

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initiative is founded on the belief that "the presence of children and families is a necessary component of sustainable and healthy communities, and that the Centre City is no exception" and that "Making Seattle's urban center amenable to families with children is a socially responsible choice towards building an inclusive, sustainable Seattle" (City of Seattle, 2006, p. 1). The workbook provides numerous reasons to focus on family-friendly urban living; notably, it creates "more stable, civically aware communities" through the availability of "cradle-to-grave" housing, suggesting that accommodating people at all life stages creates cohesive and stable neighbourhoods (City of Seattle, 2006). Other reasons include achieving a better environment for all, because kid-friendly spaces are enjoyable by all residents; providing alternatives to car-dependent commuter lifestyles, thereby promoting physical activity and reducing childhood obesity; reducing sprawl; and achieving a more sustainable, diverse, livable city. The workbook also highlights the places and spaces that can attract and support households with children, including schools, housing, open spaces, streetscapes and the public realm, interior public spaces, and programmed activities and 'temporary' spaces. Under each heading is a description of the opportunities, examples of initiatives, lessons learned from other precedents, and questions for city staff to address. In terms of housing, FUN! suggests the "greatest challenge is creating housing options that are affordable and amenable to middle-class and growing families" (City of Seattle, 2006, p. 9) because as the current trend stands, many young families leave the area when children reach school-age due to a lack of housing stock. The workbook addresses the efforts of Vancouver, particularly in regard to their *High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines*, as well as similar efforts in San Francisco. Overall, FUN! is a showcase of the potential for

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encouraging family-friendly development in Seattle's urban core and suggests that more specific language at the policy level to accommodate households with children will allow the City to better reach its long-term planning goals.

6.3.3   San Francisco

San Francisco is also tackling the issue of family-friendly housing as the lack of suitable options is creating an imbalanced mix of residents. This issue resulted in the 2005 report entitled *Getting Behind the Headlines: Families Leaving San Francisco* released by the Public Research Institute at San Francisco State University at the request of the Mayor's Policy Council under the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DFYC). The report suggests the need for future research into possible policy directives and other strategies to keep families in the city. In 2006, the Policy Council released a discussion brief with recommendations on the matter, including a definition of family housing, defined in terms of bedroom count of at least two bedrooms and a suggestion that a minimum target of 20% of units be developed as such (DFYC, 2006). The briefing also poses possible strategies for encouraging the development of family-friendly housing, including:

- Explore amending the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to close the housing gap for families with children.
- Streamline permitting and planning review for developers who produce affordable family friendly housing. Put developers who produce family friendly housing on a separate "fast track."
- Explore strategies for addressing parking requirements as a barrier to affordable housing development.
- Research incentives or "density bonuses" to developers who agree to produce affordable, family friendly housing.

- Dedicate a high percentage of inclusionary in-lieu fees generated from private market development to development of family housing.
  (DFYC, 2006, p. 14)

Several of these recommendations could be considered by the City of Toronto, such as bonusing or fast tracking the permit process for projects with an element of family housing and density – a tactic that is also used in Chicago for projects containing affordable family-friendly housing.

The City's General Plan contains housing related policies in the *Housing Element*. The latest update, drafted in 2009, is currently before Council for adoption. The City suggests "families with children are very much part of the City's vitality and diversity" (City of San Francisco, 2011, p. 19); and accordingly, general housing objectives relate to the creation of a broad range of options, including: "Foster a housing stock that meets the needs of all residents across lifecycles" (City of San Francisco, 2011). Under this objective is Policy 4.1: "Develop new housing, and encourage the remodeling of existing housing, for families with children" (San Francisco Planning Department, 2011, p. 19). Efforts to include 40% family-friendly units of at least two bedrooms have been implemented in certain projects, and should be continued in the future throughout the city (San Francisco Planning Department, 2011). Furthermore, the *2009 Housing Element* suggests the work of the DFYC, including the definition of family housing and recommendations for encouraging such housing "be codified into a formal city definition that can be used to shape housing requirements, and inform housing construction approvals" (City of San Francisco, 2011, p. 19). If the *2009 Housing Element* is adopted as currently drafted, the City of San Francisco will have strong policies in place to encourage and accommodate family-friendly housing.

6.4 Conclusion

   This purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the strategies employed by other cities to encourage urban family living. Vancouver is the foremost example of a successful practice of planning for complete communities. Other cities are starting to take notice and looking to mimic Vancouver's success. The experiences of these cities provide invaluable lessons of how the City of Toronto can work toward creating more viable, complete communities of its own. The following chapter looks at this issue in more detail through interviews with key informants and parents in the Toronto setting.

7   INTERVIEW FINDINGS

7.1   Introduction

This section will look at the results of interviews with two sets of participants: key informants in the planning and development field; and parents who have previously lived in or currently live in a downtown condominium with at least one child. The findings of these interviews will address two of the research objectives. First, *to determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium development to be more family-friendly*. Second, they will be used *to make recommendations for the City of Toronto on making condominium development more family oriented in downtown Toronto*, both of which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

7.2   Key Informant Interviews

The findings of the key informant interviews are presented in this section. There are five categories of key informants and have been coded as such: urban planners (PL); politicians, including City Councillors and their staff (PO); urban developers (UD); school board planners (SB); and development and marketing consultants (DM). All key informants were guaranteed anonymity. In total eleven key informant interviews were conducted; the categories of informants and corresponding codes are presented in Table 7.1. Chapter 3 provides a more detailed account of the methods behind the interviews. All interviews were conducted in person using a general interview guide with semi-structured, open-ended questions and lasted, on average, 45 minutes. Discussions were dominated by the proposed 'Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children' (OPA) and provide a diverse perspective on the

implications of such a policy. However, it is important to note that at the time of the

interviews, the proposed OPA was still drafted to include 10% family-sized units; the

proposal has since been reduced to 5% three bedrooms as was discussed in Section 5.4 of

this paper. Regardless of the reduced proposition, the findings still hold merit and are

used to make recommendations in Chapter 8 of this thesis. The findings of these

interviews are presented according to category of informant, followed by a summary of

key themes in Section 7.2.6.

Table 7.1 Key Informant Interviewees

Category	Code	Informant
Urban Planner	PL	PL_1 and PL_2
Politician (includes City Councillor and staff)	PO	PO_1, PO_2, PO_3, and PO_4
Urban Developers	UD	UD_1, UD_2, and UD_3
School Board Planners	SB	SB_1
Development and Marketing Consultants	DM	DM_1

7.2.1   Urban Planners

Discussions with the urban planners centred on neighbourhood planning, family

housing, and the proposed OPA. The main points raised by the planners relate to the all-

encompassing livable community and affordability. A strong foundation of parks,

accessible community facilities, good transit and connections, a friendly pedestrian

environment, and a mix of housing forms are the key to making neighbourhoods livable

and attractive to families (PL_1). This is especially important in areas that are typically

high-density in nature: "just because you're dealing with a form that is more apartment ...

doesn't mean you then just assume that you're planning only for singles" (PL_1).

Creating the amenities that families need can be done in a downtown context. One example raised is the Bathurst-Spadina/Harbourfront neighbourhood where there is a good park, a combined school and community centre, and a mix of incomes living in affordable housing and market condominiums. Creating these mixed-use communities, however, is an ongoing challenge, and in the end the issue is bigger than just family housing (PL_2). Market forces are creating neighbourhoods with such high real estate values that this is, in itself, creating exclusionary housing practices (PL_2).

PL_1 suggests that planning often reflects more traditional values of "families live in houses and singles live in apartments"; however, "the reality of the Toronto situation is that families live in apartments too". Families do live in condominiums, more so outside of the core, and it is in these areas where the growth in families will be seen – places north, east and west of the city that are now more urban than suburban (PL_1). Demographic changes are playing a large role in planning and development. In the 1960s, '70s and '80s, many buildings went up in the "near suburbs" which contained larger two and three bedroom units – this reflected the demographics of the time; however, the traditional 1970s family formation is not at play anymore: the trend is toward smaller households with fewer children, meaning the period of time when "child-friendly" is a concern is shorter (PL_2). This plays a large role in the idea of households with children living in downtown condominiums because it is a valid choice to raise a small family in an apartment setting.

In terms of the proposed OPA to require a minimum number of three bedroom units, it is generally understood that part of the problem is that if the supply of unit sizes that families need is not there, they will not be able to live in that community. There is a

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need for long-term understanding of, and planning for, healthy sustainable communities. Communities that consist largely of childless singles and couples start to lose the ability to support local schools, parks, and community programming, to the detriment of the families who do live in the area, however small in number, as well as the potential of attracting families in the future (PL_2). Although in the Canadian and even larger North American context there is no real tradition of intervening and telling developers who to build for, "with the degree of intensification, it is reasonable to think that we're going to need to accommodate more and more families over time ... in those multiple family buildings" (PL_2). Having a policy to require a specific number of units may undoubtedly be met with resistance, but having a specific policy may skirt the "enforceability" issue of general policy that calls for a "full range" of housing (PL_2). In the end, the culture of intruding on developers is not prevalent; however, this policy may be a relatively modest intrusion on developers, albeit far from straightforward (PL_2). The priority objectives should be on securing affordable housing and protecting existing rental stock; however, if there is a gap in the market it needs to be addressed – and this is what the policy will do (PL_2).

The issue of affordability is a predominant theme of the discussion. PL_1 asserts "the supply also has to make sense for the income group that families represent across the city ... if people who they're actually being built for can't live there then it's basically a failed initiative". With the typical price point of a three bedroom unit pushing a million dollars, families will not be able to afford to live there (PL_1). One possible solution is raised by PL_2 in the form of offering three bedroom units with "entry-level" finishes to make them more affordable – they do not need to be luxury penthouses, and they do not

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need to be that much more than a two bedroom unit. PL_2 states that "if some

[developers] embrace it, there are ways they can think about this stuff to make it work".

Inevitably, though, it becomes an issue of the chicken and the egg: without market

demand for larger units, the pressure to produce them is not there (PL_2).

When asked about other strategies that could be used to encourage developers to

build more family-friendly units, PL_1 calls for "something far more substantial" than

providing bonuses or reducing development charges. PL_2 asserts that because

development charges are no higher for a three bedroom than they are for two bedrooms,

developers are not "penalized" for building three bedrooms. Removing disincentives

makes sense, and is appropriate, but offering additional incentives is not:

> The problem with incentives is there is a limit to how many
> incentives cities can offer given the way they are fiscally
> structured and given critical demands on the public purse,
> not the least of which is decent transit or truly affordable
> housing. (PL_2)

7.2.2   Politicians

According to the politicians and staff interviewed, the issue is about good

planning; about creating viable, livable, healthy communities. Part of the problem is that

the new residential component in downtown is not diverse enough; it is "developing a

monoculture" (PO_1) because "there is too much of the same stuff" (PO_4). The

"structural diversity of living arrangements" needs to be maintained (PO_2). An

insufficient mix in units "creates unsustainable living conditions" because it does not

allow people to stay within their familiar neighbourhood at all stages of life; "having that

range of options within a community creates greater social cohesion" (PO_1). There are

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people who have chosen the downtown lifestyle as childless singles or couples because they truly prefer the experience, and when it comes time to start a family, not everyone wants to give it up and move to the suburbs. This is the kind of change in housing trends that needs to be addressed because right now development is not providing the choices that would allow these people to remain downtown (PO_2). In turn, declining usership of the social infrastructure that is in place, like schools, could lead to closures (PO_1). This is why attracting families to these neighbourhoods is important – they are needed to sustain the existing social infrastructure (PO_1; PO_3; PO_4).

The proposed policy to mandate family-sized units is just a "first step", and three bedrooms is the bare minimum, according to PO_1. In terms of the originally proposed 10% number, PO_2 reasons that "there's no mathematic or theory behind it other than the fact that market forces seem to be able to accommodate it". PO_3 and PO_4 argue that they do not know what the right number is. According to PO_2, the policy is needed because market driven planning will not lead to good cities. There is a strong need to be cognizant of market forces, but:

> The trouble is that planning is not about the market forces that are current, they're about the social needs that are projected and if you let market forces do the planning, you will build what worked yesterday for tomorrow, as opposed to what you need for tomorrow now. (PO_2)

Although there is no guarantee that families will occupy the larger units, PO_2 states "what I do know is that if you don't build the capacity, you'll never have families living there". It's about guiding the market (PO_2). There is more to the issue than just providing the units; there are other obstacles families wanting to live downtown face, so they all need to be addressed (PO_1; PO_2). PO_3 stresses that the proposed policy

acknowledges the idea that there is a need for family-suitable units, but whether

mandating a percentage of units be built as such is questionable because in the end it is a

supply and demand issue, and if the building industry sees the demand is there, they will

provide for it, thus eliminating the need for policy. In Vancouver, there was demand and

an environment ripe for providing for families living downtown – "this isn't Vancouver"

(PO_3). And in New York, it works because the amenities are all there to support the life

(PO_4). What needs to be done is ensure adequate provision of the amenities needed to

support families (PO_3; PO_4).

Utilizing knock-out panels, according to PO_1, is not entirely practical, because

the affordability factor is a major concern: one needs the neighbouring unit to be

available, and needs to have enough money to purchase the second unit and undertake the

conversion renovation. However, PO_2 proposes that including knock-out panels will

create much needed flexibility in unit sizes in the future. Conversely, PO_3 suggests that

the combining of units is something that already happens "based on needs, demand, and

ability to afford", so requiring it is not necessarily going to change much.

Another part of the problem is that the three bedroom units being built tend to be

configured in such a way that is not usable by families (PO_1). The way condominiums

are being built in the downtown, in terms of size and layout, poses a major challenge to

people wanting to raise families in them (PO_3). Another aspect of the issue is that

families tend to buy what is built, not something that is off spec and a few years away

from completion, so the larger units tend to sell after construction; developers have

voiced concern about this fact and the impact it has on securing financing (PO_2). Issues

like this need to be addressed, and policy needs to be sensitive to it but not driven by it

(PO_2). Furthermore, the affordability factor is an issue, especially because the

"affordability" of a condo tends to only apply to smaller units (PO_1). PO_3 questions,

"can those who are interested afford it"? Even if the policy has good intentions, if it ends

up that the City is in anyway subsidizing the units, PO_3 is not supportive of it. PO_4

reiterates the issue of affordability and that it is essentially excluding families from the

core; however, development charges are already low, so retooling them will not make a

difference in the end price. Despite the issues, PO_4 acknowledges that larger units are

needed because they allow people room to grow, so maybe forcing construction is the

only way to achieve the supply. In discussing the geography of the policy, the

interviewees acknowledge that the downtown is the most in need of action, but PO_3 and

PO_4 question why it will not apply to the waterfront redevelopments.

In the end, all of the politicians and staff interviewed support for the idea of

accommodating families downtown; however, PO_3 and PO_4 suggest it is too early to

legislate anything. According to PO_3, "the challenge is to think beyond what we

basically know now, to what will be the future needs", and incorporate these needs into

development now so it is there down the road. But to do this effectively, there needs to

be more dialogue with the building industry and with families, to better understand the

issues and needs (PO_3). PO_4 considers it to be the right direction, if it will work, but

in the end "there is only so much the City can do; at some point in time the market place

has to dictate it".

7.2.3   Urban Developers

It is the general perspective of the developers interviewed and DM_1 that the development industry in Toronto is one of the largest, healthiest and most balanced in Canada. Any policy that might disrupt this needs to be thoroughly researched and all possible implications understood – a matter that needs more work before any policy is passed (UD_1; UD_2; UD_3).

Developers recognize that typical buyers tend to be young professionals, primarily single, first time buyers; older retirees downsizing from houses; or investors looking to purchase units to rent out (UD_1; UD_2; UD_3). They are people who live in the city and want to stay in the city because they like the lifestyle, the location, and the easy commute (UD_1). A significant number of young purchasers are female (UD_2). Another portion of buyers are move up buyers: purchasers who require more space because they have coupled up or want more space because they can now afford it (UD_3). Families are not seen as a component of the market.

This being so, there are some families – typically new families with one young child. UD_1 notes that in some of their buildings there are children and mothers' groups using the party rooms, despite the fact that there are no three bedroom units. This draws the question: do families really need three bedrooms? In the experience of UD_2, several of their projects contained three bedrooms – some to the tune of 10%, even before the policy was proposed – but only on a site specific basis, depending on the target market of each project. In one project, within six months of sales none of the three bedroom units had sold so they were redesigned to be smaller, and subsequently less expensive, and only then did a few sell, suggesting that "it's more of a price point proposition than

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simply the number of bedrooms" (UD_2). Another factor is that people who have

children or are planning children tend to not purchase pre-construction because it will be

three or four years before it is available (UD_2). Larger units tend to sell last, closer to

occupancy – this is when families might purchase because it is more in line with the

timeline for their housing needs (UD_2). UD_3 has included larger units, mostly two

bedrooms or two plus den, consequently "taking the risk that demand will be there for

larger suites". They have even included child-friendly amenities like a craft room,

karaoke room, and bowling lanes, "but families aren't buying" (UD_3).

The developers generally support the intent of the proposed policy, but there are

significant issues with the approach to encouraging family-sized units, specifically in the

legislating of a prescribed amount of units. Part of the problem is related to demand;

right now the City is not ready for policy because:

> It's not dense enough yet, to cause people to move to 950
> square feet. We're not New York; we're not Chicago;
> we're not San Francisco; we're not London; we're not
> Hong Kong; we're not a lot of cities where that is
> acceptable. We're a long way off. So families are not
> shooting to live in 950 [square feet] today, and I think it's
> going to take a generation of people living – the generation
> that is living in condo now, that were living there from their
> early to mid 20s on, got used to that lifestyle, they got used
> to living downtown, they got used to living there maybe as
> a couple with their first kid, they got used to living in that
> environment. I think that their offspring, that generation 20
> to 25 years from now, will live in that [condo]. (UD_3)

The generally accepted reason behind the proposed change is if we do not build it now,

we will not have it when we need it down the road. The developers support the idea of

families living downtown and are more than willing to accommodate the family market,

if it existed. The problem is that right now there is little to no demand from families and

building for a market that is not there does not work (UD_1; UD_2; UD_3). Another major issue raised with respect to the proposed OPA relates to a lack of fundamental research on what families need, whether this policy would address those needs, and what implications it would have at a broader level. More research needs to be done because at this point what families need is not well enough understood (UD_1). Part of the question is what constitutes "family-sized". In Vancouver, a city lauded as the archetype for downtown family living, the defining variable for "family-friendly" is "at least two bedrooms", established in the *High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines*. This begs the question as to why the focus is on three bedrooms in Toronto (UD_1; UD_3). It is also recommended that before mandating the building of family-sized units, research needs to be conducted to see if it will work, because it has not been done (UD_1; UD_2; UD_3). "It is too soon to mandate" (UD_1); "the work hasn't been done" (UD_3); and the broader policy implications need to be considered (UD_2). There are positive objectives that the OPA is trying to achieve, but the City needs to be flexible to prevent other planning objectives from being compromised (UD_2).

Another part of the issue is that there is no guarantee that families will choose to live in the units. One developer suggests that even if they built three bedroom units, it would be unlikely that families occupy them "because of the choices and the end selling price" (UD_3). Typically, the argument always leads back to affordability because it is a major factor preventing families from purchasing condos. The price point for a three bedroom unit downtown is no less than a house, so families are still opting for that dream (UD_1; UD_3). End selling price is an important piece in the affordability debate, because to qualify for a mortgage, 50% of the monthly fees are considered in the list of

expenses in the qualification formula, so to qualify for a $600,000 condo, you need more income than to qualify for a $600,000 house. With average family income in the $70,000 per year range, these units are out of reach to most families (UD_3).

Furthermore, there is concern that 10% is an arbitrary number. UD_3 suggests that this number is too high to start with and that there is no growth target to support it; however, a smaller percentage could be the base initiative and the larger goal phased in over time through a method of review every five years and increasing the target as demand is proven to be increasing – if demand grows, the development industry will keep pace. UD_2 worries that a policy like this could inhibit development in the core because financing is dependent on pre-construction sales; so if more units are three bedroom, and three bedrooms sell last and make up a large share of sellable area, more of the smaller units need to be sold before construction financing can be secured. Furthermore, in terms of the policy not applying to the Waterfront, UD_2 finds it "hypocritical to exclude their properties from the same requirement".

Ultimately, encouraging families to live downtown is not only about bedroom counts; the City needs to make sure the community is accommodating families through amenities and services (UD_1; UD_2; UD_3). A critical issue for families is schools, but it once again comes down to the chicken and egg argument: communities need schools to develop, but schools need a community to provide the students – so, do you build the school before the student population is there, or do you wait for the students to build the school (UD_1; UD_2; UD_3)? Despite having large units and the family-friendly amenities, UD_3 says they are not seeing a lot of families because the last piece of the puzzle is the school, and it has not been built yet even though the funds are in place,

collected from a dedicated development levy. Families also need parks that are clean, well maintained, and usable by families as opposed to ornamental (UD_1; UD_2). They need grocery stores – which, fortunately, are adapting to the urban market with many expanding in the core with small "urban" stores (UD_1). These family-friendly amenities are what will attract families to the downtown.

When it comes to providing family-friendly amenities within a building, there is no question that if the demand was there so too would be the amenities. However, UD_2 explains that:

> You can create the amenity in the first place but it is the condo corporation that is responsible for maintaining and running that [amenity]. So if we put in a playroom, for example, there is nothing that stops the condo corporation from changing it to a yoga studio.

It is also important to note that some amenities, like multi-purpose rooms and movie screening rooms, though often interpreted as adult in nature can be family friendly (UD_2). UD_2 calls attention to another part of the problem that people need to be cognizant of: "there is a segment of the population that sort of wants to shelter themselves from children and has no desire to participate in the upbringing or care of children".

In regards to other plausible strategies for encouraging family housing, including minimum zoning at subway nodes is suggested by UD_1 and UD_3, because intensification makes sense in these areas and it can likely be accommodated there: "families probably like subway nodes because then it ties into the fact that if you live right near a subway you don't need a car" (UD_1). UD_3 suggests the City encourage development along subway lines and in areas where schools are in decline: "triage areas

that are under threat of declining retail, declining schools and enrolment – put families there first". Implementing any policy geared to family housing on an area specific basis allows it to be used as needed, which can help improve the areas that already have the family-friendly amenities but are lacking in the supportive family population (UD_3). Another suggestion is to promote the lifestyle with a public relations campaign (UD_1); try to incent people by raising awareness that there are family-friendly amenities. The use of knock-out panels is conceivable, and may be more accepted than building 10% of units as three bedroom, but they are not ideal because their utilization depends on the neighbouring unit being available, which is not likely to be the case when it is needed, and may require paying a premium to secure the unit (UD_2). UD_3 confirms that the cost of conversion is a problem, but suggests that knock-out panels can be utilized. However, UD_2 has seen knock-out panels included in projects, but suggests there is no record of use.

When asked about possible incentives to encourage more building of family-sized units, suggestions relate to eliminating financial disincentives on the developer so the end price can be lower, because affordability is the main factor. For example, reducing development charges on three bedroom units, making them the least expensive to build; giving more height and density for including them; or even speeding up the building permit process (UD_1). All of the developers say the City has carrots, but is using the stick approach. Eliminating disincentives will make it easier for developers to comply and will make the end price more affordable, which is key to attracting families. Additionally, incentives for the purchaser, if they are households with children, could be used (UD_2). The developers all state a concern that they will have to absorb the costs of

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the larger units or pass it on to the other purchasers, subsequently subsidizing the large units. UD_3 states that the proposed policy is "by default, asking us to subsidize the cost of housing".

Other concerns relating to the issue were raised. UD_2 asserts that when looking at the issue of family-friendly housing, you have to look at the overall housing stock not just new stock because in the downtown area there is family-appropriate housing and in the older stock it tends to be larger and more affordable (UD_2). UD_3 suggests that the inevitable failure of the policy is because it is "a victim of the ward council system": of the 44 councillors, some understand the issue, but others do not. In the end, the developers assert that it is just too soon for the policy because the market is not there to absorb it and the work has not been done to justify it.

7.2.4   School Board Planner

The most important amenity to fostering family-friendly living is schools. They have been identified as the key piece of the puzzle to attracting families by developers and planners. In terms of encouraging families to live downtown, SB_1 suggests you have to be cognizant of the fact that "a lot of families still want the white picket fence; they are important values in our society, and it's hard to run counter to those". The City and the school board could play "an enlightened role" in marketing the virtues of downtown living, like the convenience and amenities – including schools – and create diverse, mixed communities as opposed to "just a repository for single, one person homes or seniors" (SB_1). However, one of the problems with the proposed policy relates to demand, or the lack thereof. SB_1 suggests that it is a "noble effort" but also

"unrealistic" because it is still a niche market. Nonetheless, "there is a role for the City to play, but it may not be through legislated ways". The point is, there needs to be a diversity of residents in communities, and there needs to be flexibility in accommodating the mix, but leaving it to the market to establish will lead to a "one dimensional kind of range in the housing stock" (SB_1).

> You can't always just let the market dictate where they think the residential units come and go ... I think there is an obligation at a public level to sort of engage the citizenry about the value of intensification downtown and how do you reawaken the virtues of those communities. By that I mean things like schools. It's a great virtue to be able to be living without having to drive so much in those communities and you see people at [public consultation] meetings ... that welcome these opportunities. The challenge is the demand. Is the demand sufficient? (SB_1)

When it comes to demand for schools, there are two elements that need to be considered: political demand and student demand (SB_1). Political demand relates to the idea that schools are needed in communities, they have a justified presence, while student demand refers to the number of school-aged children in an area to support a school. As SB_1 describes it, a large part of the demand issue is related to scale: you cannot plan a school site in the downtown core as you would in the suburbs. Small schools, for say 350 pupils as opposed to 500 or 600, could work for niche areas and create a mix of residents (SB_1). So in areas of new development where schools are needed, especially in downtown Toronto, the key is collaboration between the school board and the City. Having a partnership with the City means they are acquiring the site, often under Section 37 or dedicated funds, thus negating any financial or political uncertainties of the school board (SB_1). This means that a school site is secured, the money to build the school is collected, so a school will be built; but it is a complicated process because it may speed

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up the timeframe for building the new school and may require other conditions to be met, such as including child care (SB_1). It has, essentially, created the need for a new model of school building because in the downtown scenario sites are smaller and demand may be smaller (SB_1). In the Railway Lands, special levy agreements were entered into with developers to provide the moneys for building a joint Toronto District and Toronto Catholic school, community centre, child care facility, and community housing. As UD_3 discussed, they are not seeing a lot families in the area because the school has yet to be built. It relates, yet again, to the chicken and egg argument: do you build the school before there are students, or do you wait for the students to build the school?

In predicting student demand, the best qualifications are affordability, structure type, and availability of amenities – not bedroom count (SB_1). Typically, three bedroom units are far out of reach for families, so providing a stock of housing that is unaffordable to families is counterintuitive. This resonates with the qualms of the other interviewees on the matter of the proposed OPA. One possible method of encouraging affordable family-friendly units suggested by SB_1 is to give the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) a larger role in providing them so that they can be affordable and actually occupied by families[25].

7.2.5 Development and Marketing Consultant

In discussing the development industry, DM_1 confirms that the market dictates what is built; and is typically driven by four groups of buyers. Over half of the market is young, first time buyers, anywhere from 20 to 40 years old, generally childless singles or

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[25] In the Railway Lands West, there are two sites being developed by TCHC, including the site that will share the joint Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic School Board school facility, as well as sites in the West Don Lands.

couples, who are interested in the affordability of a small condominium as an entry into the real estate market and the convenient lifestyle because it makes sense at that stage in life (DM_1). Another quarter of the market tends to be empty nesters or "move down" buyers, looking to downsize from a larger home often because they no longer need so much space, they like the condo lifestyle, and they are looking to reduce maintenance duties (DM_1). A small portion of the market is "move up" buyers who are now buying their second condominium because they want more space and they can afford it now, or because they have coupled up and need more space (DM_1). The remainder of buyers tend to be investors who purchase units with the intention of renting them out, which effectively is the new rental housing stock in the city (DM_1). Demand from families is notably low.

When asked about the proposed OPA, DM_1 acknowledges the need for mixed communities to avoid "a ghetto of all young people" – neighbourhoods should have options for all stages of life so residents are not forced out when their housing needs change. However, forcing developers to build for a market segment that is not present is not the solution, especially because every site is different, so applying a "broad brush" approach across the board will not work (DM_1). There may be certain sites that could handle more than 10% family-sized units; it all depends on locational attributes and demand (DM_1). One important factor raised by DM_1 is that the way the development industry is structured in Canada has prevented a housing bubble like that which has occurred in the United States, because of the discipline in securing pre-construction sales for financing. It is generally accepted across the planning and development board that

three bedroom units are the hardest and last to sell, so requiring developers to include a certain number of them could greatly impact financing and increase risk (DM_1).

In the end, it is a chicken and egg issue; do you build the supply for a demand that is really only anticipated yet (DM_1)? If the argument is "build it and they will come", it is risky for developers; but if developers started to see families coming to sales centres looking for larger units, it would not be hard to make some changes and create a three bedroom unit to suit their needs (DM_1). The thought that maybe in the future there will be more young people who decide to stay downtown when they have children, because they are used to the lifestyle and its conveniences, is raised by DM_1; however, if it will be enough demand to warrant legislating a certain number of units to be family-sized is unknown.

What is needed is more market research and demand analysis to determine where family-friendly condominiums would be most appropriate (DM_1). Also, create the "family-friendly infrastructure" to support families, including parks – with appropriate playground equipment – daycares, good schools, and clean streets (DM_1). "If you're really, really serious about families downtown ... just a little neighbourhood park is great" (DM_1). Develop a "multi-pronged approach" (DM_1). Encouraging mid-rise development in established neighbourhoods surrounding the downtown core, where school closures are occurring, will provide options for families and also for empty nesters who want to stay in the neighbourhood, but have no option other than staying in their houses – this would free up the houses that young families typically prefer, and bring children back to these areas (DM_1). To encourage building more large units, the City needs to be flexible: "bonusing or having that kind of flexibility and perceptiveness to

discussing such things would definitely encourage more accommodation of [families], whether it is daycares or affordable housing or those types of things" (DM_1). Looking at the Vancouver Model, developers were compensated for including community facilities and affordable housing (DM_1). In the future there may be more people opting for the downtown life when they have children, but whether it is enough to warrant an arbitrary percentage of three bedroom units is certainly unclear (DM_1).

7.2.6 Summary

Interviews with the five sets of key informants have provided rich and diverse perspectives on the issues relating to family housing and the proposed OPA. The most notable issues relate to affordability, livability of neighbourhoods, family-friendly infrastructure and amenities, market demand, and the approach of the proposed OPA to encouraging family-friendly units. These themes are presented in Table 7.2 and summarized below.

Table 7.2 Summary of Major Themes from Key Informant Interviews

Theme	Summary
Affordability	• Typical price point of a three bedroom unit out of reach of many families • Supply needs to make sense for the target market • Price may prove to be more of an influence than bedroom count • There may be ways to eliminate financial disincentives on larger units, thus lowering the end selling price, but not if it results in the City subsidizing units • Size, layout and finishes need to be appropriate for families, not luxury penthouses
Livable neighbourhoods	• Current building scheme is creating a monoculture of childless singles or couples • Need a mix of residents, in terms of tenure, age, and income to create livable neighbourhoods • Planning needs to be flexible in accommodating diverse sets of

	residents
Infrastructure and amenities	• Supportive family-friendly infrastructure, like schools, daycares, community centres, parks, transit, retail, and mixed housing forms, is needed to make neighbourhoods livable • A mix of residents, in terms of tenure, age, and income are needed to sustain and support social infrastructure • Small scale schools may be appropriate for urban areas • Common building amenities can be interpreted as family-friendly • If demand for child-specific amenities was strong, they would be provided • Clean parks with playground equipment critically important
Market demand	• Demand from families is notably low • There are some people who are choosing to maintain the condo lifestyle after having children • Model of the "traditional" family is changing • Families do live in apartments throughout the city, so it is reasonable to consider condominiums as suitable family housing • Issue of chicken and egg: what should come first, the supply or the demand? • If the demand by families was there, industry would meet it
Approach of proposed OPA	• Mandating a certain number of large units may be a "relatively modest intrusion" on developers • The proposed target appears to be arbitrary and there is not enough supportive research to back it up • Not enough dialogue between key players to support policy of this nature at this time • Forcing more risk on developers • No guarantee families will be occupants of large units • Knock-out panels can provide future flexibility, but are limited by financial and timeline constraints • Geography of policy may not be appropriate • Apply on an area or site specific basis where it can be more appropriately accommodated • Should include the Central Waterfront

In general, the key informants are all supportive of the intent of the proposed OPA to encourage family-sized units – they all acknowledge that there may be families choosing to live downtown and if there are no suitable units and amenities, families will be driven out. The contention is in the method of achieving family-friendly housing in

the core; specifically, if the right approach is through policy to require builders to include three bedroom units. Several arguments were raised about whether families would be able to afford the large units or if there is any guarantee they would be the occupants of the large units. Simply, there is no guarantee that they will be occupied by families, but there are ways to make them more affordable, which might make them more likely to be occupied by families.

With regard to neighbourhood amenities, many of the talked about qualities of livable neighbourhoods are not limited in use by families and children. Clean, well maintained parks, local retail services and grocery stores, accessible transit, cycling, and pedestrian connections are all features that every resident, not just parents and children, can enjoy and will create strong, vibrant communities. This is the essence of good planning.

The proposed OPA is by nature a long-term planning goal. It is about providing options for current and futures residents; creating the opportunity to remain in a familiar neighbourhood into child-bearing and rearing years and having the supportive infrastructure to maintain the lifestyle. It is, therefore, less of an issue of immediate occupancy by families; it is a matter of planning for tomorrow today. This notion is generally accepted by the key informants; however, many draw attention to the need for more supportive research to back up the targeted percentage, because it is a market intervention that could have a negative impact. Overall, the intent of the OPA is acknowledged as positive, but negative in the approach of mandating a requirement for building three bedroom units.

7.3   Parent Interviews

The findings of the parent interviews are presented in this section. Interviews were conducted with a parent of a household with at least one child, who is currently living, or has recently lived, in a downtown condominium. All participants are anonymous and are coded as PA. A description of the participants is provided in Table 7.3. The results of the discussions were analyzed and coded into major themes; these findings are discussed in this section. It is important to note that there is significant overlap between themes and they are all interconnected; however, for organizational purposes they will be presented separately.

Table 7.3 Parent Interviewees

Parent Code	Number of children	Number of bedrooms	Square footage	Housing status
PA_1	2	2 plus den	1900	Moved up from one plus den to a two plus den with the arrival of a second child. Moved to house when children were 7 and 2.
PA_2	2	2	-	Moved to a house because space was cramped, no local playground, and difficult to manage with a dog.
PA_3	2	3	2000	Moved to a house shortly after birth of a second child because wanted more space and a backyard
PA_4	1	2	1000	Moved outside of city to townhouse because of family emergency, not because of housing issues
PA_5	1	1	-	Moving to a nearby house because need more space and local school is sub-par.
PA_6	2	2 plus den*	1100	Moved to a nearby semi-detached house because needed more space and could not find larger condo unit.
PA_7	2	3	1625	Lives in condo because it is a very convenient lifestyle and has no intention of moving.
PA_8	1 and expecting	3	1350	Lives in condo for the lifestyle and convenience. Only complaint is concrete

	second			balcony railing – glass would be better.
PA_9	1	1	680	Moving to a house to satisfy desire of living in a more residential and community oriented neighbourhood.
PA_10	1	2	1380	Moved to a house after a year because open concept space did not suit having children.
PA_11	1	2**	1800	Purchased neighbouring two bedroom unit and is combining them to make a 3600sqft four bedroom unit because loves the lifestyle and convenience. No intention of moving.
PA_12	2	2*	950	Moved to a nearby house because did not find the lifestyle family-friendly enough.
PA_13	1	1 plus den	720	Moving up to a two bedroom plus den condo unit because loves the lifestyle and wants to stay downtown.

Note: The bedroom count and square footage listed is for the previous condominium unit for those parents who have since moved to a house or for current condominium unit for those parents who are still residing in a condo. Some participants did not specify square footage.
*Stacked townhouse condominium unit
**Soon to be combined with neighbouring unit to create a 4 bedroom, 3600sqft unit

7.3.1   Lifestyle

One of the most discussed reasons for choosing condo living is *lifestyle*. All of the parents were living in condominiums before having children and decided to stay because of the lifestyle, though how long they stayed varied (see Table 7.3 for housing status of each participant).

For all of the parents, the urban lifestyle trumps the suburban lifestyle. Many of the parents who have stayed in the downtown core assert that lifestyle is the contributing factor. PA_8 says they stayed because they did not want to become part of the "Kelsey's culture of the suburbs". Of those who moved to a house, all but one stayed in Toronto, and most remained within or close to the downtown core. PA_5 suggests there are still a lot of options in the downtown area for families who want to remain in the area; for

example, they opted to buy a small house just two kilometres north of their condominium.

A couple of the parents assert that the lifestyle is often "underestimated" by people who get too caught up in the idea that children need to live in a house with a backyard (PA_1; PA_8; PA_11; PA_13). PA_1 lived in a condo with two children for several years because they did not see disadvantages to the lifestyle but ultimately made the move to a house because they thought that children needed to grow up in a house on a street; however, "in hindsight, we wish we would have stayed ... children don't need that; they would have been just as happy in a condo" says PA_1. Additionally, PA_4 notes that the urban lifestyle was very much desired at the time, and that the reason for moving was not driven by the need for a backyard or the suburban life but by a family emergency requiring them to change locations; however, having a backyard has become the "biggest benefit" of moving. PA_8 offers a very strong summary of the lifestyle:

> It's a really simple lifestyle for moms and I think parents get really caught up in this feeling that they need to have a backyard or they need to have this single family home once they have kids and I think there's going to be a real paradigm shift because we do live in an urban culture and it's *environmentally friendly* to live in a condo in many ways. And it's, at the very least, also a *socially conscience* decision; it's a *good use of land*; it's *good for moms* who maybe feel lonely or isolated, for at risk for post-partum to have neighbours around so close in the building; and I think it's a *really awesome way to live* if you can find the right unit that works for your family. And I think something's got to make moms not feel like, or families not feel like, their failing because they don't have a proper quote house for their kids *[my emphasis]*.

Convenience

Convenience is unanimously emphasized as a large part of the lifestyle. PA_7 found it so easy with one child that they stayed when they had a second child, which has "turned out to be great because it's so convenient". PA_2 suggests "for two working parents, it's a really manageable way to live"; however, it was also noted that it is really difficult if you have a dog and children. PA_11 is not only staying in a condo but is combining two units because of the convenient lifestyle of being walking distance to everything, the ease of living without stairs, having 24 hour security, and having a network of other parents in the building. Proximity to work and other local amenities was often cited as a valuable feature of the lifestyle, particularly being walking distance. Being able to run errands on foot is a well noted convenience, as well as being able to get out and about with a newborn with a stroller instead of depending on a car. Furthermore, for some of the parents being walking distance to work and nearby amenities negates the need for a second car, which is a huge financial savings.

Commute Time

A notable aspect of the lifestyle discussed by several parents is the time savings from not having a long commute to and from work. For busy parents, time is a valuable resource, and not wasting time commuting affords parents more time with family. PA_5 stayed within the downtown area in order to maintain the urban life and not give up family time to commuting: "we'd rather pay more for a smaller house but not spend an hour and a half getting to and from work everyday ... the time was very valuable to us". PA_6 and PA_12 shared the same time related concerns and the desire to maintain the

urban life, ultimately moving to nearby houses that offer more space than a condo but a

location within their familiar neighbourhoods. PA_13 emphasizes the time savings

aspect of the lifestyle, stating that

> When we pick [our child] up from daycare at 5 o'clock we
> actually have time to spend with her; whereas I imagine if
> you live in the suburbs, and I hear stories from friends of
> mine who do live in the suburbs and work downtown, it's
> just a mad rush.

Maintenance

Dealing with general maintenance issues was viewed as an easy part of the

lifestyle: "if something was wrong we just called the management office" says PA_3. A

much noted part of the lifestyle is the freedom from property maintenance like grass

cutting and snow removal. As well, a few parents like being able to put garbage out

whenever needed. The low maintenance upkeep of living in a condo was noted to afford

more time to spend with children, a positive attribute of the lifestyle.

Community

Sense of community is important for families. Several parents found a strong

community within their buildings. For PA_1 the sense of community was strong: "the

children were very well liked by the other people living there and even everyone who

works there ... they felt very much at home there". Other parents note that their children

made friends with other kids in the building and would play in the common room. PA_8

even reports that the condominium board encourages the use of the lounge for playgroups

and that the children in the building have a good relationship with other residents.

However, a few parents note that the lifestyle was more isolated because there were not many families in the building and the desire for more community and neighbourhood feeling contributed to moving.

Security

In general, safety and security were commonly mentioned as positive aspects of condo living. The risk of break-ins was perceived to be lower by those who lived higher than the ground floor and by those in buildings with 24-hour security and concierge services.

7.3.2   Deterrents

Some of the parents discussed downsides to the lifestyle other than space constraints, notably relating to elevators and noise. There is, however, an apparent split in attitude toward elevators. Some parents found them to be a nuisance because of long waits, especially if only one is in service, and being limited in how much can be carried with children in tow. It is also a hassle to quickly go back if something is forgotten. It can also contribute to a feeling of too formal a living environment. However, other parents consider it a major convenience because there are no stairs to navigate, which makes it particularly easy and hassle free with strollers and children.

Noise travel was discussed by several parents, for some becoming a contributing factor to moving, though never the sole factor. Other parents noted worries of noise travel, but qualify that it is not limited to just condos, as it would occur in row and townhouses, and semi-detached homes. For PA_10, noise was a primary factor in

moving, because they could hear noise from the children above – including crying and playing – and did not want to be noisy to the occupants below them.

Other negative aspects discussed by one parent include fire alarms and water shut offs for servicing to the building's plumbing systems. The majority of problems with the lifestyle relate to the lack of amenities, both within the building and in the public realm.

7.3.3 Space

Space is a major factor that can impact the quality of life in a condo – in terms of unit size, layout, and storage space. For many parents, space is a major determining factor in whether to stay or move. PA_1 suggests the key to making it work is in having a suitably sized unit, while PA_7 also says layout is important. This is reiterated by many of the parents, especially PA_10 who says the open concept layout did not suit having children, and when planning for a second child decided there just was not enough space to accommodate a family of four.

The space issue becomes especially apparent as babies become toddlers, becoming mobile and acquiring a lot of "stuff". PA_5 asserts that lack of space is a major issue, especially because there is no good place to put a stroller in the unit, which is a very "kid-unfriendly feature of the condos". Also, the lack of "hidden space" for storage is a noted problem with the design of units, especially as they are often open concept. In the end, for PA_5, the open concept design and lack of space forced a move to a house. For PA_6 space became the biggest issue with the arrival of baby number two because they needed more space but were already living in the largest unit in the area, which ultimately forced them to move to a nearby semi-detached house.

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However, not all parents made the move to a house when space became an issue. PA_8 moved from a one bedroom unit to a three bedroom after becoming pregnant, choosing a condo over a house and emphasizing they are "lucky" to have one of the four three bedroom units in their building, especially because it is in an area that has a "good mix" of adult-friendly and child-friendly amenities. PA_13 is moving up to a larger unit for more space as their child gets older. Similarly, PA_11 purchased a neighbouring unit and it combining the two units, which will create a 3600sqft four bedroom unit, a decision based on the desire to maintain the convenient, urban lifestyle.

7.3.4   Amenities

Access to amenities is crucial to making a neighbourhood accommodating to families. There is a marked inconsistency in the experience of the parents with local and building amenities. Some had more than adequate access, while others were forced to move because of the lack of suitable child-friendly features. Walking distance to such amenities like parks and schools is also crucial for parents.

Parks and Open Space

Good quality, clean, safe, accessible green spaces and playgrounds is unanimously seen as vital to making the lifestyle work. Although access to parks and open space in general is important, it is even more so to have good children's playground equipment in the parks – something that PA_7 notes is definitely missing in the downtown core. All of the parents confirm this, and for some the lack of child-friendly parks became one of the main issues to prompt a move. PA_6 notes that the lack of

child-friendly parks with play structures meant the area was not family-friendly enough past the point of newborn children, asserting that it is fine if you have a six month old baby, but for a toddler or older there is nothing to do. PA_9 points to the example of Vancouver where good clean, safe parks and open space are abundant and foster a better feeling of community, something that downtown Toronto is lacking. This is repeated by PA_10 who considers the lack of accessible outdoor space and parks in new downtown developments a severe limitation for families. Several parents discovered that play structures were built in their area after they moved out, which points to the need for timely provision of such amenities. A few parents noted that small green spaces are typically used by dog owners, so separate dog runs would be key features to improve safety and enjoyment by both parents with children, dog owners, and other general park users.

Building Amenities

Amenities within a building are also important, though not as important as parks and open spaces. PA_4 emphasizes that access to local parks and drop-in centres for playgroups made up for the lack of child-friendly amenities within the building, noting "you spend most of your time outside anyway". None of the parents' buildings contain child-specific amenities but many of the traditional "adult" amenities can be easily adapted for use by children. Some buildings contained pools, which parents were able to use with their children, though one noted that condominium board rules prohibit children under the age of three from the pool area. Often the typical amenities are gyms and party or entertainment rooms, and occasionally a games room, though often outfitted with pool

tables, which are generally not seen as child-friendly. PA_2 often used the party room as a play space but said it would have been nice if there was something geared to children, because there were a lot of kids in the building. PA_4 had a similar experience child-proofing an informal coffee lounge and meeting area for play groups with other children in the building. PA_11's building has a half-sized basketball court and games room that will be useful for older children but can also be adapted to be toddler-friendly. Despite being able to adapt the typical amenities for use by children, the general consensus is that it would be nice for more child-friendly or child-specific amenities, like play rooms.

Schools, Daycares, and Community Centres

Schools are an area amenity that is critical for families. They are typically discussed in two frames of reference: accessibility and quality. Being within walking distance to a school is highly coveted. However, the quality of the schools is a pressing issue. Many parents voiced concern about the quality of their local schools and the lack of investment in downtown schools; for some it was a significant influence for moving while for others it might become a factor in a few years when their children reach school age.

Daycares were considered a positive amenity and many parents provided little issue in having access to quality facilities, though a few noted that waiting lists are common. Despite more and more facilities opening up to meet demand, several parents suggest improvements could be made because demand is already high and is also growing, so in the future there could be problems.

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Programming for children was discussed by several parents, some who found access to local drop-in community centres with playgroups quite adequate. Others discussed informal playgroups and walking groups that were formed by parents within the buildings. However, others like PA_9 discovered programming for child activities like playgroups was limited and found it difficult to meet other families with children – something that better provision and marketing of programming at community centres and libraries for mothers, caregivers and children in the downtown would help.

7.3.5   Summary

The findings from the parent interviews indicate that lifestyle considerations are one of the main factors for choosing condominium housing. In the words of PA_11, "you're either a condo person or you're not". The experiences described by the parents indicate that there is a segment of the population who having lived in a condo prior to having children may want to maintain the living arrangement in the child-rearing years. Ultimately, whether it is a form of housing that can be family-friendly enough to sustain the lifestyle beyond toddlerhood depends on the unit space – size and layout – and amenities – within the building and local area. Many of the parents state that they have friends who are having the same issues finding amenities and large enough spaces.

It is evident from this analysis that long-term planning is critically important. Several of the parents question what will happen when the young professionals currently living there want to stay when they have kids, much like their own situations. Making the neighbourhoods livable for all stages of life and more family friendly is something that needs to be addressed. PA_6 suggests "[The City] need[s] to think about what they

want the neighbourhoods to look like in 10, 15, 25 years". Many of the parents suggest rather simple solutions to making the lifestyle more family-friendly, including very simple amenity rooms in buildings that can be used for child's play; cleaning up parks and building more playgrounds; and ensuring adequate access to quality daycares, schools, and community centres. It is important to note that many of the things parents want in a neighbourhood are things that non-parents can equally benefit from – such as clean, walkable streets; safe, well designed and maintained parks; separate children's playgrounds and dog runs (separating such spaces can relieve worries of safety over conflicting uses); and access to retail and transit. Neighbourhoods do not have to be child-centric to be child-friendly.

In terms of space issues, which tend to be at the forefront of discussions, the layout and design of units is almost as important as the size of the unit. This is a crucial factor in addressing the family-friendliness of condominium living, especially as the City is exploring the possibility of requiring a certain number of units to be built as three bedrooms: if these units are going to be conducive to raising children, they need to be designed in a manner that makes the space usable for families. Consideration needs to be given to such things as stroller storage and the need for hidden storage space for the "stuff" that comes with having kids. In some cases, family-friendly design features can be as simple as glass railings on balconies, so children can see out. This may seem trivial, but for PA_8 the only complaint of living in a condo with children is that their child cannot see over the concrete balcony railing and tries to climb up just to look out. However, bedroom count does play a significant role in housing decisions. For the most part, the condo lifestyle works with one child, but for several of the parents the arrival of

a second child pushed the walls to the limit and forced a move to a larger dwelling. If more well-designed large units were available, some parents may have been able to continue living downtown.

7.4   Conclusion

The findings from the interviews provide valuable insight into the issue of family living in the downtown setting. It is made clear by both groups of interviewees that one of the most important elements to a successful neighbourhood lies in the availability of quality amenities and facilities – like parks, transit, retail, schools, daycares, and community centres. It is, therefore, vital that new communities continue to provide such features. However, it is evident that providing such features is not the only part of the equation. Well designed units that are family-friendly in price, layout, and size are important. For many, the space limitations of a one or two bedroom condo force a move when children enter the mix, especially when two children are part of the family. It is for this reason that consideration of larger units – three bedrooms – is important.

Although the proposed OPA would require the building of more three bedroom units, it is a contentious issue among key players in the field. Based on the interview findings, and the policy reviews in Chapters 5 and 6, recommendations will be discussed in the following chapter.

8   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1   Introduction

The overall intent of this thesis is to provide an answer to the question, ***how can downtown condominium development be more accommodating to families?*** In order to address this question, four research objectives were considered:

1. To understand what policies and strategies are in place to make residential condominium development more accommodating to households with children;

2. To determine what strategies can be used to encourage condominium development to be more family-friendly;

3. To provide an updated model of housing requirements under the family life cycle concept; and

4. To make recommendations for the City of Toronto on making condominium development more suitable for families in downtown Toronto.

Through a detailed investigation of the planning policies guiding the growth of the City of Toronto, an overview of what has been done in Vancouver and other cities, as well as in-depth interviews with key informants in the field and parents with experience living with children in a downtown condominium, these objectives are addressed in order and an answer to the research question is provided in this final chapter.

8.2   What Policies and Strategies are in Place to Make Residential Condominium Development more Accommodating to Households with Children?

The first research objective was addressed primarily through the policy review provided in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 of this paper. This review established a detailed record of the relevant planning policies that are currently in place to guide the growth and development of Toronto, particularly in the downtown core. Housing and community

services and facilities policies were reviewed, with a focus on the family-friendliness of such policies.

Part of the City's vision in the Official Plan is about creating "vibrant neighbourhoods that are part of complete communities" and providing "affordable housing choices that meet the needs of everyone throughout their life" (p. 1-2). This is further outlined in one of the guiding principles of the Plan, *diversity and opportunity*, which states "housing choices are available for all people in their communities at all stages of their lives" (p. 1-3). In terms of specific housing policy, the general intent of the Plan is to provide a "full range" of housing that is diverse in form, tenure, and affordability. However, one of the groups left out of the definition of a "full range" is households with children, despite the overall goals and founding principles of the Plan. This neglect of an important segment of the City's population has recently become an issue because development is dominated by one bedroom units and, to a lesser degree, two bedroom units – three bedroom units are drastically underrepresented. This is especially true in the downtown core. The problem with this is in the long-term vision of the City. If a broad range of housing options are not built now, communities will not be able to foster diverse living in the future.

Some of the Secondary Plans for the downtown area provide more direct, detailed policy for the provision of housing for households with children, though it is markedly inconsistent as to what size or number of bedrooms is considered family sized as there is no clear definition in any of the City's planning policies or guidelines. However, the presence of such policies within the Secondary Plans acknowledges the increasing need for family-appropriate housing. There is also abundant policy for the provision of

community amenities such as schools, daycares, and community centres that would directly support any families opting to live in the core; however, it is yet to be seen how these policies will be implemented. Importantly, if these policies are only implemented as a response to the existing non-family development model seen to date in the core, then their potential as a change-agent to encourage more family housing by showing that family-oriented amenities are in place, will be lost. For example, in the Railway Lands, the monies for the financing of the new school on Block 31 (which was dedicated without cost for their purpose) have been collected from a dedicated levy and are in place. The school board needs to capitalize on this and build the school because, as UD_3 stated, the school is the key missing piece of the puzzle in encouraging families to live in the core.

The City's Official Plan emphasizes the tenet of sustainable development, focusing on intensification to accommodate growth and minimize sprawl on greenfield lands. Given the already large, and growing, market for residential units in downtown Toronto, government initiatives to curb sprawl and promote sustainability, changing demographics and definitions of family, and remaining tracts of undeveloped brownfield land, the City is presented with a unique opportunity to establish complete communities as the preferred alternative to both suburban tract development and urban "vertical" tract development. Urban living has already been accepted by young professionals and retired baby boomers – two cohorts who have created a thriving condominium market. If this market can expand to include families, more people can be housed in higher density, livable neighbourhoods with all the necessary amenities at their finger tips, truly establishing complete communities, and sparing the limited greenfield lands surrounding the City.

8.3 **What Strategies can be used to Encourage Condominium Development to be more Family-Friendly?**

The second research objective is partly addressed in Section 5.4 in the overview of the proposed City of Toronto 'Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children' (OPA), as it is the most prominent example of a possible strategy to encourage family-friendly condominium development. The issue of the lack of family-friendly housing rose to City Council's attention in 2007 when discussions began on the possibility of requiring developers to build a certain percentage of three bedroom units suitable for families. The aim of the initiative, put forth by Councillor Adam Vaughan, is to fill the gap in the "full range" of housing by changing the definition of "full range" of housing to expressly include "dwelling units suitable for households with children". The intended result is to provide more options for families living downtown through a requirement that condominium developments in the downtown area include a minimum number of three bedroom units, to be provided in some combination of 5% of units to be built as three bedrooms, or 10% convertible units, or 20% combinable units. This type of policy can help the City better implement the tenets of its Official Plan and foster the development of truly complete communities by more precisely defining the "full range" of housing and eliminating any confusion in enforcing the sought after diversity in housing stock. Although elements of the proposed policy are contentious with developers, it has enormous potential for making the City more diverse, more vibrant, and more livable. The overall area of undeveloped land in the core is significant, but not limitless. Condominium developers are highly motivated and the now lower percentage requirements of three bedroom units should be achievable,

particularly given the larger percentages now being provided in Etobicoke York, North York, and Scarborough (as discussed in Section 5.4).

The key informant interviews revealed several areas of contention in regard to the proposed OPA and the idea of building family-friendly housing in the core. The foremost concern is in forcing developers to build for a market from which they are not seeing the demand. Additionally, the affordability of large, three bedroom units is seen as a major problem by the key informants because by nature they are more expensive, and generally sell last, thereby posing the most risk to developers. At the same time, the developers see their end selling price as being out of reach to many families. Interestingly, however, developers are apparently able to successfully market their three bedroom units in other areas of the city mentioned above, where over 10% of units in the pipeline are three bedroom (see City of Toronto, 2008 for more detail). Furthermore, the results of the parent interviews do not suggest that unit price is an issue. Following this discussion will be a list of recommendations that relate to the proposed OPA and the achievement of sufficient family-friendly housing to create complete communities.

8.3.1 Market Demand Intervention

The major argument from the developers against the OPA is that its policies will be mandatory. It is forcing developers to build a certain number of units to be three bedrooms and as such is seen as market intervention because the market for three bedroom units is perceived as low. Based on this intrinsic character of the OPA, one of the most common questions raised by the key informants is: what comes first, the chicken

or the egg? Do you build the supply for a non-existent demand, or wait for the demand to be in place before you build the supply?

Setting aside the issue of market intervention, the key informants as well as the parents interviewed believe that providing greater options for households with children is important and should be improved. The key informants, whether ultimately for or against the proposed OPA, acknowledge that it is a matter of long-term planning – it is about what the neighbourhoods should look like in the future and building for it today. However, the developer key informants argue that right now the market is not demanding large units, and the City should not be intervening in the market. This ignores the obvious constraint that the extra bedroom is not the only requirement to establish family-friendly housing; schools, playgrounds, and community centre facilities are just as important, and as long as they are not being provided, the demand will be low. If the City does not intervene and does not have the forethought to require larger units now, the opportunity is lost. The problem with letting current demand fully dictate what is built now is that it precludes possible higher future demand. Higher energy costs and transit congestion, as well as the emergence of a "second generation" condominium cohort, will have a positive impact on demand for family-sized units, but if there are no condominiums large enough to house them it will never be an option. The remaining significant tracts of brownfield land are currently being redeveloped, and it is in these areas that new neighbourhoods will be built from the ground up. This marks a critical juncture in city building, because if these new neighbourhoods are not built to house and accommodate a completely diverse set of residents, in age, income, and tenure, they will not be the complete communities the City is striving for; they will be monolithic

subcultures of young and old, singles and couples, "yuppies and dinks". Furthermore, some of the existing child-supportive social infrastructure in the downtown core is facing declining usership and threats of closure, including, in particular, schools. If more housing options for families are constructed, these facilities may gain the student population needed to keep them from closing. This is critically important because once a school is closed, families will avoid that area and the school will remain closed forever.

This highlights the time sensitive nature of this proposed OPA. If the City and the school boards wait for the demand to be there, opportunities may well have expired. If the downtown core – especially the Railway Lands and Central Waterfront areas, as they are the last remaining brownfield sites – is built-out now without family-friendly units, when the demand is there in the future, there will effectively be no supply. Both elements of the OPA are necessary, and the policy rationale is strong. The City and school boards need to ensure the parks, schools, daycares, and libraries are constructed, while the developers need to construct and properly market the family-sized units to house the family population that will support those parks, schools, daycares, and libraries.

PL_2 acknowledges that this policy is an intrusion on developers, but it may only be a modest intrusion. And ultimately it is one that serves a greater purpose for the longevity of the city. As developers argue that the risks involved with constructing three bedroom units are too great because they are the last to sell and often prices end up being reduced, there are ways to work around this issue and make it more attractive for developers to include more three bedroom units in their projects. Some of these solutions include a set of design guidelines for making units better suited to family needs; reducing financial disincentives; and allowing for height or gross floor area bonuses in exchange

for meeting the family-friendly housing component. These solutions will be discussed in Section 8.5.

8.3.2 Affordability

One of the more prominent areas of discussion regarding the OPA is related to affordability. It is commonly stated by the key informants, especially the developers, that the price point of a typical three bedroom unit is out of reach to many families, and some question: what is the point of building a stock of units that does not make sense for its intended market? This is a very real issue, but there are possible solutions to making the units more affordable.

One possible way of making large units more affordable, and consequently more attractive to families, is by creating units with lower end selling prices. Three bedroom units do not need to be built as luxury suites or penthouses as they most often are today. They can be located on lower levels without the premium package of features and finishes; they can be offered as entry-level units, as PL_2 suggests. UD_2 emphasizes that price tends to play a larger role than bedroom count, as witnessed in a project which saw some of its three bedroom units redesigned to have smaller square footage and therefore more affordable prices before being sold. Another possible strategy is to implement density or height bonuses for including more family-friendly units and also to improve the affordability of all units. If developers can have increased density, they can offset some of the costs, thus bringing down the end selling prices.

Several key informants suggest that because people can still buy a house for the cost of a condo unit, why would they choose the condo? Although many people may still

choose the house over the condo, there is a growing population of people who will choose the condo over the house if the supporting social infrastructure are in place. This is especially true of those who prefer the urban lifestyle over the suburban life. Evidence of this is exhibited through the interviews with parents. It is clear that for the parents choosing downtown condos, lifestyle and location are highly valued. In the future, as costs of commuting and commuting times continue to rise, together with the building of schools, daycares and parks in the core, there may be even more people opting for the downtown condominium family lifestyle. Whether they can be accommodated depends on the construction of a suitable housing stock today.

Another layer to the issue of affordability is in the provision of truly affordable housing targeted for low income households, which is a role taken on by the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC). In the downtown area, there are several sites which the City has been able to secure for TCHC to develop affordable housing, including sites within the Railway Lands and West Don Lands. In these developments, a significant portion of the units developed will be sized to accommodate families and will rely on government subsidies. SB_1 suggests giving TCHC a larger role in providing family units, but recognizes that housing for middle-income residents needs to be considered, and the proposed OPA has the ability to do this. Accommodating the middle class is emphasized by Montgomery (2006): "Making space for the middle class is crucial if the city is serious about sustainability" (p. 56).

8.3.3 Summary

The proposed OPA has enormous potential for making a complete community of the downtown core. As Toronto moves forward with major intensification of the last remaining brownfield sites in the central core and waterfront, if done properly, it stands to create a sustainable, livable city that could rival Vancouver. The key element lies in the statement "*if done properly*". The proposed OPA has sound policy based intentions, particularly in its ability to foster complete communities and could lead to significant improvements to the housing stock; however, as it is currently drafted, there are elements, such as its intent and scope, which need to be addressed before its full potential can be implemented. By making small changes to the scope of the OPA, and taking further action, such as creating a set of design guidelines with a clear definition of what constitutes family-sized housing, the issues inherent to the matter can be solved. In order to achieve this, a list of recommendations is provided in Section 8.5 of this chapter. These recommendations involve direct changes to the proposed OPA, as well as other initiatives and actions that need to be considered in conjunction with the OPA.

8.4   An Updated Model of Housing Requirements Under the Family Life Cycle

In Chapter 2, the concept of the family life cycle was reviewed; particularly as it applies to housing requirements (see Section 2.4). The family life cycle is a concept used in modelling residential mobility behaviour. As it applies to housing requirements, it is based on the notion that a family will relocate to accommodate changes in size and space requirements. Accordingly, it is important to understand that demographic characteristics, traditional household formation, and housing patterns are changing;

planning needs to reflect this. Family life cycle, or life stage, is necessarily considered in

planning because it is a vital component in community development and in the provision

of housing to meet the needs of people across all life stages. However, the family life

cycle model is based on an antiquated understanding of family housing needs. This is the

foundation behind the third research objective of this study. In order to address these

changes in the housing requirements demanded at each stage of the family life cycle, an

updated model is proposed to consider the "condo family".

The housing requirements typically demanded at each stage of the family life

cycle are illustrated by Short (1984) in Table 8.1. The six stage life cycle is still common

today; however, there are factors that affect the length of time one spends at each stage,

and this will impact housing demands. With the traditional nuclear family becoming less

common, delays in marriage and child-bearing years, increases in common-law

partnerships, childless couples, lone-parent, blended, and single-sex families, and a trend

toward smaller families, the types of housing demanded at each stage are changing.

Table 8.1 Traditional Family Life Cycle Housing Requirements

Stage in Life Cycle	Housing needs/ aspirations
1 pre-child stage	Relatively cheap, central city apartment
2 child-bearing	Renting or single-family dwelling close to apartment zone
3 child-rearing	Ownership of relatively new suburban home
4 child-launching	Same area as (3) or perhaps move to higher-status area
5 post-child	Marked by residential stability
6 later life	Institution/ apartment/ live with children

Note: from Short (1984)

A family's housing needs are typically defined by either stability or mobility. As

a family's housing needs change, whether they need more space to accommodate

children or they are ready to downsize after the child-launching stage, they will likely

satisfy their new housing needs through moving. The increasingly prominent ideas of

aging-in-place and *complete communities* are founded on the notion that people should be able to remain in their familiar neighbourhood throughout every stage of their lives; people should not be forced to move out of their community because suitable housing is not available. For a neighbourhood to be stable, its residents need to be stable within their own housing needs. Providing options for this is important in areas like the downtown core where neighbourhood stability will strengthen the community. In order to create a stable living environment, a variety of housing options needs to be provided. Consequently, if a community is *complete*, then the housing needs across all life stages will be met within that neighbourhood.

Demographic changes are redefining the concept of family and the typical stages of housing consumption are changing. The total fertility rate in Canada was 1.66 children in 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2009), meaning that families with one or two children are in the significant majority. Coupled with the demographic changes discussed in Chapter 4 regarding the continuing trend toward smaller, non-traditional families, and more dual income households, it is necessary to consider that given an adequate supply of amenities such as schools and daycares, as well as housing opportunities, the family of today could readily be supported in a two or three bedroom condominium. The research provided in this thesis confirms there is a trend for the young professionals who have become embedded in the downtown lifestyle to remain there after having one or two children. Generally, it is because of lifestyle considerations that they have become accustomed to and the fact that they like condominium living; it is close to their place of work, it is safe and secure, they may not need an automobile, and they enjoy the amenities and culture of urban neighbourhoods. The current state of condominium housing in downtown Toronto

appears to be able to accommodate families with one, sometimes two, young children –

typically infants or toddlers; however, it is generally the arrival of a second child that

prompts the need for more space, or children reaching school age that demands an area

with a good school. For this reason, larger units and child-supportive infrastructure are

needed to keep these families in the area; if the options are not available, families will be

forced to move out of the core, and the existing child-supportive amenities such as

schools will suffer. Therefore, planning decisions need to consider an updated model of

housing requirements under the family life cycle concept, one that better supports the

principles of a *complete community*, and considers those who choose to remain living in a

downtown condo throughout their child rearing years. This updated model is based on

the family of today: the "condo family", and is presented in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 Updated Family Life Cycle Housing Requirements

Stage in Life Cycle	Housing needs/ aspirations
1 pre-child	Small downtown condo – typically one bedroom or one plus den – rent or own
2 child-bearing	Same as (1) or move up to larger unit – more likely to own than rent – stay in familiar neighbourhood
3 child-rearing	Same as (2) or move up to ownership of larger condo – two or three bedrooms – typically apartment, townhouse, or stacked townhouse
4 child-launching	Same area as (3) or perhaps move to a larger unit
5 post-child	Marked by residential stability or downsize to smaller unit
6 later life	Remain in same unit, downsize to smaller condo, or senior-oriented housing in same area

Note: Ideally, all housing demands can be met within the familiar neighbourhood.

The idea that communities need to be built to accommodate residents across all

stages of the life cycle is echoed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, as well as in the

interviews with several of the key informants. In many cities, it is common to live in

diverse, high-density neighbourhoods throughout life; for example, New York, London, Singapore, Tokyo, even Vancouver. In the future, Toronto may be added to this list if steps are taken today. The proposed OPA is one step toward acknowledging and accommodating changing housing needs.

8.5   Recommendations for the City of Toronto on Making Condominium Development More Suitable for Families in Downtown Toronto

The following section addresses the fourth research objective and discusses several key recommendations for making development more family-friendly. The recommendations pertain both to the proposed OPA and to actions outside the scope of the OPA. Although primarily directed to the context of the City of Toronto, they draw on the experiences of Vancouver and other cities, and, therefore, can be considered to be applicable generally.

8.5.1   Clarify the Intent of the Proposed Policy

In proposing the policy changes that would see the OPA adopted, clarification is needed on the definition of the issue. One necessary action is to make it clear that the intent of the OPA is to create family-**friendly** housing, not family-**only** housing. Nor is it to guarantee that families will buy the three bedroom units. The goal is to balance out the existing monoculture of young professionals by providing them the option of staying after having children; to provide residents the ability to stay within their familiar neighbourhood throughout all stages of their lives, if they should choose to do so; and to provide a greater mix of housing opportunities for future residents.

8.5.2 Redraft the Proposal Regarding Combinable Units

Although the intent of the proposed OPA is very strong, there is one element that has the potential to critically undermine the fundamental purpose of the policy: the inclusion of the option to build 20% of units as combinable units. The options put forth in the drafted proposal are:

> a) 5 percent of the units to be built in the development will contain three or more bedrooms; or
>
> b) 10 percent of the units may be built as convertible units that may initially contain fewer than three bedrooms, provided that such units retain the ability to be converted to contain three or more bedrooms through relatively minor changes to internal wall configurations; or
>
> c) 20 percent of the units may be built as combinable units that may contain fewer than three bedrooms, provided that such units may be combined with adjacent units through the removal of knock-out panels in demising walls to create larger units consisting of three or more bedrooms; or
>
> d) any combination of (a), (b) and (c) above which provides the equivalent number of units at the rate of 1 three-bedroom unit being equal to two convertible units, or 4 combinable units. (City of Toronto, 2010c)

The problem with approving the proposed OPA as it is currently drafted and making it policy is that there is still no guarantee that there will be more three bedroom units. If developers opt to put knock-out panels between 20% of their units, the supply of three bedroom units is not going to increase; only a future possibility for combining units to create three bedrooms will exist. This option was included in the most recent version of the proposal following consultation meetings and the release of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) report, *City of Toronto's Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children*.

Although the inclusion of knock-out panels between units can provide flexibility in the future, it does so in an incredibly challenging manner. Many interviewees suggest it is challenging to undertake because it requires one's neighbouring unit to be available when needed, and requires one to have the financial capacity to purchase a second unit (or two at one time) and renovate to combine them. Utilizing knock-out panels to combine units may sound good on paper, and may certainly provide potential for creating larger units as needed, but it should not be the only means of providing family-friendly units. It could be used in addition to other methods, like actual three bedroom units or convertible units, but it should not be relied upon as the only method.

The inclusion of convertible units, where the layout is such that interior walls could be installed to create a third bedroom, may have greater potential in the long run because the unit footprint is laid out to accommodate three bedrooms from the beginning, and the renovation cost would be lower than combining two units, thus making it a more affordable option. It allows for more flexibility, because someone can purchase a unit as a two bedroom condo, and, if needed, build a set of interior walls to create a third bedroom. Although there is no guarantee that any of these units will ever become three bedrooms, the feasibility of this possibility is much greater simply from a convenience and affordability stand point.

The proposal should be redrafted to eliminate the concession of 20% combinable units, and focus only on the options of building 5% three bedroom or 10% convertible units.

8.5.3 Clarify the Geographical Definition of the Policy

The geographical scope of the proposed OPA is twofold. The proposed amendment to Official Plan Policy 3.2.1.1 would see the addition of "dwelling units suitable for households with children" to the definition of a "full range" of housing and applies on a city-wide basis. However, the requirement of a minimum amount of three bedroom units is through a Site Specific Policy for the downtown area as defined in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1 Geographical Scope of Proposed OPA
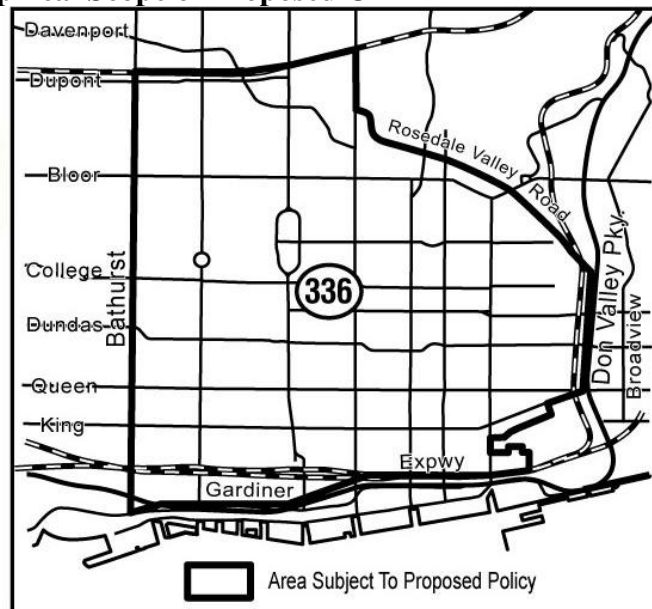
Note: from City of Toronto (2010c)

The *Downtown* will be the focus of the Site Specific Policy 336 because this is where larger units are most needed. However, several key informants strongly question why the OPA will not apply to the Central Waterfront areas contained within the Central Waterfront Secondary Plan, including the West Don Lands, East Bayfront, Lower Don Lands, and Portlands. The City's reason for this exclusion of the Central Waterfront from the Site Specific Policy of the OPA is that its Secondary Plan already contains

policy to provide at least 5% family-sized units. However, this is not clearly stated in all of the Secondary Plan documents for the Central Waterfront – an issue that should be clarified. Furthermore, a clear definition of what constitutes family-sized units needs to be established through the creation of a set of design guidelines for housing families in high-densities and applied on a city-wide basis.

8.5.4   Develop Design Guidelines for High-Density Housing for Families

In order to better facilitate the creation of family-friendly housing, the City needs to develop a set of design guidelines for housing families in high-density housing. The City of Vancouver has a set of guidelines called the *High-density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines*, which provides detailed guidelines for accommodating family housing and addresses elements of site, building, and unit design. As well, the guidelines define family housing in order to provide a consistent benchmark for creating family-friendly housing. In San Francisco, the planning department is looking to create a similar document. If Toronto had a similar set of guidelines, the development of three bedroom units could better reflect the needs of families. Further study and consultation would be needed to create such guidelines, but the result could provide developers with the tools needed to include large units that are better able to accommodate the needs of families. Additionally, a set of design guidelines should include a clear definition of family-friendly housing that can apply on a city-wide basis and better encourage the realization of a "full range" of housing that includes dwelling units suitable for households with children.

One consideration for the design guidelines is to better promote the "city home" idea that has become prevalent – and successful – in Vancouver (MacDonald, 2005). These rowhouses, with street-oriented entrances and setback point towers above, can provide families with some of the characteristics of a house – such as a front door and stoop – with the densities and amenities of downtown living. This building form may be best suited to areas like the Central Waterfront where new neighbourhoods will be built from scratch; however, it could be realized at a much broader scale throughout the city.

8.5.5   Focus on Community Amenities and Facilities

In order for a neighbourhood to successfully maintain a population of residents, regardless of age, income, or tenure, it must have the infrastructure to foster a sense of community. Whether this means updating existing infrastructure in established neighbourhoods or building new elements in planned neighbourhoods, it is critically important to provide the supporting infrastructure for all residents.

Most importantly, several of the key informants suggest the focus should be on the amenities and facilities that are needed by families, because their presence will be what dictates if a neighbourhood is family-friendly. Furthermore, many parents suggest that amenities like parks with playground equipment are critical to making the lifestyle work. In the City of Toronto, planning policy abundantly supports the provision of such amenities. In the downtown core, policies within the relevant Secondary Plans consistently provide for schools, daycares, community centres, libraries, and parks, and this is crucial for making the neighbourhoods viable communities. However, aside from the need for suitable housing stock to support the population who will be the users of such amenities, they need to be provided in a timely manner.

Additionally, although there is policy provision for parks and open space, further direction is needed to provide playground equipment and play space for children of all ages because "quality play opportunities can be delivered only through a deliberate process" (Walsh, 2006, p. 142). The Douglas Coupland Park at the centre of the CityPlace development is an example of where the lack of such policy direction has failed the community because there is no playground equipment. If the needs of children are not incorporated in urban planning and development schemes now, the ability to accommodate their diverse needs in the future is greatly compromised (Walsh, 2006).

More precise policy prescriptions for the inclusion of such things as separate child play spaces and dog runs will make the parks usable by a broader range of users. Many of the parents interviewed suggest parks for children do not need to be huge, as long as there is some element of child-friendly play space. In Vancouver, the areas of False Creek are often seen as family-friendly and livable because of the array of smaller park spaces and playgrounds. It is important to remember that many of the elements needed within a community to accommodate families, including clean parks, safe streets, accessible transit and retail services, are all features that will improve the neighbourhood for all residents, regardless of age or household size.

8.5.6 Develop a New Model for Urban Schools

Perhaps the most important part of the provision of community amenities and facilities is schools. The availability of quality schools is vital for families, and in several areas of the downtown this is an issue. With numerous proposed school sites, and one planned to be underway soon in the Railway Lands West, building to the right scale is

critical and necessitates a new model for school design and demand level. This is especially true in the new neighbourhoods of the Railway Lands and Central Waterfront where new schools will be required.

In building new schools in the downtown, as SB_1 suggests, the typical model of a suburban school based on at least 500 pupil places on a large site with a single-storey facility surrounded by parking lots and playing fields will not work. Urban schools, especially those in downtown areas, provide unique opportunities to create multi-purpose facilities dependent on smaller student populations. They can be multi-storey facilities integrated into the base of a residential tower, with smaller scale outdoor play areas. They do not need large soccer fields and baseball diamonds, especially when bordering large parks, like the school sites in both the Railway Lands and the West Don Lands do – these park spaces can be utilized for daytime school programming needs. An example of a this urban school model is the planned school site in the Railway Lands which will be a shared facility with both the Toronto District School Board and Toronto District Catholic School Board, with a community centre and daycare at the base of a residential tower of affordable housing provided by TCHC. Even the funding scheme for this school was based on a new model of collecting a dedicated levy from the developer, as well as the provision of the site to the City. Given that the site and finances are in place, there is no reason to delay the construction of the school.

In providing schools in urban areas, especially the downtown core, the school boards need to be more committed as stakeholders to provide schools as part of complete communities, and need to advance their planning for schools. They need to play an

"enlightened role" because they have a responsibility to provide schools, which if not met, can frustrate the achievement of a viable, complete community

8.5.7   Develop an Incentive Strategy

One of the most criticized aspects of the proposed OPA from the development industry relates to the increased risk it would put on developers. Many developers argue that large units tend to sell last and often at reduced prices. It is no question that the development industry is driven by the bottom line, and while the condominium market in Toronto is incredibly strong, it is important to the development industry that housing policy not threaten this. However, there are ways to maintain the success of the industry and achieve a greater mix in housing stock. The urban developers interviewed suggest the City has carrots, but uses the stick approach; while the urban planners interviewed suggest the City has fewer carrots in the bag than many think.

One possible solution to making the proposed OPA attractive to developers is to offer height or density bonusing incentives for the inclusion of family-friendly units and a fast tracking of the permit process. In Vancouver, various bonus incentives were implemented with success. In other cities, streamlining the permit process has been utilized. The City of Toronto should consider the potential of both of these methods as incentives. Doing so will help to preserve the developer's value and achieve this important policy objective.

Reducing development charges on three bedroom units, while an important consideration, is not practical for two key reasons. First, the development charges for a three bedroom unit are no higher than they are for a two bedroom unit, thereby not acting

as a financial disincentive on construction. Second, the monies collected through development charges go toward improving capital infrastructure which is a necessary component of community development; reducing the total collection will impact the provision of necessary amenities and infrastructure.

8.5.8   Conduct a Thorough Market Assessment Study

Many of the key informants suggest they have not been provided with enough statistical evidence to support the need for the proposed OPA. Although BILD reported on the issue, the report provides little evidence and lacks any considerable scientific rigor or representativeness to support the conclusions – the focus groups held as a part of the BILD study were only attended by seven participants and fourteen staff, many of whom have a vested interested in seeing this proposal either succeed or fail. In Portland, an outside firm was hired by the Portland Development Commission to assess the market for family housing. The results were published in the 2006 report, *Market Assessment for Family-Oriented Condominiums in Portland, Oregon*, and supported the need for more family-friendly housing development. The study involved a significantly larger survey than the BILD report and can therefore be considered more concretely.

It is recommended that the City consider hiring an outside firm to conduct a study that assesses the market potential of family-friendly housing and the specific needs of families; this may well refute the BILD "survey" and it will also help with the creation of a set of design guidelines. However, a study of this kind may take time and waiting for it to be conducted before adopting the proposed OPA will lead to missed opportunities.

The OPA should still be implemented because it is inherently time sensitive, but further study is still needed to effectively define family housing.

8.5.9   Promote and Encourage Child-Friendly Programming

The City of Toronto has a lot to offer in terms of programming for families and availability of strong social infrastructure. However, more could be done to market and promote these services to increase peoples' awareness of such facilities and activities. For example, the City could put together a guide to what is available, including such things as festivals at Harbourfront or Nathan Phillip's Square; drop-in centres with children's activities at local community centres or libraries; walking school bus programmes; and websites for parent groups and connections. These are very important to those adopting a high-rise family lifestyle, and will go a long way in promoting the city as family-friendly.

8.6   Future Research Opportunities

There are several evident areas of possible future study. For example, a more thorough investigation into the specific housing needs of families living in condominium development could complement and update the existing literature and be used to help the City develop a set of housing design guidelines. This could include post-occupancy evaluations like the one conducted for False Creek North in Vancouver, while similar research in other cities can improve the comparative knowledge base on the matter and provide cities with points of reference and lessons learned. All of this will provide valuable insights into what works best in creating complete communities.

More detailed research into the effects of demographics changes on the housing requirements of the family life cycle is also needed as family formation is changing in the downtown area. While this study provides a brief look at the issue, further investigation could provide greater insight into the "non-traditional" family formation typical of downtown neighbourhoods.

8.7   Conclusion

This purpose of this study is to provide an answer to the question ***how can downtown condominium development be more accommodating to families?*** In considering the research objectives, an answer can now be provided. In order to make downtown condominium development more accommodating to families, the City needs to take steps towards better creating the complete communities it strives for, focus on the long-term future of the City, and have the foresight to intervene before it is too late. Adopting the proposed 'Official Plan Amendment to Encourage the Development of Units for Households with Children' is an important step; however, there are other considerations outside of prescribing that a minimum number of three bedroom units are built. Focusing on the provision of adequate and appropriate community services facilities is vital to attracting a broad range of residents to any community. Building abundant affordable housing in every neighbourhood to foster diversity in social mix is crucial. Establishing a housing stock for the future demands, not just the current demands, is imperative for the long-term success of the City. Ultimately, the City can make downtown condominium development more accommodating to families by committing to building for tomorrow, today.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Vision of the Toronto Official Plan, 2002

[create] an attractive and safe city that evokes pride, passion and a sense of belonging – a city where people of all ages and abilities can enjoy a good quality of life. A city where:

- *vibrant neighbourhoods that are part of complete communities*;
- *affordable housing choices that meet the needs of everyone throughout their life*;
- attractive, tree-lined streets with shops and housing that are made for walking;
- a comprehensive and high quality affordable transit system that lets people move around the City quickly and conveniently;
- a strong and competitive economy with a vital downtown that creates and sustains well-paid, stable, safe and fulfilling employment opportunities for all Torontonians;
- clean air, land and water;
- green spaces of all sizes and public squares that bring people together;
- a wealth of recreational opportunities that promote health and wellness; a spectacular waterfront that is healthy, diverse, public and beautiful;
- cultural facilities that celebrate the best of city living; and
- beautiful architecture and excellent urban design that astonish and inspire

Appendix 2 Sample Information and Consent Letter for Key Informants

December 15, 2009

Dear *Participant*,

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in research that I am conducting as part of my thesis for my Master's degree in Planning at the School of Planning, University of Waterloo, under the supervision of Dr. Laura Johnson. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

As defined in the provincially initiated *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, the City of Toronto is expected to accommodate 400 residents and jobs per hectare within its existing urban boundary – the highest level of residential and employment intensification targets provided for in the Act. In order to meet this target, condominium development will play an increasingly important role as higher density residential forms contribute to smart growth and intensification. However, creating successful condominium developments lies in the accommodation of a diverse range of occupants, particularly those diverse in household makeup. For this reason, the purpose of my thesis research is to determine how downtown condominium development can be more accommodating to families.

This research will focus on generating policies and strategies that can be used to encourage condominium development in downtown neighbourhoods to be more family-friendly. In order to determine what, if any, planning policies or strategies would be feasible and accepted in the planning and development field I am interviewing key informants in this area. On this note, I believe that you hold valuable insight into this area based on your professional experience and expertise in the field, and I would like to include you in my study by asking you a few questions relating to planning and development of residential communities and condominiums in downtown Toronto.

Participation in this research is voluntary. It will involve an interview of approximately a half-hour in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information. It is my intent that all information provided will be analysed and referred to anonymously in the thesis or any publication in regard to the purpose of this research. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study; however, with your permission anonymous quotations will be used. All participants' data will be coded for reference in the findings. You will have the option as being referred to as KI (Key Informant) or by their occupational/professional category (UD for Urban Developer; PL for Planner; PO for Politician; SB for School Board Planner; and DM for Development and Marketing Consultant). Data collected during this research will be retained for one year upon completion on a password protected personal computer at my

private residence, and then erased. Only researchers associated with this project, myself and my supervisor, will have access.

If you have any questions regarding this research, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at ██-██-███ or by email at cawillco@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Laura Johnson at 519-888-4567 ext. 36635 or by email at lcjohnso@uwaterloo.ca.

I would like to assure you that this research has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes of this office at 519-888-4567 Ext. 36005 or ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

I hope that the results of my research will be of benefit to those participants directly involved, other professionals in the planning and development field not directly involved in the research, and to the City of Toronto.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Willcocks

University of Waterloo
School of Planning

██-██-███

cawillco@uwaterloo.ca

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about research being conducted by Caitlin Willcocks of the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this research, I may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567 ext. 36005.

1. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

   ☐ YES   ☐ NO

2. I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

   ☐ YES   ☐ NO

3. I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

   ☐ YES   ☐ NO

4. I wish to have my anonymity coded as:

   A) ☐ KI (Key Informant)
   B) ☐ PL (Planner)
   C) ☐ UD (Urban Developer)
   D) ☐ PO (Politician)
   E) ☐ SB (School Board Planner)
   F) ☐ DM (Development and Market Consultant)

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3 Sample Information and Consent Letter for Parents

February 14, 2010

Dear Participant,

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in research that I am conducting as part of my thesis for my Master's degree in Planning at the School of Planning, University of Waterloo, under the supervision of Dr. Laura Johnson. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

As defined in the provincially initiated *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, the City of Toronto is expected to accommodate 400 residents and jobs per hectare within its existing urban boundary – the highest level of residential and employment intensification targets provided for in the Act. In order to meet this target, condominium development will play an increasingly important role as higher density residential forms contribute to smart growth and intensification. However, creating successful condominium developments lies in the accommodation of a diverse range of occupants, particularly those diverse in household makeup. For this reason, the purpose of my thesis research is to determine how downtown condominium development can be more accommodating to families.

This research will focus on generating policies and strategies that can be used to encourage condominium development in downtown neighbourhoods to be more family-friendly. I am interviewing the parents of families with children living in downtown condominiums to understand what factors played a role in the decision to live downtown, their experience with raising children downtown, and to gather suggestions that could make it easier and more feasible to raise children downtown. I would like to include you in my study by asking you a few questions relating to your decision to live downtown with your children and your experience of living downtown.

Participation in this research is voluntary. It will involve a short telephone interview of approximately 10-15 minutes. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information. Anonymity will be guaranteed and your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this research; however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. All participants' data will be coded for reference in the findings as PA (Parent). Data collected during this research will be retained for one year upon completion on a password protected personal computer at my private residence, and then erased. Only researchers associated with this project, myself and my supervisor, will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this research.

Please review the attached consent form. Should you agree to participate I will request your verbal consent at the beginning of the interview.

If you have any questions regarding this research, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at ██-██-██ or by email at cawillco@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Laura Johnson at 519-888-4567 ext. 36635 or by email at lcjohnso@uwaterloo.ca.

I would like to assure you that this research has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. However, the final decision about participation is yours. If you have any comments or concerns resulting from your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Susan Sykes of this office at 519-888-4567 Ext. 36005 or ssykes@uwaterloo.ca.

I hope that the results of my research will be of benefit to those participants directly involved, other professionals in the planning and development field not directly involved in the research, and to the City of Toronto.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

Caitlin Willcocks

University of Waterloo
School of Planning

██-██-██

cawillco@uwaterloo.ca

CONSENT FORM

I have read the information presented in the information letter about research being conducted by Caitlin Willcocks of the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at the University of Waterloo. I was informed that if I have any comments or concerns resulting from my participation in this research, I may contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567 ext. 36005.

5. With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

    ☐ YES   ☐ NO

6. I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

    ☐ YES   ☐ NO

7. I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

    ☐ YES   ☐ NO

Appendix 4 Sample Recruitment Notice for Parents

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH IN
FAMILY-FRIENDLY CONDOMINIUM DEVELOPMENT

I am a Master's student in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo looking for participants who live in a downtown condominium with at least one child under the age of 12 years to take part in a study of how condominium development in downtown Toronto can be more family-friendly.

As a participant in this study, you would be asked to partake in a short telephone interview of approximately 10 minutes. All information gathered will remain anonymous.

For more information about this research, or to volunteer for this study,
please contact:

Caitlin Willcocks

School of Planning

at

Email: cawillco@uwaterloo.ca or

Phone: ▇▇▇-▇▇▇-▇▇▇▇

This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics, University of Waterloo.

Appendix 5 Interview Guide for Key Informant Interviews

Planner
- When planning for the redevelopment of an area like the Railway Lands, what segment of the population do you plan for?
- With growth boundaries and intensification targets set out for Toronto, do you think there will be an increase in the number of families living in condos? Downtown?
- Do you think families belong downtown?
- What strategies do you use to work with the City and developers to incorporate amenities such as schools, libraries, community centres, and daycares in residential developments?
- What are your thoughts on the recent push by some Councillors to have at least 10% of all units built be three bedrooms that would be suitable for families?
- Are you aware of any development that meets this standard? Any that goes beyond it?
- Are you aware of any policies or strategies being used to develop family-friendly condos? To secure family-friendly amenities?
- Do you think planning needs to accommodate children?
- Do you have any suggestions of how this could be done?
- Would you like to see incentives for building family-friendly?
- Any suggestions of the types of incentives, policies or strategies that could be employed to encourage development to be more family-friendly?

Urban Developer
- Who do you see as the typical buyer?
- Have you seen demand from other types of buyers?
- How do you decide what amenities will be included in each building?
- Do you think families belong downtown?
- Could any of your developments accommodate families?
- Would you be willing to create more units of a suitable size for families? Include amenities for them, such as kids play areas, craft rooms?
- Are you aware of any policies or strategies being used to develop family-friendly condos? To secure family-friendly amenities?
- What are your thoughts on the recent push by some city councillors to have at least 10% of all units built be three bedrooms that would be suitable for families?
- Are you aware of any development that meets this standard? Any that goes beyond it?
- Would you like to see incentives for building family-friendly?
- Any suggestions of the types of incentives, policies or strategies that could be employed to encourage development to be more family-friendly?
- What strategies do you use to work with the City and developers to incorporate amenities such as schools, libraries, community centres, and daycares in residential developments?

School Board Planner
- How does the School Board determine when to build a new school?
- Are you seeing demand in downtown for more schools?
- What strategies do you use to work with the City and developers to incorporate school sites in developments?
- What are your thoughts on the recent push by some city councillors to have at least 10% of all units built be three bedrooms that would be suitable for families?
- Do you think families belong downtown?
- What impact do you think this would have on school enrolment and need in the downtown core?
- Do you think downtown development is currently conducive of a child-friendly learning environment? What changes could be made?

Politician/Staff
- Do you see the need to plan downtown neighbourhoods to be more family-friendly? Do you think there should be policy to mandate development be more accommodating to families?
- Do you think families belong downtown?
- What strategies do you use to work with planners and developers to incorporate amenities such as schools, libraries, community centres, and day cares in residential developments?
- What are your thoughts on the recent push by some Councillors to have at least 10% of all units built be three bedrooms that would be suitable for families?
- Do you see the need to require developers to build a certain proportion of units in the two and three bedroom sizes that could accommodate families?
- Could you suggest any incentives, policies or strategies that could be employed to make development more appropriate with families living downtown?

Development and Market Consultant
- What is the typical market developers build for? Who is the typical buyer of downtown condos?
- Does marketing consider children and families?
- Do you think families belong downtown?
- Have you seen an increase in the number of buyers with children?
- Are you aware of any buildings that target families in marketing?
- Do you think there is a need to build for families?
- Are you aware of any policies or strategies being used to develop family-friendly condos? To secure family-friendly amenities?
- What are your thoughts on the recent push by some Councillors to have at least 10% of all units built be three bedrooms that would be suitable for families?
- Are you aware of any development that meets this standard? Any that goes beyond it?
- Would you like to see incentives for building family-friendly?
- Could you suggest any incentives, policies or strategies that could be used to encourage family-friendly development?

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Appendix 6 Interview Guide for Parent Interviews

- Do you live in a condominium?
- How many children do you have?
- What is the size of your condo? How many bedrooms?
- Are there amenities in your building for children?
- Are there sufficient local amenities for you and your children?
- Do you send your children to a local daycare or school?
- Are you satisfied with the quality of the daycare or school?
- What influenced your decision to live in a condominium with your children?
- Do you see it as a temporary living situation or a permanent one?
- Does it feel like home?
- Do you think families belong downtown?
- Are there features or amenities you would like to see?
- Would you recommend the lifestyle?
- Do you think the City is doing a good job planning for people living downtown? With children? What could they do better?