

VALUING LAND: WELFARE STATE DISINVESTMENT, INCLUSIONARY
ZONING, AND JUSTICE

by

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A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Department of Anthropology
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Anthropology

June 2019

DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE

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Title: Valuing Land: Welfare State Disinvestment, Inclusionary Zoning, and Justice

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Degree awarded June 2019

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Doctor of Anthropology

Department of Anthropology

June 2019

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This research asks what happens when the measures that will provide needed housing to the poor are also those that will displace other precariously housed people and disrupt valued social relations in neighbourhoods. To answer this question, it examines political and economic shifts in the welfare state, urban scale, and urban land use, through the lens of an inclusionary zoning land use policy in Vancouver, Canada. This policy trades additional land development rights to real estate developers in exchange for funds for public amenities, increasingly social or low-income housing. Based on sixteen months of ethnographic research in three neighbourhoods in Vancouver, this project finds that the land use policy in question has contradictory results. The policy produces small amounts of new low-income housing units in a time of diminished public funding. Yet, it also produces large condominium developments that contribute to speculation in the land and housing market, rising land values and rent rates, displacement of homes and communities, urban inequality, and urban conflict.

This project argues that disinvestment measures have resulted in a rescaling of the city as an arena of welfare state funding enacted by assembling land for investment and development. Further, it argues that while urban residents articulate alternative, often

non-market, understandings of the value of land and place, the effect of these articulations is impeded by new state forms that rely on private capital. Throughout I examine the work of land use planning in assembling urban land into an investable commodity despite its existing uses. This work leads to conflicts between residents, real estate developers, non-profit housing agencies, and city government over competing conceptions of the value of land and place. As neighbourhoods change through new land investments, residents' place making activities are overwhelmed, particularly those of residents who experience race and class inequality. In addition, since this policy implicates social housing providers in the gentrification of neighbourhoods, it also contributes to resident distrust of the remaining institutions of the welfare state, potentially undermining collective action toward more robust public services.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express appreciation to my two advisors on this project. Dr. Sandra Morgen welcomed me to the University of Oregon campus, advocated for my admission, and supported me through the first phases. Dr. Lynn Stephen generously and without hesitation took over this advising role upon Sandi's passing, providing guidance through the last phases of research, analysis, and writing. My two advisors both provided invaluable advice, criticism, and support without which this project would not have come to completion.

Members of my committee have provided invaluable advice, not only in their responses to this research, but in moving forward into the professional world of research and teaching. Thank you to Dr. Stephen Dueppen, Dr. Bharat Venkat, and Dr. Raoul Lievanos.

Of course, many people outside the university were involved in contributing to the success of this research. Specifically, the many people who offered me interviews and documents, who told me of their experiences, and who invited me in to their groups and meetings. Primarily, this gratitude goes to the members of the No Tower Coalition, who welcomed me immediately and were a fundamental source of understanding of the process and politics of fighting city hall.

Finally, many people in my life supported me personally throughout this long PhD process. To my family and my friends, your encouragement bolstered my ego, provided comfort, gave me energy, and honed my capacities. Thank you.

This research was supported in part by a University of Oregon Dissertation Research Fellowship and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of

Canada.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

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I. INTRODUCTION: VALUING LAND

Context, Significance, and Key Arguments

Much recent scholarship has pointed to the rescaling of cities as central nodes in national and global economies and in policy development (Brenner 2004; Hackworth 2007; Harvey 2005). This rescaling has arisen over time since the 1970s through downloading and disinvestment of the welfare state, intra-national revenue transfers, and taxation regimes as well as through reinvestment by global economic interests as cities have sought new markets and new resources. In the process, municipal governments gained some autonomy over their operations vis-à-vis more encompassing regional and national governmental scales. They also experienced new fiscal and service-delivery burdens as poverty increased and wealth and income polarized with fewer nationally-provided resources to respond. Arising from and shaping these larger political, economic, and scalar shifts are spatial changes within cities. Through globalization, manufacturing and resource-based industrial centers moved from the global north to the global South, and from major urban centers to new economic zones, leaving industrial lands vacant for reinvestment by emerging finance, real estate, and insurance industries. Municipally-led land use changes permitted redevelopment of these areas with residential uses that helped create a new urban economy more dependent on real estate development (Brash 2011; Hackworth 2007; Kern 2010; Searle 2014; Smith 2002). This contributed to the in-migration of wealthier and whiter residents to the urban core (Hackworth 2007; Ley and Lynch 2012), threatening the tenure of low-income residents, Indigenous residents, and residents of colour and leading to increased urban conflict over displacement, gentrification, and privatization (Atkinson and Bridge 2005; Bridge, et al.

2012; Cahill 2010; Checker 2011; Jones and Ley 2016; Lehrer & Wieditz 2009; Shatkin and Vidyarathi 2014; Weinstein and Ren 2009).

Such political and economic changes have occurred in cities around the globe and both changes and the conflicts that result are an important area of urban research. This project examines such political and economic changes as they have impacted Vancouver, Canada where the global land and real estate economy has been linked to the provision of public amenities, increasingly social or low-income housing through municipal land use policy. Although cities are commonly considered “physical expressions of social relations, movements, and ideologies” (Hackworth 2007:78), rarely have the links between changing land use patterns and welfare state provisioning been examined. Yet, the combination of growing fiscal burdens and the opportunity presented by increased investment interest in land and housing has propelled Vancouver’s municipal government to rely on its primary jurisdictional authority, land use, to create new revenue streams for public amenities. This has been accomplished by expanding the use of one land development policy, the Community Amenity Contributions (CAC) policy, which extends additional land development rights to real estate developers in exchange for revenues used to build public amenities, increasingly social housing or housing for low-income households. This policy was first used to extract fees from developers for the construction of new downtown neighbourhoods on former industrial sites. However, neighbourhood planning in Vancouver has moved into long-settled residential neighbourhoods, particularly into renter-predominant neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods with high proportions of households of colour and working class, poor, immigrant, Indigenous, and women-led households. Land development negotiations

outside the downtown core result in smaller amenities and are resisted by organized groups of residents who reject the neighbourhood changes and gentrification wrought by large scale condominium development. Residents seeking to preserve their neighbourhoods resist the actions of politicians and bureaucrats at city hall and real estate developers. They are also pitted against the non-profit housing agencies that administer social housing and that experience service expansion in a time of overall retrenchment through these land development deals. Development pressures most keenly impact neighbourhoods where residents have the fewest resources and/or depend on neighbourhood social relations such as for linguistic and cultural expression (Cahill 2010; Shaw & Hagemans 2015). The involvement of non-profit agencies in CAC land development means that resident concerns and opposition campaigns are inhibited; non-profit organizations are often seen as reflecting public interest while those that oppose non-profit agencies may appear discriminatory. Consequently, differently positioned actors within the civil society realm may be pitted against each other, rather than against the real estate developers who benefit most from CAC policy, leading to loss of trust in social programs, loss of social cohesion, and greater difficulty seeing and articulating a common interest in more robust public programs.

Centrally, this research explores how this overall political and economic context has tied the meanings, values, and uses attributed to land locally to those sought by global economic interests heavily invested in land and land development. It asks what meanings, values, and uses are promoted by different political actors, including land developers, city bureaucrats and politicians, social housing providers, and residents? How do the meanings, values, and uses attributed to urban land by these different actors

sustain or undermine valued neighbourhood relationships, democratic accountability, and the tenure of diverse urban residents? What is the relationship between the meanings, values, and uses attributed to urban land and the potential for return to more robust public programs and public accountability? More than just an examination of the links between land's meanings, values, and uses and welfare state provisioning, this research examines what happens on the ground to residents, non-profit agencies, and city government when the measures that will provide needed housing to the poor are also those that will displace other precariously housed people and disrupt valued social relations. This paradoxical outcome from CAC policy is engendering significant conflict in Vancouver that risks overrunning neighbourhoods, increasing inequality, and undermining accountability to broader public concerns. The resulting dissertation, based on sixteen months of ethnographic research, argues that public disinvestment measures in Canada have resulted in a rescaling of the city as an arena of welfare state funding enacted by assembling land for investment and development. Further, it argues that while urban residents articulate alternative, often non-market, understandings of the value of land and place, the effect of these articulations is impeded by new state forms that rely on private capital.

This ethnography looks primarily at one CAC-involved land deal within the context of a new neighbourhood plan for Grandview Woodland, an east Vancouver neighbourhood. The Boffo/Kettle development partnership proposes a privately-funded for-profit condominium and retail building in Grandview Woodland with profits accruing to the developer, Boffo Properties. This building would also contain an expanded program and administrative space and new social housing units to be operated by the

Kettle Friendship Society, a mental illness and poverty serving non-profit agency currently operating on the site. The land deal conforms to the Community Amenity Contributions (CAC) policy, which trades additional land development rights for cash and in-kind contributions from real estate developers to the municipal government to fund public amenities, increasingly social housing. In the case of the Boffo/Kettle development partnership, new zoning would permit Boffo Properties to build 150-200 condominiums and up to 18,000 square feet of retail. The Kettle Society would receive renewed administration and program space and add up to 30 units of single-occupancy social or low-income housing to their portfolio of 200 or so managed social housing units around the city. In the eyes of the partnership, paying for this renewal and expansion would be enough for Boffo Properties to secure support for upzoning from the City of Vancouver bureaucrats and politicians under the CAC policy. However, in the eyes of the opposition group, the No Tower Coalition, also based in Grandview Woodland, this development would fundamentally alter the experience of neighbourhood, and lead to increased land value, real estate speculation, and displacement. Ethnographic research focused primarily on Grandview Woodland and secondarily on two other east Vancouver neighbourhoods, Chinatown and around Joyce Station, where similar land development deals were proposed and protested. Throughout, I explored the ways that changing land uses were interpreted and valued by different actors within the neighbourhoods and city. While this research examines the role of the community amenity contributions policy centrally, over the course of this project, it became apparent that this land use policy enacted at the municipal level was influencing social housing policy at the provincial (regional) and federal levels. This ethnography, therefore, moves from the context of

neighbourhood and municipality into the realm of social housing and the welfare state more broadly.

Background Literature

Canada, like many Western nations, has seen a significant shift from Keynesian welfare state standards and funding to what many scholars refer to as a neoliberal approach, or the instantiation of “market-like rule” (Peck 2010:20), through privatizing public services, eliminating subsidies, restructuring welfare provisions, increasing the attachment of the poor to work, and reforming urban fiscal policies to encourage gentrification and securitization (Kingfisher and Maskovsky 2008:116). Neoliberalism tends to produce greater insecurity and inequality in part by operating through supposedly gender, class, and race neutral “economic policies” that draw on and reproduce existing gender, class, and race inequalities (Morgen, Acker, and Weigt 2010:6). Resources and services that had become part of the political or public realm in the Keynesian period of welfare state expansion are (re)privatized in neoliberalism through processes that are both hegemonic and contested (Clarke 2004). In addition, neoliberal policies impact the scale at which political and economic decision making is conducted, downscaling responsibility, but not resources, to smaller units, such as cities, which then turn to the market in response (Brenner 2004; Hackworth 2007). In Canada, neoliberalization has included the elimination of national standards and much national funding for welfare programs from cash assistance, to housing, to healthcare and education (Brodie 2002; Pulkingham and Ternowetsky 1999). Provinces, left more to their own devices and with

more limited funds, have further downloaded social service responsibilities to the cities, often without the requisite resources (Smith and Stewart 2009).

In British Columbia, in which Vancouver is one of the largest cities, city governments have limited jurisdiction. While Vancouver is somewhat more powerful than other municipalities in the province, this power is still limited, particularly in its ability to levy taxes (Smith and Stewart 2004). Taking only a small portion of property tax revenue but experiencing increasing poverty and destitution without a responsive provincial or federal government, the city government has turned to its primary authority, zoning and land use, to instigate site-specific rezonings and new neighbourhood plans in Grandview Woodland and many other areas to create new social housing among other public amenities. This has been done by turning to a heated global market in land and housing by permitting condominium-form redevelopment of, first, decommissioned industrial lands in the downtown core and, later, moving outward by initiating new neighbourhood plans in neighbourhoods surrounding the core, such as Grandview Woodland (Harris 2011; Ley 1996). While initial condominium development in Vancouver did not involve the negotiation of CACs, post the Expo '86 world's fair, CACs became an important part of all rezoning negotiations. Consequently, significant increases in density, often with a requirement to build social housing, have been made in many areas of Vancouver over the same period as property values have risen exponentially, leading neighbourhood activists to question whether upzoning and condominium development, and the land speculation that abounds given a pliant city council, is itself having an upward impact on land value, pushing the homelessness count higher, and growing the demand for social housing.

Frequently studied in isolation from each other, neoliberal policies have become increasingly intertwined, including disinvestment in many welfare state programs, tax cuts, downloading between levels of government and from public to private sectors, and the increasing use of contract in government and in the social service field. Over the past 20 to 30 years, these policies have formed a fabric of neoliberal effects and logics that clothe many institutions and actors. Welfare state disinvestment and downloading together with privatization of public services and government functions have created profit-making opportunities for real estate developers in Vancouver, impacting City-run neighbourhood planning, non-profit social housing provision, and neighbourhood activism. They have also created service-expansion opportunities for non-profit agencies through partnership with for-profit real estate developers as in the central case of this research. Further, land acquisition and redevelopment has intensified in Vancouver and globally as housing, a common use of land in urban contexts, is increasingly a means to wealth, a financial asset, and a global site of investment (Aalbers 2017; Rolnik 2013; Fields and Uffer 2016).

CAC policy marries private development profits to the provisioning of parks, community centers, and, as in the central case of this research, social housing and social service provision. While a public policy, it requires that the municipal government respects the profit-seeking interests of real estate developers. Around the world, such interests are exacerbating income and wealth inequality while intensifying the real estate value of land (Jones and Ley 2016; Leitner and Sheppard 2018; Li 2017; Weinstein 2014). Land is not naturally a site of investment. It must be rendered so through an assemblage of inscription devices, knowledge, and techniques (Goldstein and Yates

2017; LeBillon and Sommerville 2017; Li 2014; Visser 2017) deployed, in Vancouver, through neighbourhood planning which promises new public amenities, especially social housing, in return. Cities around the world experience gentrification and displacement pressures as a result of these shifts, including conflict between those residents whose lives are disrupted and the political and economic interests that benefit from urban redevelopment. Displacement is often understood as a temporal and spatial process of being pushed out but can also be experienced even by residents who manage to stay put (Shaw and Hagemans 2015). This was the case among activists in Grandview Woodland, in Chinatown, and around Joyce Station activists as they experienced both threats to their own tenure and to the way of life familiar and necessary to their neighbourhood relationships.

In this dissertation, neighbourhoods have several, often competing, definitions. They are administrative units set out by city government and acted upon through municipal planning and development policies and activities. Sometimes arbitrary divisions between areas of the city have often been codified as neighbourhoods through maps, land uses (especially areas of residential and industrial uses), zoning allowances, roadways, and the histories of their uses, habitation, and treatment. As such, they are an important scale of inquiry into the (re)assembling of the investment value of land. However, neighbourhoods are also more than administrative units assigned by city government or scales of inquiry chosen by the researcher. They are also important scales and sites of socio-spatial relations enabled by certain kinds of land uses, and the values, meanings, and experiences of place these reflect. When such uses are disrupted, so too are the meanings, values, and relations they sustained (see for example August 2008;

Blomley 2004; Davidson 2009; Leitner and Sheppard 2018). Among activists in Grandview Woodland, Chinatown and Joyce Station, neighbourhoods were viewed as a source of identity, a site of friendship and familiarity, as refuge from forces of race and class exclusion, as sites of resistance against these same forces, as unique and valued, and as important spaces for the creation of place. Residents in these neighbourhoods challenged the imposition of new definitions of place through new zoning allowances and proposed redevelopment.

Challenges by Vancouver residents are matched in other contexts where residents engage in activism against displacement and neighbourhood change. As work by Davidson (2009) argues, the right to place includes the right to make place or to “dwell” (2009: 232). The activity of dwelling encompasses areas of habitation, but also the many areas of interaction and resources through which collective activity, relationships, wellbeing, and in some cases, conflict can flourish. For many residents active against development, neighbourhoods are understood as a larger space of home, one on which they rely for tangible and intangible resources. In many senses, this definition of place was under threat through CAC policy and large-scale redevelopment as the very construction of place, including the physical buildings, land titles, residents, and important institutions, was targeted for change by forces with more resources and often more power than residents. However, the threat was also perceived differently by differently positioned actors vis-à-vis neighbourhood redevelopment. Neighbourhoods as geographic places containing and reflecting multiple affiliations are often sites through which multiple communities act, sometimes in concert with each other and sometimes in conflict. Thus, neighbourhoods are also sites of oppositional and contradictory

allegiances, which are often shaped through relations within neighbourhoods, but also through larger forces, such as of race and class inequality and settler colonial land relations. In this case, welfare state disinvestment was a particularly important factor since it contributed to positioning longstanding neighbourhood-based non-profit agencies and residents on opposite sides for and against development proposals.

Urban planning was an important force shaping the understanding and experience of neighbourhood throughout my research. Urban planning impacts a broad array of municipal services including social services such as housing, population needs for open space and other public amenities, built structures regulated by zoning, transportation and other infrastructure, and overall neighbourhood feel and character. Through these processes initiated by City Councilors and carried out by city planners and bureaucrats, neighbourhoods are represented as having distinct characteristics, often given through demographic accounts of wealth and poverty, renters and homeowners, and existing amenities, such as parks, libraries, recreation centers, social housing, and social services (see for example City of Vancouver 2016a). These distinct characteristics given by city bureaucrats may or may not match how residents describe their own neighbourhood. Grandview Woodland, the neighbourhood in which I focused my research, for example, was represented in planning documents as a neighbourhood with a high percentage of renter households, a relatively high proportion of Indigenous residents, a high proportion of single parent (mother) households, a declining population especially of immigrants and young people, and a high proportion of households spending over 30% of income on shelter, a proxy measure of poverty (City of Vancouver 2016b: 17-19). While these demographic facts are specific to Grandview Woodland, they are generally reflective of

east Vancouver neighbourhoods, including Chinatown and the Joyce Station area, as east Vancouver is the historically working class, Indigenous, and immigrant residential area of the city.

However, in addition to these statistics, the Grandview Woodland neighbourhood (Figure 1 below), in which I have lived since moving to Vancouver in 2003, has many other important aspects that different residents will also list, depending on their neighbourhood relationships and other ties. For example, Grandview Woodland is bounded by the Port of Vancouver, light and heavy industrial areas, major trucking routes, important highways and through roads, and the largest transit station in Vancouver. It also has beautiful views onto the North Shore mountains and downtown skyscrapers, blocks of turn of the century heritage homes, one of the city's most lively and eclectic high streets, a long working class and immigrant history, a longstanding and increasingly visible Indigenous residential and cultural presence, a herstory as Vancouver's lesbian neighbourhood, a central role in the annual Culture Crawl because of its large population of both artists and artist studios, and a reputation as a home to many of the city's most vocal political activists. A stone's throw from Vancouver's downtown condo buildings of glass and concrete, the neighbourhood is decidedly urban, but also small scale, with detached houses, many divided into 2, 3, and 4 suites, 3-storey apartments, condominiums, housing co-operatives¹, and social housing buildings, and only the occasional building 4-storeys or taller. Most trees in the neighbourhood reach

¹ Cooperative housing is a form of housing tenure funded through federal cooperative housing programs that offers security of tenure, tenant control of housing, but does not require ownership. Tenants pay a share into the cooperative upon being accepted for a unit and from there pay a monthly housing charge and participate in the running and maintenance of the building, usually an apartment building with multiple units all belonging to the cooperative. Cooperatives have been undergoing substantial change as housing programs have been downgraded to provinces (Cooperative Housing Federation of BC, n.d.).

taller than most of the buildings and when you walk around the neighbourhood, whether on the high street or any other, variability rather than monotony meets the eye. Some of these understandings can be mapped and listed, but others are known primarily through lived experience. Different aspects matter to different residents and to urban planners, but all constitute important understandings of the neighbourhood.

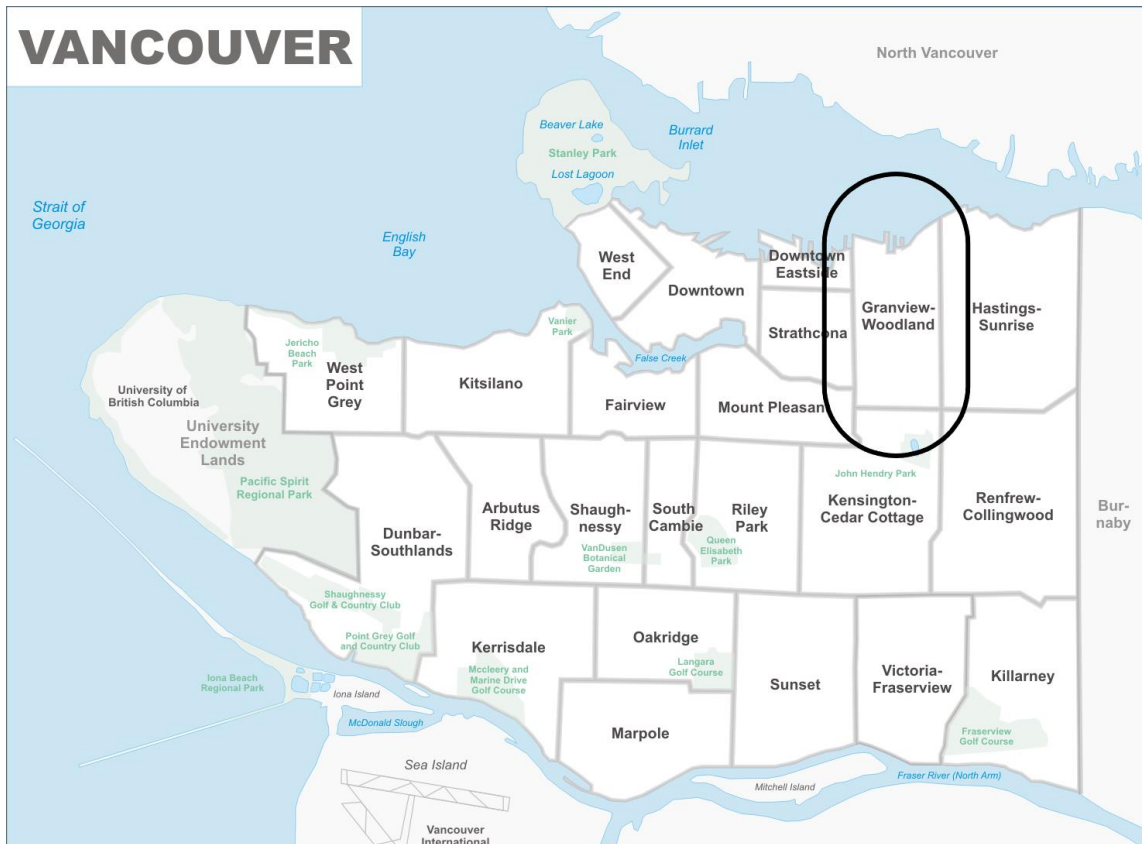


Figure 1: Map of Vancouver, Grandview Woodland circled by author. Attribution: Tschubby [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)]

Downloading, Condominiums, and The Boffo/Kettle Development Proposal

Many of the issues of disinvestment and downscaling, including the increased burdens placed on smaller and smaller governmental scales and the actions of city governments to facilitate market investment, are visible in the Boffo/Kettle development proposal at the center of this research. This development proposal also reveals that decision making and revenue generation are downscaled even further than the municipality, in this case to one neighbourhood, land parcel, non-profit agency, and neighbourhood residents. Rather than provide the needed service and housing space through national or provincial programs, achieving service expansion, in this case, required hyper-local negotiations and decisions among these parties. The Boffo/Kettle development proposal is to build a block-large building across five parcels of land located at the corner of Venables St and Commercial Diversion (shown in Figure 2 below). The proposed building would run edge to edge across the land parcel excepting a small public courtyard on the western side. Different sections would be built to different heights ranging from 5 to 12 storeys. Inside the building would be located 150-200 condominiums for sale by Boffo Properties, a larger drop-in center and administration and programming space for the Kettle Society, up to 30 units of single-occupancy supportive housing for Kettle clients, and 18,000 square feet of retail at ground level (<http://www.kettleboffo.com>).

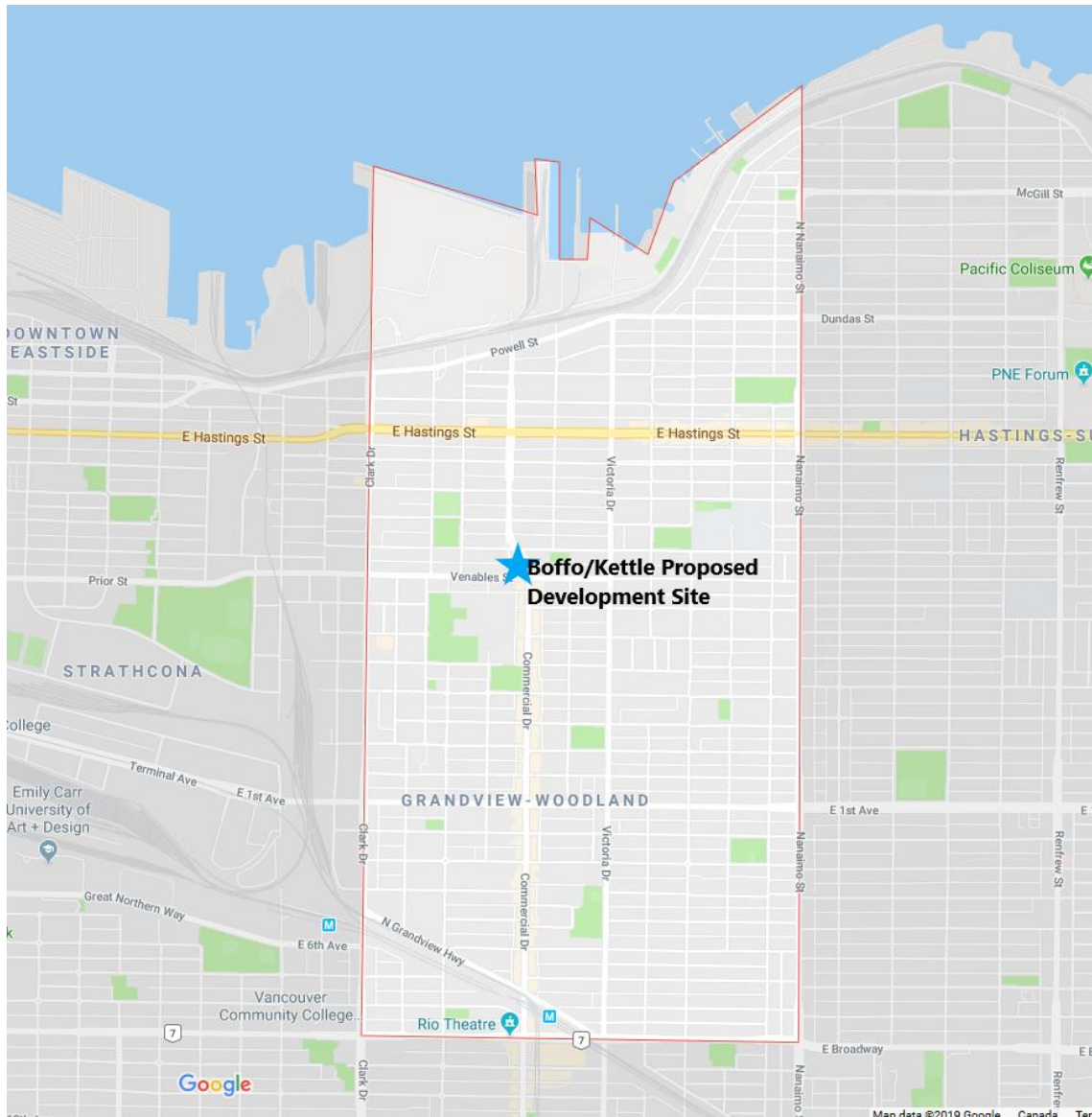


Figure 2: Boffo Kettle Development Site. Grandview Woodland neighbourhood outlined in red. Boffo/Kettle proposed development site shown with blue star. Credit: Google Maps, 2019, additions by author.

The five plots of land that make up the parcel, show in Figure 3, include two that were bought by the developer in the years preceding the development proposal, including a former leather drycleaner (1) with significant toxic pollution and a former wedding and banquet hall (3) now rundown and being used by the nearby Britannia Community Center

and an associated bike sharing non-profit organization. It also includes a parking lot operating on municipal public land (5) and a laneway (4), also municipal public land. And, finally, it includes a piece of land owned by the non-profit Kettle Society, serving the mentally ill and poor from their building located at the center of the five land plots (2). (Plots 6, 7, and 8 are surrounding context: Commercial Drive, Uprising Breads Bakery, and private residences respectively).



Figure 3: Image of land parcel. Credit: Stephen Bohus.

As revealed in city documents released through a Freedom of Information request, the idea to expand Kettle Society operations reaches back as far as 2005/6. The Kettle Society building along Venables (plot 2 in the image) is the main program and administrative space of the organization, though the Kettle also manages and operates satellite services and housing throughout the city. This piece of land was purchased in 1999 after many years operating in a rented space elsewhere in Grandview Woodland.

Over time, the building has become crowded and too small for the service and administrative work being done there, which now includes a daily lunch program with lineups out the door on many days. Increasing poverty has placed strains on the services and the building is also run down with many expensive repairs needed (Non-profit staff Member, Personal Communication, November 26, 2015). At the time that the owner of the wedding and banquet hall next door (plot 3 in the image) wanted to retire, he approached the Kettle executive with an offer to purchase his building. City documents released because of a Freedom of Information request, as well as press interviews, and interviews with Kettle staff reveal that the Kettle Society also approached the City of Vancouver in 2006 with a request to purchase the parking lot and laneway (plots 4 and 5). While all the land owners and the potential purchaser seemed amenable, public funding was not forthcoming for development of a new Kettle building and the transactions did not occur at that time.

It was ultimately the City of Vancouver planning department staff who introduced Daniel Boffo, of Boffo Properties, and Nancy Keough, of the Kettle Society executive, in 2010 (Retired government staff member, personal communication November 25, 2015; Non-profit staff member November 26, 2015). From there inquiries about purchase of the parking lot and laneway, as well as inquiries regarding rezoning and provision of a CAC were led by Daniel Boffo of Boffo Properties, with active participation of the Kettle Society. On June 1, 2011, a Master Agreement between Boffo and the Kettle was signed. Pursuant to this agreement,

Boffo agreed to purchase the lot owned by Kettle (“Lot 19”) [Plot 2 in the image], to consolidate Lot 19 with adjacent parcels of land, to design and build a mixed-use complex on the consolidated lands (the “Site”), and then to subdivide the site and convey to Kettle a fee simple

strata lot or airspace parcel for a new and expanded programming centre in turn-key condition. Boffo is also solely responsible for all costs incurred by Kettle to relocate to transition space during construction.

Boffo's obligations in the master agreement are subject to Boffo entering into a binding agreement with the City to purchase the property located at 800 Commercial Drive [plot 5 in the image], receiving a commitment from the City to close and convey to Boffo the land and parking lot adjacent to Lot 19, and obtaining a rezoning of the Site and the necessary development approvals from the City for a feasible project, all as determined by Boffo in its sole discretion.

(From a letter from Boffo Homes and Kettle Society Board Chair dated July 14, 2015 to City of Vancouver Attn: Andrew Newman, Real Estate Services, not published, in possession of author.)

The Master Agreement between Boffo and Kettle Society sets out that Boffo will purchase the current land plot 2, owned by the Kettle Society, through an agreement to exchange the Kettle's existing land rights as property owner for a "fee simple strata lot or airspace parcel" in the form of an expanded programming center in "turn-key condition". Fee simple ownership refers to freehold ownership. A strata lot arises when a building or land is divided into separately owned units. Each unit can be individually owned, and the strata corporation, the collection of all owners of the building or land in question, together owns the common property of the strata corporation, such as roofs, foundations, common walls, and common use areas. An airspace parcel is a legal definition under the *Land Title Act* in British Columbia that, while describing a volumetric parcel of space located above the ground (even if not occupied by a building), constitutes a form of land title. Airspace parcels can be subjected to market and regulatory measures as titles registered on physical plots of land.

When public funding was not forthcoming, the Kettle society executive was introduced, by staff of the municipal government, to the real estate developer, Daniel

Boffo. Achieving their new facility, one on which a growing number of people depend for a range of services, including meals, was turned from a concern of government to one of the Kettle Society itself. For trading their physical plot of land into the overall proposed development, the Kettle Society will receive, pursuant to the Master Agreement, a plot of land, or perhaps a parcel of air, in the form of a brand-new fully operational (turn-key) building that can act as their renewed administrative and program space as well as provide them with new housing units they previously did not operate at the Venables Street site. They will own this new space as one member of a strata corporation that will include 150-200 residential condominium titles and an unspecified number of commercial titles. Achieving the new Kettle Society space is dependent, not on a standard for service delivery or program of public allocation of funds, but on the willingness of the City of Vancouver to sell the two public land plots (plots 4 and 5) to Boffo and undertake and approve both a community amenity contributions negotiation and rezoning across all five land plots as well as issue a development permit. Further, to go ahead, Boffo must be fully satisfied with all such arrangements, meaning that Boffo must be satisfied that the degree of upzoning for greater height and density produces enough condominium profit to justify, according to Boffo “in its sole discretion”, the cost of the project. This further means that achieving new social services and housing is dependent on satisfying the profit-making interests of a real estate developer. Thus, achieving the new Kettle facilities will depend on a substantial change in zoning, which also downscales the decision making about social services to the level of land parcel and neighbourhood, where residents are tasked with the dilemma of accepting a development that will likely displace residents or rejecting it and achieving no new public services.

Pushing Back Against Scaling Down: The No Tower Opposition Campaign

The No Tower Coalition did not accept that resolving such a dilemma was the responsibility of residents, instead embarking on a public and heated protest of the Boffo/Kettle development proposal that spanned from early 2015 to fall 2016. The No Tower campaign received much attention, not always favourable, from those outside the neighbourhood, including in press, and among planners, politicians, and non-profit operators throughout the city (see for example Gold March 2, 2016; Jean April 2, 2016; Jamieson and Barkley June 22, 2016; Johnson June 28, 2016; Jones March 3, 2016; Klassen Mar 2, 2016; Lupick June 9, 2016). It was forceful and effective in making visible significant opposition to this proposal, opposition that likely also reflected a more generalized fatigue and rejection of the pace and scale of development in rapidly changing and increasingly expensive Vancouver, which had experienced a 300% housing purchase price increase since 2005 (regbv.org).

In February 2016, the development proponent team released an artistic rendering (Figure 4) of the proposed building depicted within the context of the neighbourhood. These images were circulated widely including on posters put up around the neighbourhood by the proponents as part of their professional public relations offensive. However, they were also contested by members of the No Tower Coalition, a neighbourhood-based group opposing the proposed development. These images were criticized for falsely representing relative scale of the proposed 12-storey Boffo/Kettle development. In Figure 4 below, this is the lit-up building in the central area of the image. An existing 12-storey senior citizen non-profit housing complex across the street (shown on the right-hand side of the image) appears larger than the proposed

Boffo/Kettle building, though actually sits at the same height and occupies less space due to its much lower number of units.



Figure 4: Renderings of Boffo/Kettle development by proponent team. Credit: <http://www.kettleboffo.com/renderings/>

City of Vancouver-released drawings (Figure 5) are less alluring, but perhaps give better perspective on the relative height and mass of the proposed building (in pink), much larger than anything currently existing in the neighbourhood, indicating to residents that approval of this proposal would bring a sea change of new large-scale developments to the neighbourhood and they feared the resulting disruptive effects.

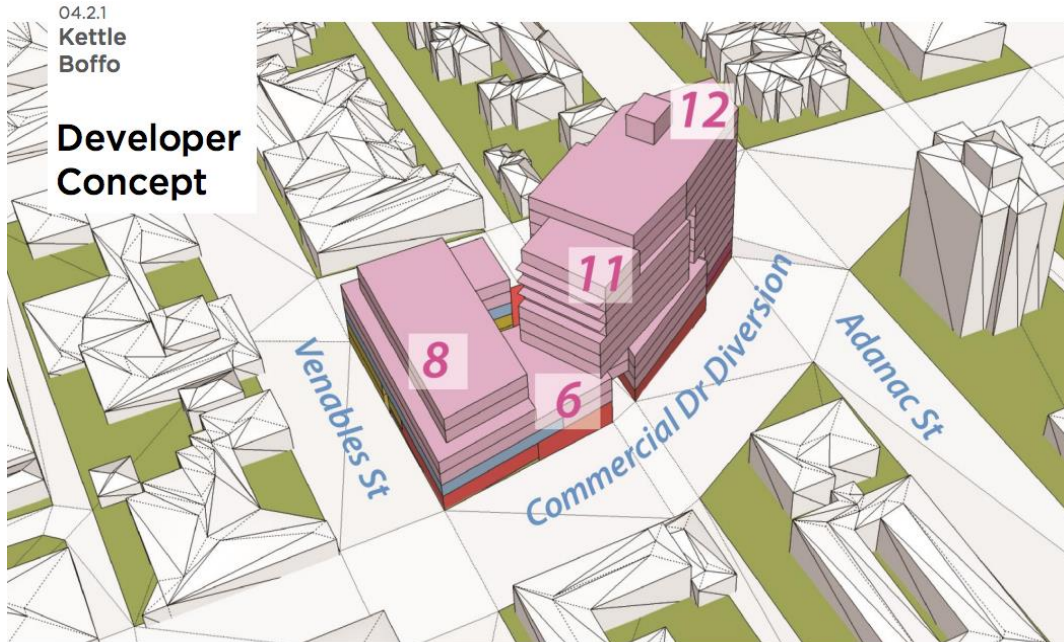


Figure 5: Rendering of Boffo/Kettle development by city planners. Credit: City of Vancouver

The No Tower campaign opposing the Boffo/Kettle development proposal was strategy-rich, with news releases and press interviews, letters to and meetings with municipal and provincial politicians, municipal bureaucrats, non-profit agencies, activists, and other entities in the neighbourhood and city. The No Tower Coalition created a petition and postcards, a website with semi-weekly updates to a list of around 1000 followers, flyers distributed around the neighbourhood to match letters sent out by the Mayor and Boffo/Kettle, as well as posters, an eye-catching logo, lawn signs (Figure 6), a video posted to YouTube and distributed widely, a Styrofoam to-scale model of the proposed development, and ultimately a proposal for what the group believed to be a financially viable alternative low-rise building for the Kettle Society and public piazza for neighbourhood use.



Figure 6: No Tower lawn signs in Grandview Woodland. Photo by author.

Yet, when asked to evaluate the most successful of all the strategies, every member of the group told me that staffing the petition table, two or three members at a time, at the local park on the neighbourhood high street weekly during dry weather was the most important action No Tower members took throughout the campaign. The table proved to be an important and affirming point of contact between No Tower and the public, even while also eliciting sometimes strong opposition and confrontational arguments with those on the other side of the debate. Over 3200 of the almost 4500 signatures were gathered in-person, mostly at the table, at an average rate of 20 per hour, for a total of approximately 400 person-hours over the course of the campaign. The table was where the No Tower message met public response and therefore was a prime

method, not only of gathering support and petition signatures, but of learning what neighbourhood residents and other members of the public thought about the Boffo/Kettle development proposal. It was also a place where the arguments both for and against the development were debated, many reflecting the political and economic contexts already discussed.

The petition table (Figure 7) was located several blocks up from the proposed development site at the heart of the neighbourhood high street on the edge of Grandview Park with views onto the North shore mountains, downtown skyscrapers, and passersby. Neighbourhood vendors of jewelry, books, CDs and DVDs, art, used clothing, Indigenous carvings, and household odds and ends were often set up behind and to the side of the table on the concrete benches around the park's memorial to the world wars. A group of people were usually gathered there to sell, buy, and just hang out. More people passed back and forth in front of the table, which was set up on the grass at the edge of the sidewalk to capture maximum attention while still being out of the way. Capturing attention was generally not difficult, and less and less so as the months passed since more and more propaganda was added to the display. Conspicuous red and white NO TOWER lawn signs festooned either side of the display and a banner with the group's name hung down from the grey plastic folding tables, which held the Styrofoam model of the proposed development and surrounding neighbourhood context, petition pages, a donation jar, and information flyers. In the early months, particularly late summer through fall of 2015, these items comprised most of the display. Once the good weather returned in March/April 2016, and the table started up again, it had additional easels containing posters on foam core with full colour before-and-after images of the

proposed development site. All was designed to entice passersby to talk and sign the petition against the development as well as provide jumping off points for discussion between No Tower members and the public.



*Figure 7: Politicking along the neighbourhood high street, March 2016.
Credit: novenablestower.wordpress.com*

With all the additions, the table became quite an installment, and certainly hard to ignore for those walking past it. In addition, it revealed the enormous depth of knowledge and capacity for skilled work among No Tower members who produced the elements of the display. Further, members shared knowledge of local printing and production resources, fundraising efforts to cover costs, and the time needed from a variety of members to staff the table. One member transported this raft of materials to and from the park almost every tabling day, missing only a few among the many dozens of days the group staffed the table. Many members of the coalition took turns staffing the

table, two at a time, generally for an hour-long shift of the 4-hour stint during each tabling day. While chairs for members to sit on were lined up behind the table, many of those staffing it preferred to stand along the sidewalk on either side to speak directly with passersby, hand out flyers, and ask for petition signatures. Staffing the table was not a job for the meek of heart as it required gently but firmly interrupting people as they passed by on their errands and other business along the high street, often requesting that they stop, take out ear buds, and engage in conversation on a topic that, over time, became a well-known controversy in the neighbourhood with entrenched positions on both sides. The word “NO” in capital red letters was prominently displayed on several items at the table making clear that passersby would have to engage with one of these entrenched positions if they were to stop to talk. Nevertheless, No Tower members faithfully signed up for the table, most logging many hours over the course of the campaign.

Fears were stoked both for and against development through the campaign period of fall 2015 to spring 2016 as property assessment values, registered annually by the provincial government, rose exponentially followed closely by rent rates. The feeling of being outpaced and outpriced by real estate development and rising prices, common among many Vancouverites, was amplified through 2015 and 2016 in news reports that revealed not only a heated real estate market, but an exponentially heated one with purchase prices climbing even faster and higher than in prior years (see Lee-Young Sun Dec 5, 2016; Hampel June 22, 2016; Cooper Province Oct 15, 2015). Rental rates and the proportion of renter income spent on rent were also reported to be at crisis levels (Cooper Province Nov 22, 2015; Cooper Province Sep 19, 2015). Thus, the impacts of

rezoning and condominium development, particularly the pressure on renters, were being acutely felt, particularly in the historically working-class east end of Vancouver, including in Grandview Woodland, throughout the campaign period.

As No Tower members internalized a sense of a land and housing market out of resident control, members of the public responded back to them from diverse interests and positions as they passed by the petition table. Among those already convinced and those who only took a little more convincing, the relationship between changing land use, particularly increasing density of housing, rising land value, and threats to security of tenure from gentrification was the primary objection to the Boffo/Kettle proposal. There are many renters in the neighbourhood many of whom when passing the table made a ready connection between the proposed development and either recent difficulties in finding rental accommodation within their price range or fear of having to move given unaffordable rents. While not all were moved to sign the petition, the issue of rental affordability is one they almost invariably connected to the proposed development (Fieldnotes October 24, 2015 and April 16, 2016). Similarly, some homeowners or homeowner hopefuls expressed that the proposed development would raise nearby purchase prices (Fieldnotes November 9, 2015), some expressing that neighbourhood planning, upzoning, development, and profiting were pushing “middle class families” (Fieldnotes April 23, 2016) in the neighbourhood out, making housing unaffordable and ownership unattainable. Fear of speculation and the demolition of ever more buildings was also prevalent.

To those supporting the development, concerns about what they perceived to be trivial matters like architecture, shadow creation, and changes to the look and feel of the

neighbourhood seemed like homeowners protecting their property values at the expense of people who need the low-income housing that would be built through the partnership. Subtle and not so subtle accusations that “homeowners” were acting out of “NIMBYism” or rejecting the proposal for self-interested and/or bigoted reasons, such as not wanting to have social housing in their backyards, were not the only commonly heard arguments for the proposed development. Coupled with government disinvestment from public services, many saw that developers were necessary to the construction of social housing, believing that the provision of low-income housing and, to a lesser degree, non-profit operating space outweighed all other considerations, including the potential rise in land value and threat to neighbourhood (Fieldnotes August 28, 2015). Still others would not accept that upzoning and high-rise for-profit development in an expensive real estate market could lead to speculation on surrounding properties, rising land value and rents, contrary to the arguments made by No Tower members. For these interlocutors, gentrification was a red herring; without proof of an effect that had yet to occur, they could not be convinced that the Boffo/Kettle development was a threat to other housing in the neighbourhood (Fieldnotes April 9, 2016).

The amalgamation and juxtaposition of neighbourhood planning, zoning regulations, non-profit housing provision, for-profit real estate developers, and neighbourhood residents are at the nexus of this research project. Around this bundled core, though, circulate perhaps some of the more trenchant issues that I believe are at play in these political-economic amalgamations and juxtapositions. Disinvestment and downloading of welfare state services and funding has meant that service standards passed from federal to provincial to municipal governments and from government to for-

profit and non-profit agencies (Evans, et al. 2005) and finally to neighbourhood residents who experience contradictory impacts as revealed in the disparate arguments for and against this proposal at the No Tower petition table. Many poverty, mental illness, and other services are now operated by semi-autonomous agencies, many of whom control small pockets of land in an extremely volatile global real estate market. The growth of poverty presents these agencies with a growth in clients and needs, a growth that some real estate developers and non-profit organizations see as an opportunity given a heated real estate market. Finally, the political orientation of Vancouver's city council, a neoliberal left council strongly supportive of private investment in "public" services and amenities has created opportunities for increased profitability among land investment and development firms that are both local and global. Residents face a dilemma as they are bombarded with both the pressures of land value and rent rise and repeated messages of not enough public funding. Those that oppose paying for amenities and welfare state programs with developer contributions increasingly find that tight relationships between city government, for-profit developers, and even non-profit agencies act as a political block impeding their alternative articulations of the best use of land for preserving neighbourhood socio-spatial relations, often expressed as "neighbourhood character".

Redevelopment of non-profit-owned land can net gains for both the non-profit providers and the real estate developers with little to no cost (except for the land they already own) to the non-profit agency and, supposedly, none to the "taxpayer." While not "over-burdening" the tax payer is a persuasive political rhetoric in neoliberal globalization (Morgen and Abramowitz 2006), those same taxpayers when viewed as residents and potential participants in a democratic process have more to lose than just

money. Mixed for-profit/non-profit development projects can seem like private profit making social good, or developers paying their just dues for the gift of upzoning, a sleight of bureaucratic-political hand that delivers windfall profits (Moore 2013:14). Yet, these trades may also be deepening the crisis of disinvestment, privatization, and poverty engendered by neoliberal globalization. The processes of such trades, heavily reliant on closed-door contracts and proprietary information never released to the public, create new opportunities and even public support for real estate development profits. They also produce ever higher land values leading to displacement, inequality, and loss of the potential for democratic participation in neighbourhood planning, development, and social service decision making. In the context of downscaling, the proverbial overburdened taxpayer is faced with a diminished democracy where private contract, non-transparent and closed to outside influence, replaces public decision making and publicly accountable standards for distribution of resources and services.

Methods

Taking the Boffo/Kettle development proposal as a central case, my research took me from City Council meetings, to the provincial housing corporation, to neighbourhood activist groups, to non-profit housing providers and real estate developers to understand the politics and goals of community amenity contributions as each of these actors understands them from their perspectives. Even though I sought out as much as possible the range of actors involved in these density-for-amenity trades, I focused most of my research attention and time with the activist group opposing the Boffo/Kettle development proposal. Participating with No Tower included attending often weekly

group meetings, staffing the public information and petition table at a neighbourhood park multiple times each week in good weather, attending meetings with city politicians and city planners, and participating in the No Tower Twitter account and WordPress website content creation. In addition, I conducted interviews with the most active members of No Tower in the wake of the Council decision to approve a new neighbourhood plan for Grandview Woodland with a potential 12-storey building at the Commercial and Venables site. Participation with No Tower led me to seek out many other activist groups around the city opposing upzoning and high-density condominium development. While generally zoning for density is opposed in suburban communities where large lot zoning tends to exclude low-income households and households of colour (Heiman 2015), such opposition in Vancouver is often found in historically working class neighbourhoods with large immigrant, low-income, and Indigenous populations and a high proportion of households of colour and women-led households.

I participated in meetings, rallies, and conducted interviews with activists in two other east Vancouver neighbourhoods, one located to the east of Grandview Woodland and one to the west on the edge of the downtown peninsula. These second two cases, Joyce Station and Chinatown respectively, I used to contextualize the experiences of Grandview Woodland. Understanding development proposals and how activists interpreted their impacts in different neighbourhoods helped me look more closely at different urban planning and development discourses in neighbourhoods with different class, race, and immigration experiences. Grandview Woodland is majority white with a small but significant population of Indigenous residents and an ageing immigrant generation primarily from Southern Europe, though also significantly of Chinese descent.

The Joyce Station area has a large population of younger immigrant and first-generation households of Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Punjabi, Filipino/a, and Latina/o origin and descent. While all neighbourhoods on the east side of Vancouver tend to have a larger proportion of working class and poor residents than those on the west side, Chinatown residents tend to be extremely low-income and often elderly women who frequently speak little English. Chinatown is also a cultural and community hub for residents of Vancouver of Chinese descent, close to 30% of the city's population (Statistics Canada, Census 2016). Both city planning and development discourses and resident activism differed in these neighbourhoods, reflecting different demographics, histories, and potential outcomes from upzoning and development.

Aside from research with activists, I pursued the experiences and attitudes of those engaged in supporting or at least participating in CACs. This included interviews with non-profit housing providers, real estate developers, city politicians, city planners, and other planning professionals, including retired city planners. As I came, through the course of my research, to realize that policies supporting for-profit/non-profit development partnerships in urban planning were mirrored by social housing policies, I attended several conferences hosted by the City of Vancouver and the British Columbia Non-Profit Housing Association, a non-profit housing advocacy organization, on the issue of housing and new social housing policy. This was also a topic explored in interviews with non-profit housing providers and provincial government bureaucrats.

As planning is a pervasive, ongoing, and highly consequential activity in Vancouver, I also attended regular public events related to planning, sometimes weekly, though at least two a month, throughout the 16 months of research. These included City

of Vancouver-hosted open houses for rezoning on large and small sites in the neighbourhoods where new plans had already been passed. They also included monthly lunch gatherings at the downtown campus of one of the universities and monthly evening gatherings hosted through the planning department at the other university. I monitored the press daily, including two provincially significant dailies, one city-wide twice weekly paper, one city-wide weekly paper, and a strictly online news source. I also followed several notable blogs pertaining to real estate development and city politics. Finally, although many Vancouverites, especially those active in opposing development, perceive most city (and provincial) politicians to have been captured by the large proportion of political donations received from real estate developers, the ultimate yay or nay on rezoning and neighbourhood planning is given by City Council. City Council meetings, along with publicly accessible meetings of development-related boards at City Hall, are therefore important moments of contention and argument. I attended many such meetings over the course of my research, following social and land use planning decisions at City Hall as well as the presentations of residents, non-profit directors, and developers who frequently attended to give comment and sometimes to protest. This ethnography will draw heavily from my involvement with the No Tower campaign, through which I experienced the frustrations, challenges, and sheer fatigue of fighting city hall. However, it will also contextualize that campaign within the city in which many other campaigns and actors supporting and opposing development in one form, or another were simultaneously at work.

While in some respects, Vancouver is particular in its policies guiding the trading of densities for amenities, in other respects, it is very much in line with other jurisdictions

undertaking similar zoning policies and practices. My focus is less on this policy per se, but rather on how this policy exemplifies an interweaving of the strands of public disinvestment and private reinvestment through the land and housing market. As mentioned above, this project seeks to understand how the multiple strands of neoliberal policies, developed over 20 to 40 years of both roll back and roll out neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell 2002) in many areas of public provisioning and governance, have become interwoven, if they were ever truly separate. These strands now form a fabric of neoliberal effects and logics that clothe many institutions and actors inside and outside of government and the market. However, just like any woven cloth, there can be points where the strands do not come together perfectly, where small holes are visible, or where new colours and textures can be added. While decades of such policies in Canada, and many other parts of the world, have made a strong neoliberal fabric, the weaving is not yet finished and other ideas are still present or newly emerging, increasingly represented in this ethnography by resident groups opposing the current common sense that high-density real estate development will lead to housing affordability, that the private sector can and should replace the public sector, that the public is unwilling to pay higher taxes for better services, and that government can be legitimately conducted through private contract. Neoliberalism and opposition to it, like the weaving of cloth, is a process not a fixed product, one that shifts and changes, creating/encountering problems and finding fixes, following pathways and contexts as contrasting strands of thought contend and contribute (Kingfisher 2002; Maskovsky and Brash 2014).

Contributions

This research contributes to theories of the production of space, place, and inequality, examining these phenomena through the lens of neoliberal globalization and land's changing meanings, values, and uses. Despite the preponderance of private property in Western urban settings, this dissertation takes up the argument that all property relations are social and cultural, in Canada shaped strongly by ongoing settler colonial land/property relations (Blomley 2004). It argues that neighbourhoods are not merely geographical spaces, but are places created through socio-spatial relations supported by certain kinds of land uses. It extends arguments that private property can be understood as collective when acted upon and/or serving collective interests by arguing that the many types of property uses and the social and cultural relations these produce create a sense of a neighbourhood place that residents rely on, value, and seek to preserve. The capacity and agency of residents to make place is often interrupted through land use changes that permit high density development. This is most true for residents with few resources, those who experience racial and class exclusion, and those who most directly experience the negative impacts of colonization. While preservation of neighbourhood socio-spatial relations cannot always be achieved and perhaps should not always be sought, such as in cases where neighbourhoods are designed and lived in ways that exclude groups on the basis of class and/or race, the neighbourhoods I have discussed here are historically working class neighbourhoods with high proportions of immigrant residents, Indigenous residents, and residents of colour. In Vancouver, residents of these neighbourhoods recognize the relationship between land uses and the meanings and values lived within neighbourhoods more so than any other actors invested in planning and development issues. Resident groups can name the threats to their

neighbourhoods from large scale, high-density, and often high-end condominium development as well as from public disinvestment from social housing and other public institutions.

Thus, the combination of public disinvestment and private reinvestment are central aspects of the remaking of space and place in Vancouver. Downloading of and disinvestment from the welfare state, reduced intra-national revenue transfers, and less redistributive taxation regimes arising over four decades have been studied commonly as separate processes, while the role they play in opening land markets for global investment is not well-researched. This dissertation articulates how these processes are increasingly intertwined and examines their effects, extending the analysis of neoliberal globalization to the land market. Such a broadening and deepening of the analysis links neoliberalization in the global North to changes happening in the land market globally and to a growing body of literature that describes the techniques and practices that render land investable (Fogelman and Bassett 2017; Le Billon and Sommerville 2017; Li 2014). Much of the literature on rendering land investable focuses on the mapping, property titling, and other bureaucratic measures undertaken to create private and fungible property in regions where the market has not been the fundamental relationship to land. This dissertation argues that related practices of mapping and planning are used in longstanding property markets to renew land's investability, including through elaboration of the poverty of existing neighbourhoods and obsolescence of existing land uses.

This research has also contributed to a growing literature on the nature of displacement in gentrification, an important consequence of rendering land investable. In

this dissertation, displacement is viewed as the ongoing loss of the capacity and freedom to make place (Davidson 2009; Shaw and Hagemans 2015; Stabrowski 2014). This contrasts with more common conceptions of displacement as a geographically and temporally circumscribed experience at the point of physical dislocation (Stabrowski 2014). While there is a growing body of literature on the affective and sustained experiences of displacement, this analysis is still emerging, but increasingly important as global land development changes urban neighbourhoods in fundamental ways, rendering them incommensurable with the expectations and experiences of existing residents. The impacts of displacement are particularly acute for those groups who rely on neighbourhoods as places of life-sustaining social relations. In Vancouver, neighbourhood tenure is supposedly secured by development policies like the community amenity contributions policy, which incorporate the production of social housing into neighbourhood plans and development permissions. By engaging a notion of displacement that includes the loss of the capacity and agency to make place, this dissertation advances an argument that social housing and its capacity to enable residents to stay put is not in itself enough to counteract displacement effects. If residents lose access or belonging within other important public and private institutions in the neighbourhood, their capacity and agency to make place is heavily circumscribed. In the increasingly unequal and polarized city, the uneven distribution of the capacity and agency to make place is an important reflection of the overall experience of inequality.

Finally, the divergent political and institutional perspectives of different elements of civil society, including activist residents and non-profit agencies, are explored in this research, contributing to a more robust articulation of the actors, politics, investments,

and understandings operating within the private realm in neoliberal globalization. Often, neoliberal globalization is understood as a deep privatization of formerly public or state institutions and practices (Clarke 2004). Market actors often receive considerable attention, in large part because they wield considerable power and influence (Konings 2012). However, the political opportunities and participation experiences of non-profit agencies and individuals are also shaped by new state forms that incorporate private capital. In this research, activist residents and a non-profit agency were pitted against each other, leading to distrust. This is not only an expression, I argue, of this one development partnership and proposal, but rather a reflection of the impeded politics within the context of neoliberal globalization. As residents try to have their concerns, values, and alternative development proposals heard and made meaningful, they find state and capital interests operating through non-profit institutions to which formerly public/state services have been downloaded. As a result, resident protest is impeded. The distrust that is built has the potential to further exacerbate privatization as individuals turn away from the non-profit institutions that have the potential to be made into more robust expressions of public interest and welfare state services.

The experiences between the No Tower Coalition and the Kettle Society may repeat themselves in new social housing policy. While welcomed in many corners, and particularly in Vancouver, one of the capital cities of Canada's housing crisis, new social housing policy unfortunately appears to continue to manifest private development pressure on land. Rather than decommodifying some land and housing, these policies invest public land and public or non-profit housing with potential profit-making capacity. Rescaling welfare state decision making, privatizing welfare state provision, and

impeding political expression by residents is resulting in conflict and exacerbating inequality. This dissertation takes contributes to understanding the political impacts of neoliberal globalization and in doing so offers a potential intervention into state-led policies that enable capital to act in its own interest.

The degree to which density for amenity trading has become a fundamental part of urban planning in the City of Vancouver and the fact that these trades are relatively open-ended is unusual, even though the logic of this policy is repeated in many jurisdictions in Canada and globally. Thus, Vancouver's experience, while particular in some respects, is also reflective of experiences more broadly, especially as high-end condominium construction and global land and housing investment become ubiquitous features of urban environments, exacerbating conflict and inequality. Thus, while this study looks at specific examples, the politics and particularly the power of state-capital interests over and above residents is a feature of urban land development globally that could be used to contribute to cross-cultural and comparative research on these phenomena.

Limitations of the Study

One of the biggest limitations of this study was in access to the entities and actors involved in trading density for amenities. That these trades happen through public process does not make them publicly accessible. That they involve proprietary information and interests makes them even less accessible than other government processes. As a result, I was never able to observe a CAC negotiation and could only hear about them second or third hand from those who had been involved or who had reason to know a considerable amount about them. While I was able to interview some

of the most important players in Vancouver in the development of the current uses of CAC policy, I was not able to confirm their descriptions through observation.

A second limitation of this study is another issue of access. Over the 16 months of research, I sent dozens of emails to developers, introduced myself to development industry professionals at dozens of open houses, and attempted to attend as many public events where development industry professionals were likely to gather as possible. Out of these efforts, I achieved a total of six interviews, all with principle members of large development corporations. These interviews were ultimately achieved only through an intermediary who agreed to introduce me. The development industry is both powerful and cagey. It is an economically powerful industry that has also been reported as among the largest political donors to municipal and provincial politics. There are many signs of duplicity in the treatment of residents by the industry, particularly from activist groups who note that hired public relations firms misrepresent facts, demonize resident groups, and send plants to community meetings. Rumours of illegal dealings swirl around the Vancouver real estate market, including around the actions of developers. Nevertheless, the development industry is also dependent on government, which ultimately decides if zoning will be changed and development permits granted. All of this means the development industry has a lot of information it would like to protect, particularly on the topic of CACs, which are, after all, subject to open-ended negotiation with government. Such negotiation depends on maintaining good relations with government as well as keeping proprietary knowledge private. Thus, getting access to interviews with real estate developers is difficult. So, too, is attending open events, such as at the industry's lobbying body, the Urban Development Institute, where event tickets can easily run more

than \$100 dollars. The limited access to developers and other development industry professionals means that their perspectives are only minimally represented in this ethnography. Further key information, such as actual ratios of land value appreciation to CAC extraction or development industry profits, remain unknown.

Finally, a third issue of access, though also of neighbourhood politics, is present in this study. While in the early days of conducting participant observation with the No Tower Coalition, I was able to hold one interview with a member of the Boffo/Kettle development proponent team, this was the only interview I was able to obtain. Future requests were denied. I assume this was because of my involvement with the No Tower Coalition and a perception that an interview, no matter promises to not impart any information to members of No Tower, was unfeasible. Therefore, I know primarily the No Tower Coalition side first hand. This is true of the two other neighbourhoods as well. While I was able to interview past and current urban planners, city politicians, and non-profit housing providers in addition to residents over the course of my research, the perspectives and experiences to which I had most access were those of residents active in their neighbourhoods. This makes sense given what I have said already about closed processes and inaccessible development industry professionals. It also makes sense given that activists were trying to be visible to have impact. It also means, however, that this study exposes the attitudes and values of resident groups more so than of any other group of actors within planning and development issues in Vancouver. For those who would argue against these groups, this may mean this study unfairly presents some attitudes and arguments over others. From another perspective, however, it also reflects the very claim such groups are making when they argue that planning, development, and CACs are non-

transparent, unaccountable, and undemocratic. If the actions and understandings of key players are inaccessible, then so too are the very processes through which these policies and practices are enacted.

Chapter Outline

In Chapter 2, I explore the larger political-economic shifts in the welfare state, including changing scalar relations, the relationship between deindustrialization and condominium development, and growing urban inequality. I argue these have shaped the context and application of CAC policy. In Chapter 3, I explore the CAC policy in detail, drawing on interviews, fieldnotes, and discourses within city documents to examine how disinvestment and downscaling has created a context in which public policy must first center the goals of private capital. In Chapter 4, I argue that neighbourhood planning in Vancouver is a process through which land is assembled for renewed investment and development, often with the promise that such interest will result in new public amenities, especially social housing. Examining neighbourhood planning in Grandview Woodland primarily and Joyce Station and Chinatown secondarily, I look at the techniques, inscription devices, and discourses used to produce the assembly. In Chapter 5, I argue that displacement is both a physical experience, at the point of being forced to leave a home or neighbourhood in which one has resided, and an emotional or everyday experience as neighbourhoods familiar to residents change through land value and rent rise, demolition, and eviction. Exploring conceptualizations of “neighbourhood character” in each of the three neighbourhoods, I examine the attitudes and values this concept holds vis-à-vis land use and the relationship between the disposition of land and

valued neighbourhood characteristics. In Chapter 6, I argue that No Tower's articulation of an alternative neighbourhood character preserving development proposal was impeded by the investment of both municipal and senior governments in land development partnerships with private capital. Exploring the distrust that was built among No Tower members towards the Kettle Society and city government, I examine the potential threat to social cohesion from disinvestment and privatization. The conclusion summarizes the elements of prior chapters and offers a summary analysis, including the contributions this research makes to the study of neoliberal globalization, scalar relations, and rising urban inequality.

II. COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTIONS IN POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT: NEOLIBERALIZATION, GLOBALIZATION, AND SCALE

Introduction

Brenner, et al. (2003) note that academic debate has increasingly examined the “decentered” (2003:3) national scale and questioned the “the internal coherence of national economies and national civil societies” (2003:3). Decentering and splintering have arisen through the twinned processes of neoliberalization and globalization, which have “perforated” the experience and conception of states as “territorially self-enclosed” (2003:3). Economy, politics, and redistributive mechanisms are no longer nationally constituted (2003:4). For example, in many countries, labour and industry have been globalized, welfare state programs been reduced or eliminated, taxation measures made less redistributive, and intra-national revenue transfers and governance standards diminished (Kingfisher 2002). These significant political-economic changes have both allowed and pressured urban and regional economic and governmental scales to become important nodes in the global economy (Harvey 2005; Smith 2002). Cities have moved from a managerialist role under post-WWII political economic systems to an entrepreneurial one wherein they are market facilitators (Hackworth 2007:61). This means that cities develop and implement policies and practices that respond to economic and political issues increasingly interpreted as local rather than cross-regional or national. At the same time as localism is promoted, the global also comes more into play. Policy solutions and economic interests circulate globally, and cities pull from and reach out to

these international scale interests given diminished response to local issues at the national scale. This research explores such tying of local and global scales through the policy and practice of community amenity contributions (CACs) in Vancouver. CAC policy enables Vancouver's city government to fund new and renewed public amenities, often social or low-income housing, by extracting funds from real estate developers. I take this policy as an example of a localized policy response to growing income and wealth polarization in Vancouver given diminished resources and standards emanating from the national and provincial (regional) scales of government. This response operates through an intensification of ties between the meanings, values, and uses associated to land in Vancouver and the interests of the global real estate and land market.

This chapter will introduce the theoretical context of CAC policy and give a brief history of land development in Vancouver. It argues that CAC policy arises through neoliberalization and globalization, including growing urban inequality, the rescaling of the city as an arena of public amenity and welfare state funding, and the increasing prevalence of residential development in the central city. It also argues that CAC policy further ties land use in Vancouver to a global economy invested in land and land development. CAC policy has differential impacts on residents, non-profit housing agencies, and development industry professionals, particularly in conditions of disinvestment at the national and provincial scales. In Canada, disinvestment conditions include polarization of income and wealth as well as the inability of tax and social service programs to redistribute resources more equitably. Some individuals and groups have experienced diminished access to the city as a result of disinvestment and growing

inequality. Others have experienced new opportunities for profit and other benefits from these same political and economic changes.

Development industry professionals and non-profit housing agencies experience beneficial opportunities through CAC policy. This public policy works to make land development more profitable by permitting additional height and density of condominium units on a given parcel of land. Additional height and density results from rezoning, or a change of land-use bylaw, enabling extraction of some of the increased profit-making potential for the provision of public amenities and services in conditions in which they would otherwise not be achieved. The amenities and services paid for with CAC revenue increasingly include social housing units, which are operated by non-profit housing agencies who otherwise have limited means of service expansion given disinvestment. However, for many residents, these exchanges of land development rights for revenue for public amenities worsen rather than ameliorate income and wealth inequality and polarization because they require permission for intensive land and real estate investment and redevelopment. The resulting gentrification increases displacement pressures particularly impacting those residents who do not securely own assets or who rely on existing land uses for their daily life needs. Further, CAC policy at the municipal levels appears to be informing emerging social housing policy at the provincial and federal levels as public land is sold to non-profit agencies who are increasingly required to turn to the private market in rent, land, and finance to meet operational costs. This upscaling of CAC policy potentially deepens displacement and polarization as even social housing becomes a site of land and housing commodification. Particularly impacted through all policy realms are residents who experience class and race inequality. Deepening

gentrification pressures in the global north are connected to urbanization processes in the global South as the use of land and housing as a site of capital investment leads to fundamental changes in urban structures and state-capital relations globally. For some, the city, and even social housing, becomes less accessible as land, rent, and housing prices skyrocket engendering conflict. Yet, the provision of some social housing and other needed services also muddies the water, giving at least the appearance of public benefit and inhibiting effective public opposition.

Overview of Policy and Practice of CACs Over Time

As recently as February 2004, the City of Vancouver adopted a report laying out the possibilities offered by various development fees for financing the costs of growth in Vancouver. The report noted population growth, though beneficial, has costs, including more demands on parks, libraries, transportation, and community centers, among other services. The report goes on to argue that taxes are no longer a viable source of revenue for new facilities because the City is pressured to deliver more services than previously, infrastructure is ageing, and provincial and federal government funding has decreased “significantly” (City of Vancouver 2004:1). The City of Vancouver collects several development-related fees. Of interest in this report were two fees, Development Cost Charges (DCCs) and CACs. DCCs are standard charges assessed per square foot on all development. Their uses are regulated by the province, intended in Vancouver only for parks, replacement social housing (in cases where a development demolishes existing social housing), childcare, and utility infrastructure. Arising from a fee structure created in 1958 at a time of suburban expansion, DCCs are meant to offset the costs of providing

public utilities and other services in new subdivisions (British Columbia n.d.) and are used similarly in urban centers today. In Vancouver, standard DCC fees are set for regions of the city, and an annual report details the fees collected and spent. CACs, by contrast, result from negotiations initiated at the request of a development company, often with municipal government policy and planning encouragement, for rezoning of a parcel of land, in general for greater development rights, referred to often as rezoning for greater height and/or density. This rezoning increases the value of the parcel of land because it enables the creation and sale of more units of housing than prior to rezoning. CAC payments fluctuate substantially on an annual basis depending on the amount of rezoning requested and undertaken in Vancouver each year as well as the size of the land parcels being rezoned.

Comparing the viability of Development Cost Charges (DCCs) and CACs the 2004 report notes the flexibility of CACs but argued that DCCs would remain a more important source of revenue since rezoning is relatively rare (City of Vancouver 2004). Only ten years later, however, in 2014, when the City of Vancouver commissioned and adopted a second report, this one on the impact of CACs on housing costs, CAC revenue had grown to be the largest portion of development-associated revenue, eclipsing DCCs not only in amount of revenue (shown in Table 1), but in spending flexibility. The 2014 report argued that CACs, while they do require rezoning, and the creation of new land value by allowing a larger development opportunity, “if calibrated appropriately” (Coriolus Consulting 2014:1), allow land value rise to be “shared among stakeholders” (Coriolus Consulting 2014:1), including original land owners, developers, and the community at large who gain new public facilities. The key to sound CAC policy, the

report authors argued, is to find the “optimal mix of incentive for land owners, earnings for developers, new housing construction, and community benefits” (Coriolus Consulting 2014:1).

Table 1: CAC and DCC Revenues Collected²

Year	CAC Revenue (in millions of dollars)³	DCC Revenue (in millions of dollars)⁴
2012	68	78.8
2013	133	61.5
2014	234	62
2015	103	99.8
2016	127	66.6

Fiscal constraints imposed by reductions in transfer payments coupled to reductions in income support and housing programs have put a significant financial and service burden on municipal governments. Municipalities, already “exceptionally” dependent on property tax (Rose 2010), are even more so given limited other sources of revenue. Further, in Vancouver, along with Toronto, another major Canadian city,

² These are the only years for which figures are fully available for both types of development-related revenue.

³ Data does not include rental housing units built through policy as these were not part of all years’ data. Sources include City of Vancouver May 3, 2013; City of Vancouver October 16, 2014; City of Vancouver June 2, 2015; City of Vancouver May 18, 2016; City of Vancouver May 30, 2017.

⁴ DCC stands for Development Cost Charges. Data includes interest earned from prior year unspent DCC revenue. Sources are City of Vancouver May 6, 2013; June 16, 2014; May 27, 2015; May 20, 2016; May 23, 2017.

municipal governments are increasingly dependent on fees, statutory and negotiated, from real estate development for capital expenditures and services (Walks and Rosen 2014; Moore 2013; City of Vancouver 2004). Statistics from Vancouver show that development fees make up a growing proportion of the city’s capital budget, increasing from 12.4% in the 2012-2014 capital budget to a projected 53.8% in the 2019-2022 capital budget (Table 2). The capital budget itself has grown substantially, indicating not only urban growth, but diminished resources from revenue transfers and direct capital investment from provincial and federal governments as well as an increased role for the city government in capital expenditures, not only in the amount of money spent, but in the amount, kinds, and responsibility for capital projects undertaken.

Table 2: Percentage of Capital Expenditure from Development Charges⁵

Capital Budget Period	Total Budget Expenditure (in millions of dollars)	Revenue from Development Fees (CACs and DCCs, in millions of dollars)⁶	Percentage of Capital Budget Funded from Development Fees
2012-2014	702	87	12.4%
2015-2018	1085	303	27.9%
2019-2022⁷	2800	1505	53.8%

⁵ Data taken from City of Vancouver September 14, 2011; City of Vancouver September 23, 2014; City of Vancouver July 12, 2018.

⁶ Includes only fees from DCC and CAC cash payments and in-kind CAC payments. No water and sewer or other development connection fees included.

⁷ Projected.

CACs have grown relative to Development Cost Charges and both charges have grown as a proportion of the overall capital budget. CACs are also increasingly spent on housing (Table 3). CACs for housing are collected in cash payments and provided through in-kind capital development, such as when housing units within condominium developments are set aside for low-income residency as part or all of the CAC payment. Another form of CAC expenditure occurs when payment of a CAC (and sometimes other development fees and requirements) are foregone in the case of construction of market rental housing. This housing is counted as adding to the stock of affordable housing in the city even though many residents complain that rent rates in new-build rental far exceed their ability to pay. Over the period for which figures are readily available, CAC revenues were increasingly spent on housing and less on other common uses of CAC revenues, such as for heritage preservation, childcare, parks and open spaces, community facilities such as libraries and community centers, and transportation and other infrastructure (Table 4). Between 2013 and 2015, around 50% of CAC revenue was spent on housing. During this period, the cost of housing in the city rose rapidly despite these investments.

This brief overview of recent negotiation, collection, and use of CAC revenue in Vancouver reveals that in the absence of sufficient revenue transfer from federal and provincial governments, Vancouver has turned to its one primary area of governance, land use and development, to create additional revenues for capital expenditures.

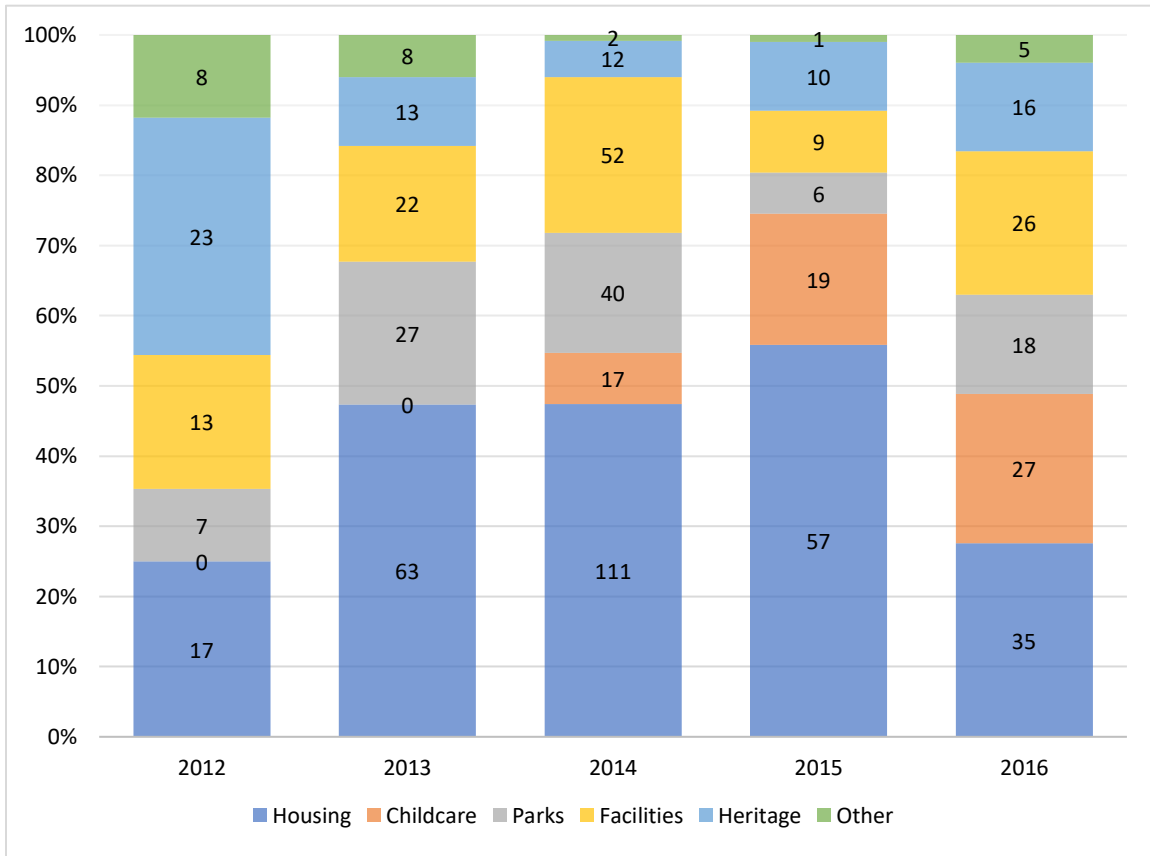
Further, CACs have outpaced other development fees and development fees generally have become a larger proportion of the municipal capital budget.

Table 3: CAC Revenue Used for Social Housing or Foregone Through Market Rental Construction

Year	CAC Revenue (in millions of dollars)⁸	Housing Expenditure from CACs (in millions of dollars)	Secured Market Rental Units Built
2012	68	17	1011
2013	133	63	886
2014	234	111	Not Given
2015	103	57	1192
2016	127	35	884

⁸ Data does not include rental housing units built through policy as these were not part of all years' data. Sources include City of Vancouver May 3, 2013; City of Vancouver October 16, 2014; City of Vancouver June 2, 2015; City of Vancouver May 18, 2016; City of Vancouver May 30, 2017.

Table 4: Proportion of CAC Revenue Spent on Housing & Other Amenities



Finally, CAC revenue is more commonly spent on achieving new social housing units (and market rental units where CAC and other development fees are foregone). Historically, in Canada, provision of social housing was in the mandate of the provincial and federal governments, not the municipal governments, which tend to have limited taxation and insufficient jurisdiction. In recent decades, federal and provincial governments have moved away from national standards in health and welfare spending (Brodie 2002) and privatized many aspects of the social housing program, including ceasing new federal investments in 1993. This continued up to 2016 when the first new federal investments in housing were announced. Unfortunately, these appear to continue to the trends of privatization already present in Canadian social housing policy. In the

next section, I'll discuss the experience of disinvestment and privatization in the recent history of the welfare state in Canada, focusing on social housing policy. I'll then turn to discuss emerging but not yet fully implemented further privatization and financialization in social housing policy.

Neoliberalization, Disinvestment, and Scale

In global perspective, neoliberalization, or governmental and economic changes that instantiate market-like rule (Peck 2010), occur through local policy, economic and other institutions (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2010) in a highly flexible assemblage (Ong 2007) designed to “overcome context-specific obstacles to capital accumulation” (Shatkin and Vidyarthi 2014). The role of the state in neoliberalization is to support an institutional framework of strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade in order to encourage individual entrepreneurial freedoms (Harvey 2005). Neoliberal economies are competitive between territories, such as for which territory has the best business climate. This means that neoliberalization is propelled forward by uneven distribution of advantage and development. As one area realizes an advantage, others adjust to keep up, inserting considerable volatility into the global economy, which is increasingly interconnected (Harvey 2005:87). Strong economic climates have mostly been those in which economic interests have relative freedom from regulation, such as from labour unionization or other labour regulations, as well as from collectivist, planned, and socialized modes of government that shaped more robust welfare state institutions and redistributive tax regimes in the post-WWII period (Peck 2010).

Over the post-WWII Keynesian period in welfare state economies, such as of the U.S. and Canada, the purview of the political broadened substantially to include aspects of the market and the domestic realm. In the current period, as Clarke (2004) argues, the public realm is contracting anew as government is made to accommodate the logic and interests of private capital. While public institutions appear to function as previously, the utility logic of capital circulates in the public domain where it becomes policy (Sassen 2001). Government privatizes public services, eliminates subsidies, restructures welfare provisions, and encourages urban gentrification (Kingfisher and Maskovsky 2008). Redistributive tax structures, or those that distributed income from wealthy individuals to public programs, and redistributive social programs, or those that distributed public resources to poor individuals, have both been undermined (Morgen 2006; Morgen and Erickson 2017). Overall, the result of neoliberal policies has been economic insecurity within and between states with an increasingly uneven distribution of economic opportunity, income, and wealth (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2010; Harvey 2005; Kingfisher and Maskovsky 2008; Peck 2010).

All these aspects of neoliberalization and globalization contribute to a change in scalar relations. As the role of the state shifts from one of securing a national economy, national welfare, and a national identity to one of promoting and ensuring private property rights, free markets, and free trade, the role of regional and urban centers becomes less tied to their geographic, economic, or other position within the nation and more to their capacity to attract industry, investment, and other economic activity (Brenner, et al. 2003; Brenner 2004; Hackworth 2007). Regional and urban centers become competitive on a global scale for economic investment. Reduced or eliminated

national standards in welfare state programs contribute to the positioning of regional and urban centers in the global economy. By granting regional and urban centers the freedom to determine how remaining national-regional-local revenue transfers are spent, these local governments can elect to further privatize services by inviting participation of both for-profit and non-profit private entities as well as by redirecting funds to new industries and to attracting investment from profit-seeking interests (Brodie 2002; Kingfisher 2002). While local governments gain greater control over how they distribute public resources through these shifts, they also inherit the social problems such changes in welfare state services, taxation regimes, and inter-governmental revenue transfers produce (Smith and Stewart 2004). Social problems include increasingly unequal distributions of economic opportunity, income, and wealth within localities as well as around the globe (Ley and Lynch 2012; Harvey 2005). This rescaling has proceeded in stages within Canada and has happened through changes at all scales of government. While CAC policy, and the new social housing policy it appears to have inspired, are examples of policy “innovation” at the local and regional levels, their practice arises within these larger shifts.

An important moment in the Canadian experience of neoliberalization is the change to the federal-provincial revenue transfer program initiated in 1995 and altered again in 2004. As a result of the implementation of the new transfer system, the provinces were freed from national standards in welfare state programs established at the founding of the Canadian welfare state in the mid-1960s. Consequently, they reduced income assistance (welfare) programs, directing more limited federal revenues to programs with wider political support (Brodie 2002; Pulkingham and Ternowetsky

1999). The most significant cuts to BC's income assistance (welfare) program did not begin until 2002, when the provincial government announced a decrease in funding of 30% over three years (Klein and Pulkingham 2008). Budget cuts were achieved by cutting benefits, tightening eligibility rules, and undertaking operational cuts. As a result of these changes, welfare caseloads declined rapidly, at a rate of 3.2 percent per month between 2002 and 2006 with some former recipients finding work or other means of support and others becoming destitute (Klein and Pulkingham 2008). The express purpose of the welfare reforms was to move people off welfare rolls and prevent new people from accessing welfare at all (Little and Marks 2006).

In the social housing realm, successive waves of privatization between 1974 and 2001 have contributed to transfer of social housing construction and management from public bodies to non-profit organizations and resulted in diminished public investment in operational and capital social housing needs. In the early period of downloading (1974-85), the non-profit and cooperative sector became more important to housing production and management, replacing public bodies established primarily after WWII. Housing production volumes remained high in this period and revenue came almost exclusively from federal expenditures, often through direct federal loans (until 1978) and operating agreements to cover amortization and subsidies to low rents. Between 1986 and 1993, the provinces became the primary managers of social housing production, which was increasingly administered by non-profit housing societies under contract. Mortgages shifted from the federal government to the private sector, but with federal mortgage guarantees, including low-interest rates that covered 100% of capital costs (Wake and Jones 2000). In 1993, the federal government ended all involvement in the production of

new housing and, aside from existing federal contracts, the provinces assumed all responsibility for managing the rent subsidy programs in social housing. These programs had been one of the largest social transfer programs in Canada (Suttor 2016).

While BC is recognized, along with Quebec, as retaining a provincial housing program even after federal cutbacks, the amount of housing delivered after the national housing program ended in 1993 diminished significantly over previous levels (Laird 2007; Klein and Copas 2010; Ley and Lees 2008; Suttor 2016). Further, much of the government support for housing diverted away from the construction of new social housing units toward rental assistance supplements, emergency shelter services, and the purchase of existing low-income private housing stock in inner city neighbourhoods, mostly in Vancouver (Klein and Copas 2010). Lastly, funding for the construction of new housing units has tended toward housing with supports, or housing for people who have been homeless and are coping with addiction and mental health challenges, as well as housing for seniors. While this housing is needed, it has come at the expense of social housing for “those who simply struggle with low incomes” (Klein and Copas 2010:3; see also Thomson 2010). Whereas under the federal housing program, approximately 1000 to 1500 new units of social housing were built in BC annually, Klein and Copas (2010) count the net number of new units built in BC between 2006/7 and 2010/11 at only 280.

Many scholars of neoliberalization of the welfare state have noted that the changes have downscaled responsibility for provisioning not only to ever smaller scales of government, but to the poor themselves (Kingfisher 2002). Individuals who could formerly seek provisioning from the state, though generally inadequate, are now more frequently told to turn to the private market instead (Morgen, et al. 2010). Contributing

to inequality and polarization are neoliberal tax cuts, which have allowed the wealthy to keep more of their income, and declines in welfare state services, which have distributed less of the national wealth to the poor (Ley and Lynch 2012). Since the early 2000s, income inequality in Vancouver appears to be rising quickly with a declining group of middle-income earners and greater proportions of the population at both the high and low ends of the income spectrum (Walks 2013 29; 38). Reductions in taxation, revenue transfers, and welfare state programs have made space for a more prominent role for the private market in many facets of social policy and political life, including through policies like the CAC policy, which tend to lead to further privatization

This was evidenced over the period of my research as new social housing funding at provincial and federal levels was announced. In reading through the policy and funding materials produced by both federal and provincial governments, I find that new announcements continue rather than reverse privatization trends in Canadian housing policy. New funding programs rely heavily on loans, cost-sharing, private sector partnerships, and transfers of public land to private ownership. Like CAC policy, these new housing funding announcements localize responses to housing need, often relying on non-profit agencies and municipal governments to broker deals with for-profit developers. The role of all levels of government becomes less about providing capital costs than about brokering land deals, partnerships, and loans. Despite these issues, announcements in 2016 of new government social housing funding, both provincial and federal, were exciting to providers of non-market or social housing. In the 71-page glossy conference brochure, for *Housing Central*, a province-wide social housing conference hosted by the British Columbia Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA),

a group dedicated to furthering the work of BC’s non-profit housing providers through research, training, bulk purchasing programs, and lobbying, the CEO, Kishone Roy, declared 2016 a “turning point” for affordable housing in BC. When BCNPHA was formed in the 1990s, he argued, affordable housing was “falling off the political radar; funding was being cut and mass homelessness was at its dawn.” Yet, in this year, “reinvigoration appears to be on the horizon” as affordable housing has reentered public consciousness, and governments have “reengaged on the issue like never before, announcing more new funding than in the previous 20 years combined” (Conference Brochure 2016:4).

Reinvigorated and reengaged government ministers in federal and provincial governments also addressed conference attendees from the front pages of the conference brochure. The federal government minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)⁹, Jean-Yves Duclos, promoted “a National Housing Strategy – the first in four decades – that covers the entire housing continuum, from homelessness, to shelters, to transitional housing, to social housing, to affordable market rental to market homeownership” (Conference Brochure 2016:5). While, Rich Coleman, then Minister with responsibility for BC Housing, highlighted the provincial government’s “unprecedented” investment in affordable housing: \$500 million for affordable rental housing enabling 2,900 new rental units to be built in partnership with non-profit housing agencies, government agencies, and the private sector; and \$355

⁹ Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC) is a federal housing agency at arm’s length from the federal government, but accountable to it. They administer social housing programs, create housing policy, research housing trends, and provide mortgage loan insurance, among other activities (<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>).

million announced in February 2016 enabling 2000 new units of affordable rental housing throughout BC (Conference Brochure 2016:6).

Yet, promised reinvestment is largely through the private market in one form or another. For example, within the federal strategy, the *National Housing Co-Investment Fund* sets aside \$15.9 billion dollars to create 60,000 new units of affordable housing and repair 240,000 units of existing affordable rental and non-profit run housing. Within the \$15.9 billion dollars, \$4.7 billion dollars is to be provided as an allocation and \$11.2 billion dollars will be provided in low-interest loans (National Housing Strategy 2016:9). A further \$4.3 billion dollars is set aside to continue to provide subsidy to low rents in existing housing units, however, this will be delivered under a new program that will give non-profit agencies more opportunity to take out loans for repairs and capital upgrades to their buildings, making them eligible for the \$11.2 billion dollars of loans from the first category (National Housing Strategy 2016:13-4). Another \$4 billion will go to a new federal rent supplement program for low-income households in the private rental market, rather than to construction of low-income housing. Finally, over the next 10 years, up to \$200 million in federal lands will be privatized through transfer to housing providers (National Housing Strategy 2016:12). Almost all funding announced by the federal government requires cost-matching by provincial governments, who may then elect to require additional cost matching by municipal governments, paving the way for development partnerships with private developers and zoning-based allocations, such as through CAC negotiations. The province of BC has promised \$6.6 billion in revenue over a ten-year period to build new affordable housing. Part of this revenue will fund a new “housing hub” to “partner with the non-profit sector, faith groups, for-profit builders,

all levels of government, and others to find and develop or redevelop available land and buildings” (Homes for BC 2018:26).

Further, as of October 2016, BC Housing has transferred ownership of 138 parcels of public land to non-profit societies across B.C. A March 2017 audit of BC Housing’s Non-Profit Asset Transfer Program found that the province took in \$500 million from these sales of public land to non-profit agencies and will use this revenue to fund expanded rental assistance grants to low-income households and construction of 4000 new units of non-market housing (Auditor General of BC 2017). Social housing funding derived from sale of public land comes with no operational subsidy and requires non-profit agencies and their “partners” to extract as much equity, especially from land assets, as possible to secure a portion of the new funds as public investment in any given project. One way to do so is by increasing rents on a portion of units. As a result, in these latest social housing privatization policies, income thresholds for tenure in non-market housing were raised, including no income thresholds for rental housing operated by a non-profit agency where there are no subsidies to tenant rents.

Finally, financial institutions and investors can profit from new social housing “reinvestment”. At three housing conferences I attended in 2016, private lenders, especially a large Vancouver-based credit union, discussed creating new lending instruments to enable non-profit housing providers to borrow through market instruments. Through the credit union’s “impact real estate” division and “social purpose real estate” mandate, it is offering to act as a facilitator of partnership and project development as well as a financier of non-profit housing development given new non-profit access to land assets (Credit union staff, Personal communication, June 6, 2016).

In addition, there are also new forms of investment. One of the most prominently discussed at *Housing Central* was New Market Funds, an investment group claiming to offer market returns and community benefit. Investing specifically in purpose-built, multi-family affordable rental housing operated by non-profit agencies, the fund offers “attractive investment opportunities not otherwise available in the conventional market” (<http://newmarketfunds.ca/>). While still a small player in the rental housing investment market, New Market was an important part of one prominent City-backed development involving multiple non-profit housing agencies that was much discussed at the housing conferences I attended in 2016. Finally, attempts are made to extend the capacity and reach of the non-profit housing sector even further into the world of global finance through the Canadian Finance Authority/Housing Sector Bank. The Canadian Finance Authority would be a standalone corporate entity that would focus on pooling the capital requirements of borrowers, primarily non-profit housing providers, allowing them to access the world’s capital markets in an “efficient and cost-effective manner”. According to Dan Maxwell, VP of Corporate Services and CFO of BC Housing, we need “mechanisms to unlock and leverage those existing assets” within the housing sector. The CFA is one of the “key ingredients” to the transformation of the sector (Fieldnotes November 21-23, 2016).

Harris (1999) has argued that while Canadians have often understood welfare state programs to have included housing, Canadian housing policy has been characterized by market predominance from the beginning. Tax subsidies to homeowners have dwarfed expenditures on social housing since the 1950s; non-market housing, including public housing, non-profit housing, and housing cooperatives, have historically accounted

for less than 5 per cent of federal expenditures on housing (1999:1172). Where public allocation was made to public housing, non-profit agencies did not have to think of the land on which they operated, whether they owned it, leased it, or simply operated housing on it, as an asset or in terms of equity enabling the leveraging of investment and debt from private sources. The new models, however, require that myriad forms of land leveraging, depending on the context of the non-profit agency and the land in question, be considered. In interviews with non-profit housing developers, advocates, providers, and government administrators, many interlocutors stated that the new funding models work particularly well in expensive land and housing markets, such as Vancouver. When land value is high and rental housing is in high demand among middle as well as low-income earners, non-profit agencies have more opportunity to attract development partnerships, leverage value in land, and charge higher rents on some units creating more revenue to service debt and fund operations and long-term maintenance. Further, non-profit groups that own land but to date have not been housing operators, for example faith and other community-based organizations, are seeing the opportunities presented in the new relationships between land use regulation and non-market housing construction and operation. Faith and community groups can achieve renewal of existing facilities, add housing to their property portfolios, and create a revenue source by employing the same kinds of partnerships as non-profit housing agencies.

Globalization, CAC Policy, and Residentialization of the City

Though the full effect of these new housing policies has yet to be seen, the existing changes to welfare state, transfer, and taxation policies have already helped

produce economic and spatial change in cities, including Vancouver. Globalization and deindustrialization have exacerbated the changes to welfare state, transfer, and taxation regimes by contributing to income and wealth polarization and spatialization in the city. These forces have opened new tracts of land in urban centers for the creation of new residential neighbourhoods increasingly occupied by residents who have benefited from less redistributive economic and political contexts. Finally, it was through residential development in the form of condominiums on decommissioned industrial lands in the central city in the late 1980s that the CAC policy was first developed and applied. Standards for required amenities were initially high and the amenities commanded were more substantial. Further, even though cutbacks had already begun by the late 1980s, public programs were more robustly funded. Amenities could, therefore, be supported with public revenue sources in addition to private ones. As condominium development moved outward into other areas, CACs became a normal facet of development negotiations in Vancouver (Gray 2012) and as public sources of funds dried up, they became a more important source of public amenity capital funding.

Vancouver began to experience the impacts of deindustrialization and decommissioning of industrial areas in the central city in the 1970s. High density residential redevelopment projects in this period were led by city government on city land under long term leases, rather than through land sale. While they brought significant new residential tenure to the central city (shown in Figure 8), which later impacted surrounding land value, driving it higher and leading to further redevelopment (Harris 2011), these projects also included significant public amenities, such as parks, a range of social housing types, and other public services provided publicly without the negotiation

of CACs. By 1986, however, when Vancouver hosted *Expo '86*, a world's fair on a downtown former industrial site, the downtown core had several large tracts of land, former mill, rail, and other industrial sites, from which industry had moved offshore or that had been decommissioned. Most famously, the Expo lands, acquired earlier by the provincial government, were sold to a Hong Kong-based real estate tycoon, Li Ka-Shing, for residential redevelopment. Bordering the waterway of False Creek near downtown, these properties would become one of the sites of Vancouver's iconic condominium towers of glass and steel that began to pop up all around the waterfront of downtown following this period. It is through these post-1986 downtown redevelopments that the CAC policy was first developed and applied.

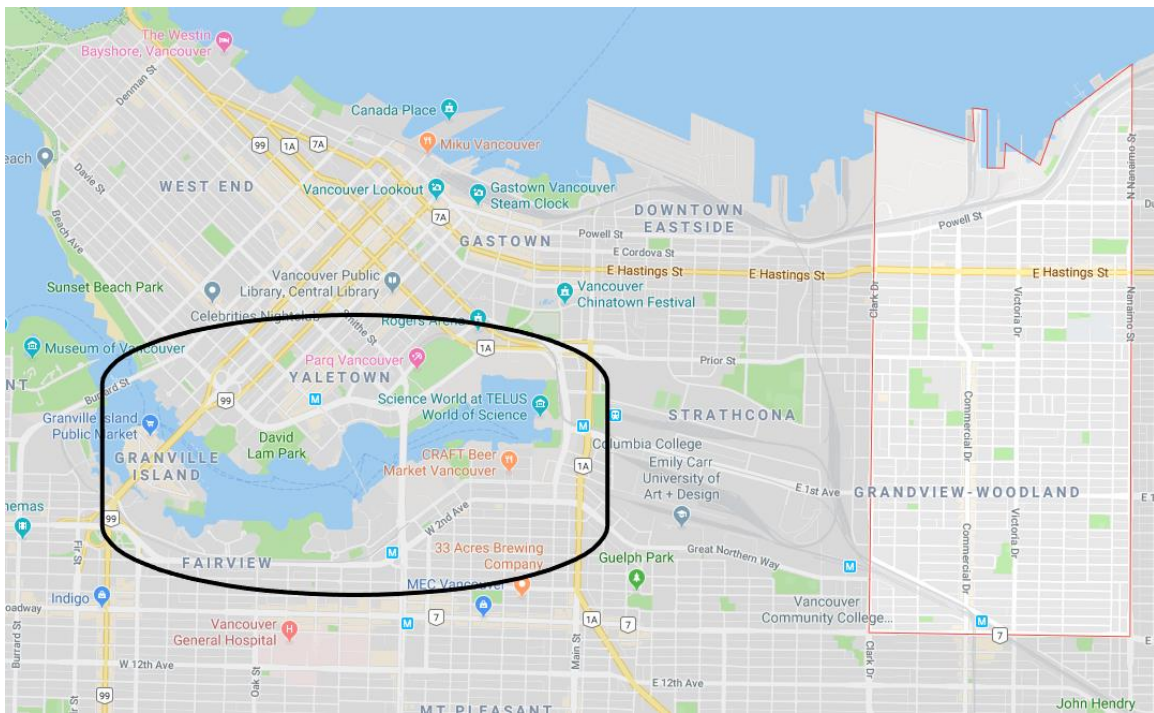


Figure 8 Map of Residentialization of Former Industrial Lands. Circle added by author. Residentialization began around Granville Island and Fairview (lower left of circle). CACs first applied to development of Yaletown (upper center). Circled area now almost fully built out with condominiums. Grandview Woodland shown on right in red. Credit Google Maps, 2019.

For these lands, the amenities required of development companies included 2.75 acres of park per 1000 residents, 20% of the housing potential to be reserved at a discounted land price for provincial government social housing programs, which were stronger at the time, similar standards for childcare under the promise of a national childcare plan, which has yet to emerge, cash contributions for community centres and libraries, streets, sewers, water mains, and waterfront recreation facilities including an extensive public walkway (Gray 2012:2-3). These high-value downtown lands commanded high-value amenities, a trade later development outside the downtown core could not match. As lower value former industrial lands in neighbourhoods outside downtown were redeveloped, the CAC standards applied earlier were found to be too high and site-specific negotiated CACs became a more normal approach in the city. The logic for this shift away from high and consistent CAC standards was that higher value land, such as downtown waterfront, can command much higher CAC revenues because the ultimate profits generated from residential redevelopment are much higher. By contrast, lower value lands outside downtown do not net such large profits and therefore cannot support such high CAC payments (Gray 2012). This also points to an inequality in the negotiation of CACs wherein the amount of CAC collected differs by the value of the land from which it is extracted. Neighbourhoods that tend to have cheaper land also tend to have cheaper housing costs and rental rates, indicating they are more likely to house working class and poor residents.

The arrival and growing prominence of CAC negotiations for public amenities mirrors the arrival and growth of condominium forms of residential development, a property structure that intensifies private property interests in land by stacking them

vertically rather than horizontally (Harris 2011:695). The legal architecture for condominiums was adopted in the late 1960s in British Columbia and began to emerge in Vancouver in the 1970s, starting slowly near middle income residential areas and often operating through rental conversion in areas already zoned for multi-family or apartment building dwellings. Considerable renter protest of rental building conversions did succeed in pushing back against these practices (Harris 2011), and currently Vancouver has a moratorium on rental conversion to condominium. However, the condominium form was highly successful as economic changes, such as those discussed above, in the city made middle class central city tenure more desirable. Condominium construction grew from neighbourhoods just west and south of downtown into the deindustrialized areas of downtown and from there into the east side of Vancouver to neighbourhoods including Grandview Woodland, particularly through the 2000s. With most of the city zoned originally as single family or as industrial, the construction of condominium buildings, particularly after *Expo '86*, required rezoning. Through rezoning for condominiums and the creation of new condominium-predominant downtown neighbourhoods, CACs were normalized.

Globalization made earlier industrial uses of large tracts of land in Vancouver obsolete. As industrial plants and rail uses were decommissioned, stretches of land in the downtown core, especially bordering the waterway of False Creek, became a site for a significant change in the city that has since spread to many other areas. Combined with the arrival of condominiums, these former industrial lands became part of the new Vancouver in which the downtown peninsula was as much a residential area as a commercial one. While the earliest developments on former industrial lands around

False Creek were done with substantial public investment into the amenities provided, post Expo '86, these amenities were provided by the developers as a condition of development permission. This helped produce the CAC policy, an “innovation” now applied much more broadly in Vancouver. While CACs provide some amenities given that public revenue transfers have diminished, they do so in a relatively ad hoc manner. Rather than provide amenities on the basis of a city-wide, provincial, or national standard, they do so on the basis of land value. Downscaling public amenity provision has meant that amenities are increasingly provided if redevelopment of land is sufficiently profitable to extract a CAC. Since not all land or land development is equally profitable, amenities provided through CACs are not equally substantive. In other words, downscaling means that not all areas of the city benefit equally in terms of the amenities built through land development negotiations. Further, as condominium development and the application of CAC policy has extended outward from former industrial downtown lands to established residential neighbourhoods, particularly those on the east side, condominium construction has displaced residents and neighbourhoods by driving up land value. New social housing policy, which similarly relies on privatization of funding for social housing construction and operation, may have similar consequences in neighbourhoods with high proportions of social housing, such as Grandview Woodland and others on the east side.

Inequality and Polarization in Vancouver

Reductions in welfare and housing provision, privatization of social housing, neoliberalization/globalization and residentialization through condominium development

have compounding impacts leading to inequality and polarization in income and wealth in many urban centers, including Vancouver. Taking account of both the rise in the cost of living and cuts to welfare programs, the real value of annual welfare income fell by more than \$2,000 between 1994 and 2015 for single persons and by close to \$3,000 for families of four in the province of British Columbia (Klein, Ivanova, and Leyland 2017). Homelessness in Metro Vancouver has risen over 60% since 2005, from 2174 counted individuals to 3605 counted individuals in 2018 (metrovancover.org). In the Metro Vancouver region (the City of Vancouver and its suburbs) social housing waitlists now comprise over 10,000 individuals (Klein, Ivanova, and Leyland 2017). As a result of the combined effects of seemingly disparate policy and economic changes, workers now experience diminished or no alternatives to inadequately remunerated work as well as increased debt levels. Currently 25% of all paid employees in BC make \$15 an hour or less putting them at or below poverty thresholds (Klein, Ivanova, and Leyland 2017).

Additionally, the overall share of middle-income neighbourhoods in Vancouver fell since 1970 while the share of both extreme low-income neighbourhoods and extreme high-income neighbourhoods increased by comparison (Ley and Lynch 2012:17). There has been a rise in managerial, administrative, and business job incomes, while other sectors saw incomes decline or remained stagnant (Walks 2013:42). Related to these economic changes, incomes in Vancouver between 1990 and 2005 relied less on employment sources, and more on government and investment sources, indicating a growing income and wealth gap in the city (Walks 2013:37). Such polarization also implies that asset-owning households are relying more on asset-based income than employment income while non-asset owning households are more and more

impoverished, a situation reflected in other cities around the world (Aalbers 2017). A total of 17.7% of households in BC now pay more than 30% of their income on shelter, a ratio that is considered to make their housing situation precarious and potentially put them in core housing need (BCNPHA 2017; Laird 2007; Klein and Copas 2010). Vancouver has the highest proportion of core housing need households of any Canadian city (Klein, Ivanova, and Leyland 2017).

Thus, poverty in Canadian cities is increasingly concentrated (Abele and Graham 2011; Procyk 2014; Walks and Bourne 2006) and “increasingly polarized between affluent neighbourhoods toward the center and larger numbers of disadvantaged neighbourhoods on the edges” (Ley and Lynch 2012: 3). Taking account of Vancouver’s 23 neighbourhoods and 15 suburban municipalities, Ley and Lynch (2012) show that historically high-income neighbourhoods on the west side of Vancouver and in the suburbs of North and West Vancouver have remained so, but that historically low-income downtown and east side neighbourhoods, such as Grandview Woodland now also contain high-income census tracts. While there remains a core pocket of low-income households in the center of the city, it is smaller, notably located in the north end of Grandview Woodland, in the far eastern neighbourhoods of Vancouver, and in the Downtown East side, a neighbourhood running between Grandview Woodland and the downtown business district. These economic changes have implications in terms of racial equality as well. New immigrants to Canada and visible minorities, a census category referring to people of colour in the Canadian census, saw significant income declines in Vancouver as compared with native-born and white Canadians since the 1980s (Walks 2013:38-9). Further, the wealthiest areas of the city have more concentrated native-born and white

populations, while the areas that have declined in income have more immigrant and visible minority residents (Ley and Lynch 2012:30). Unlike in the city of 1950s and 1960s when urban residents tended to be poorer, today there is an influx of high-income, native-born, and white households in the central city.

In Grandview Woodland, the neighbourhood where this research is primarily located, there has been a growth in middle-income households and a decline in the number of immigrant and visible minority households starting in the 1970s as neoliberal economic changes began to take shape and particularly as east side neighbourhoods began to gentrify with wealthier and whiter residents (CBC News October 29, 2017). Increases in middle-income and white households in Grandview Woodland is in line with similar shifts in other neighbourhoods in Vancouver and nationwide (Ley and Lynch 2012:32), though data is insufficient to say how much Grandview Woodland has gentrified as compared with other East Vancouver neighbourhoods immediately adjacent. Certainly, gentrification is not complete, and some analyses even refer to it as stalled (Ley and Dobson 2008). Changes brought about by already occurring gentrification processes pre-date the redevelopment proposals such as those of Boffo/Kettle or the rezoning in the new Grandview Woodland Neighbourhood Plan. However, it should be noted that a significant cluster of remaining low-income households in Grandview Woodland are located around and to the north of the Boffo/Kettle development site proposal with very high concentrations of renter households and slightly higher concentrations of visible minority residents in these areas of the neighbourhood (censusmapper.ca Accessed December 2018). Thus, Grandview Woodland, along with other east side Vancouver neighbourhoods, faces substantial gentrification and

displacement pressure resulting from several decades of neoliberal policy and economic change. Although the CAC development proposal of Boffo and Kettle would create 30 new housing units for extremely low-income residents, the 150-200 condominiums, as opponents of the proposal pointed out, would further contribute to the wealth and income polarization and displacement already occurring in the neighbourhood.

Urban change in Vancouver has been wrought over approximately 40 years as seemingly disparate political and economic changes have converged in the experiences of residents with some benefiting and others losing. In terms of CACs, the policy and its practice emerge and change alongside and through these policy shifts. As social and infrastructure spending is downloaded to successively smaller scales of government, the municipality takes on a new role in delivering capital and welfare state projects as compared with older contexts. As federal and provincial governments no longer set service standards or provide capital, cities face the necessity of turning to economic development through the private sector for additional funds. Deindustrialization through globalization made land available for investment. One of the few areas of governance controlled by most municipalities in Canada is land use. By turning formerly industrial lands into residential neighbourhoods through the condominium form of development, the City of Vancouver was able to attract real estate development interest. Achieving the right to build high-rise condominium developments in Vancouver generally requires negotiating the payment of a CAC, which over time has come to take on an important role in funding the amenities that are no longer provided publicly. In turn, this policy and its context have shaped a new set of political and economic relationships, one in which more and more existing residential neighbourhoods in Vancouver are opened to high-rise

condominium development as part of neighbourhood plans that promise desired and needed new amenities. It has also contributed to a changing social housing policy landscape in which social housing land, buildings, and operations are increasingly opened to private investment and market engagement. Together, these shifts are changing the sense of neighbourhood and security of tenure for many Vancouver residents. Increasingly, residents are not willing to trade development permissions in their neighbourhoods for CAC revenues. Yet, others who benefit from such trades, especially real estate developers, the city government bureaucrats and politicians, and non-profit housing agencies continue to push for them.

Urban Growth and Uneven Impacts: Vancouver in Larger Context

In Vancouver, there is much, often racist, worry about Chinese investment in Vancouver real estate, both at the time that Li bought the Expo lands and now. Over the course of my research, news headlines frequently proclaimed that foreign buyers or foreign money, both directly and indirectly referencing Chinese investors, were “snatching” land, “driving up” prices, and acting as the “hidden” force leading to soaring real estate prices (Cooper, October 15, 2015; Dmitrieva March 7, 2016; Gold August 14, 2015). However, residentialization of Vancouver’s industrial lands and current real estate development in existing neighbourhoods is more than just an effect of “foreign” or “Chinese” investment. It is part of the circulation of global capital into, within, and out of Vancouver. Even “local” Vancouver investors increasingly act globally, with Canadian and Vancouver-based real estate development and investment companies being noted sources of foreign capital in real estate markets as far flung as Los Angeles,

Houston, London, Chengdu, and Shanghai (Airoldi and Coryne October 16, 2017; Business in Vancouver August 9, 2017; Naidu-Ghelani January 29, 2018).

Further, Vancouver's experience is part of a global trend of urban redevelopment, especially of former industrial sites, informal residential settlements, and low-income neighbourhoods including public housing (August 2008; Fraser, et al. 2012; Leitner and Sheppard 2018; Shatkin and Vidyarthi 2014; Weinstein 2014). There are many reasons states open the door to urban real estate investment, but cities around the world are experiencing similar kinds of deindustrialization and high-end residential development with uneven and unequal impacts on residents. Scholars of urbanization record this throughout the literature, noting among other issues: the enclosure of public land and common pool resources to "renew" areas considered blighted or create new opportunities for investment (Blomley 2004b; 2008); the removal of older industries to make way for new ones (Chen, Wang, and Kundu 2009; Weinstein and Ren 2009); bids to attract major international sporting and other spectacles (Brash 2011); bids to commodify land in new ways accessible to a global investment market (Searle 2014); and policies to enable new forms of residency and consumption (Hackworth 2007; Ley 1996; Wyly and Hammel 2001). Each of these examples has some benefit, primarily, as Kern (2010) has argued, to elites, but also in many cases some, if minimal, benefit to non-elite groups who, for example, may find new jobs, increased safety, renewed or expanded social service infrastructure, or other kinds of benefit. CAC-involved development similarly distributes opportunity and harm differently to different groups, providing greater potential profits to developers, development fees to city governments, and building public amenities and social housing that might benefit some of Vancouver's most desperate residents, if only a

small number. At the same time, by tying local land use to the needs and desires of a global land, real estate, and housing investment market, land development including through CAC policy may move land use out of the control of Vancouver residents.

Throughout my research, I found that residents argued this was occurring especially as neighbourhoods changed and displacement pressures increased.

These pressures are not new, but they are intensifying. The notion that the city is a “growth machine” (Molotch 1976: 309) is not a new one. Molotch (1976) argued that growth is the political and economic “essence” of localities and provides a key motivation for action among elites (1976:310). Current urban growth arises significantly from the transformation of urban landscapes from industrial uses to residential and post-industrial work uses into which are integrated housing, shopping, restaurants, cultural facilities, open space, and employment opportunities, among others (Smith 2002).

Global financial markets, large and medium sized real estate developers, local merchants, property agents, and governments work together to achieve redevelopment (see for example Kern 2010; Searle 2014; Shatkin and Vidyarthi 2014; Weinstein and Ren 2009; Zoomers 2017) as the state no longer sees gentrification as producing a set of problems, but as producing positive social outcomes (Hackworth 2002; Smith 2002).

Neoliberal/global gentrification has resulted in larger, more expensive and more symbolic projects in which global finance plays a bigger role. There is increased repression of anti-gentrification protest, making clear that real estate is now at the center of the city’s productive economy, and gentrification is expanding outward to districts where land values have not yet climbed (Hackworth 2002; Searle 2014; Smith 2002). As Smith (2002) argues, “gentrification complexes in central cities across the world have become

an increasingly unassailable capital accumulation strategy for competing urban economies” (2002:443).

These urban changes are bound up with global changes in the housing market. Housing, a key use of urban land, is increasingly a means to wealth. As Rolnik (2013) argues, housing is increasingly commodified and integrated into global financial markets (2013:1059; see also Aalbers 2017). It is an ever more important part of domestic and international economies, with mortgage markets in some countries, including the US, UK, Denmark, Australia, and Japan reaching between 50% and 100% of GDP (Rolnik 2013). While this is not an entirely new phenomenon (see Harvey 1978), a potent combination of policy and financial shifts has heightened its degree and impact including: austerity measures that led to privatization and reduced construction of new non-market housing (Hodkinson 2012; Marom and Carmon 2015); promotion of “asset-based welfare” or increasing use of mortgage debt and home ownership as an investment and source of economic security over a lifetime (Aalbers 2017); deregulation in the rental sector, such as of rent controls, along with surging demand for rental housing, and growing investment in rental buildings in addition to other forms of housing and mortgage debt (August and Walks 2018; Fields 2017; Fields and Uffer 2016); proliferation of new investment funds and trusts that create or take advantage of standardization, calculative systems, stable income, and institutions of the housing industry to use it as an investment vehicle (Aalbers 2017; August and Walks 2018; Searle 2014); policies that repackage state housing subsidies under the rubric of “affordable housing” and gear housing programs toward more middle class tenancy, moving subsidies from lower income households to higher income households (Marom and

Carmon 2015); and the sale of public lands proliferating private investment in housing and reducing the capacity of current and future generations to make decisions about land use that could de-commodify housing and other resources (Christophers 2017; Hodkinson 2012; Whiteside forthcoming).

Now, intensive land and housing redevelopment and investment is a facet of many urban centers around the globe, often occurring through context-specific state institutions attracting or permitting private capital (Zoomers 2010). In many such cases, residents who are displaced, either from their residences or work places protest changes with varying degrees of success. For example, Weinstein and Ren (2009) argue that land redevelopment in Shanghai and Mumbai is directly impacting housing rights in these two urbanizing cities. In both cities, large urban areas have been privatized or leased to private developers for redevelopment. The processes through which urban land is privatized are different in each context, but both cities perceive an interest in attracting capital investment and turning their cities into global ones. To do so, they are willing to undertake “brutal measures to remove residents and clear land” (Weinstein and Ren 2009: 408) threatening the livelihoods and homes of millions of residents. While residents in Mumbai have been somewhat successful in stopping some changes of land use, residents of Shanghai have been relatively less successful and are more commonly pushed into peripheral areas.

The agreement of private companies to participate in delivering state goods and services comes based on new opportunity for profit (see for example Maskovsky 2000). In CAC-involved development and in new social housing funding models, opportunity is extended to non-profit institutions, particularly ones that operate housing. While these

organizations do not profit financially, they experience opportunities for service expansion in a time of overall retrenchment, sometimes with greater autonomy than would result from direct government allocation. While in Keynesian welfare state structures, non-profit organizations played a peripheral or additional role in welfare state service delivery, through neoliberalization, as the state has diminished, privatized, and/or eliminated public services, non-profits have become central to service delivery in remaining welfare state programs (Baines 2010; Bode 2006; Cairns, et al 2007; Evans, et al 2005; Gazley and Brudney 2007; Milbourne 2009). They now deliver a larger proportion of welfare services in many countries (Evans, et al. 2005; Fisher 1997).

However, non-profit organizations are also subject to the instability of contract rather than core funding, short term rather than stable funding, underfunding rather than adequate funding, highly regulated contract terms, and increased bureaucratic regulation, practices that are themselves now integral to welfare state services. These place strains on non-profit organizations, which are inherently limited in their capacity to be providers of collective goods since, unlike a state, they are not equipped to provide uniform services on an equitable basis for all (Evans, et al. 2005:75). In Canada, non-profit organizations' own assessment of their capacity to deliver on their mandates given the downloading of welfare state functions indicate organizations experience increased demand for services, greater complexity of client needs, and are more often helping people meet basic needs for food and shelter rather than assisting with more complex problems (Burnley, et al 2005; Woolford and Curran 2011). Organizations also express that their own funding is less stable, with increasing time, energy, and revenue spent getting and maintaining contracts, including accounting to government funding bodies

rather than service mandates (Burnley, et al 2005; Woolford and Curran 2011). As Bode (2006) argues, there is a paradox in the new welfare state structure in that it generates innovations in public-private partnerships, governance, service delivery mechanisms, communications, resource management, and political campaigns while simultaneously engendering successive organizational failures.

Disinvestment from welfare state programs means that many non-profit organizations, including many that I spoke with through the course of my research, experience a near constant pressure to maintain and grow their programs and funding. The terrain on which they do this is shifting constantly. For non-profit organizations, the impetus to participate in CAC-involved development or new privatized social housing funding is married to the constraints they face in a neoliberalized welfare economy. For residents, however, the involvement of non-profit organizations in development proposals inhibits the effectiveness of their protest, presenting the opportunity for a growth in much-needed services, especially low-income housing, that is not otherwise forthcoming from public sources. The new role of municipal governments and social housing agencies in providing, or at least finding new ways to fund, welfare state services downscales the welfare state to an extreme level. Funding decisions for amenities and services are scaled down to the level of neighbourhood, land parcel, individual non-profit organization, and residents. By contrast, the real estate development companies involved operate on a global scale, with global land holdings, business models, financial instruments, and investors.

Real estate developers I spoke with over the course of my research did not on the whole indicate that they sought non-profit agency partners in their land development

negotiations. However, involving non-profits, especially ones that run or could run housing, does appear to be a growing strategy in pushing through neighbourhood and site-specific rezoning and individual development proposals among municipal government, real estate developers, and even some landowning non-profit agencies. These dual market and non-market development proposals were mentioned in press, in Council meetings, and at provincial housing conferences during the period of my research. Further, the Boffo/Kettle development partnership that is the focus of this research was not the only example within my research sample. Two simultaneous development proposals, one around Joyce Station and the other in Chinatown, two neighbourhoods adjacent to Grandview Woodland, were similarly slated to provide both social housing and condominiums through rezoning, sometimes in direct CAC partnerships, like that of Boffo Properties and the Kettle Friendship Society, and sometimes through slightly different development deals that still relied on the CAC policy and other facets of social housing privatization. CAC-involved development and privatized social housing mobilize competing claims to benefit and harm that, in the context of austerity and of global investment interest in land, real estate, and housing can be difficult to disentangle and resist.

Conclusion

The community amenity contributions policy (CAC) of the City of Vancouver arose in the context of neoliberalization and globalization, including the increasing changeover of central city areas from industrial uses to residential neighbourhoods. This policy appears to have inspired further privatization of social housing funding and

operations policy at provincial and federal levels. CAC land deals and privatized social housing present a particularly complicated mix of advantage and disadvantage, benefit and loss, especially for residents who might seek to oppose them. In conditions of disinvestment, it can be quite hard to tease out the true costs and benefits of condominiums, especially when they return some public benefit, commonly housing for low-income households. Having to rely on private profit for public services has created some opportunities for new amenities but has tied Vancouver's land use to a global market in land and housing. This increasingly comes at the expense of predominantly low-income residents, who face being pushed out of the city, and of existing neighbourhoods, which are changing dramatically. The lack of public accountability, disparate benefits and losses, and disparate profiting increasingly leads Vancouverites to argue that such development does more harm than good.

III. CACS IN PRACTICE: NEGOTIATING AND DEBATING THE VALUE OF URBAN LAND

Introduction

The prior chapter argued that the CAC policy of the City of Vancouver arose in the context of neoliberalization and globalization, including the increasing prevalence of residential development in the central city. That chapter looked centrally at the impact of neoliberalization and globalization on scale. As national and provincial or regional scales of government have retreated through changes to welfare state programs, revenue transfers, and taxation policy, they have simultaneously created the conditions for and necessity of urban centers to become market facilitators. In Vancouver and other cities, municipal governments have attracted global investment, which is heavily oriented toward land and housing. As a result, cities are undergoing significant change, especially through residential development in the urban core, including on previous industrial land and in inner-city neighbourhoods (Smith 2002). As Hackworth (2007) argues, gentrification, which results from such investment and development, has transformed from “an idiosyncratic anomaly in select housing markets to an apparently systemic process integral to the near future of advanced capitalist urbanization” (2007:99). The urban fabric of cities large and small is being reshaped as disinvested inner city neighbourhoods and industrial areas become sites for new real estate investment. Even public housing complexes are becoming sites of market real estate development (August 2008). The community amenity contributions policy of the City of Vancouver is one of the many ideologically tied policies in circulation that help create this transformation. It is a form of inclusionary zoning, an umbrella term for zoning-related policies that are

meant to open expensive real estate areas to low-income tenure but are having opposite impacts in central city neighbourhoods (Angotti 2017; Porter 2004). It is ideologically connected to other neoliberal planning orientations that favour “social mix”, or income mix within neighbourhoods. Social mix policies are often critically interpreted as encouraging the in-migration of wealthier and whiter residents into central city neighbourhoods (August and Walks 2012; Bridge, Butler, and Lees 2012; Ley 2012; Rose 2004).

This chapter will look closely at the Boffo/Kettle development proposal, the CAC project at the center of this research. CACs make certain social housing and other public amenity projects viable by providing needed revenue that is otherwise not forthcoming from public allocation. In doing so, these projects make some space in the gentrifying city for the poor. However, Vancouver resident groups that oppose such development projects point out that achieving a CAC through private land development undermines the pressure for public amenity provision, reduces public accountability, and contributes to upscale real estate development, rising land value, and rising rent rates, which ultimately push people out. CACs are presented as a form of community or public capture of private benefit, but achieving CACs requires that the municipal government recognizes and respects private interest and profit. Only by adding greater potential for private investment and profit in land, can a CAC extraction be obtained from a real estate developer. This chapter will argue that CACs are not accepted by all, but that alternative articulations of the potential values and uses of urban land are incommensurable within the municipal government-capital politics of CACs. It will start by describing how CACs are understood and negotiated by planners and other bureaucrats engaged in the process.

It will then look at them through the lens of the Boffo/Kettle development proposal and the No Tower Coalition's opposition campaign. This last section will draw from interviews and fieldnotes gathered during three days of Council hearings into the new Grandview Woodland neighbourhood plan, which focused substantially on the Boffo/Kettle development proposal. Analysis of fieldnotes will help parse the different ideas of value associated to land use and development among the different actors, including the Boffo/Kettle partnership, city planners, city councilors, and No Tower Coalition members.

CAC Negotiations: Practice and Context

Early in my research, I attended a day-long course given by two experts and consultants to the City of Vancouver government on the topic of financing urban growth through real estate development. Arriving at the downtown campus of one of the two research universities in the city, I made my way up the hill to the high-rise campus building. The classroom, in a back hallway on the main floor, was furnished theater style with U-shaped desk seating already halfway filled with professionally dressed attendees when I arrived. Most, I later learned, worked in municipal planning departments in smaller cities around the province, sent to the course as part of their professional education and as emissaries of their departments and cities, later to return with knowledge and ideas for new policies and practices for financing urban growth, or financing the expansion of urban infrastructure and services necessitated when cities experience increases in economic activity, industry, and population.

At this day-long seminar, three municipal tools for leveraging real estate development toward funds to finance urban growth were discussed: Development Cost Charges, Density bonusing, and Community Amenity Contributions. Development Cost Charges (DCC)¹⁰, discussed briefly in the previous chapter, are standard charges assessed per square foot on all development. Their uses are regulated by the provincial government, intended in Vancouver only for parks, replacement low-income housing (in cases where a development demolishes existing low-income housing), childcare, and utility infrastructure. Density bonusing, a second policy for financing urban growth, refers to a zoning, or land-use bylaw, that allows for multiple development densities depending on the amenity, that is fee, built structure, or service, a developer is prepared to offer. In general, there is a base density where no amenity provision is required. Then, there may be one or more possibilities for greater density with clear guidelines for amenities required should developers seek approval for one of these. Community amenity contributions are the most open-ended of the three development charges discussed. Final building density and amenity contributions are set through negotiation between planners, other municipal bureaucrats, and real estate developers over the zoning permissions that will be applied to a land parcel (Moore 2013). In general, the greater the change in density permitted through the application of a new zoning bylaw to a site, the greater the amenity collected. Ostensibly, this means that CACs can account for rapidly changing land values or newly arising political contexts, from which larger amenities or cash payments may be accessible or desirable. Unlike density bonusing, CAC amounts

¹⁰ Development Cost Levy (DCL) is the term used only in the City of Vancouver. Similar charges in other municipalities in the province are referred to as Development Cost Charges and the regulations surrounding collection and spending are slightly different.

are not preset. Further, unlike with DCCs, spending of CACs is determined by the municipality rather than set by provincial standards.

In the course I attended on “financing growth”, CACs were the major topic of conversation, both because they now return the greatest revenue of all development charges and because they allow the greatest flexibility in terms of expenditure, giving municipalities greater freedom from provincial and federal mandates to meet infrastructure, service, and political goals. As one of the instructors of the course on financing urban growth argued, and regional and local planning documents agree (City of Vancouver 2004; City of Vancouver 2016), urban growth is inevitable if wealth and people are mobile. The important question is not, he argued, should or will we have growth, but who should pay its costs in terms of added infrastructure and service burdens, especially since we are no longer in the “good old days” when provincial and federal governments transferred more consistent revenues for capital projects and municipal operations. Further, as we learned, municipalities tend to look for non-tax revenues because higher taxes are “politically unpopular”.

Interview participants and policy documents revealed that the process of negotiating and achieving the CAC happens between the real estate development company and the bureaucrats of the municipal government in a closed-door process. Under negotiation are the architectural drawings and the proforma (development budget), which lists the land purchase price, other costs such as land remediation, architectural fees, construction costs, marketing and sales fees, along with developer profit, and the retail revenues expected from final sale of the condominium units (City and Provincial staff, personal community July 20, 2016 and September 20, 2016), a profit not realizable

for approximately 3 to 5 years after the negotiation for the rezoning and CAC is complete. While such lengthy development timelines could introduce risk of loss, in the most recent decade of real estate development in Vancouver, land and housing prices have risen year over year with approximately 300% rise in house purchase cost since 2005 (regbv.org Accessed January 2018). Thus, in the recent Vancouver real estate market, profits realized over long development timelines often rise as compared with initial projections. This makes it likely that the CAC negotiations completed years prior do not fully reflect all costs and profits.

The CAC negotiating parties, all having specialized knowledge of the land market, architectural drawings, construction costs, and other information not generally held by the public at large, who regardless have no access to the CAC negotiation or even records of it, argue back and forth as to validity of costs and revenue playing a game of cat and mouse until they deem a fair deal to have been reached (City and Provincial staff, personal communication, July 20, 2016 and September 20, 2016). The municipality claims to take 75% of the “land lift”, or the rise in land value attributed to municipal rezoning. This value is determined when both parties have agreed as to the revenues of the project, subtracted all costs including developer profit, and found a remainder, an imputed land value rise that can be attributed to rezoning itself. This land value rise is extracted, at a rate of 75%, either through cash payment to the municipal government or in the form of an agreement for construction of a building or other public space to serve as an amenity (City and provincial staff, personal communication, March 21, 2016; June 6, 2016; September 20, 2016). This process is part of what makes the negotiation of CACs flexible or capable of responding to real estate and political contexts arising.

However, it's also part of what makes the negotiation of CACs politically fraught, since development densities as well as agreed-upon amenities come to the public almost as *fait accompli* with little accountability on how and why agreements were made and little public input. Once the closed-door negotiation is complete, rezoning proposals come to a rezoning hearing at Council, which is ostensibly open to public input. However, CAC negotiations, having taken considerable time and effort prior to the rezoning hearing on the part of city planners and development industry professionals are rarely defeated even when there is visible public opposition. This undermines the public's trust in the process of rezoning and CAC negotiation.

Negotiated CACs are a Vancouver-specific phenomenon. However, they are part of a group of policies called inclusionary zoning, a growing policy orientation in many US and Canadian municipalities (Levy 2010). Inclusionary zoning policies leverage strong private residential real estate markets to induce developers to incorporate affordable housing in their developments (Porter 2004:213), usually in exchange for additional density or other kinds of tax and development incentives. Inducements can be legislated or can be softer encouragements (Schuetz, et al. 2011), and they generally require 10% to 15% of units for lower income households (Mukhija, et al 2015). Units can be for sale or for rent, and while they are geared toward lower income households, often prices for rent or sale do not permit participation of the lowest income households (Porter 2004). The concept of inclusionary zoning arose in the 1960s and early 1970s in the US through pressure by housing advocates to end race and class exclusion in suburban zoning practices (Porter 2004; Whittemore 2017). The policy is also a response to downloading of housing funding and responsibility in both the US and Canada (Mah

and Hackworth 2011; Mukhija, et al. 2015). For housing advocates, many see potential in inclusionary zoning policies, though increasingly, as real estate development has become more focused on reinvestment in urban areas, inclusionary zoning policies are coming under criticism for bringing gentrification and displacement under the guise of providing affordable housing (Angotti 2017; Li 2010; Stabrowski 2015).

While in theory, inclusionary zoning is designed to open middle class suburbs to working class and low-income household tenure, in central cities, the implementation of inclusionary zoning policies, such as the CAC policy, are changing neighbourhoods of concentrated poverty to mixed-income neighbourhoods, often displacing low-income residents, residents of colour, and their urban cultures, jobs, and networks (Angotti 2017; August 2008; Stabrowski 2015). Within the context of neoliberal urban planning ideologies, such outcomes appear positive. Prominent within neoliberal planning ideologies is the concept of social mix, a set of policies that argue that diversity of income, race, identity, and experience is important to vibrant neighbourhoods and strong communities (Lees, et al 2012). This policy orientation is prevalent in the US and UK contexts (Lees, et al. 2012), though also found in Canada (August and Walks 2012; Ley 2012). The underlying theory is that by changing neighbourhoods of concentrated poverty to mixed-income neighbourhoods, diversity and tolerance will ensue, remaining poor residents will have strong educational and work role models (Lees, et al. 2012), and segregation will be reduced (Angotti 2017; Ley 2012). Rather than low-income households taking up residence in wealthier suburbs, as when inclusionary zoning is applied to suburban developments, it's application in urban contexts enables the immigration of middle- and upper-income people, more likely to be white (Fraser,

DeFilippis, and Bazuin 2012; Lipman 2012), into neighbourhoods formerly inhabited in a more concentrated way by poor and working class individuals and individuals of colour. Deconcentration of poverty is the supposed positive benefit that outweighs the cost to low-income communities.

Studies of income inequality and polarization in Canadian and other cities globally show that wealth is increasingly concentrated in inner city areas (Ley and Lynch 2012; Wyly and Hammel 2001). This is especially the case as condominium development has happened on former industrial sites and moved into lower-income urban neighbourhoods, as has been the case in Vancouver. While those in favour of social mix may see inner-city neighbourhoods and social housing complexes as areas of segregated poverty, often racialized as non-white, and welfare state dependency (Davidson 2012; Ley 2012), their demolition disperses people and networks that are often vital to the well-being of original residents. Demolition of areas of concentrated poverty in favour of a mix of social housing, market rental, and homes for sale (August 2008; Lees, et al. 2012; Ley and Lees 2008) will supposedly promote inclusion, diversity, and integration (August and Walks 2012; Lees, et al. 2012). However, studies show that remaining original residents often feel displaced despite their continued tenure (August 2008). Further, neighbourhood opposition, especially working class and tenant organizing, is undermined as a result (see for example August and Walks 2012; Ley 2012; Stabrowski 2015), making it harder for those most negatively impacted to resist.

In Vancouver several other discourses support inclusionary zoning and social mix related land development policies and practices. One is that CACs help suppress rise in land value and therefore more equitably distribute the benefits of land development. A

frequent accusation against rezoning is that it raises the value of land parcels since landowners attempt to sell at prices that recognize the higher development profits arising when developers succeed in negotiating for greater building density. However, in the course on financing urban growth, it was argued that since rezoning happens after land purchase, the uplift in land value is never available to the original land owner, and, therefore does not increase land purchase price (Fieldnotes October 29, 2015). Repeated messages that CACs “capture” land value combined with message that population growth is beneficial and inevitable, that taxes are politically impossible, and that other government funding is unavailable all presented CACs as inevitable, beneficial, and contained, that is with little effect on the surrounding land market on which their negotiation depends. Yet, although CACs are represented as a form of community or public capture of private benefit, negotiating CACs requires that government recognize and respect private interest and profit. As numerous developers and several municipal bureaucrats told me, CACs present a kind of capitalist dilemma: if government takes all the “land lift”, they undermine the incentive for landowners to sell and developers to buy and rezone thereby undercutting the capacity for urban growth, a necessary element of a productive urban economy. Yet, if they don’t take enough, the burden of paying for growth will fall to taxpayers, an undue and unwelcome imposition with negative political consequences. Thus, municipalities are tasked with finding the “right balance” between “too much” and “not enough” CACs (Fieldnotes October 29, 2015).

Of course, to conclude that CACs capture all land value rise and fairly distribute benefits to landowners, real estate developers, and the public, one must ignore certain facts of landownership, development, and the history of urban change. In Vancouver,

CAC negotiations are tied to deindustrialization, residentialization through the spread of condominium development in the central city, and the changing demographic composition of urban neighbourhoods as low-income residents and residents of colour are pushed out in favour of wealthier and whiter residents. These impacts reveal that the benefits of real estate development are not evenly spread, no matter the capture of some value for public use. Further, the notion that the impact of such development, a precondition to the negotiation of CACs, is somehow contained within the land parcel over which the negotiation is done, is belied by the history of the spread of development, particularly in the form of condominiums, across the city over time. Development in one area of the city appears to set the precondition for development elsewhere. And, as the application of CAC policy over time reveals, given disinvestment conditions, city government and urban planners often set the stage for redevelopment in new areas by planning new potential densities, often through the logic of inclusionary zoning and social mix, politically opening land to development interest and CAC negotiation.

These activities rely on the idea that private land development interest can serve public benefit. However, activists in the No Tower Coalition organized against the Boffo/Kettle development proposal in the Grandview Woodland neighbourhood, along with other activists against development proposals in secondary research areas around Joyce Station and in Chinatown, articulated alternative interpretations of these urban land investments and uses. Such articulations, explored in more depth in the next section and in later chapters, reveal that the values and meanings associated to land use are not unitary or settled. Rather, the ideas put forward by city hall and within the development industry are under dispute. However, the articulations of the activists, though growing in

number, are incommensurable with dominant articulations, including that CACs are a form of inclusionary zoning that leads to positive social mix, that other public sources of funding are not forthcoming, and that CACs capture private benefit for public use. The next section will explore these, and alternative conceptions of value associated with the No Tower Coalition's proposal for an alternative development on the land parcel claimed by the Boffo/Kettle development partnership.

Debate at Council

The new Grandview Woodland neighbourhood plan was put before Council in late July 2016, after close to five years of work on the part of city councilors, bureaucrats, and residents. The planning process will be examined in the next chapter in more detail. However, excerpting a small portion of it here, primarily one day of the three of hearings that ultimately decided to adopt the new plan, will help elucidate different and conflicting interpretations of the potential meanings, values, and uses of neighbourhood land.

Arriving at City Hall the morning of July 27, 2016, the day given to public response to the proposed neighbourhood plan, the mood was jittery, a nervous excitement permeating the antechamber where members of the public gathered in preparation for the Council meeting. Some took seats on the plastic folding chairs, set up as overflow seating in front of a large wall-mounted flat screen tv that would eventually show the proceedings in the Council Chamber, which had not yet begun. Others milled about the speaker's list mounted on one of the wooden pillars in the somber wood-paneled and carpeted room. The glass doors to the Council Chamber, itself another wood-paneled and carpeted room, cavernous and hushed, remained locked pending the 9:30am start time when the

Councilors would enter from back hallways leading from their offices directly into the Chamber.

The speaker's list noted that among the first speakers at this day of hearings into the proposed new neighborhood plan for Grandview Woodland were some neighbourhood notables. These included the board chair for the community center likely to receive a substantial portion of the promised CAC revenue generated through rezoning in the plan, representatives of Indigenous-serving and advocacy groups whose buildings were also slated to receive the benefits of CAC revenue, a representative of a theater in the neighbourhood likely to benefit from the influx of new condominium owners arising from the plan, and a senior staff member for a non-profit housing advocacy agency with its head office situated on the neighbourhood high street. In addition, representatives of the Kettle Friendship Society also received preferential spots on the speakers list of over 80 speakers. The Kettle is the non-profit mental illness and poverty serving agency that is a key member of the Boffo/Kettle partnership relying on the CAC policy of the city to obtain upzoning for the construction of 150-200 condominiums and up to 30 single-occupancy social housing spaces along with expanded programming and administrative space for the Kettle. While Daniel Boffo, principle at Boffo Properties, was seated in the audience throughout the day of speakers, he did not take a spot on the speakers list. Though I do not know for certain the reason he remained silent, the Kettle had been the face of the development throughout and appeared so again at the Council hearing. This positioning made it more possible to camouflage the 150 to 200 condominiums and their profits accruing solely to Boffo Properties with a worthy cause. Further, several other representatives of major real estate development firms spoke over the course of the day,

advocating for the Boffo/Kettle development and greater zoning changes in the neighbourhood plan. Therefore, the interests of Boffo Properties were likely already well represented without having Daniel Boffo speak.

General members of the public followed initial notable speakers, not commencing until after the lunch break and extending until after 10pm at night with many not being able to stay through the whole day of hearings and missing their time to speak. Each speaker had five minutes to present their case for or against the neighbourhood plan before Council. This time might be extended, as was the case with the notables of the neighbourhood, if Councilors had questions for speakers. Early in the day, Councilors often had questions, but as the day of speakers progressed, they had fewer and fewer, intent rather on getting through the list before midnight to avoid having to extend the hearings into future dates. Among the members of the public speaking to Council were several members of the No Tower Coalition who had in the weeks leading up to this Council hearing perceived that a decision on the neighbourhood plan would decide the fate of the Boffo/Kettle development proposal. While not the only large upzoning or source of CAC-funded amenities in the new plan, this was the only such proposal advanced enough to have full condominium to amenity ratios and architectural images as well as the only proposal to locate both the condominiums and social housing in a single site. Other potential CAC recipient organizations awaited a series of yet-to-be-proposed rezonings in disparate locations around the neighbourhood that would net yet-to-be seen CAC dollars and so those promises received less opposition from residents¹¹.

¹¹ Though, notably, the Chair of the Community Center Board requested that CACs not be used to fund the redevelopment and renewal as they money had previously been promised from public sources and “should not be on the backs of the further densification of our neighbourhood” (Dahlin July 27, 2016).

The release of the draft neighbourhood plan had been encouraging. In it, city planners had proposed that Council permit, not the 12-storeys requested by the Boffo/Kettle partnership, including between 150 and 200 condominiums, but maximum 9 storeys of condominiums, a reduced but not stated number of units. Planners also seemed to have incorporated some of the ideas from the No Tower Coalition of creating a public plaza (or piazza in the No Tower proposal) along the side street, a perception confirmed in a meeting between No Tower and the planning department in the weeks leading up to this hearing. This city planner proposal was not quite a victory, but it was better than the Boffo/Kettle proposal in the eyes of the No Tower Coalition. Though, members also feared that it was an attempt at a “bait and switch” wherein their opposition was being asked to accept a compromise on the condominium height and density that would be undone by Council who could ultimately decide by vote at the hearing into the neighbourhood plan to proceed with the 12-storey proposal of Boffo/Kettle. The No Tower alternative plan, by contrast, recommended only 6-storeys on the public land portion of the land parcel incorporating the social housing and program/administrative space for the Kettle Friendship Society along with 3 floors of general rental housing. The No Tower Coalition’s alternative made no mention of condominiums and encouraged that the side street be closed off and become entirely, not partially, a public piazza. Key differences in the three proposals (Boffo/Kettle, No Tower, and City Planners) are compared in Table 5 shown below.

Table 5: Detail of Key Differences Between the Three Proposals

	Maximum Storeys	Proposed Disposition of Public Land	Number of Condominiums Proposed	Number of Social Housing Units Proposed	Number of Rental Housing Units Proposed
Boffo/Kettle Proposal	12	Sell to Boffo Properties	150-200	30	0
City Planner Proposal	9	Sell to Boffo Properties	Not Stated	30	Not Stated
No Tower Proposal	6	Lease to Kettle Friendship Society	0	30	18

The discrepancy between the Boffo/Kettle proposal for 12-storeys and the city planner proposal for 9-storeys, as outlined in the draft neighbourhood plan, was one of the hottest of the issues before Council concerning proposed neighbourhood change¹². The Boffo Kettle proposal would require significant upzoning of the 5 conjoined plots of land to build the 150-200 condominiums in 12 storeys, a height and density the property developer, Boffo Properties (Boffo), claimed would create a return large enough to fund the 30 single-occupancy social housing units and expanded office and program space for the mental-illness and poverty serving non-profit Kettle Friendship Society (Kettle) that already owns and operates out of one of the 5 plots of land (plot 2 in the image above). At issue for the proponents and supporters of the development was a perceived “gap” in

¹² The others were displacement of renters, development around the transit station, and the potential bike lane on the high street, Commercial Drive.

funding resulting from the decrease in height and density of condominiums as proposed by city planners in the neighbourhood plan, a gap that was even larger when the Boffo/Kettle proposal was juxtaposed to that of the No Tower Coalition. The non-profit director addressed this in her presentation, one of the earliest of the day of public comment.

Breaking Even

Standing before Council, Nancy Keough, Executive Director of the Kettle Friendship Society, made a conciliatory figure. Appearing somewhat shy, Keough is white woman in middle age. Her tone was simultaneously insistent and supplicatory. She noted that city planners had publicly acknowledged that the Boffo/Kettle plan is self-sustaining and that the reduced plan “is not financially viable without a significant infusion of money” (Keough, Council Meeting July 27, 2016). Not only, according to Keough, had the non-profit been exploring government funding options for the renewal and expansion of its program and administrative space for over 10 years without success, but “the funding gap” (Keough, Council Meeting July 27, 2016) presented by the city planners was a problem, “not just for our partnership, but for a city that desperately needs more supported and market housing and better services to the community for our most vulnerable citizens” (Keough, Council Meeting July 27, 2016).

One of the city councilors, Kerry Jang, an Asian man in middle age wearing one of his customary flamboyant suits, addressed the question of the “funding gap” and turned from the planners’ 9-storey proposal to the No Tower Coalition’s proposal, expounding on its inadequacy particularly in light of its reliance on public rather than

private funding. He asked Keough to “ballpark” (Clr Jang, City Council Meeting July 27, 2016) the funding gap that would result from allowing only reduced condominium height and density on the site. She responded that she didn’t “have enough information to understand” what the changes proposed in the city planner alternative version would mean to the project. “We’ve been working with the City and we’ve come to what we know will *break even*, which is the 12 storey [original] plan” (Keough, Council Meeting July 27, 2016, emphasis added). Their conversation continued on the topics of public funding, the need for the services the Kettle provides, and what is needed in terms of condominium density to “break even”:

Jang: *The 12-storey will break even and that will just get you 30 units of social housing?*

Keough: *And our expanded drop-in. Because that’s a very big piece because that’s the hardest things to get funding for is the community services. And that’s often the doorway for people to come in, to connect, and particularly from the street.*

Jang: *I certainly see the lineups every morning when I go by going to work every morning. Do you get a lot of turn-aways? And you mentioned, it’s bursting through the seams. Could you describe what’s happening there now?*

Keough: *Well, it’s having a decent space for people. In the mornings is the worst. At mealtime, there’s people waiting outside and inside to eat because we don’t have enough seating. So, you can imagine if you’re already coming from maybe no sleep, no food, unsafe housing, and you come in the door and it’s very crowded and there’s not enough personal space, that that’s also really hard to manage for the staff and for the people coming into the center.*

Jang: *The spill out of folks waiting on the outside, I mean I do get the odd complaint about litter and all sorts of disorder. I mean do you see that daily?*

Keough: *Well we have a lot of members that volunteer and help clean up and we really work to be a good neighbour, but having the smaller space is certainly a challenge to do that well.*

Jang: *It could be better inside. So, you need, at minimum, 12 storeys to break even?*

Keough: *Yes*

Jang: *Ok. And, have you actually tried, you kind of mentioned it in passing, other sources that you’re trying to, if you’re only allowed*

6 [storeys], as people are advocating here, that's a lot of money as far as I can see that you're going to have to raise just to break even. What sources have you tried? I mean, I know there's been talk of the Feds [new federal government funding] and the Province [new provincial government funding], but we haven't seen a lot come through yet and so we talk about the next budget cycle and the next one.

Keough: Well there's been no sources for the community services. And, I think that's a very big piece of this ask. You know, Coastal Health¹³, there's been cuts in budgets. And, there's certainly been no additional dollars available. And, so the community services is the hardest piece to get the funding for and, you know, for the drop-in that we have now, it took us a number of years to raise the million dollars to renovate the building and to make it useable as it is. The other thing that is so important is the immediate need. So, to start now and try and raise yet another few million dollars, it just puts off the people coming in the door today. That I can't stress, you know when I see people coming in the door, they're not well, they're not there's so many things not working in their life and to have a place that is safe and welcoming and begin that journey of recovery is so important.

Jang: So, some of the groups in the area or a group has suggested an alternative plan where the city would provide some land. By my calculations, just trying to guess, even the gift of the land wouldn't bring you to that break even point. Do you agree?

Keough: Yes, I mean it's hard for me to speculate, but yes, I think the gift of the land is not a big enough part of the expense of the project.

Jang: It doesn't actually get you anything more. I mean it may bring down the cost, but it actually doesn't get you, from my reading of that proposal, an increase in or larger community space?

Keough: Yes, that's my understanding of it.

Jang: Ok, thank you very much.

(Council Meeting July 27, 2016)

In this exchange and in many presentations from supporters of the Boffo/Kettle partnership and its proposal for redevelopment of the land parcel at Venables and Commercial, the argument was made that only with private land development and investment, up to 12 storeys and 150 to 200 condominiums, enabling the extraction of value through CAC policy, could the project of providing new low-income housing and

¹³ Coastal Health refers to the health authority, Vancouver Coastal Health, the major public funding and administrative body of Kettle and other health-related services in the region.

mental illness support services be made viable. This logic also appeared in the questions of most other City Councilors and in Councilors' summary arguments made before voting on the new Grandview Woodland neighbourhood plan the following day.

Although the CAC policy was rarely mentioned directly, it is under its auspices that this partnership was made possible; by partnering with the Kettle Friendship Society, Boffo Properties got access to the land owned by the Kettle, became eligible to purchase the public land component owned by the City, and was able to enter into a negotiation for the right to build and sell additional residential (condominium) height and density over the entire land parcel. So long as the public benefit, in the form of new low-income housing and expanded service-delivery space for the Kettle provided by Boffo, matched in value the amount the City of Vancouver would seek to extract in return for changing the zoning on the site to allow for greater residential height and density, this partnership conforms to the CAC policy. Further, as is expressed by both Jang and Keough above, these services are needed, a requirement for approval for spending CAC revenue, with many Vancouverites living in desperate circumstances with no or unsafe housing and not enough to eat, and the existing Kettle facilities already "bursting at the seams".

An important part of the debate between Jang and Keough and others is an analysis about which of the three proposals for the Boffo/Kettle development would "break even". In the above extended quotation, Keough argues that only the original proposal, the one put forward by the Boffo/Kettle partnership, would "break even." Neither, the city planner proposal with lower for-profit residential (condominium) density nor the gift of a sizable plot of public land, as proposed by the No Tower Coalition, could make the project "break even". Never in any exchange at Council was the concept of

breaking even, a term generally referring to a financial transaction that results in neither a profit nor a loss, challenged, except by members of No Tower and their supporters. No mention was made of the dollar amounts involved or of the discrepancy between the concept of “breaking even” and the fact that this development as planned would net a profit to the developer, Boffo Properties. Neither was the potential for rising land values and gentrification, likely to result from the incursion of 150 to 200 brand new condominiums in an area of the neighbourhood with a high concentration of social, cooperative and rental buildings considered, even though condominiums would likely contribute to very uneven distributions of wealth for some and displacement for others. The unevenness of the two types of housing being proposed, high-end condominium units and their professional-income residents as compared with small single-occupancy Kettle-run social housing units with extremely low-income residents, were also ignored. Ignored too was the uneven access to power and money of the many entities supporting and opposing this development; the No Tower Coalition had often found themselves shut out of the process leading up to the draft neighbourhood plan whereas the proponent team, particularly the developer, Boffo Properties, was revealed, through released City documents, to have had continuous access and many more financial resources.

Rather, the “break even” point in this development proposal is where the value of the CAC that can be extracted from Boffo Properties, itself dependent on the degree of additional height and density permitted through zoning change, is equal to the cost of the new amenities sought by the Kettle. In other words, the concept of breaking even was used to reflect only one version of the politics in play in the debate at Council and indeed in the neighbourhood over the prior year. This is important to dwell on because it points

to the pivotal role of private capital, in the form of real estate development, and public resources, particularly zoning, to imbue land with enough value to achieve an amenity under the Community Amenity Contributions policy. In effect, Keough and Jang argued that only with rezoning to allow for the construction of 12-storeys of 150-200 condominiums to be sold at a projected profit of at least 15% to 20%, an industry standard, by Boffo Properties could the land be imbued with enough value to produce the expanded program and administrative space and up to 30 low-income non-market housing units to be operated by the Kettle Friendship Society. Gifting the public land portion alone would not make enough of a financial contribution in an era of government disinvestment, for the Kettle to achieve their new space. By adding greater potential for private investment and profit in land, through changing the zoning to allow for more condominium units to be built, the CAC negotiation could extract the needed value and lead to construction of the Kettle's sought amenity.

Alternative Versions of “Land Value” and “Breaking Even”

Assessing a CAC involves adding monetary value, at least on paper, such as by changing the permissible type, height, and density of for-profit, mostly condominium, development on land, thus imbuing that land with the potential for increased profitability, a potential that can then be extracted in the form of a public amenity or cash. By contrast, the No Tower Coalition proposal that the public land within the land parcel be made available for development of a new Kettle facility, with partial contribution from the Kettle itself and partial contribution from other public sources, added a different kind of value to land. Instead of focusing on profitability, this value incorporated land's use as

housing and its relationship to other surrounding plots of neighbourhood land and the people residing there. This type of valuation of land was deemed inadequate in the discussion above and in the ultimate decision of Council on this development site at the hearings into the Grandview Woodland plan. In other words, the two systems of valuing land, the one that privileged the value that could be obtained and extracted through private investment and the one that valued its use within a neighbourhood context, were incommensurable within the council hearing. While one sought to maximize the “land lift” in order that the value extracted could “break even” against the cost of the new amenity, the other sought to minimize the “land lift” in order to reduce the unevenness of impacts on surrounding properties, homes, and the neighbourhood. The No Tower Coalition members are part of a growing number of Vancouverites, including those who protested developments around Joyce Station and in Chinatown concurrently with my research in Grandview Woodland, who note that land development as practiced in Vancouver privatizes government decisions, raises land value and rent rates throughout the city, and consequently disrupts familiar patterns of life in neighbourhoods by displacing existing land uses, residents, and local-serving businesses.

As Searle (2014) argues in her analysis of land and real estate markets in Mumbai, the politics of commensuration related to land development are integral to transforming land situated within a localized market and use context into an internationally recognized asset (2014:62). As Indian and foreign real estate investors attempt to move capital into and out of Indian real estate in a profitable manner, they must align different concepts of value in a manner that articulates Indian real estate legibly within the context of global capital. In Vancouver, the politics of

commensuration are also in play in the land market. Through CAC policy, an expensive land and real estate market must be made commensurable with providing for growing urban poverty, most visible as street homelessness, resulting from state disinvestment from welfare state services among other measures. Yet, through the actions of resident groups, such as the No Tower Coalition, residents argue an alternative rubric of commensurability, namely that land redevelopment and valuation must meet resident expectations of public accountability and neighbourhood continuity. Insisting on the validity of this alternative rubric of commensurability can be difficult when municipal politicians and bureaucrats, and other powerful actors, insist that privileging public accountability and neighbourhood continuity will necessitate foregoing new low-income housing units, among other amenities.

As Kern (2010) notes about condominium development in Toronto, condominium construction is a primary gentrification strategy, reflecting and producing privatized versions of what it means to be a city resident, to build and have housing, and to benefit from city services. This wave of gentrification is led by capital rather than homeowners and is facilitated by state interventions such as removing the legislative and zoning barriers set up to limit the redevelopment of vulnerable neighbourhoods and to protect public spaces. Through global-local structures, often bypassing federal and provincial governmental bodies, new sites are opened for investment despite the relative scarcity of land. The primary beneficiaries of these processes are landowners, financiers, developers, investors, builders, and the middle class and elites to whom the redevelopment caters and to whom the profits are available (2010:22; see also Davidson and Lees 2005; Hackworth 2002; Jones and Ley 2016). Kern's analysis focuses on the

role condominium development plays in privatizing the safety concerns of women in city life, such as by providing safe residences in “dodgy neighborhoods” (Kern 2010:135). She argues these “safe residences” position private property as a way of achieving gender equality and community in the city, privatizing women’s safety, associating it with privilege and consumption, creating zones of exclusion, and undermining collectivist and redistributive feminist visions of city life.

In Vancouver, the primary benefits of condominium development are supposedly the new public amenities achieved, especially the services for Vancouverites living in desperate circumstances. This benefit is especially meaningful given that existing services are largely at capacity or suffering from decades of public disinvestment and therefore run-down or otherwise inadequate. Resident groups point out that such private funding of community amenities, needed as they may be, undermines public visions of amenity provision, public control of public land, and creates upscale development, raising land value and rent rates in ways that fundamentally, and without accountability, change the way of life of neighbourhoods and residents. The incommensurability of such arguments within the municipal government-capital politics of CACs mean they tend to meet with derision and even accusations of discrimination. In the City Council hearing extracted above, the No Tower Coalition’s development proposal was mocked and derided as impossible to achieve, NIMBY or revealing a middle-class disgust at the thought of being neighbours to the poor, irresponsible, and even, in summary arguments made by City Councilors the following day, as likely to lead to the death of people who are homeless. This last argument was put forward by Councilor Jang through comparisons between the irresponsibility of the No Tower proposal and the selfishness of

arguments brought at another Council meeting against putting a suicide barrier on a downtown art deco-style heritage bridge. While the barrier was intended to prevent suicide, the arguments against it centered the beauty of the bridge as more important than human life, according to Jang (Council Meeting July 28, 2016). In comparison, he argued, the No Tower Coalition's 6-storey, mostly publicly-funded proposal for new Kettle program and administrative space and low and modest-income housing, without additional condominium density, was similarly a privileging of aesthetic or personal values over the well-being of desperate people given the austerity politics of public funding. Despite the many arguments put forward by the No Tower Coalition and supporters at Council about the negative impact of such a massive development on the neighbourhood, including displacement of its lowest-income residents, the desperation of homeless Vancouverites and the dearth of public funding for housing and services was successfully used to browbeat No Tower members and refuse meaningful consideration of their proposal.

Conclusion

While many forces have worked to make real estate a central piece of the city's economy and CACs, in Vancouver, seem like an important source of funding for public amenities, increasingly social housing, these ways of using and valuing land are not shared by all. Negotiating and achieving CAC revenues is presented as the public capturing private benefit, specifically the value that can be extracted from developers when the government of the City of Vancouver changes zoning on a parcel of land. However, achieving CAC revenues requires that the municipal government recognizes

and respects private interest and profit by permitting increased height and density of condominium development and not taking “too much”. Only by adding greater potential for private investment and profit in land, can a CAC extraction be obtained from a real estate developer. Yet, both the processes and the ideology of CAC extraction are disputed by members of the public, particularly activists in neighbourhoods where CAC-involved developments are being proposed. CAC-involved developments are among many other kinds of real estate developments in central urban neighbourhoods, which, since the 1990s, have experienced gentrification. CAC-involved developments require that city governments permit high proportions of condominiums in order to “break even” against the cost of the amenities extracted. For residents, these calculations do not respect the values they favour, such as public accountability, public funding, public use of public land, and new housing that sustains neighbourhoods and resident tenure. When these two ways of valuing and conceptualizing urban land use met in the context of the City of Vancouver Council hearings into the new Grandview Woodland neighbourhood plan, only one was ultimately heard and accepted. This one conformed to the municipal government-capital politics of CACs. When the state is rescaled at all levels and cities are both required and pressured to facilitate market activity, such activity becomes fundamental to all aspects of city operations. Residents who might seek to return to publicly funded amenities and services find their ideas rebuffed.

IV: RENDERING LAND INVESTABLE: THE ROLE OF CACS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING IN ASSEMBLING THE INVESTMENT POTENTIAL OF LAND

Introduction

The alternative development proposal put forward by the No Tower Coalition, the resident group opposing the Boffo/Kettle CAC land deal, centered the value of neighbourhood land for the uses it could support and the wider meanings and relationships resulting, including the capacity of land use to support low-income tenure, neighbourhood continuity, and public activity, such as on the piazza. By contrast, CAC negotiations privilege the capacity of land to support the profit-seeking interests of a real estate developer and other land and housing investment interests. While investment interest in land may align with other desired meanings and relationships, in development-weary Vancouver this is often not the case. Since land is not naturally an asset, a commodity, or a site of investment (Li 2014; 2017; Visser 2017), it is not always, nor perhaps ever, straightforward to succeed in privileging land's investment value over its other potential values. Rather, this must be achieved by assembling land's varied and often contradictory meaning, values, and uses into an alignment that creates land's investability (Goldstein and Yates 2017; Le Billon and Sommerville 2017; Li 2014). This assemblage is composed of private and public institutions, technologies such as for mapping and communication, inscription devices, and the physical landscapes and spaces, which, in cities, include housing, parks, shops, services, and transportation networks, among other infrastructure and land uses (Fogelman and Bassett 2017;

LeBillon and Sommerville 2017; Searle 2014). In Vancouver, the assemblage is enacted through neighbourhood planning. It may seem strange in the context of Western property markets, especially urban ones where land is predominantly private property, to talk of rendering land investable; the notion of land as private property is ubiquitous and thus land appears to already and always be investable (Blomley 2004). The seeming naturalness of the link between land and property, however, indicates a deep assemblage at work, one that relies, in the case of Canada and other settler societies, on colonial dispossession through the creation of private ownership and a property market in land (Blatman-Thomas and Porter 2018; Blomley 2004; Grandinetti 2017). The continued creation, enforcement, and limitation of property rights in land continues, carrying settler colonial relations and logics into the present moment in addition to constantly reenacting race, gender, and class unequal social, cultural, economic, and legal institutions (Blomley 2004).

This chapter argues that in the context of an intensified global real estate market, neighbourhood planning in Vancouver assembles a renewed investment potential in neighbourhood land. In Vancouver, city planning is done neighbourhood by neighbourhood, plot by plot, with guiding policies, but no overarching city plan. Deploying statistical and demographic data pertaining to land use, population densities, and opportunities, needs, and desires for neighbourhood change, municipal governments created and made visible the opportunities for intensified expression of investment interest in land. This makes other claims to land more tenuous, whether to land rights, such as in the case of unextinguished Indigenous title, or to the rights of communities within neighbourhoods, which are commonly dependent on certain land uses to which

communities have no legal claim. To explore these arguments, this chapter discusses the resources involved in neighbourhood planning, focusing on Grandview Woodland primarily, and secondarily on Joyce Station and Chinatown, two other neighbourhoods undergoing smaller planning and zoning processes during the period of my research. It shows that neighbourhood planning transforms land valued for its use into land valued for its investability. It also shows that neighbourhood planning exercises claim that this reworking of land's meanings will enable the land uses that benefit these neighbourhoods, including through the CACs extracted. Neighbourhood planning exercises invite residents to name their desired changes and the issues as they see them within the neighbourhood. In East Vancouver, these interactions with residents often elicited concern about the impact of rising housing costs. Resident responses also called for more social housing, improved services, better transportation, additional and improved green space, and increased safety. While many of these issues fall to regional and federal government jurisdiction, disinvestment by those governmental scales has created an absence of activity on these pressing urban issues. At the municipal level, there is no capacity to make up for the loss of revenue except in specific cases where real estate capital can be attracted to be later extracted through CAC negotiations. As a result, in East Vancouver, a sense of investment opportunity is in part created by elaboration not of the wealth of the neighbourhoods, but of their poverty and need. Contributing to the logic that assembling new investment opportunity in land will benefit local needs are maps, census data, and budgets that visually and discursively separate land areas that are often interconnected. These inscription devices also appear to localize social issues and decision making about them. Resident engagement creates the illusion that

neighbourhood planning is oriented toward public rather than private benefit. Further, discourses of obsolete land uses “create the appearance of certitude out of the cacophony of claims about value” (Weber 2002:173), making land’s investability appear to be a response to need when it has negative impacts on race and class equality in neighbourhood tenure.

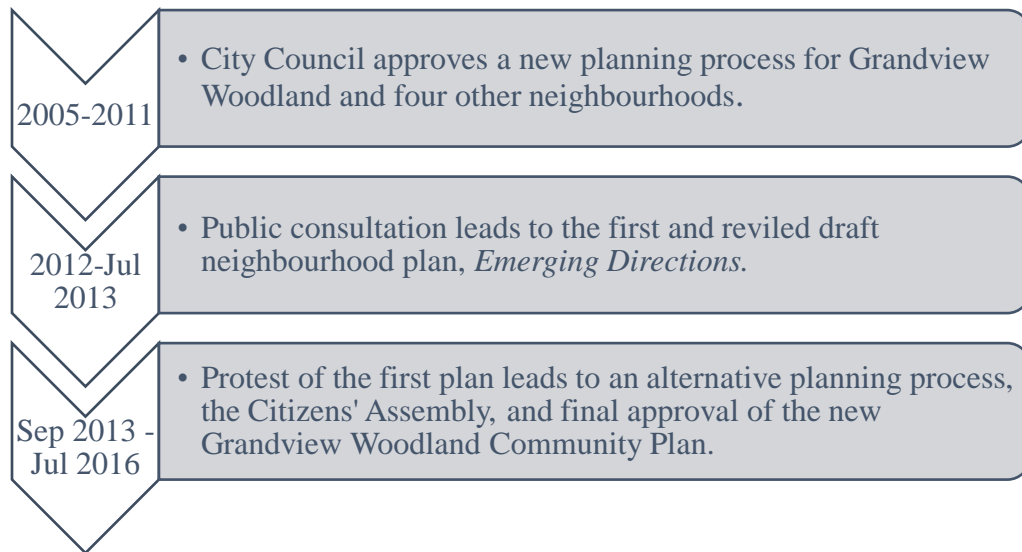
The Grandview Woodland Neighbourhood Plan Process and Context

About a month prior to the council hearing on the new Grandview Woodland plan, the draft version of the plan was released by the urban planning department at city hall. In late June, on the very weekend that schools let out for summer break, city planners first released the draft plan in a meeting with members of a citizen’s advisory group called the Citizens’ Assembly and later released the plan in full to the public online through the City of Vancouver website. Developing, releasing, and approving the neighbourhood plan in Grandview Woodland was a long process most of which was directed and determined by planning staff at city hall with political direction from city councilors. The first phase of the process started in 2005 when city staff undertook a review of older neighbourhood plans in nine neighbourhoods, including Grandview Woodland. Grandview Woodland was not finally selected to undergo a new planning process until 2011. A second planning phase of public consultation started with a select group of neighbourhood stakeholders in 2012. Stakeholders included local non-profit service providers, the business improvement association, community policing centers, a residents’ area council, arts and culture organizations, and students from the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of British Columbia,

approximately 120 individuals in total (City of Vancouver March 2012:2). Stakeholder meetings were convened to discuss issues, assets, and planning priorities for the neighbourhood. These discussions and the maps produced from them became a basis for wider public consultation in which planners went into public spaces and events in the neighbourhood to talk with residents. After June 2013, there was a rift in the Grandview Woodland planning process with the release of a reviled early draft neighbourhood plan referred to commonly as *Emerging Directions*. Not well-received, this plan proposal changed a relatively congenial planning process into one of bitter disagreement, opening the third phase of the planning process. *Emerging Directions* added significant and unwelcome height and density. For the first time, a full public benefits strategy listed how new or refurbished amenities would be added through development to the neighbourhood, and the Boffo/Kettle development appeared as a site amenable to additional height and density in exchange for a public amenity. Meant to result in another round of public consultation proceeding to the next draft of the plan in fall 2013 and Council final approval in Winter 2013, the *Emerging Directions* documents galvanized such vocal opposition, the City was forced to halt the planning exercise altogether. A reset and the selection of a new deliberative body, the Citizens' Assembly, followed. This group met for a year of workshops at the end of which, in July 2015, they presented their recommendations to Council. I attended this Council meeting at the start of my field research. The No Tower Coalition protesting the Boffo/Kettle development proposal had formed in spring 2015 and were vocal in responding to Citizens' Assembly recommendations about the site at that Council meeting. I would not join the group for another month following this Council meeting. The final Grandview Woodland

neighbourhood plan was only presented to the public and adopted in June and July 2016 respectively. The process of replanning the neighbourhood was, therefore, an especially long and convoluted one. The major phases of planning in Grandview Woodland are given in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Grandview Woodland Neighbourhood Planning Phases



During the period from 2005 through 2016, Grandview Woodland was far from the only neighbourhood to go through a planning process. The 2005 neighbourhood plans review led to Mount Pleasant, another East Side neighbourhood, being re-planned in 2010. Also, in 2010, an experimental zoning of an area straddling Kingsway, a major Vancouver thoroughfare, produced the Norquay Village Neighbourhood Center Plan supposedly part of a green-oriented densification that saw that area of East Vancouver have new zoning and development possibilities added to it continuously up to and including the period of my research. Two additional neighbourhoods, Marpole in South

Vancouver and the West End on the downtown peninsula, along with Grandview Woodland, were approved for re-planning in 2011 (City of Vancouver March 7, 2012). In a separate process, a fifth neighbourhood, the Downtown Eastside located just west of Grandview Woodland, would also begin a re-planning process concurrent with those of Marpole, the West End, and Grandview Woodland. The Cambie Corridor, a multi-kilometer linear area of 12 to 15 blocks in width and over 50 blocks in length encompassing a major north-south thoroughfare, Cambie Street between 16th Avenue and Marine Drive (72nd Ave), was already in an early implementation stage for a plan passed in May 2011 with a third phase of planning under review during my research period. This re-planning was meant to orient development along a new rapid transit line and encompassed several large institutional and commercial sites simultaneously undergoing their own large site zoning plans. Additionally, the area adjacent to Joyce Street Skytrain station in East Vancouver and Chinatown, part of the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, would come up for further re-planning during my research period. An area of industrial zoning just west of Grandview Woodland, known as the False Creek Flats, was also in a planning process, with pressure for residential uses to be allowed. A new neighbourhood was being created in far southeast Vancouver along the Fraser River. Finally, a twinned elevated roadway connecting East Vancouver to the downtown peninsula, referred to as the Viaducts, was approved for demolition, which, once completed, would open one of the few remaining non-residential areas of downtown to condominium development. Thus, a sizable portion of Vancouver (Figure 9), especially the eastern portion of Vancouver, was in re-planning or recently had been re-planned at the time of my research.

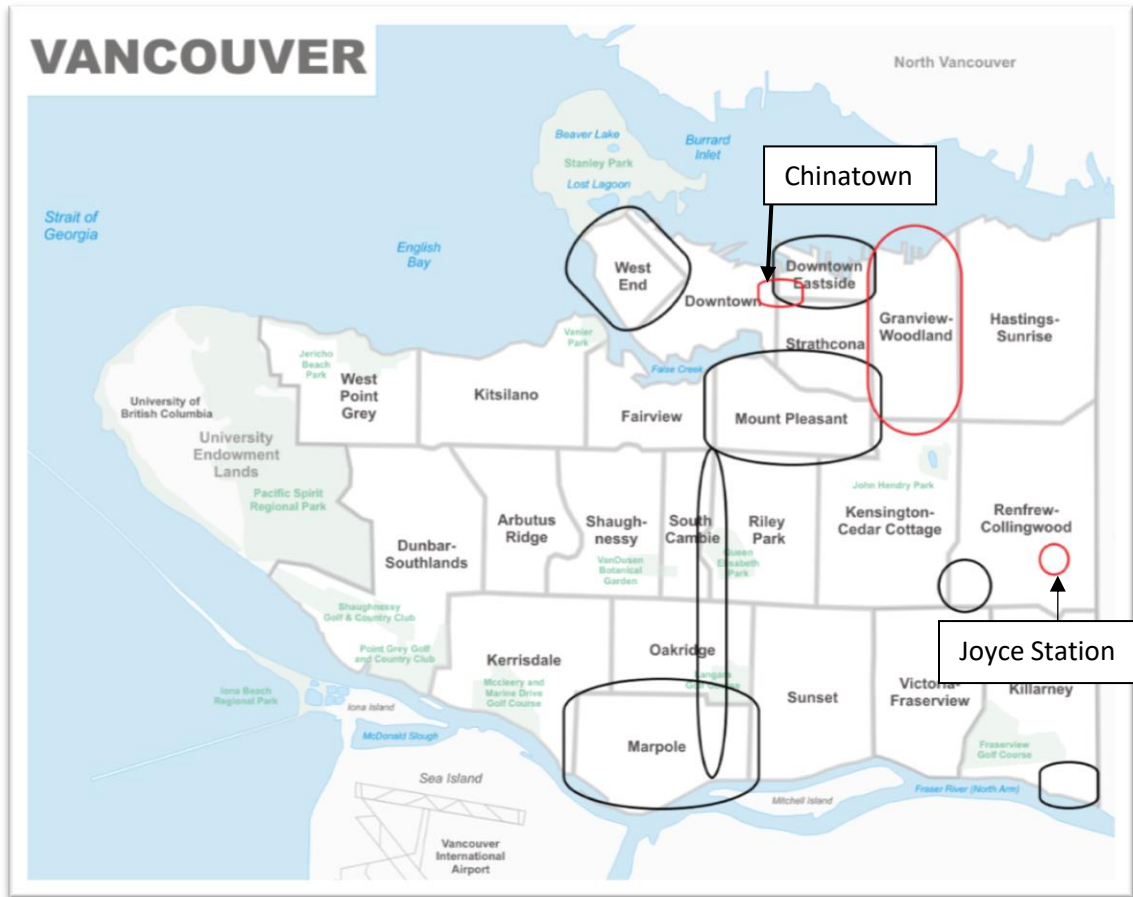


Figure 9 Map of areas recently planned or under planning during 2015/6. Neighbourhoods researched in red. All outlines added by author, placement approximate. Attribution: Tschubby [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>)]

In determining neighbourhood planning priority in 2011, when Grandview Woodland was first being considered for a new plan, much was made of the current unpredictability of developer pressure for rezoning approval, noting “significant and increasing concern” among residents on this issue (City of Vancouver July 15, 2011:11-12). The pressure produced by developers was not one city staff sought to relieve, however, but rather to control by setting out limits that would still foster redevelopment, helping city government meet the commitments it had made in 2010 when it adopted the

Regional Growth Strategy encompassing Vancouver and surrounding municipalities. The strategy estimates that, between 2011 and 2041, 147,800 new residents and 96,900 new dwelling units will be added to Vancouver (Metro Vancouver July 28, 2017:68). It argues for creating “complete communities” or areas where residents can “find an appropriate place to live at all stages of their lives, earn a living, access the services they need, and enjoy social, cultural, educational and recreational pursuits” (Metro Vancouver July 28, 2017:45). The philosophy of complete communities encourages diversity of housing type and tenure, where people can raise families, “age in place”, and where housing responds to household demographics including a range of income levels and household types. It mandates that residents should be able to access a wide range of services and amenities near where they live, including employment and transportation (Metro Vancouver July 28, 2017:45).

Achieving “complete communities” requires detailed service needs analysis on transportation, public health, safety, arts, culture and recreational services. To achieve this, City of Vancouver planners proposed wide consultation with residents, landowners, developers, public agencies, and health and community services (City of Vancouver July 15, 2011:11-12). Amenity needs should be arrived at through “neighbourhood discussions about local priorities” (City of Vancouver July 15, 2011:12-13) that make efficient use of limited resources, namely funding and land, including “through physical co-location of services in multi-use facilities, partnerships with other levels of government, the private sector and non-profit organisations”, and development charges such as CACs (City of Vancouver July 15, 2011:13). While Grandview Woodland notably faced less development pressure than other neighbourhoods (Meggs in Council

Meeting July 28, 2011; City of Vancouver July 15, 2011), it had high amenity needs, including the highest proportion of low-income and single-parent households, the highest unemployment rate, and the highest proportion of households that spend over 30% of their income on rent as compared with Marpole and the West End, the two other neighbourhoods accepted for re-planning under the same Council decision.

Many scholars of current urban development strategies note that gentrification, once seen as a problem is now posed as a solution to urban problems (Hackworth 2007). For example, by changing neighbourhoods of concentrated poverty to mixed income neighbourhoods, as with social mix policies (Bridge, Butler, and Lees 2012), a new tax base is created, space is made for new industries and their workers, and economically depressed urban areas are revitalized (Kern 2010). In many areas of the world, through condominium construction and global real estate investment, formerly public lands and public urban development programs are being privatized (August 2008; August and Walks 2012; Christophers 2010; Kern 2010; Searle 2014; Whiteside forthcoming). According to Brash (2011), in New York, planning and development schemes have historically been initiated by the private sector and only latterly supported by the local state. In that city, urban planning has become a means for channeling the profit-desires of real estate development professionals.

Privatization has been accompanied by urban planning fragmentation, or a geographic and political parochialism in urban planning initiatives focused on single projects or small areas. In Vancouver, the multitude of planning projects underway, just completed, or initiated during the period of my research were all segregated into separated processes with little to no analysis of the relationship between planning in often

geographically contiguous areas of the city. These processes, and the development in neighbourhoods recently re-planned, was a ubiquitous part of the Vancouver experience during my research period. As a researcher interested in the urban planning processes in Vancouver, I could feasibly have attended an open house or two for new neighbourhood plans and large and small site rezonings almost weekly. Aside from a few open houses with wide appeal, they were almost invariably attended only by people residing in the same neighbourhood as the rezoning or development proposal along with developers, architects, planners, and, often, real estate agents. Not only the fragmentation of planning and rezoning, but the pace and sheer amount of it prevented wider participation in these events. Throughout the city, new higher-density zoning was being added to existing neighbourhoods to meet growth goals and create “complete communities” with homes, workplaces, shops, and services.

As Brash (2011) argues, this fragmented approach can paradoxically constitute a “coherent development strategy” (2011:41), serving the interests of the city’s entrenched real estate industry. This is especially the case if fragmentation is led by capital with support from government, but with little ability for the public at large to examine its impact or direct its approach. In New York, privatization, fragmentation, and continued support for these planning patterns by the local state has helped insulate planning and development decisions from public protest and instead led to a discourse that profitable development of real estate is in the public interest and even protective of “inner city” neighbourhoods. In Vancouver, privatization of development goals, such as achieving “complete communities”, and fragmentation of planning decisions into neighbourhoods, together with the overwhelming pace and scale of planning and development, serves to

insulate planning decisions and the actions of the real estate development industry from coherent public scrutiny, criticism, or influence.

Three planning goals seemed to continuously repeat themselves throughout each neighbourhood or small area re-planning/rezoning: the provision of new higher-density housing units at lower prices than detached homes; the ability to extract CAC revenue; and the proximity of concentrated development to existing rapid transit networks, a planning orientation referred to as “transit-oriented development” (Jones and Ley 2016; Quastel, Moos, and Lynch 2012). Despite reports indicating that most such re-planning and rezoning was not needed or had already resulted in new housing units in excess of population growth goals (Coriolus Consulting 2014) as well as news and anecdotal reports of exponentially increasing land value, housing prices, and rent rates concurrent with re-planning, rezoning, and development (Cooper September 19, 2015; Cooper November 22, 2015; Hampel June 22, 2016; Lee-Young Sun Dec 5, 2016;), City Council and planners continued their efforts apace.

Notable in the decision to re-plan Grandview Woodland is a desire to steer but not prevent redevelopment of the neighbourhood. While in 2011 Grandview Woodland had relatively less interest from the real estate development industry as compared with the other neighbourhoods to be re-planned under the same Council decision, it had, as Councilor Meggs and staff reports noted, high amenity needs, due to the prevalence of poverty in the neighbourhood. High amenity needs, in a context where public funding is reduced or eliminated, means that new amenities will have to rely on extractions from real estate development through the CAC policy. The neighbourhood also contained the largest transit station in the city. The combination of wanting to extract CAC payments

and add a large amount of residential density near rapid transit made specific sites and subareas of the neighbourhood particularly vulnerable to significant planning attention and zoning change, notably the southern neighbourhood boundary that contained the rapid transit station and the Boffo/Kettle development proposal, the only specific private sector-led development proposal to receive mention in the final plan. Diminished funding for social housing and other public amenities along with a history of reliance on the private sector to provide most of the housing stock (Harris 1999) meant that overall the planning process was directed toward enticing the interest of the real estate and development industry. Over the multi-year planning process that followed, development interests in the neighbourhood intensified. This was apparent not only in the actions of Boffo Properties in their partnership with the Kettle, but in rumours of land speculation, evidence of numbered companies holding title in the neighbourhood, the revelation of specific real estate interests in a large site near the transit station, and ultimately, the testimony of senior staff of major real estate development companies, though notably not Boffo Properties, in favour of even greater zoning changes at the Council hearing into the new neighbourhood plan in July 2016. Planning in Grandview Woodland opened many new land parcels for redevelopment by a relatively small though influential group of real estate and development professionals who were also some of the largest political donors to local and provincial governing political parties in the period (Dembicki June 19, 2018; Hoekstra February 10, 2017).

Rendering Land Investable in Grandview Woodland

The discourses of high amenity needs in Grandview Woodland, as noted in the Council meeting in 2011, and potential for transit-oriented development, CAC extraction, and a “complete community” that meets population growth goals were only the beginning of the elements assembled to render Grandview Woodland land more investable. As Goldstein and Yates (2017) argue, for land to be treated as a commodity and made available for investment, in the sense of both given value for investment and made accessible to investment, it requires assemblage of institutions, social relations, legal structures, and technologies. Of course, urban land in Western property markets has already been invested with market value through a range of legal and social instruments and institutions. That we tend to readily think of land as property is evidence that an assemblage of institutions is already at work shaping our relationship to land (Blomley 2004). However, the concept of land as property is not wholly successful in all instances and particularly, for the purposes of this analysis, may be challenged in the case of longstanding and widely recognized common usage and the concomitant creation of collective meaning. Blomley (2008) gives one example of this from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver after the shuttering of Woodward's Department Store. When a real estate developer sought permission from the City of Vancouver to redevelop the site as condominiums, the neighbourhood rallied, occupying the boarded-up building for months. The 2002 “Woodsquat”, as the occupation and protest came to be known, claimed the building, the history of the department store, and the land/property on which it sat as neighbourhood commons. Protestors succeeded in winning an agreement to a mixed market/non-market housing development in an arrangement related in philosophy, but different in execution to the community amenity contributions developments.

Ironically, Downtown Eastside anti-poverty activists now see this development as the toehold enabling other condominium development that is succeeding in gentrifying this historically working class and poor neighbourhood (Neighbourhoods Activist, Personal Communication, October 11, 2016).

Even in established property markets, such as in Western urban centers, land has many meanings, including when its familiar uses enable community among residents. Going back further in the history of land development in Vancouver, competition over the values, meanings, and uses of land is at the center of the establishment of the city and of its property relations. Present day land relations are commonly informed by the historical land relations of a place. For example, Searle (2014), examining land development negotiations in Mumbai, notes that India's agrarian history is central to its land development policies, practices, and cultures now. In Vancouver, and many other cities in settler societies such as Canada, land development policies, practice, and cultures are also impacted by historical relations. The history of the city is a colonial history, shot through with many instances of both dispossession and displacement of Indigenous people. Blomley (2004) defines settler colonial dispossession as the specific processes through which settlers acquired title to Indigenous land. Displacement he defines as the conceptual removal of Indigenous people from the city and the "emplacement" of predominantly white settlers (2004:109).

The city of Vancouver was imposed upon a network of ancient native villages, resource sites, and symbolic landscapes (Blomley 2004:110), and that imposition continued well past the formation of the city (Barman 2007; Stanger-Ross 2008). Historically, the creation of property required the application of law and the making of

space. Landscapes had to be transformed into territory upon and through which relations of property could be asserted and protected. Maps, such as for the first city plan in 1929 (Stanger Ross 2008) helped impose a “new economic and spatial order” (Blomley 2004:112) that “obliterated” (ibid), or attempted to obliterate, Indigenous geographies and property relations and provided the template for colonial land speculation and urbanization. Three important examples of removal, replacement, and attempted control stand out in the history of land use and city formation in Vancouver. These include the removal of Indigenous settlements for the creation of the largest and most iconic park, Stanley Park, on the downtown peninsula, the coerced removal of people from the Kitsilano Reserve formerly located in a prominent position on the Vancouver waterfront, and attempts to control land use and taxation rights on the Musqueam Reserve. The reservation, while experiencing alienation of some of its territory, still exists on the southern boundary of the city. Many of these exercises of removal and control, though they followed decades of colonial displacement and dispossession, were initiated in the early 1900s. However, many of these successful acts of removal remain unsettled today as First Nations persist in enacting claims regarding the unfair alienation of land, sometimes through settlement and sometimes through new forms of property relations.

Many theorists of settler colonial societies and urban centers within them note that settler colonialism is an ongoing relationship (Glenn 2015). As Blatman-Thomas and Porter (2018) argue, the settler colonial order can never be “post” because it is always recomposed (2018:31); “[u]rban landscapes are emblematic of the logic of replacement” (Blatman-Thomas and Porter 2018:33). Not only have Indigenous peoples been dispossessed, but there are structural limitations to their ability to assert sovereignty in

the urban context (Blatman-Thomas and Porter 2018). Cities are transformed into spaces where settlement is seemingly natural and fully accomplished (Grandinetti 2017). This is so, even as cities are built on Indigenous landscapes, which, in the case of Vancouver, have never been ceded and as a larger proportion of Indigenous people are pushed into urban areas from home territories or as a result of being denied formal recognition as Indigenous people. As sites in which Indigenous peoples, in Canada including Inuit, Metis, First Nations peoples, as well as Indigenous people without formal status come to enact pan-Indigenous community associations, cities are also key sites of Indigenous resurgence and struggle (Blatman-Thomas and Porter 2018; Grandinetti 2017; Lawrence 2004). Property relations therefore become key to not only telling the story of Indigenous displacement and dispossession, but in their capacity to permit or undermine current claims on urban land as well as pan-Indigenous community in the city now. Transforming land into property produced the settler society by transforming land from a set of relationships within an Indigenous experience and worldview into a stable, severable, fragmentable thing that can be traded and occupied, affirmed in law, and made pervasive in the society. Further, neoliberalism has entrenched these settler colonial relationships by deepening the requirement that all people engage in market mechanisms, including vis-à-vis land, regardless of historical or current relationships (Tomiak 2017). Finally, for the development of pan-Indigenous communities in urban areas, including of many peoples without an ancestral claim on land, the disposition and context of property matters for how its uses shape the potential for these communities to persist and grow. This was particularly important in Grandview Woodland, a neighbourhood to which many Indigenous peoples had been displaced or to which they traveled to participate in

the institutions of urban Indigenous life that were concentrated there. This will be explored in more depth in Chapter 5.

Reservations and Indigenous-controlled lands in and on the edges of the city sometimes bring these issues of Indigenous and settler rights to control land into current land use politics, particularly surrounding development on a small pocket of reserve land on Vancouver's west side and on 90 acres of former federal lands newly acquired by three nations (Lee-Young April 13, 2019; O'Connor March 3, 2019; Stanger-Ross 2008). Settler colonial property logics are endlessly creative and work perpetually to render invisible the Indigenous histories and continued relationships to land (Blatman-Thomas and Porter 2018:34). This is made necessary in part by the very materiality of land. No matter the imposition of colonial forms of property, and all the institutions that sustain it, the land is still there. While its meanings for and uses by Indigenous peoples is often outside the common knowledge of the dominant settler society, those Indigenous relations have a way of reasserting themselves. In response, settler colonial governments continue to develop new means of displacing or controlling them. This working of and through property is also reflected in the property relations instantiated through neighbourhood planning, even though not all the people and relations subjected to the neighbourhood plan are Indigenous. In the Grandview Woodland plan, a key part of the assemblage was a process that rendered both visible and invisible the Indigenous community in the neighbourhood, which was anchored by the largest proportion of Indigenous social housing in the city and several important institutions. Rendering visible meant making special mention of Indigenous residents, noting a long history of negative impacts that they have experienced throughout colonization, and evincing

support for reconciliation, cultural celebration, renewed services, and use of Indigenous place names. Rendering invisible meant never diverging from the notion of neighbourhood land as property. Though several mentions are made of the neighbourhood and city being situated on the unceded lands of the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh peoples, such understandings never fully entered into city planning practice, as planners, and indeed most residents, acted as though the property title in land was a settled fact, even if they disagreed on how it should be enacted.

On this basis, planners in Grandview Woodland engaged residents and non-resident land owners in open-ended inquiry and in surveys, in public meetings and through published descriptions that made a case for the neighbourhood as a special place, with an important history, meaningful institutions, longstanding relationships, and unique character including both Indigenous and settler residents. The Spring 2012 discussions with key stakeholders and the maps produced from them became a basis for wider public consultation in which planners went into public spaces and events in the neighbourhood to talk with residents. From City documents reporting on the outcomes of consultations, contact, in the form of “meet and greets” at local events and focused small group discussions, was made with approximately 2000¹⁴ residents and questionnaires were answered by 800 residents (City of Vancouver September 2012). Recorded questionnaire responses and descriptions of the conversations had with residents revealed overwhelming concern with decreasing housing affordability in the neighbourhood and desire to have the neighbourhood be both “an affordable place to live” and a “diverse and welcoming” place (City of Vancouver February 2013:14). The most desired types of

¹⁴ In City documents, Grandview Woodland is noted as having 27,000 residents. Thus, these figures indicate contact with a small percentage of residents overall (City of Vancouver 2016a;b).

housing, as indicated by resident responses, included housing cooperatives, affordable owner-occupied units, and social housing, with over 50% of respondents indicating desire to see more of all of these types of housing in the neighbourhood. More rental housing was desired by just under 50% of respondents and even a third of respondents wanted to see more homeless shelters built (City of Vancouver February 2013:16). Strong desires to improve parks and have more green space were also noted, as were concerns about at-capacity recreational, social service, and health facilities, which residents noted were sometimes funded in unstable and unsustainable ways (City of Vancouver March 2013:37).

The same documents list the social, cultural, and economic issues of the neighbourhood. These documents are replete with the needs of neighbourhood residents, particularly poverty demographics. For example, 37% of renters in the neighbourhood spend more than 30% of their income on housing and this is true even though rents in the neighbourhood are below city averages (City of Vancouver February 2013:27 and 32). Twenty percent of families are lone-parent families, higher than city averages. The neighbourhood had a reported crime incidence, mostly of theft and break and enter, of 74.3 per 1000 residents as opposed to city-wide averages of 60.6 per 1000 residents (City of Vancouver March 2013:24). Food insecurity is experienced by 22% of residents (City of Vancouver March 2013:30). There are 40 non-profit social services operating in the neighbourhood and 35% low income households (compared with 27% city-wide) (City of Vancouver March 2013:36). Finally, the neighbourhood is home to homeless individuals as well as non-profit, social housing, and co-operative housing buildings, and that 66% of

dwellings in the neighbourhood are rented compared with 52% city-wide.¹⁵ These conversations and statistics seemed to confirm Councilor Meggs' assertion of Grandview Woodland's "high amenity needs" as well as a sense of the values and unique character of the existing neighbourhood and its residents.

In response, planners listed numerous public and housing amenities that would be provided in the new plan, such as a renewed community center, new mainstream and Indigenous social housing, and new rental housing. These were given in multiple places, including on poster boards displayed at community meetings, and in documents published by the City. All relied on a change of land use, particularly in the immediate vicinity of the transit station, along major thoroughfares, especially Hastings Street to the north, and in areas where there are small pockets of non-residential uses or in areas where there are already apartment buildings. For example, the "City Tool Kit", lists land use, that is zoning, as its primary tool for supporting "social planning and social sustainability objectives" (City of Vancouver March 2013:5) and "housing policy objectives" (City of Vancouver February 2013:5), including renewed and new public amenities and social and affordable housing. Of the other tools, taxation and borrowing, policy development, design guidelines, construction, and development and rezoning also rely on land, change of land use, and/or partnerships with developers to produce public amenities and other social service outcomes. In terms of creating affordable housing, residents were directly asked to choose which type of zoning or land-use response they preferred (City of

¹⁵ These documents stated neighbourhood demographics based on 2006 census data. The first complete census since 2006 was conducted in 2016 and therefore results were not available until after the new Grandview Woodland plan was produced. These data reveal that the number of renters in the neighbourhood had decline slightly to 63.7% and the number in Vancouver had risen slightly to 53.1%. Many residents of the neighbourhood suspected a diminished number of renter households as, not only had this been the trend since the 1990s, but it appeared to residents that rentals were being converted to owner-occupied units and Airbnb units.

Vancouver February 2013:23), a situation also faced by members of the Citizens' Assembly (Interviews September and October 2016) as senior government funding was noted as being inadequate. Each of these new land uses reflects an intensification of the property value of land and are designed to attract investment and development.

For example, the new zoning plan (Figure 10) released in June 2016 with the rest of the draft neighbourhood plan shows the neighbourhood out of context of the rest of the city and as internally divided between areas of minimal zoning change (yellow) and those of greatest zoning change (dark red, brown, blue, and purple). The yellow areas are primarily where detached houses are located whereas the areas of substantial zoning change are located primarily near the transit station (T) and along the major thoroughfare of Hastings Street and in a few select nodes in apartment-zoned areas. The recognition of ongoing colonial relations, together with the characteristics, maps, statistics, and resident desires recorded through the neighbourhood planning process became part of a kind of abstracted description of Grandview Woodland, in which inhabited areas of the neighbourhood were represented, especially through the zoning map, as segregated from other proximal and related areas and as places amenable to different kinds and amounts of zoning change. Current land uses were overwritten with potential land uses and only by knowing the neighbourhood as it is lived can one see the current variegated and relational land uses underneath the coloured sections. Such rewriting of landscapes of uses and relations, particularly through the fragmentation and disruption enacted by intensified private property interest in land reflects the history of both property development and government in this settler colony. By rendering the neighbourhood through this new zoning map, the existing variety is overwritten with a standardized

vision. This standardized vision reasserts the value of land as property, telling those with investment interest in land how to behave, including how much to pay as compared with how much they can later build and what kinds of CAC extractions City of Vancouver bureaucrats and Council may seek.

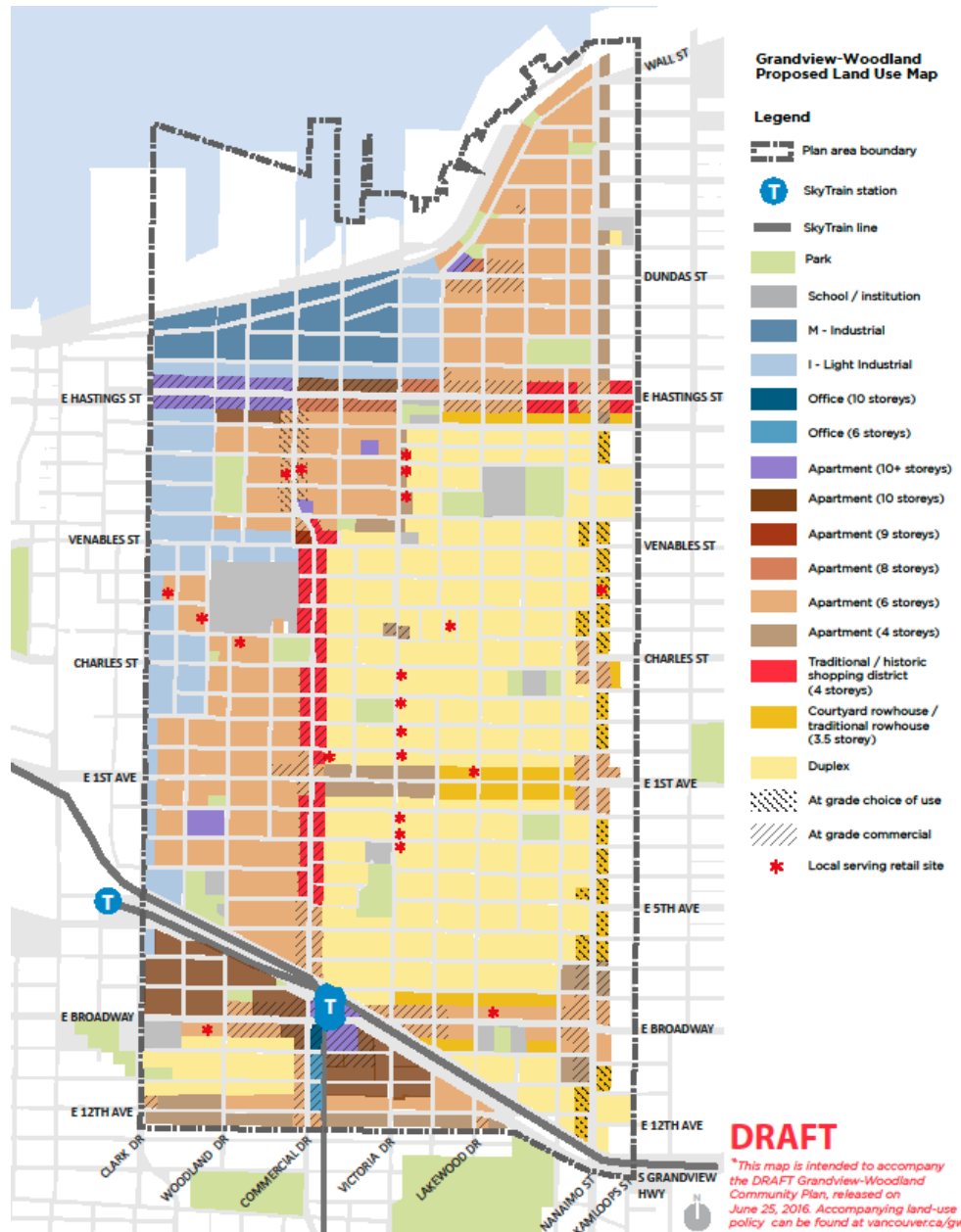


Figure 10: Zoning and land use map for Grandview Woodland released June 2016. Differently coloured areas of the map indicate different degrees of zoning change with yellow areas undergoing the smallest change. Credit: City of Vancouver.

Further, that rezoning can lead to CAC extractions may help ideologically bridge the gap in logic created by the argument that re-planning and rezoning will benefit the neighbourhood when it will also lead to the intensification of private property interest in land, particularly through speculation, investment, demolition, new buildings, and the destruction of many valued current land uses as well as displacement of residents, especially those residents who are supposedly served when CACs are extracted to fund a neighbourhood's "high amenity needs". The promise of CACs helps create public support for changes in zoning while the need to make significant changes in allowable building height and density creates zoning policy that presents new real estate development opportunity and attracts the interests of land developers and investors. Beginning in 2011 when members of city council noted the "high amenity needs" of Grandview Woodland, through the early phases of public consultation in 2012 and 2013 during which residents expressed desires for new and renewed amenities, including new affordable housing, and city planners repeated the poverty-related demographics of the neighbourhood, Grandview Woodland was established as a vibrant and much-loved neighbourhood with, nevertheless, many local problems and needs. Accompanying these neighbourhood descriptions was a repeated refrain of not enough public funding, especially from provincial and federal governments, to meet these needs and ameliorate these problems. Instead, solutions proposed involved changing potential land use to attract real estate investment and development and extract CACs. This cleaving of areas of the neighbourhood into those amenable to substantial change as compared with those amenable only to smaller changes was done on the basis that it would preserve the neighbourhood, an argument put directly to me by a senior city planner (Fieldnotes July

5, 2016). In this mystification, assembling the political, economic, and legal resources to render land investable, including over the long history of settler colonial appropriation of land, enabling real estate investment and development as well as CAC negotiation, can somehow preserve valued neighbourhood land uses rather than disrupt them. Yet, those who know the neighbourhood as it is lived, because they themselves live it, experience the relatedness of land, land uses, land prices, rent rates, and the familiar patterns of neighbourhood life they value.

Displacement Fears and Displacement Goals in the Neighbourhood Plan

The extensive investment of time, energy, and resources in Grandview Woodland achieved a plan that proposes to add 9500 new residents to the current population of 27,000 by 2041 (City of Vancouver 2016b:28). According to the Plan, this will be done through a combination of new housing for purchase, housing for rent, and subsidized low-income housing, or social housing. Most of the proposed new density is condominiums in the form of apartment buildings and townhomes. The public benefits strategy for Grandview Woodland anticipates new or renewed social housing, rental housing, childcare, parks, the renewal of Britannia Community Services Center, expansion of the Urban Native Youth Association, infrastructure for public safety, transportation, and utilities, and preservation and restoration of heritage buildings, and, of course, the expanded services and housing for the Kettle Friendship Society. The total cost of these new and renewed public services is estimated at close to \$800 million, of which 23% is expected to be delivered by developers through CACs and other development fees. In comparison, property taxes and fees collected by the City of

Vancouver will fund only 15% and contributions from other governments and non-profit agencies is projected to fund 61%¹⁶.

None of these funds had been secured at the time of approval of the neighbourhood plan in July 2016. Willingness of the municipal government to rezone was indicated through policy statements rather than zoning bylaws, giving developers an indication of what to expect from a rezoning and CAC negotiation and therefore what maximum prices to pay for land in the neighbourhood, though as discussions with planners and residents revealed, developers had been speculating within the neighbourhood throughout the planning process, buying lots prior to the inevitable land value rise resulting from the new plan. Further, funds from provincial and federal governments had not been secured, and, in the case of the public housing authority's recent funding announcements, would only be secured with matching private sector funds or through loans (Fieldnotes November 2016). As the plan states, the public benefits strategy is not a promise of services to be delivered, but rather "provides strategic direction for future capital investments in a community over the long-term" (City of Vancouver 2016b:227) and is "an aspirational plan that reflects the needs and desires of the community" (City of Vancouver 2016b:228). Although developer contribution appears small as compared with public contributions in the projected public benefits strategy for Grandview Woodland, 23% of the needed funds must come from development contributions, mostly CACs, a significant proportion requiring either large or many zoning changes and neighbourhood redevelopment. Thus, the price of potentially achieving new desired amenities, including social housing, was to permit

¹⁶ This adds up to 99% due to rounding in the original Plan document. These are the most precise figures I have.

intensified development potential and interest particularly in selected pockets of the neighbourhood, but with impacts throughout.

By the time the draft neighbourhood plan was released in June 2016, most participants in the neighbourhood planning process were battle weary, with only the most concerned and those with the most time still engaged in a process that had been drawn out and where the public had been systematically shut out. The public was further shut out when the plan was released at the start of summer holidays with only a month in which to read, digest, and form an opinion on a 242-page document. Accompanying the plan release was an announcement of several large and small meetings to be held in the neighbourhood. Advertisements were posted sporadically around the neighbourhood (Figure 11) on large posters as well as online on the City of Vancouver website. At these meetings, city bureaucrats, including from various planning departments at city hall, would attend to answer questions from all concerned, including residents, landowners, land developers, and others. Three “open houses” were the main public meetings convened, held at different centers in different regions of the neighbourhood, including the Croatian Cultural Center just outside the southern boundary and near the largest transit station, the Maritime Labour Center, a large hall situated in the north end of the neighbourhood nearer the port, and the Aboriginal Friendship Center located in the north end, but closer to Commercial Drive, the neighbourhood high street.



Figure 11: Advertisement for Plan open houses. June/July 2016. At the Woodland St bridge over the train and Skytrain tracks. Photo by author.

I went to all three open houses, most of which were sparsely attended, with perhaps 100 to 200 attendees each in a neighbourhood of over 27,000 residents and where attendance was primarily white and largely of homeowners and land developers, many of whom sought to clarify new land development opportunities presented by the plan before the Council hearing. This compares with a neighbourhood that, while majority white, has a sizeable proportion of residents of colour, particularly of Asian and Indigenous (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) descent, and where the majority, 63.7%, are renters and where median incomes, though rising overall, are still about \$10,000 per year below city median incomes (Statistics Canada, Census). Arriving at the second open house at the Croatian Cultural Center, I noted the usual set up of poster-sized information boards arranged on easels in a sequential order around the periphery of the large high-ceilinged room. This set up was in place at every rezoning or plan open house I attended,

no matter the neighbourhood, throughout my research. Cookies, coffee, and tea were set out on a table at one end of the room. Circular tables and chairs with pens and forms for giving comment were arranged in the center of the room. Staff of land use and social planning departments at the City of Vancouver stationed themselves near the poster board that reflected the work of their department ready to explain the posted information and answer questions from the public. Members of the public milled about, examining the posters, sometimes sequentially but also sometimes walking back and forth across the semi-circle of easels as they came across some new information about park space and wanted to consult it against the new zoning map, for example, or realized high density uses were going to be allowed in their subarea and wanted to contrast these changes against the heritage building-retention plan, or simply wanted to understand how the policies for redevelopment of one subarea of the neighbourhood fit within the whole. At the open houses in Grandview Woodland (Figure 12), as in many others I attended over the 16 months of my research, information was being presented, but little was being sought. City planners willingly answered questions but were reticent when faced with challenges. While the lead planner for the neighbourhood dutifully took notes in a small notebook if challenges reached his ears, junior planning staff often looked flummoxed when faced with resident criticism. They seemed to have come fearing confrontation, but ill-prepared to respond to it, perhaps believing that the public consultation had already been exhaustive, given the year-long engagement with the Citizens' Assembly, and that this was just a formality.



Figure 12: Neighbourhood Plan open house at the Aboriginal Friendship Center, July 2016. Photo by author.

At the open house, I chatted with two senior City of Vancouver planners about the reasons some neighbourhood sub-areas had been assigned certain kinds of zoning policies and others different. I was trying to understand the logic that had been applied across the neighbourhood, which made some areas amenable to substantial zoning changes and others maintained at existing zoning or with smaller changes. In this conversation, I was focused on the areas surrounding the transit station, the largest and busiest in the city, where some of the most significant additional density was projected. This area of the neighbourhood, the one in which I have lived for over a decade, is also home to some of the more depressed property and rent prices, as the elevated transit line and nearby major roadways are noisy, unsightly, produce added traffic and garbage, and

are well-known conduits for drug and other crime. It is also home to some of the greatest existing housing density in the neighbourhood with dozens of 3-storey condominium, rental, and social housing buildings and fewer detached homes (St. Denis February 23, 2017), almost all of which are or contain rental units. The plan detailed policy for rezoning in neighbourhood sub-areas rather than bylaws, indicating to developers the willingness of municipal bureaucrats to entertain rezoning requests, thereby enabling a negotiated process for a CAC. Some of the policy even outlined how that CAC negotiation might go, letting developers know that buildings up to six stories would be allowed if they were built as rental housing, and buildings up to 10 stories would be allowed if they were built as either 80% condominium units with 20% social housing units or 50% each condominium and rental units. While rezoning would open the door to other kinds of negotiation as well, the plan offered a relatively clear relationship for developers between development rights and amenities, with the rental and social housing being counted as public amenities.

The 6 and 10-storey options were puzzling to me and to several renters in the area that I spoke with at plan open houses and other neighbourhood-wide meetings. They seemed arbitrary, as did many of the proposed zoning policies in the plan. Although these formulations could deliver added housing units for a range of income levels, they were slated for an area where there was an already high density of housing units for a range of income levels, skewing toward lower incomes. Redevelopment would require demolition of those buildings on which renters depended for relatively cheap housing and the construction of new buildings that would have to sell and rent at rates reflecting inflated land costs and the costs of new construction. Buying existing buildings that offer

affordable housing to build new, even rental, housing, will necessarily price the lowest income residents out of the neighbourhood. New construction, whether for sale or rent, costs significantly more than older housing. At each stage of development, costs are layered on top of already high land purchase prices, necessitating an additional opportunity for value creation such as intensifying the number of units permitted on a plot of land and increasing the cost of those units to the end user. Only by creating new value through higher rents or high sale prices can real estate developers recoup costs and make profit. Further, existing land owners may need incentives, such as inflated purchase prices, to be induced to sell, especially in such a heated real estate market where substantial land value increases happen over short periods of time.

The pressures created by such a land market, bolstered by rezoning in the neighbourhood plan, were well-recognized by several renters living in the same sub-area whom I met at the same open house. Two mid-fifties to mid-sixties white women who described living for a decade or more in one of the rental buildings paid rents 50% below current market averages due to their long tenancy, provincial regulations limiting rent increase, and prevailing Grandview Woodland rental rates. At the open house at the Croatian Cultural Center and later at a resident-hosted public meeting on proposed changes in the neighbourhood, these women expressed fear. They both believed they were “being squeezed out” of their apartment and the neighbourhood. One woman said that she had lived in the neighbourhood since childhood. She described the plan as “too much on her nerves” leading her to wonder “when are they going to come and take my apartment” (Fieldnotes July 11, 2016).

At the open house, I posed the collective sense of impending loss of existing affordable housing to one of the most senior planners at the City of Vancouver, a tall, thin, white man in his late 50s dressed in collared shirt and slacks. In response, he revealed that, in the opinion of senior planners at the City of Vancouver, some displacement was a necessary tradeoff in a plan that would enable the heights, densities, and housing type mixes needed to meet population growth goals and the desire for high-density development around transit to encourage more transit use. When I asked why the particular mixes of condominium, rental, and social housing were proposed, he responded that land assessors contracted by the City of Vancouver were hired to “crunch the numbers” on heights and densities in the plan, recommending these building types, with their particular mix of housing because they are equivalent in terms of a cost to profit ratio from a developer’s perspective. Whether a developer builds 6-storeys of rental or 10 storeys split between condominiums, social housing, and rental in the proportions prescribed in the plan, their costs and profits are similar, he argued. Increasingly defensive as I raised the issues I had heard and noticed in my discussions with other neighbourhood residents, the senior planner refused to consider the issue of renters and the problems they would face given the likelihood of the plan leading to redevelopment of the neighbourhood. When I asked why relocation protections for demovicted tenants were not extended to those in suites in detached homes, a large percentage of neighbourhood renters, he thought the loss of those units and individuals was “acceptable”. Neither was he interested in an analysis that considered the change in rental rates in new build rental as compared with older rental, saying that displacement of

some was another cost that simply had to be borne due to the strong need for housing in the city.

He further refused to examine how significant zoning change in one renter-predominant area of the neighbourhood could impact rental rates elsewhere in the neighbourhood and city, with new-build rental setting a new rent floor. He refused to consider the interconnection between subareas of the neighbourhood or neighbourhoods in the city. Even when I insisted such that cleaving geographically proximal and socially and culturally related neighbourhood subareas was inappropriate and inaccurate, he insisted on the distinction, saying that “60% of the density” would be added around the transit station and at Hastings, “not in the center of the neighbourhood”. Therefore, the logic went, the plan would not displace people and in fact was offering something very positive for the neighbourhood by only densifying in select areas. At one point, I made the mistake of referring to displacement impacts as *gentrification*, a term and analysis he refused outright and in an increasingly frustrated tone stating that Council has no political will to engage with this term or argument and planners are “not willing to consider it”. There is a “never-ending” pressure for housing in the City of Vancouver, he continued, and planners must meet this pressure. Displacement was not a problem he believed he should have to consider or contend with going so far as to say some people can be pushed out of the city. At this point, I changed the topic in order to avoid a pointless fight. Fortunately, shortly thereafter, another neighbourhood resident and a real estate agent both approached the planner and took him off in another conversation (Fieldnotes July 5, 2016).

The overall experience of attending the three open houses for the Grandview Woodland plan was familiar to me after a year of attending many other open houses around the city. The experience of seeing new plans for a neighbourhood in which I have lived for over a decade and with which I engaged deeply throughout my research was perhaps more emotional for me than other open houses. Though, the range of feelings and interests I encountered amongst other attendees, from fear of being displaced to excitement at new property development and investment opportunities, seemed in line with those in evidence at other open houses. The conversation with the senior city planner was, however, very unusual. Every neighbourhood or rezoning plan I encountered contained a public benefits strategy, commonly a description of what CACs could be extracted and how they would be spent. While not always going to low-income housing or other social services, they almost always went to some other public amenity, even if only to provide road and sidewalk upgrades or beautify existing green spaces. Development was always presented as supporting the wellbeing of the neighbourhood and adding to its livability. The possibility of displacement of existing residents was almost always glossed over and where it was unavoidable, such as where a rental or social housing building was up for demolition, pains were taken to describe the measures that would ensure tenant right of return. By contrast, in the conversation above, this city planner straightforwardly stated that displacement is not only a possibility, but a desired goal of neighbourhood planning. The need for higher density development around transit and other changes to neighbourhood land use to create more housing units is, for him, a greater need than ensuring continuity of tenure and of neighbourhood. Displacement impacts are not random, but effect predominantly those people who have the fewest

resources and most tenuous tenure, particularly the lowest income renters. While residents had been encouraged to express their fears about rising housing costs, and CAC-funded amenities were promised to offset such impacts, city planners knew and expected that rendering land more investable would ultimately change the tenure of the neighbourhood and reduce access for its lowest income residents. This included assessing what zoning policies would best produce a combination of developer profit, thus enabling and encouraging such interest.

Planning Processes at Joyce Station and in Chinatown

Concurrent with the later stages of the planning process in Grandview Woodland and the period of my research, June 2015 through October 2016, two other subareas within larger east side neighbourhoods were also targeted for rezoning and substantial new condominium development coupled to new low-income housing units. In the first example, rezoning of the 2-block radius around Joyce Skytrain Station, a transit station along one of the Skytrain or elevated rapid transit lines, was initiated on the basis of an upgrade to the transit station and bus loop by the transportation authority, Translink. This was presented as an important opportunity for rezoning and redevelopment. While land around the station had been upzoned in 1988, no redevelopment had occurred and the work to plan for station upgrades offered an opportunity to “explore why change has not occurred, as planned” (City of Vancouver December 2014). As was later revealed by members of the Joyce Area Residents Association (JARA), which ultimately formed to oppose the rezoning, a developer, Westbank, had already come to the City to request a

rezoning for a 29-storey condominium tower adjacent to the Joyce Skytrain Station in 2013.

Joyce Station is part of the larger neighbourhood of Renfrew Collingwood, which had undergone almost continuous planning and development changes since the late 1980s. At that time, eleven hectares (approximately 27 acres) of industrial land was rezoned for high rise residential development, including an additional 2800 residential units. Further planning was done in the area between 2002 and 2004. This process involved significant consultation with a broad base of neighbourhood residents. Later still, in 2011, a large development was proposed for the far eastern edge of the neighbourhood, about 850 meters from the station. Two 40-storey towers were approved with both MOSAIC, an immigration settlement service, and the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, a community agency also involved in the Joyce Station rezoning, receiving amenity space as part of the community amenity contribution made by Wall Financial Corporation to achieve the rezoning.

The neighbourhood, as noted in City of Vancouver reports and census data is, like Grandview Woodland, relatively low-income, with almost half of all households being renters and almost half of those spending over 30% of their income on rent (City of Vancouver February 2016). Further, the neighbourhood has a high proportion of immigrant residents speaking diverse primary languages, notably Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Punjabi, and Spanish in often significantly higher proportions than city averages (Statistics Canada, Census 2016). Median neighbourhood household incomes are below city medians, though notably the proportion of low-income households has

declined over the prior two decades, as in other east side neighbourhoods like Grandview Woodland (City of Vancouver n.d.).

Between the final months of 2014 and September 2016, the City of Vancouver established the need and potential options for upzoning, and a single preferred option which was presented to the neighbourhood public beginning in February 2016 over several public meetings. The final proposal for upzoning accepted by Council in June 2016 extended outward from the transit station for about 2 blocks on all sides. The tallest building heights were zoned in closest proximity to the station on the logic, also found in the planning in Grandview Woodland, that “density is best located in close proximity to a transit station” (City of Vancouver December 2017:12). From these high points, “transitional densities” or sequentially smaller buildings “step down” into the neighbourhood so that the remaining original homes sit directly next to townhouses and apartments buildings between 4 and 6 storeys high rather than buildings 25 to 28 storeys high. As the planning process unfolded, local non-profit and religious organizations, including the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, the YMCA, and St Mary’s Catholic Parish consisting of the church, Catholic elementary school, and church-run low-income seniors housing, also began to see opportunities for both redevelopment of their own properties immediately adjacent to the Station and for CAC revenue for their operations. At the rezoning hearing, the staff report to Council notes that:

City policy sets a target of 20% affordable housing to be achieved through the development of large sites and through community plan policies. Opportunities for a significant increase in the amount of mixed-income non-market rental housing are identified in the JC Precinct Plan [the Joyce Station Plan]. If realized, these opportunities together could increase the amount of non-market housing in this small area from about 150 units today to over 800 units, and the potential to achieve 30% affordable housing.

(City of Vancouver June 2 2016:10)

Reading further into the staff report, the largest contributor to new non-market housing is the redevelopment of St Mary's Parish land, estimated to produce 400 of these new units with the City of Vancouver producing 80 units through redevelopment of city land within the area, and BC Housing to produce 240 units through redevelopment of their existing housing also in the area (City of Vancouver June 2 2016:17). JARA members, very interested in seeing more affordable housing in their neighbourhood, made multiple calls to BC Housing, the provincial housing authority, to get confirmation that the agency was planning to expand their existing non-market housing near the station. Though they spoke with representatives for housing development in the area, none indicated that the City of Vancouver's projections were at that time in BC Housing's plans. Like the projected public amenities in the Grandview Woodland plan, non-profit agency and developer partnerships plus developer contributions from community amenity contribution payments would fund a substantial portion of the new amenities and budgeted public funding had yet to be secured.

In the second example, Chinatown, to the west of Grandview Woodland, is a small neighbourhood within a neighbourhood on the east side of downtown Vancouver. Developed beginning in the 1850s when primarily men of Chinese descent settled near the Burrard Inlet in what is now downtown Vancouver (Anderson 1987), Chinatown was created as a result of and in response to Chinese exclusion laws and attitudes. As activists in Chinatown today argue, the neighbourhood remains an important space that takes its identity in part from its history and in part from its continued relevance as a center of Chinese retail and cultural activity, and working class residency, as well as an

important space of resistance to ongoing anti-Chinese racism made more virulent again through repetition of the message that Chinese investment in Vancouver's real estate is driving price inflation. In 1971, the provincial government designated Chinatown as a historic district. It is located within one of the poorest districts of the city, the Downtown Eastside, which has experienced significant economic decline, especially since the closing of Woodward's Department store in 1993, discussed briefly above, and recently new mixed market/non-market condominium and social housing development and a new neighbourhood plan that have led to significant land use change, more condominium development, and gentrification.

There is a sense in reading the background description of planning work done in Chinatown since 2001 that the neighbourhood is in decay. The word revitalization, especially in relationship to economic opportunities and business, especially retail, is commonly used. Emphasis on marketing the neighbourhood, improving retail business opportunities, enticing tourists, and intensifying residential uses to support economic growth all produce a sense of the neighbourhood as insufficient, out of date, and dying. "Chinatown is for Everyone" reads one of the section headings in the Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan and Economic Revitalization Strategy dated June 2012. And, there is a sense in reading the paragraphs that follow that the struggles of Chinese-Canadians for citizenship and voting rights, and for preservation of their neighbourhood against the imposition of a highway in the 1970s era of urban renewal projects are proud histories that now belong to the nation and the city as a whole. As the document opines, "the historical and cultural significance of Chinatown has since been recognized by Vancouverites of all backgrounds and the Chinese-Canadian communities continue to

thrive in all parts of the region” (City of Vancouver June 2012:6). And, contrary to the racial ideology that marked Chinese settlers and continues to mark Chinese-Canadians as other (Anderson 1987), Chinatown is heralded as one of the original “ethno-cultural communities” in Vancouver, which “epitomizes the core value of contemporary Canadian society – cultural diversity” (City of Vancouver June 2012:8).

Planning documents from 2012 further celebrate Chinatown as a neighbourhood in transition. Census data from 2006 reveals that the number of people living in Chinatown almost doubled from 775 to 1,420. Growth is attributed to new residential developments, including market and non-market housing, at the southern edge of Chinatown which brought in new younger residents. Further as downtown land becomes less and less available, Chinatown is “well-positioned to receive new residents” (City of Vancouver June 2012:32). Yet, the process of deciding Chinatown’s future is still open ended, according to planning documents, that ask:

Who is Chinatown for today? Who will be living, shopping and working here in the future? How will the existing low-income community and the new residents define a new vision for the neighborhood that celebrates and strengthens the cultural and historic fabric while embracing new opportunities? (City of Vancouver June 2012:32)

These questions are being rapidly answered by gentrification pressures impinging on the neighbourhood as downtown development drives land value ever higher, even in the relatively devalued downtown eastside area. Chinese-owned and local serving businesses are slowly being replaced by upscale storefronts that serve a wealthier and whiter clientele. Further, condominium towers, while not yet in the heart of Chinatown, are closing in on all sides. Lastly, a new neighbourhood plan for the whole Downtown Eastside neighbourhood in 2014 and specific zoning guidelines adopted for the historic

district of Chinatown in 2011 have already invited development applications for market condominium development, albeit often mixed with non-market housing. During the period of my research, one upzoning and development proposal from Beedie Living, a prominent real estate development company, at 105 Keefer Street was the subject of intense neighbourhood opposition. Brought forward five times over three years starting in 2014, Beedie Living's proposal to upzone a site directly opposite the Chinatown Memorial Square, created in 1995 as a public space and containing a sculpture installed in 2001 to commemorate the contributions of Chinese veterans and rail workers, faced growing opposition from an increasingly well-organized group of young people and senior citizens of predominantly Chinese descent. The square itself links the Chinese Cultural Centre and Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Classical Chinese Garden and is a significant neighbourhood gathering spot, as evidenced by many events held there, including protests of Beedie Living's development proposal. The second to last time Beedie brought forward their development proposal, in June 2017, the company was seeking a rezoning approval from City Council for construction of a 12-storey tower consisting of 106 market-priced condominium units, 25 low-to-moderate income units for senior citizen residency, and a ground floor common space for cultural gatherings in Chinatown.

Unlike in Grandview Woodland, City of Vancouver planning documents elaborate neither neighbourhood poverty-related statistics nor the lack of public funding alternatives for the small area rezoning around Joyce Station and single site in Chinatown. Here, other elements of neighbourhood deficiency and decay were more prominent, such as the lack of high-density development around the transit station despite earlier zoning changes and Chinatown's "decay", particularly in the context of a

“multicultural” society that celebrates rather than ostracizes diversity. In the Joyce Station area, the ability of zoning changes to add new affordable housing units became a significant part of the ultimate proposal, though was not added in the beginning. Unlike in both Grandview Woodland and in Chinatown, the area being rezoned, though immediately surrounding Joyce Station in a very urban context, contained 161 detached homes. This is quite common in Vancouver’s east side where there are still only small pockets of apartment buildings, both condominium and rental, and far fewer townhomes. Detached homes, commonly in Vancouver referred to as “single family homes” have come under fire in recent years as a gross waste of space in the urban environment and, as their price has climbed over 300% in the last decade, too expensive for the average buyer. As JARA pointed out in their campaign, these supposedly “low-density” housing forms, when located in neighbourhoods with a higher proportion of working-class residents and residents of colour, tend to house more than just one household. Many of the 161 detached homes in the rezoning area around Joyce Station house multiple generations of the same family as well as have one or more rental suites, as was revealed by research conducted by JARA (Joyce Area Residents’ Association March 10, 2016).

Both rezoning options offered new social and affordable housing units, though, as in Grandview Woodland, these amenities were provided through development partnerships and CAC exchanges. Where public money was required, it had mostly not been secured. In all cases, the price of achieving new affordable housing was accepting new zoning and for-profit market development of condominiums that would both directly demolish existing affordable housing and lead to land value and rent rate increases and displacement. While land developers and land-owning or partnering non-profit agencies

appeared to have privileged access to city planners and other staff at city hall, resident groups, as in Grandview Woodland, reported to me that they were consistently shut out of planning processes, relegated to only the public meetings at which it often appeared like decisions had already been made (Neighbourhood Activist, Personal communication, December 13, 2015; November 18, 2016). This included failure of city officials to translate city documents from English to the languages most commonly spoken around Joyce Station and in Chinatown. Neither were residents offered interpretation services at city hall when they attempted to speak against rezoning and development proposals. When other residents offered interpretation assistance at city hall, speakers' time before Council was not extended to reflect that every point had to be made twice, once by the speaker and again by the interpreter (Neighbourhood Activist, Personal communication, December 13, 2015; Neighbourhood Activist, Personal communication, November 18, 2016).

When the opposition group in Chinatown gained traction, mobilizing opposition not only among the many elderly Chinese residents of the neighbourhood, but broadly in the city, the City of Vancouver proposed the *Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan*, which organizers referred to as the *CRAP*. Launching a campaign against the proposal called *Cut the CRAP*, residents also contended with this new attempt to push through both Beedie's proposal and many others. The Chinatown Economic Revitalization Action Plan proposed drastically increasing building heights (up to 150 feet tall or 14 stories) and building frontages (up to 200 feet wide), while gutting the existing public consultation process of open houses and public hearings. If the "CRAP" had passed at City Council, projects like that proposed by Beedie would not have needed

to undergo public rezoning as the new zoning would already be in place for the neighbourhood as a whole.

In all cases, including Grandview Woodland, an extensive amount of time, energy, and resources were put forward by city planners, City Council, and consultants and experts within the planning process, often establishing iterative planning consultations that visited and revisited the same areas of the city over relatively short timelines. Actions seemed to anticipate public protest in numerous ways, sometimes by eliciting residents needs and desires and promising neighbourhood planning as a route to meeting them, sometimes by attempting to eviscerate public process altogether. These processes tended to turn first to local stakeholders and to later maintain the deepest contact with land development interests. While the pressure on existing housing affordability, particularly in these low-income neighbourhoods, which also had higher proportions of immigrant, Indigenous, and visible minority residents, became a relevant and meaningful political concern, these concerns were deemed met when rezoning could net new privately-funded affordable housing units. Such concerns did not prompt reductions in upzoning and development nor did they lead to further public funding of housing or other amenities.

Discourses of Obsolescence

Discourses of obsolescence, such as of deficiency, stagnation, and decay wound their way through the planning processes of Grandview Woodland, Joyce Station, and Chinatown. In Grandview Woodland, a neighbourhood that was already a “complete community” with a range of housing types and styles to suit a range of incomes, as well

as good access to employment, services, retail, and transit was deemed insufficient. In the discussion with the senior planner, above, its existing uses, though technically conforming to current planning goals, did not meet new growth goals, making displacement of people and neighbourhood relationships a desirable outcome. Similarly, around Joyce Station, where properties had been rezoned in 1988, but not redeveloped, the impetus for rezoning was explained as an exploration of “why change has not occurred as planned”. Documents explained that “[c]urrent land use does not take full advantage of highly suitable sites immediately around the SkyTrain station” (City of Vancouver June 2, 2016:3) and there is “poor pedestrian connectivity, limited shops and services, poor integration with Collingwood Village [produced through the earlier development of former industrial sites], and there could be better utilization of land” (City of Vancouver June 14, 2016). The resident group, JARA, argued these supposed deficiencies were not experienced by residents, who valued the existing neighbourhood amenities, yet planning documents, as in Grandview Woodland, still argued that existing structures were insufficient. In both neighbourhoods, arguments for new plans and new development seemed to amount to the notion that new is better.

In Chinatown, obsolescence was expressed as decay. The word “revitalization” was in the title of the plan, which would help Chinatown “remain relevant in a more multi-cultural Vancouver” and “become a regional – even global – destination where people can experience Chinatown’s culture and heritage through its architecture, urban life, and festival events” (City of Vancouver June 2012:15). Obsolescence was paradoxically tied to alternative conceptions of heritage. Chinatown’s heritage buildings were not threatened in the planning process, but their significance and meaning were

slated to change. Heritage buildings are old and have not been renovated (City of Vancouver June 2012:17) and consequently have less value as tourist attractions, the plan implies. Revitalization of Chinatown must preserve its heritage as a museum/tourist site, but also allow new development to preserve the look and feel, but reverse population and economic decline (City of Vancouver June 2012:30-1). The document argues that “Chinatown needs to modernize and broaden its product offerings”, especially led by the restaurant sector and involving “younger community members in decision-making roles” (City of Vancouver June 2012:49-50). “Old line retailers and restaurateurs are not keeping up with changing times” (City of Vancouver June 2012:49) and consequently consumers are not attracted to the neighbourhood, leading to loss of revenue, deserted streets, and loss of street safety. By contrast, the Chinatown Action Group, a coalition of younger and senior citizen activists, argued that the neighbourhood was still living and that its existing uses should not be gentrified with new retailers and restaurateurs.

As noted not only in documents, but in interviews with activists, newness is highly valued in neighbourhood planning in Vancouver (Neighbourhood Activist, Personal communication, December 13, 2015; Neighbourhood Activist, Personal communication, November 18, 2016). Sometimes this is justified by the argument that neighbourhoods don’t have enough zoned capacity to create new buildings to house growing populations. This justification was repeated over and over despite reports to the contrary. New planning ideals also seemed to suggest newness was a key goal. This includes the arguments that neighbourhoods in east Vancouver did not already constitute “complete communities” with opportunities to live, work, shop, and recreate in a single neighbourhood even though this was the stated experience of existing residents. Or, that

they were not “transit-oriented” when they already had significant residential density located near transit, often multiple or large households of a range of income levels. In conversation, planners commonly repeated the idea that knocking down older rental buildings was positive because they had reached the end of their useful life or that detached homes were inefficient, even when they were divided into suites or housed larger households. Notably, no rental building in the neighbourhoods in which I researched sat empty during the time of my research. The senior planner with whom I spoke and who argued that some people could and should be displaced gave the impression that, to some planners, the residents of the neighbourhoods were themselves obsolete. Around Joyce Station, the logic of transit-oriented development proposed that existing structures were insufficient and that, where high density zoning had already been permitted but not used, it no longer fit the market demands. In Chinatown, the whole neighbourhood was portrayed as obsolete, as if its history, current residents, and buildings belonged only to the past, not relevant to the current neighbourhood, Chinese-Canadians, or city interests, except as heritage structures. Finally, not living up to potential, in terms of land value extraction and public amenity contributions, was part of each neighbourhoods’ categorization as “obsolete”.

In analyzing discourses of obsolescence in city planning, Weber (2002) argues that these are preferred to older stigmatizing or devaluing discourses, such as of blight, because they can be justified based on the passage of time, changing societal needs, or changing consumer habits, all of which appear to be politically neutral. However, neighbourhood planning, and the potential rezoning it will enable, are not politically neutral, especially with respect to race and class. In the examples above, planners

elicited resident fears about rising housing costs and displacement but did not then seek to minimize the possibility of real estate investment. Rather, these statistics were used to justify upzoning to enable such investment on the basis that it could help meet urban development goals for new complete communities, new high-density development around transit and amenities via the CAC policy. Many of the neighbourhoods targeted for significant zoning change included those with higher proportions of low-income and working-class residents, renters, residents of colour, Indigenous residents, and immigrant residents, many of whom feared displacement as a result. While these neighbourhoods had undergone some gentrification, neighbourhood planning furthered this process rather than interrupting it. Further, city council meetings about neighbourhood plans were held on weekdays during working hours when many residents not involved in the development industry could not attend. Interpretation services were not provided at Council hearings and rarely and insufficiently at open houses. Publicly-released planning documents were rarely translated. The history of Chinatown as a neighbourhood built out of anti-Chinese racism that serves as a site of commemoration, resistance, and home was made out to be obsolete even as anti-Chinese racism was made again more virulent and a coalition of youth and seniors of Chinese descent formed to articulate their ongoing investment in the neighbourhood as a working-class Chinese space. As land and housing prices climbed in neighbourhoods where working class and poor residents had managed to find stable and affordable housing, these land uses and housing were treated as “obsolete” even though such treatment could lead to redevelopment and displacement of those residents.

These are a few of the ready examples of the deeply classed and raced nature of urban planning in Vancouver. These do not consider the larger context of this planning

and the future development it projected, which is itself shaped by and shaping race and class tenure in cities. As was discussed in the previous chapter, urban change of the last several decades has not been race or class neutral. Deindustrialization and residentialization of the central city, the arrival of condominiums and intensification of private interests in land, and disinvestment from welfare state institutions and services, as well as from the neighbourhoods most dependent on them, has resulted in a concentration of wealthier and whiter populations in the central city. Working class and poor households, immigrant households, Indigenous households, and households of colour are being pushed to the periphery (Hackworth 2007; Ley and Lynch August 2012; Procyk October 2014; Smith 1979; 2002; Walks and August 2013; Walks and Bourne 2006). These neoliberal processes are themselves built on a history and continued re-creation of settler colonial relations that enact displacement through property; Indigenous relations to land are being constantly made invisible through intensification of the property interest in land. According to Li (2017), a certain sense of spectacle and a frontier mentality of untapped potential are reoccurring elements of rendering land investable. Vancouver's iconic downtown towers of glass and concrete that reflect, in their mirrored windows, the city's geographical placement at the meeting point of ocean and mountain certainly provide a sense of the spectacular. Their sheer number and height, architectural arrogance, and stunning natural setting are a spectacle the city markets globally to tourists, migrants, and investors alike. They have arisen out of industrial landscapes which were themselves built on Indigenous landscapes, fueling a feeling of opportunity for wealth that has been an aspect of Vancouver's history since its settlement in the 1800s on never-ceded Indigenous territory as the economic center of a provincial economy

reliant on natural resource extraction through fishing, forestry, and mining (Blomley 2004). In other words, Vancouver has been a resource-based frontier town for as long as it has been called Vancouver. This is no less true today as the spectacle of glass and the sheer pace and scale of land redevelopment creates a sense of frontier potential for the creation of new real estate on land already in use in contexts already meaningful to those occupying it.

Conclusion

Current neighbourhood planning and the redevelopment it enables continues to obliterate the lived relationship to land, not to mention fully ignore the imposition of a set of land titles and property relations without formal ceding of territory. Historical relations directly inform present day relations to land, especially land as property and are equally part of the assemblage that renders land once taken through colonial process and other enclosures endlessly newly investable and the people residing on it as endlessly removable. Assemblages of neighbourhood land use and zoning maps, amenity budgets, lists of existing services, discourses of disinvestment, and consultation processes helped render land investable by providing justification to change the zoning that would then make neighbourhood land an attractive investment site. In Grandview Woodland, Joyce Station, and Chinatown, differing but related discourses of obsolescence were used as part of the assemblage, justifying planning work in the neighbourhood and the kinds of development proposed in new area plans. While, in general, City of Vancouver planners went out of their way to argue that neighbourhood plans would provide housing for low-income residents, one city planner argued that displacing these residents was necessary to

accommodate desired new land uses, transit-oriented development, and complete communities. While planning presented its endeavours and outcomes as neutral or positive with regard to race and class, the experience of residents told otherwise as they repeatedly expressed fears at being pushed out of their neighbourhoods as development would accommodate only wealthier and whiter residents.

In Grandview Woodland, the planning process was long and convoluted, but its goals changed little between 2011 and 2016. When the terms were set in 2012, they listed neighbourhood issues, assets, priorities, and potential planning responses with reference to social, health, and safety issues including the prevalence of poverty and crime in Grandview Woodland. These issues remained through successive iterations of the planning process, appearing to inform the final plan approved in July 2016. In the 2013 *Emerging Directions* draft plan, the degree of proposed added height and density shocked the neighbourhood, leading to protest. Despite protest at City Hall, and earlier public consultation that highlighted the degree to which diminishing affordability was a significant and growing neighbourhood concern (City of Vancouver May 2012; February 2013; March 2013), the addition of height and density to the neighbourhood as a whole remained a facet of the planning process after 2013. Additionally, the *Emerging Directions* draft plan described how new height and density allowances would be a route to new community amenities, including the housing and expanded program space in the Boffo Kettle project, something that would remain throughout the rest of the process. Residents accused planners and Council of ignoring neighbourhood input and putting forth an “aggressive set of proposals” (Fleming July 9, 2013) in the *Emerging Directions* land use plan. Yet, debates over height and density were not about whether to add height

and density, but how, where, and with what impact on housing and amenities available in the neighbourhood.

Actual and promised rezoning resulting from the neighbourhood planning process and reflected in the new *Grandview-Woodland Community Plan*, is an important part of achieving the myriad goals of the planning process. Zoning policy was set at heights and densities meant to attract developer interest in purchasing and rezoning land, particularly low-income and rental housing goals through CAC negotiations. However, residents recognized an extreme negative impact due to rezoning on a neighbourhood where many households, especially renters, struggle to make ends meet. Buying and selling existing buildings that offer affordable housing to build new, even rental, housing, will necessarily price the lowest income residents out of the neighbourhood. Only by creating new value from the purchased land can real estate developers recoup costs and make profit. As one member of the Citizens' Assembly astutely said to me in an interview, if you want new housing stock, "you have to come up with incentives and it's hard to know exactly what those incentives are other than sky-high rents, which defeats the purpose" (Personal communication October 7, 2016). Yet, on the other side, resident desires for new and renewed public infrastructure, and even for social housing for low-income households, together with municipal policy standards and measurements that showed Grandview Woodland as "deficient" in regard to resident incomes and social and public services encouraged the very thing that some residents decried, namely rezoning policy that encourages the buying and selling of land for redevelopment.

V. RECLAIMING PLACE: DISCOURSES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER AND VALUED NEIGHBOURHOOD RELATIONS

Introduction

Whether residents believed they would benefit from the new high-density zoning in the Grandview Woodland neighbourhood plan, coming through the planning process was only the first stage in dealing with the neighbourhood change such a plan would induce. For all residents, the neighbourhood plan, and its associated changes in land use, development proposals, and community amenity contributions (CACs), introduces a new set of uncertainties about the pace and impact of development on their experience of neighbourhood and continuity of tenure. As argued in the previous chapter, neighbourhood plans assemble land for investment, using myriad techniques to legitimize zoning change that in turn renders land acquisition more desirable because it has made land development more accessible and profitable. Neighbourhood plans rarely if ever discuss the impact of new zoning and subsequent development on land value or of land value on housing costs and rental rates or of these costs on the future class and race composition of neighbourhood residents. They rarely confirm the pace of redevelopment or note how changes in the uses of private property will impact shops, services, schools, and transit. In neighbourhoods where residents depend on each other, such as for mutual aid, preservation of cultural identity and values, language preservation and interpretation, and as security against class and race inequality in the larger society, neighbourhood plans do not make clear how they will impact these life-sustaining social relations. They can't even confirm when or if the public amenity dollars promised through CAC negotiations will materialize. Thus, while neighbourhood plans give the impression of

certainty, this certainty is for city government and development industry professionals who through a neighbourhood plan come to understand the zoning, development, and CAC negotiation potential.

This chapter will explore resident responses to these uncertainties including arguments residents make about the relationship between land use, place, neighbourhood continuity, and tenure. Some residents fear physical displacement while for others displacement is more an emotional or intangible reality as neighbourhoods familiar to them change through eviction, demolition, rising costs, new construction, and new social networks. Stabrowski (2014) calls the intangible forms of displacement “everyday displacement”, which he defines as the lived experience of ongoing loss of security, agency, and freedom to make place (2014:796). Making place may include creating or participating in the myriad forms of sociality made possible through the lived experience of neighbourhood structures, residents, shops, services, infrastructure, common understandings, and familiar patterns. Gentrification-induced displacement, he argues, should be understood as an ongoing and lived process even for those residents who manage to stay put (see also Cahill 2010; Davidson 2009; Shaw and Hagemans 2015). Rezoning (mostly private) property to enable high density condominium development and negotiate community amenity contributions is promoted in neighbourhood planning on the basis that it will enhance the neighbourhood character by enlivening the neighbourhood, reversing decay and obsolescence, and creating the possibility of renewed or additional public amenities. However, such a conceptualization relies on the idea that a neighbourhood is a collection of segregated properties rather than a collection of interrelated properties and social relations.

In the literature, evidence of the relationship between use of property and shared or common experience of neighbourhood abounds. Residents of Downtown Eastside Vancouver argued, for example, that their use of Woodward's department store, then shuttered, had made that private property into a neighbourhood commons that could not simply be appropriated by a real estate developer seeking to build condominiums (Blomley 2004). Similarly, former residents of an apartment complex in the Bronx argued to preserve a common space within the building because of its role in the history of hip hop (Davidson 2009). Both are instances of private properties and spaces in neighbourhoods interpreted as common or collective spaces because of the role they play in valued neighbourhood social and cultural relations. In this analysis, rather than pinpointing a single building or type of use of property, I am arguing that the many types of property uses and the social and cultural relations these produce create a sense of a neighbourhood place that residents rely on, value, and seek to preserve (see also Blomley 2004; Blomley 2008; Cahill 2010; Leitner and Sheppard 2018; Shaw and Hagemans 2015; Stabrowski 2014). In resident activist groups in Vancouver, this sense of neighbourhood place was often referred to as *neighbourhood character*. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define neighbourhood character as arising not simply in the public spaces of the neighbourhood, such as parks and community centers, or even the shared uses of particular private properties, but as all the relations certain dispositions of property, both public and private, enable and on which residents depend for their sense of home and familiarity as well as for their day to day life needs.

As neighbourhood planning is done neighbourhood by neighbourhood, resistance to upzoning, including for CAC-involved development, is also conducted neighbourhood

by neighbourhood. Neighbourhood-based resident coalitions form to oppose neighbourhood-wide rezoning, subarea rezoning, and single site rezoning depending on context, including in situations where CACs will result from rezoning and where the public amenities to be built through CAC negotiations are desired. How these groups define neighbourhood character differs based on context and often changes as residents realize new analyses and impacts through their organizing and resistance efforts.

Arguments of the groups I followed, primarily the No Tower Coalition in Grandview Woodland and secondarily the Joyce Area Residents' Association (JARA) in the Joyce Station area and the Chinatown Action Group (CAG) in Chinatown, included: that their neighbourhoods functioned well for residents and were not obsolete, decaying, or deficient; that the problems of poverty, over-used services, and under-enrolled schools were important, but originated outside the neighbourhood and should be addressed with new public investment; that land value creation and extraction, despite the community amenities it provides, would have more harmful impacts than positive including disrupting neighbourhood land uses and displacing people and communities; that residents have a right to determine the future of their neighbourhoods without interference from developers or city hall; and that residents of neighbourhoods developed through race and class segregation have a right to sustain the neighbourhoods they built.

Arguments made by resident groups were not the only ones resisting the impacts of disinvestment and development during my research. In Grandview Woodland a group formed to protect the funding for Britannia Secondary School. Often times neighbourhoods are formed from associational communities, which have little basis or claim in to property in law. Yet, these associational communities are very important to

residents, not least of all a group of Indigenous and settler residents in Vancouver that opposed the threatened closure of Britannia. For Indigenous residents, many of whom have already been displaced from home communities to urban areas, associational communities are a primary form of Indigenous relation in the city and an important if conflicted claim on city land use and urban space. Advocacy for protection of Britannia in Grandview Woodland was an additional source of resistance to the twinned pressures of public disinvestment and private property reinvestment. This resistance articulated the relationship between sustaining a mixed low-income and Indigenous community and existing neighbourhood land uses.

No Tower Protest in Grandview Woodland

A crowd of maybe a hundred residents, mostly white and middle aged or older, along with a couple of camera operators and reporters, were gathered casually in Woodland Park on August 16th, 2015 to witness the raising of helium-filled balloons to the 12-storey height of the proposed Boffo/Kettle building. Gathered around a couple of portable folding tables decorated one with a tablecloth and refreshments of lemonade and cookies and the other with pamphlets, petition pages, and a banner reading “No Tower at Venables and Commercial”, people chatted to each other, watched their dogs greet and play with the other dogs in attendance, and caught up on news. Several members of the No Tower Coalition hosting the balloon raising called the group’s attention to the kite-like arrangement of helium-filled balloons and NO TOWER red and white lawn signs that was about to be unwound into the sky above the park. With some difficulty, eventually leading to the lawn signs being detached, the balloons were slowly let out to

the estimated height of a 12-storey building (Figure 13). The summer breeze blew the balloons just off course of their full height, though they still flew far above the houses, warehouses, 3-storey apartment buildings, and trees surrounding the park. Far up in the air, the balloons almost disappeared, the string securing them fading into the bright clouds of the overcast summer day. Having none of the overborne presence of a block-large building, the balloons were a whimsical but perhaps too gentle stand-in for the proposed Boffo/Kettle development which would impose and block views rather than fade into its surroundings.



Figure 13: No Tower balloon raising at Woodland Park August 2015. Photo by author.

The balloon raising was originally meant to take place in the parking lot on the proposed development site. From there the balloons would have risen above the two and three-storey buildings currently occupying the rest of site and most of the neighbouring properties, perhaps giving more context than was possible down the street at Woodland Park. This might have also attracted a greater number of passersby to the protest. The parking lot (Figure 14) abuts the back end of the Kettle Society building, where it seems to be often used as a smoking and hang out spot by Kettle clients and staff. When the No Tower Coalition had advertised their balloon raising in the parking lot, senior staff at the Kettle Society had asked them to move the location out of consideration for their clients who might feel affronted or even threatened by a protest of the proposed new facility of which the clients were much in need. In press, Nancy Keough, Executive Director of the Kettle, was quoted as saying that the protest would be intimidating for Kettle clients, and that her concern arose because the Kettle works with “very vulnerable, poor, isolated people” some of whom find coming in the door of the Kettle scary enough without a backyard protest adding to their stress (Mackie August 6 2015).



Figure 14: Views onto the back of the Kettle Society building and parking lot across the rear laneway from the Kettle. Photo by author.

Press on the day of the balloon raising and the next revealed that while vacating the parking lot had perhaps reassured Kettle clients, it had also opened space for the Boffo/Kettle partnership to meet the press on the site without hindrance. Press coverage led with interviews with members of the No Tower Coalition, but also heavily represented viewpoints from the Boffo/Kettle partnership, which focused on the needs of Kettle clients, the need for the Kettle as a service, the inadequacy of the current facility, the fact of a public funding drought particularly for new program and administrative space, and the good that a private developer could do for a desperate non-profit with no other source of funding. No Tower members were quoted arguing that the development was “totally out of character and out of place with the neighbourhood” (Mackie August 6, 2015), that there is wide neighbourhood opposition to the development, that public health projects should be publicly funded so that they do not pit “the neighbourhood against the neighbourhood” (Jackson August 12, 2015), that public land should remain in public hands, and that their campaign was being thwarted by underhanded tactics such as the

destruction of lawn signs and “emotional blackmail” in the form of accusations that No Tower members were anti-poor and anti-health care for the mentally ill. No Tower arguments did not meet the moral imperative offered by Boffo/Kettle in their press interactions. Though claiming to be pro-poor and pro-mental health care, and for that matter pro-Kettle, the No Tower Coalition could not answer how else the Kettle could meet client needs or its own service expansion goals. The crisis of poverty, however publicly understood, presented itself daily to residents of Vancouver and particularly of east end neighbourhoods, like Grandview Woodland, where most working class and poor Vancouverites reside (Ley and Dobson 2008; Murray 2011).

At my first meeting of the No Tower Coalition, which I attended the evening after the balloon raising, I learned that the Boffo/Kettle partnership was believed to have hired two public relations consultants one from each of two firms well-known in the city for working with development companies bent on having unpopular proposals make it through the public rezoning process to Council approval (Fieldnotes August 17, 2015). Evaluation of the balloon raising at the No Tower Coalition meeting the following Monday evening discussed the event itself, public messages from both sides, and the perception of members of the No Tower Coalition that the Boffo/Kettle partnership, along with their PR firms is engaging in a campaign of duplicity and manipulation, such as by asking No Tower to move from the parking lot to protect Kettle clients when really it was so that Boffo/Kettle could hold a press conference (Fieldnotes Aug 17, 2015). Nervousness and fear were commonly expressed feelings in the meeting, with one member arguing to never speak with the press again because of what she perceived to be biased coverage. Other members described their fears about the balloon raising in the

lead up to the event, not of its success or failure, but of the arrival of police, city officials, and/or angry members of the Kettle organization. Still others argued that the No Tower Coalition is being publicly misrepresented, especially by reporters, and most agreed that there were instances of duplicity, manipulation, threats, and intimidation from the other side.

My notes from that meeting show question marks next to these expressions of nervousness and fear, as well as indications that worries seemed overblown. My ongoing work with No Tower would slowly reveal to me the reasons for these feelings, including when I, too, had direct experiences of being yelled at and name-called at a public information and petition table hosted frequently at a neighbourhood park. I also experienced less confrontational but still affecting instances of having sincere and thoughtful arguments ignored or dismissed as irrelevant, wrong, or self-interested lies. These experiences, and many others with No Tower, led me to see that this nervousness and fear stemmed at least in part from the context of the neighbourhood in which many of the significant actors on all sides of this fight had an immediate and constant presence. The argument, and it was broadly carried out in many corners of the neighbourhood, was visible in the presence of the Kettle Society and their clients, of Boffo Properties and their obvious public relations efforts, and, particularly, in the flowering of No Tower lawn signs with their impossible-to-ignore red block lettering in many lawns and front windows (Figures 15 and 16).



Figure 16: No Tower sign on a balcony. Photo by author.



Figure 156: No Tower lawn signs. Photo by author.

The confrontation of opinions about the Boffo/Kettle proposal was constant and sometimes hostile, carried out by members of the parties directly involved in person and online, but also by members of the neighbourhood public who had taken sides.

Boffo/Kettle signage was defaced (Figure 17) and dozens of No Tower lawn signs were stolen later to be found piled up in the garage of a neighbourhood resident, an elderly housebound man whose rundown garage was a convenient stashing place. The level of hostility in the debate between No Tower and Boffo/Kettle supporters was revealing. At issue were divided political interests. For No Tower members, the proposed development, so much larger and denser, that is more units per area, than surrounding

buildings was a wedge issue leading to change in neighbourhood character. In the early days of the campaign, proposed building height, size, and density being “out of scale” with the surrounding neighbourhood was the most common way this threat to neighbourhood character was expressed. However, worries, expressed in press and in meetings, also revealed concern that this building would be a precedent for other densification, something that had already been threatened in the original neighbourhood plan, *Emerging Directions*, which had been rejected in 2013 as selling the neighbourhood to the highest (development industry) bidder (Suleman July 7, 2014), including by individuals later involved in the No Tower campaign. No Tower members considered the Boffo/Kettle proposal an important precedent not only in terms of what kinds of heights, densities, and development profits might be extracted from the neighbourhood, but also for how its public land would be treated and how its poverty and social services would be used as justification for profitable development.



*Figure 17: Defaced Boffo/Kettle signage.
Photo by author.*

These fears were confirmed at every turn. In September 2015, then Mayor of Vancouver, Gregor Robertson, sent out a neighbourhood-wide letter, an unusual practice in Vancouver, in which he noted that the rezoning application “for the Kettle site” had not been received, but that the City will be sure to “keep you informed on opportunities to provide your feedback” (Robertson September 2015). Of course, the “Kettle site” includes two plots of City-owned public land as well as two owned by the developer, who was not mentioned in the letter at all. In an Op-Ed in one of Vancouver’s major dailies, a former Executive Director of the Kettle Society and educator in the social service field urged Kettle Society supporters to “voice their support for the Kettle Boffo project”. In doing so, “you are telling The Kettle’s members [clients] that they are important and valued members of society who deserve access to healthy and safe surroundings, just like everyone else” (Jean April 2, 2016). This piece made nary a mention of the benefit to the developer or the future condominium buyers. In at least half a dozen blog posts, Op-Eds, and one open letter reporters, urban planners, development industry professionals, and executive directors of the city’s most prominent non-profit housing agencies argued almost exclusively in favour of the Boffo/Kettle development proposal, including many accusations of NIMBYism leveled against No Tower members. This plethora of interest in and support of the Boffo/Kettle proposal seemed to indicate that this development proposal was an important precedent not just for the neighbourhood, but for other such projects city-wide.

While letters from the Mayor and the circulation of opinions in print and online revealed that this fight was much larger than just this one site in this one neighbourhood, the most direct confrontation was experienced in the neighbourhood itself. The balloon

raising and Kettle Society protest over its location was a microcosm of the issues of land use at stake. Though the parking lot and laneway, the originally proposed site of the balloon raising, were public land at the time, the Kettle Society and Boffo Properties had already been able to appropriate their use. By calling on the vulnerability of Kettle Society clients as a reason to restrict No Tower from the site, the Boffo/Kettle partnership was able to host their press conference there instead. Thus, even before the public land sale, rezoning, and development permit were approved, neighbourhood land and longstanding neighbourhood uses were altered, making the public land at Venables and Commercial less accessible to neighbourhood residents. Similarly, the vulnerability and poverty of Kettle clients, and lack of public funding for renewed and expanded Kettle services, produced an economic, political, and moral imperative for appropriation of the whole site at Venables and Commercial for the purpose of predominantly for-profit development.

Neighbourhood Character in the No Tower Campaign

The balloon raising hosted by the No Tower coalition early in its campaign was a protest designed to draw attention to the height and bulk of the Boffo/Kettle proposed building. A mild form of protest, this whimsical stunt, flying helium filled balloons to the proposed height of the Boffo/Kettle building, garnered significant response from Boffo/Kettle, including mobilizing moral arguments to have the protest removed from the parking lot, a piece of public land. Points of view on the Boffo/Kettle development in the neighbourhood were divided and divisions were amplified as many powerful entities in the city seemed to come down for the development, including the Mayor, reporters,

developers, and prominent non-profit agency directors. While these entities tended to refer to the development as the “Kettle development” on the “Kettle site”, No Tower continued to make public the fact of the 150-200 condominiums, the majority of the development, that they believed were selling the neighbourhood’s poverty, social services, and public land in a precedent setting rezoning that would produce an out of scale building, change the character of the neighbourhood, and harm their own residency and that of others. An example is the appellation *Boffo/Kettle*. In almost all iterations outside of the No Tower group, this partnership was referred to as *Kettle/Boffo*. The No Tower Coalition insisted on putting the developer’s name first to emphasize the condominiums and profit, a convention I follow in this dissertation. That this development would change neighbourhood character, including neighbourhood land uses, was evident to members of No Tower from the start of their campaign. Even at the proposal stage, as the Boffo/Kettle partnership succeeded at commandeering the parking lot against its use by No Tower members, this development appeared to already be shifting property and land relations in the neighbourhood.

The way No Tower defined neighbourhood character changed over the length of the campaign. Originally, the architectural form of a tower and its out of scale relationship to the existing neighbourhood was particularly affronting to No Tower members. They described the building as too tall, too dense, too unlike other buildings, and as precedent for similar such neighbourhood change. Over time the potential impact of the development on land speculation, price increase, and gentrification also began to take a role in the internal conversations and public messages produced by the campaign. For example, a web posting released in February 2016 revealed a mix of messages

arguing for preservation of neighbourhood character expressed in part as rejection of the proposed bulk and height and in part as worry about land speculation and gentrification resulting from the development. The post was written as a series of questions to the public encouraging them to react to the architectural renderings of the Boffo/Kettle proposal released by the proponent team in February 2016 (and shown in Chapter 1). It read as follows:

Do you want three massive towers rising 12, 10, and 8 storeys at Venables and Commercial?
Do you want 200 expensive market condos to flood our neighbourhood?
Do you want to drive land prices in Grandview-Woodland even higher?
Do you want to put neighbourhood non-profit, rental, and other affordable housing at risk for upzoning and demolition?
Do you want even more towers like this in the future?
Do you want to see city-owned land turned over to private developers for their profit?
Do you want to exempt governments from funding needed social services like the Kettle?
Do you want to hand the future of our community over to developers?

(Retrieved from
<https://novenablestower.wordpress.com/2016/02/29/the-kettle-boffo-renderings-a-critical-view/>)

These messages show a shift from those offered to the press in August 2015 in interviews conducted in relation to the balloon raising. Whereas those messages focused on the imposing and out of scale nature of the development, as well as the underhanded tactics of the proponent team, and appropriate use of public land, new messages, while still emphasizing the affront of such a large and tall building, also described the condominiums as “expensive” with the potential to “flood our neighbourhood”. Mention is made of the development driving land prices higher and leading to upzoning and demolition of existing affordable housing. Finally, development industry control and

funding of public land, public services, and democratic processes is put into question. Many of these analyses were present in discussions among No Tower members from my initial meetings with No Tower, however, it took time for them to coalesce into the public messages produced by the group. This happened in part as a response to interactions with the public and in part as a result of exponentially rising housing costs and rental rates over 2015 and 2016, the time period of the campaign (Bramham September 1, 2015; Cooper October 15, 2015; Hampel June 22, 2016; Lee-Young December 5, 2016). Despite extensive rezoning and new development, as outlined in the previous chapter, and the promise that adding density would drive down housing costs, Vancouver residents were overwhelmed by the opposite result. Concurrent with new high-density zoning and development, land and housing costs rose more rapidly and to a greater extent than previously. As members of the public and of the No Tower Coalition experienced the impacts of this rapid rise in housing costs, and the increased threat and experience of eviction and displacement resulting from it, No Tower's changing conceptualization of neighbourhood character incorporated arguments that Grandview Woodland is a low-income neighbourhood where existing affordable housing provides valued and stable tenure to low-income households. Further, that rezoning for such a significant change from current building type will encourage speculation by developers in the hopes that they can achieve such a massive increase in development and sales potential, too. Lastly, that imposing a block large over tall building that will also gentrify will destroy the sense of the neighbourhood and displace its residents, thereby undermining the neighbourhood and its residents in multiple ways. Or, as one No Tower member put it in arguments at

the city council hearing into the Grandview Woodland neighbourhood plan: “we are a community not a commodity” (Jensen, Council Meeting July 27, 2016).

In many ways, through the first months of the campaign, the No Tower Coalition developed their understanding of the Boffo/Kettle development proposal as a wedge issue in the neighbourhood or a potential change of land use that could lead to overdevelopment, speculation, displacement, rising land value, and rising rent rates. Engaging in the campaign through protest, press interviews, and discussing their opposition with members of the public began to coalesce a sense of the relationship between land use, gentrification, and neighbourhood character. Although this took a while to express itself, No Tower members right from the start had rejected the narrow interpretation of the potential meaning of the land parcel at Venables and Commercial as expressed in the Boffo/Kettle proposal. Starting from October 2015, the group tried to publicize and promote an alternative vision for the site, which described what they saw as land use that could support neighbourhood character. The No Tower Coalition presented an alternative development proposal for the Venables and Commercial site in which the public land portion was used for a combination of expanded Kettle facility, and low-income and rental housing in a low-rise building form matching existing neighbourhood building heights with an adjacent public piazza for general use. As this proposal developed over many months, from the germ of an idea to a full-fledged proposal with building design diagrams and basic funding schema, members of the No Tower Coalition expressed suspicion and disgust at the commodification of public land, at undemocratic and non-transparent processes at city hall, and, increasingly, at the Kettle Society for

being willing to stand as the face of such bald profiteering at the expense of the neighbourhood.

In interviews I conducted with members of the No Tower Coalition in early fall 2016, after the loss at the City Council meeting described in Chapter 3, I asked each member to elaborate on the sense of neighbourhood character and current threats to it in their own words. Sitting at kitchen tables, on sofas, and in local coffee shops and restaurants, where we were sometimes interrupted by neighbours and friends, I spoke with each of the members in turn, sometimes conducting a single interview with both members of the couples involved in No Tower. Most of the members of the No Tower Coalition were white, and majority were in or nearing retirement age and had lived in the neighbourhood since the 1980s or early to mid-1990s. Homeowners outnumbered renters in the group. These characteristics both do and do not reflect the overall demographics of the neighbourhood, which is predominantly composed of white residents in the 20 to 64 age group with a majority, 63.7%, being renters. Reports note a decline in visible minority populations in the 2016 census data in East Vancouver, particularly in Grandview Woodland and Mount Pleasant, attributed in part to economic gentrification (CBC News October 28, 2017).

Somewhat heterogeneous given the neighbourhood demographic, No Tower was also internally heterogeneous demographically and politically. Younger members and renters were prominently involved in the group and there was a great diversity of attitudes and opinions regarding non-profit-run housing, neighbourhood development, government, capitalism, and community. The diversity of experience and ideology within the group meant that in interviews, different ideas about neighbourhood character

and the threats to it emerged. In one interview, conducted while sitting on a patio outside a vegetarian health foods store and Indian restaurant overlooking the neighbourhood high street, I spoke with a member who had raised her then teenage son in the neighbourhood, mostly on her own, in a low-income housing complex very near the Boffo/Kettle development site. She described the threat to the neighbourhood as

gentrification, the loss of mom and pop shops, the loss of affordability, the loss of community, and the loss of access to low-income shops....we have a lot of stores that gear toward us. But, we are seeing now stores kind of being replaced with like yoga wear stores and nail salons and you know things that I just don't need. (No Tower Member, Personal communication October 5, 2016)

She also feared loss of her housing complex as

people are buying up property all around because they know that's going to be quite the hub....as the property value goes up and the building ages and what's stopping Boffo from buying up the block, like going to offer the [agency that owns my building] a whack of money and you know so there is threat. (No Tower Member, Personal communication October 5, 2016)

For other members, the idea of the relationship between gentrification and the Boffo/Kettle development had not been as clear or immediate. Another member, then retired from a professional career and a longtime homeownership resident new to neighbourhood-based politics described that the campaign

really educated me about affordable housing and the impact development has on affordable housing. At first the campaign was about an affront geographically or physically or whatever, but then as we started to unpack things, it became very clear to me, I gave a lot more thought about the impact of gentrification and the land rush on the eclectic, affordable sort of nature of the community. This community. That really has opened my eyes to it all in so many ways. I think I knew it instinctively. But, to really understand how it happens in a much more detailed way as we did in the latter part of our campaign, that's really been eye opening for me to see you know how this is happening. (No Tower Member, Personal communication October 13, 2016)

While not every member liked or used the word gentrification in their description of the threats to neighbourhood character, most did and all agreed that money coming into the neighbourhood, from developers and new owners, and through the homogenizing overdevelopment goals of city planning, was a huge threat to what they saw as existing community relationships, values, and uniqueness. These relationships and values were described in many ways. They were described as reflected in the low-income serving shops and housing described by the first No Tower member above, in the preponderance of rental housing and still existing rooming houses mentioned by multiple interviewees, in the artists and musicians who have managed to eke out a life in the neighbourhood including members of No Tower, and in their general sense of belonging and friendship in the neighbourhood. There was an overwhelming sense of pride among interviewees in the “eclectic” and “small town” feel of the neighbourhood, as well as a sense of being welcome despite personal characteristics that had not been as welcome in other neighbourhoods, such as being a renter, an artist, a musician, a self-described “unusual” person, a single mother, and gay or lesbian. Group members described the neighbourhood as having a “village style” (No Tower Member, Personal communication October 4, 2016), “a sense of connection” (No Tower Member, Personal communication October 7, 2016), and as being tolerant of diversity and of people who live alternative lives or who are down and out.

Several of the members of No Tower, having moved to the neighbourhood from the more affluent west side of Vancouver in the late 1980s or early/mid 1990s were part of an earlier wave of gentrification. Some of these members noted changes between their arrival in the neighbourhood and now. One member who was very active in many

neighbourhood committees supporting the community center, green spaces, and schools as well as preserving neighbourhood heritage buildings noted that in the last:

...20 years I think it's [the neighbourhood's] become much more gentrified and lots more rich people are moving in. You know the planning department says that the population of this community has gone down. I think it's because of that [gentrification]. You know when, well, we're part of gentrification in a way, I think. You know we're professional people and we moved here from the west side... And when we moved in here, this house was a rental house and there were two suites, there was one upstairs and one on the main floor and the basement was unfinished. And when we moved in, we took over the whole house. We had to kick out two sets of tenants to do that. And we created a really wonderful suite in our basement. And it's an affordable suite by any current standards. But, it [the neighbourhood] isn't a super inexpensive place to live. It used to be. ...And you know the [now demolished] house that we had the funeral for across the street from us, that used to be a rooming house. I think ten single people lived in that house and it was divided up into little rooms and they shared a kitchen, I think. I think they shared bathrooms. It was a bunch of very quirky and interesting people. Mainly people who couldn't afford to live in this neighborhood now. And they were all kicked out. And I know some of them left the neighborhood and some of them struggled to find new places and did find new places. But. I really care about that as an issue. (No Tower Member, Personal communication October 7, 2016)

Another member who had similarly moved from the west side but was herself of working-class background, noted that despite gentrification, some physical aspects of the neighbourhood led to continued sense of community and shared values. She argued that:

...it [the neighbourhood] was more of a blue collar neighbourhood and not so much anymore. And, I think that's because of the push on the west side and that's why more people have moved to the East side and really put a lot of pressure on the neighbourhood. So, there's that, sort of the physicality of it. People's houses, taking care of their houses, what they can afford to do to their houses or not do to their houses, has changed. And, then when we first moved here, I think it was a bit a bit more, it was a lot of musicians, a lot of artists, probably not as many doctors and lawyers and that kind of thing because it wasn't in that

economic situation yet at that time. And, it was very I think because physically the houses are close together, it has much more of a sense of community and neighbourhood than a lot of places. So, if there's a big house and you're on a wide street from your neighbour, just physically you're not going have as much interaction with people. And, I think also a lot of people had, maybe not so much now, had similar political views just in terms of a more sharing kind of mentality. And not, so much a money mentality. So, I think for us it was that sense of neighbourhood and sense of community, or certainly for me. That was a big draw. (No Tower Member, Personal communication October 7, 2016)

As with many neighbourhood-based campaigns against new development and change to neighbourhood character, some of its members were people who themselves had contributed to a changing neighbourhood character, including the gentrification that had in part made the neighbourhood safer for large scale real estate investment (Hackworth 2002). While the interviewee above notes that there is a current “push on the west side”, meaning that prices on the historically affluent end of Vancouver have risen even further and faster than on the east side leading a new wave of professionals to Grandview Woodland and other east side neighbourhoods, many members of No Tower arrived in the neighbourhood from an earlier such push as the industrial lands of False Creek were built out, and west side neighbourhoods, such as Kitsilano, started their gentrification processes (Harris 2011; Ley 1996; Ley and Dobson 2008). By fixing up the old houses, reducing the number of rental suites, newly arrived professionals made the neighbourhood look and feel more inviting to other middle-class dwellers. Nevertheless, as Ley and Dobson (2008) reveal, gentrification in Grandview Woodland did not materialize to the same extent as in other similarly “fixed up” neighbourhoods on the west side. Enduring and relatively large proportions of social housing and industrial land, lack of beach access due to port activities, and a general attitude of tolerance toward

public disorderly and strange behavior, as well as the enforcement of such norms through acts of vandalism helped make the neighbourhood inhospitable to those who did not wish to live in such an environment. For example, the only Starbucks outlet on Commercial Drive had its large windows smashed repeatedly after opening until they were eventually replaced with an unbreakable material. This happened again in recent years on Commercial Drive to another new retail outlet (Fleming March 21, 2013). Through geographical placement, a sizable proportion of social housing, and disorganized and disruptive acts of resistance to the signs of gentrification, the neighbourhood was thus able to retain a still large proportion of renter and lower-income households (Ley and Dobson 2008).

Conducting the campaign revealed to some members of No Tower that the renter and lower-income households in the neighbourhood were under threat from such a large development. An influx of 150-200 condominium owners as well as land speculation and other such development, would have an overwhelming impact on the character of the neighbourhood that these institutional and attitudinal impediments to gentrification would not halt. For many of the No Tower members, the character of the neighbourhood was in the mix of these residents, uses, attitudes, and values while the proposed Boffo/Kettle development, and the others likely to follow, threatened to overwhelm them, bringing monotony and imposing new residents, land uses, attitudes and values that, by their large number, would not have to take account of the existing neighbourhood character. Campaign members, therefore, by creating and leading the campaign, brought to their own awareness the relationship between land use and the continuation of valued housing,

shops, services, relationships, and neighbourhood uniqueness, including in some cases their own role in paving the path toward neighbourhood change.

Further, No Tower members believed that through their opposition campaign and alternative proposal, the land at Venables and Commercial could be reincorporated into “neighbourhood character”. For the group, this meant that Kettle Society renewal and expansion could be completed using the public land portion of the Venables and Commercial site with greater contributions from public bodies. If this were to occur in the low-rise building form they proposed, not only could the gentrifying effect of the proposed development be mitigated or even halted, the whole site could be put to broad neighbourhood use through the creation of new low-income housing for Kettle clients and others being displaced from neighbourhood rental as well as through the creation of new public space in the form of the public piazza. The group also saw that the concept of “community amenity” could be reclaimed from what several members saw as its bastardized use in City of Vancouver policy. Through the proposal for the public piazza, a public non-commercial space accessible to all, unlike housing and social services, which are accessible only to tenants, service operators, and service users, the neighbourhood would get a true community amenity, and one much needed given the relative dearth of public and green space as noted in many City of Vancouver planning documents (City of Vancouver 2016a).

Displacement, Zoning, Property Relations, and Neighbourhood Character

Stabrowski (2014) argues that, as a result of a new plan and new zoning grid created for the former industrial waterfront in Greenpoint Brooklyn, displacement was

experienced even by those residents who were not pushed out of the neighbourhood by rising costs. Experiences of displacement included loss of access to common spaces in and around buildings, changing relationships with landlords who no longer needed existing tenants as new higher-paying ones became more attractive, and dissolution of the Polish neighbourhood, including Polish shops and commonplace interactions in Polish language and between people who understood themselves as co-ethnics and neighbours. As people were physically displaced, relationships within the neighbourhood changed, not just between landlord and tenant, but on the streets and with the local serving businesses and other institutions. His study points to an expanded notion of displacement, one that views it not as a single temporal and spatial experience at the point of physical relocation, but also as an emotional and even embodied experience. In this understanding, displacement is “the lived experience of ongoing loss” including loss of the “security, agency, and freedom to ‘make place’” (2014:796). The sense of loss or of threat was palpable in the interviews with No Tower members who saw in the Boffo/Kettle proposal the potential for wholesale change of the culture of the neighbourhood in addition to loss of housing. For them, this change trumped any positive benefit from the new low-income housing and expanded Kettle facility.

The impacts of gentrification-induced displacement are not only experienced by those physically displaced or at the time of their displacement, but as a sense of ongoing loss, including of the loss of security and agency within the larger space of home. Such an analysis points to an alternative understanding of property relations within a neighbourhood. While neighbourhood properties, as in many Western urban environments, are mostly private properties (Bomley 2004), the collection of those

private properties, inhabited as they are by people with a range of relationships to them, shape a larger culture. As is revealed in the literature and in the interview excerpts above, neighbourhoods, such as Greenpoint or Grandview Woodland are inhabited not just in the individual dwelling units, but in the streets and sidewalks, parks, community centers, schools, shops and services, and in the yards and other connecting and dividing spaces and relationships between dwelling units (Blomley 2016; Checker 2011; Davidson 2009). Grandview Woodland is also a renter-predominant neighbourhood where renters inhabit apartment buildings, condominium units, basement suites, social housing buildings, multi-suite houses, rooming houses, housing cooperatives, and in shared spaces in undivided houses. The range of habitation styles and arrangements, many non-formalized given building codes and occupancy regulations, have permitted much diversity in habitation type and style where people have been able to live cheaply, communally, or in other non-standard ways.

As Blomley (2004) argues, property is not settled. It is open to overlapping and conflicting possibilities, various moral interpretations, prevailing assumptions and alternative claims (2004:23). Private property relations are not just private property relations and public property does not reside only with organized government. They are both community relations because their disposition impacts the community at large. Zoning is the most commonly used means for determining the disposition of land in Western urban environments (Whittemore 2017). It is a form of land use control that sets out the type of land use, generally commercial, industrial and/or residential, and the type of building, such as how tall and how large relative to the piece of land on which it is built. Zoning, like tax policy, is a byzantine and highly technical and localized realm of

governance, which nevertheless directly impacts the structure of neighbourhoods, particularly the value and uses of land, the rate and type of land use change, and, therefore, the ability of existing and new residents to hold or gain tenure and create and sustain neighbourhood character. As Bethany Li of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund in New York City writes about contending with new zoning approved for Chinatown and Lower East Side Manhattan:

At first glance, zoning seems too mundane and technical an aspect of city governance to be worth understanding. Changing streets from an R6 zone to an R7A zone or imposing a commercial overlay or a manufacturing district often appear so insignificant that people living in the community may never realize any changes have occurred. Yet the impact of these changes is very real. Zoning controls neighborhoods' physical boundaries, determines the height and bulk of buildings, and establishes which areas contain residential, commercial, or manufacturing uses. Zoning therefore dictates where market-rate development will or will not flourish. (Li 2010:92)

Zoning encourages us to focus on the property owner, that is how certain kinds of land uses impact the value of land the owner can expect in the market by setting guidelines for how it can be used. Zoning is in a sense a means of curbing a private owner's right in property; by determining limits to the disposition of private property, zoning can fetter property rights and property's market value. However, as Blomley (2004) argues, the very institution of private property itself depends on the collective assent to and guarantee of private property rights (2004:13). The ownership model presumes clarity and determinacy in the definition of property and tells us which relationships should be valued as such and which not; the ownership model is "deemed valuable, in part, because of its guarantee of secure and uncontested relations with others with respect to the use and disposition of things" (Blomley 2004:14). However, property is ontologically and political diverse and consequently unsettled; law recognizes diverse

land tenure arrangements outside individual ownership, for example leases, cooperatives, land trusts, collective land title, and public housing, among many others. Property may also be unsettled if the unextinguished rights of Indigenous nations are recognized as superseding or changing property relations. Rarely, however, does any legal recognition of property rights extend to a community that does not have an ownership stake or other title in land. A community interest does not have legal standing and is generally not recognized as a property right, but rather as “only sentiment” (Blomley 2004:11).

Zoning changes how private (and public) owners can dispose of land and therefore the rights of property they can exercise as well as the relations of property within neighbourhoods. Zoning “dictates where market-rate development will or will not flourish” (Li 2010). In doing so, it can lead to substantial changes in the built structure of a neighbourhood, such as was experienced in Greenpoint, Brooklyn (Stabrowski 2014) and in many other cities (Davidson and Lees 2004; Kern 2010; Rose 2010; Wyly and Hammel 2001). These changes result in physical displacement or the “out-migration of individuals from a particular urban space” (Davidson 2009:225). However, as both Stabrowski (2014) and Davidson (2009) argue, the staying put of other residents should not be understood as evidence that displacement is not occurring. Displacement should instead be understood to include changes to how place is constructed, practiced, and inscribed (Davidson 2009:226). In the case of Vancouver neighbourhoods, neighbourhood planning and rezoning, including CAC-involved development, restructure not just the individual property uses and buildings, but how residents understand and experience the place in which they live. Urban places, like neighbourhoods, are

collections of social relations that depend on certain kinds of buildings and infrastructures because these are central to the costs and kinds of living arrangements possible.

In urban environments, and particularly neighbourhoods with a long history of working-class tenure and tenure of residents of colour and Indigenous residents, proposals and impositions of extreme high-density zoning are seen as leading to race and class exclusions and segregation. As Angotti (2017) argues, past forms of exclusionary urban development have created race and class segregated neighbourhoods. As Grandinetti (2017) argues, in settler colonial states, cities are often constructed in ways that privilege settlers and settler cultural values, rendering only certain, often marginal spaces, as Indigenous. These segregated and marginalized spaces are constantly awaiting renewal through reinvestment by political and economic elites who share an interest in driving ever more profitable urban land development (Molotch 1976). They were disproportionately impacted by urban renewal schemes and by welfare state disinvestment. They are now targeted disproportionately for new, often upscale, development through new zoning measures and urban planning initiatives. Thus, in the central city, new high-density zoning imposed on existing low-income neighbourhoods, neighbourhoods of colour, and on neighbourhoods with higher proportions of Indigenous residents is reproducing displacement by re-segregating the neighbourhoods as wealthier and whiter spaces (Angotti 2017:12). In Grandview Woodland, part of what was feared by No Tower members, was a standardization of habitation arrangements and increase in their price as the current structures are either demolished to accommodate new condominium construction or refurbished to accommodate new higher paying renters and/or owner-occupiers. This standardization of habitation arrangements, and their

increased prices, will also impact other neighbourhood relationships as residents, shops, and services are pushed out, brought in, and the uses of public spaces change. While Boffo/Kettle proposed to add 30 low-income housing units, which would to some extent continue the existing mix of social and market housing in the neighbourhood, the 150-200 condominiums, added centrally within the neighbourhood in a predominantly low-income rental area, would have had an overwhelming homogenizing, displacement, and neighbourhood-character-changing impact on all residents.

Gentrification Reinforced by Public Disinvestment in Grandview Woodland

Grandview Woodland, a working class neighbourhood since its inception (King 2011; Murray 2011), has been predicted to gentrify since the 1970s, but did not experience significant visible impact until the late 2000s (Ley and Dobson 2008). Yet, since that time and even before it when the in-migration of wealthier and whiter residents began, the neighbourhood has changed, so that its character is lived differently by different groups of people in different neighbourhood spaces. While No Tower increasingly recognized the class effects of new high-density development over time, they did not recognize the uneven impacts on the basis of race and Indigeneity, which never entered campaign discourse. Further, while many different residents, including residents of colour and Indigenous residents, supported the campaign, evidenced by interactions across the neighbourhood, the spaces and forms of neighbourhood character imagined and lived by No Tower members were not shared by all in the neighbourhood.

Walking down Commercial Drive, the high street in Grandview Woodland, an observer can easily notice marijuana dispensaries, cheque cashing outlets, and pawn

shops, as well as Persian, Polish, Italian, and Chinese-owned grocers, hardware stores, delis, and repair shops, and, more recently and in growing proportion, coffee shops, high-end clothing stores, and restaurants that command long line ups for brunch, cocktails, and weekend dinners. Usurious retail sits next to longstanding and often well-known businesses that serve many daily life needs as well as high-end retail outlets that increasingly draw interest from across the city. These different retail spaces are occupied and used by different groups of people in the neighbourhood. Those who can afford to while away free time in coffee shops and restaurants do so, while those who cannot may engage in family picnics, Indigenous drumming, and impromptu markets for new and used items in the parks or along the busy sidewalks, as well as gather with friends and family in the remaining public and private spaces that invite working class patronage or reflect cultural values and linguistic diversity, such as the few remaining diners, the library, and the Britannia Community Center.

Changing class and racial retail and housing dynamics narrow the spaces in which people who cannot participate in the new forms of consumption and habitation or who seek alternative non-white, non-Anglo, and Indigenous expressions and experiences of neighbourhood can participate. The No Tower Coalition was a predominantly white group that reflected neither the predominant age nor income and housing tenure demographics of the neighbourhood. This remained true throughout the group's organizing efforts even though the campaign engaged with and received support from a diverse group of neighbourhood residents as evidenced in petition signatures and conversation resulting from tabling activities. When, in June 2016, around the time of the release of the new neighbourhood plan, Britannia Secondary School, located on the

Britannia Community Center site, was threatened with closure due to the Vancouver School Board's (VSB) budget shortfall, the group that convened to protest this closure was by contrast much more reflective of neighbourhood demographics. Seventy attendees at a meeting at the Britannia Community Center came to express their concern about the threatened school closure. Unlike many neighbourhood spaces that are predominantly white, about a third of the attendees of this meeting were people of colour including six attendees who introduced themselves as Indigenous or members of First Nations. Attendees were mostly mothers, though neighbourhood activists without children in the school system were also present, including members of No Tower. Overall, the ages of attendees ranged from teenagers concerned for their own school to people in their sixties and seventies including some who described that they were raising their grandchildren. Altogether, 12 schools had been threatened with closure, 11 on the east side of Vancouver. Concern about Britannia Secondary School was a prominent tie among attendees. However, there was a feeling around the table that all schools contribute to community and that as group, people did not want to argue for one school to be saved and another closed but rather to present a "united front" to keep all schools open and operating.

The VSB and provincial government, under whose behest the VSB administers Vancouver's schools, gave a budget shortfall as the reason for school closure. Factors that were used to decide whether to list schools on the endangered list included the physical condition of the buildings and the level of enrollment, with enrollment at 95% of capacity being stated as an optimal figure (Judd and Baker June 20, 2016). News reports, statements at public meetings, and opinion pieces then and more recently noted that east

side schools in “single family neighbourhoods” were under-enrolled, implying that lack of housing density and expense of housing had led to fewer children in the neighbourhood and lower school enrollment (Glover August 12, 2016; Sherlock November 23, 2018). Other reports noted that while the east side had more children, its schools were larger and fewer children attended them (Sherlock July 21, 2016). However, in the public meeting called hastily in the neighbourhood in July 2016, a very different sense of the reasons for “low enrollment” came forward from residents.

Rather than accept the notion that attendance had declined as a result of diminished local population, attendees argued that information about school attendance provided by the Ministry of Education was incomplete. Other facts to consider, they argued, included how much money goes from the public system into the private system due to the per capita education funding system in the province that is extended to students in private schools. One recent Britannia graduate, a young Asian man, argued that it was not just the money and attendance in private schools, but that east side kids were escaping impoverished public services resulting from cuts to education in their own neighbourhoods by attending more affluent and resourced west side schools. One white woman argued west side schools are “70% out of catchment” meaning 70% of enrollment is of students not from the local school area. She argued that as soon as provincial education policy changed to allow “school choice”, Britannia Secondary School “bled students”. Attendees wanted to know how many people are being pushed out of the city by real estate values and being forced to sell or move by developers. One older white woman asked is it more valuable to have investment and development or to have a community “that functions as a community”. A First Nations woman argued that schools

should be a place where First Nations kids are welcomed and can “thrive”, and several other attendees agreed that Britannia was a particularly important place for Indigenous students’ sense of belonging, attachment to, and success in school due to specialized programs and a large enrollment of Indigenous students, approximately one third of all students at the high school, the largest grouping of Indigenous students in the city (Hyslop June 24, 2016). Another woman noted that there is a global refugee crisis and “East Van is the welcome center”, referring to a new refugee-focused housing and welcome center built on the outskirts of the neighbourhood, but that we “aren’t making space in our schools and housing for refugees”. One man argued that school closures indicate that low-income and Indigenous kids and kids of colour, along with their families, are “not welcome in Vancouver”. They are being pushed out to Surrey, an eastern suburb, where everything is much more spread out and hard to access and classes are already “overfull”.

Similar types of discussions happened in community meetings held around the same time in other venues on the topic of both school closures and Grandview Woodland’s role in answering the refugee crisis, then frequently in the news, where residents drew connections between disinvestment from public institutions and services, changing land use patterns, the rising cost of living in the neighbourhood, and threatened sense of belonging and capacity to participate in the neighbourhood for working class and Indigenous residents and residents of colour. In Grandview Woodland, all aspects of neighbourhood life were impacted by a hot real estate market, planning, and threatened zoning change and development.

The fight to retain Britannia Secondary, ultimately if temporarily won, makes clear that the issues at stake in gentrification extend far outside the neighbourhood to the social, political, and economic institutions of the city and the province. Perceived and actual better educational opportunities in west side schools made a mockery of the concept of “school choice” for east side students who were divided between those who could afford the time and bus fare to travel across the city daily and those who either could not afford it or did not desire it for other reasons of community connection, such as Indigenous student specific programs at Britannia. School closures were tied to enrollment density while the race and class inequalities that shaped school enrollment were ignored. Similarly, pro-development arguments explored in Chapter 4 also used the abandonment of working class neighbourhoods and neighbourhoods with a significant percentage of residents of colour, and the institutions that are most accessible to residents in these neighbourhoods, as evidence of the need for neighbourhood renewal through high-density development. In a sense, the concept of “low school enrollment” acted as another discourse of obsolescence, treating highly valued neighbourhood-located public institutions as decayed or irrelevant. On the surface, it may appear race and class neutral, but as discussions reported above indicate, it is not. Gentrification and “everyday displacement” include not only a loss of the familiar, but the slow whittling down of the potential for participation in neighbourhood-located institutions based on class and race.

For Indigenous students, approximately one third of the enrollment at Britannia Secondary School, the highest proportion of Indigenous students anywhere in the city (Hyslop June 24, 2016), the threat to their school was reported as threatening their access to education. The Indigenous-specific programs at Britannia are credited with higher

school retention and graduation rates and a sense of belonging and opportunity at school for Indigenous students and their parents (Hyslop June 24, 2016; January 21, 2019). Britannia is central to the urban neighbourhoods with the highest proportion of Indigenous residency, including the Downtown Eastside, Strathcona, Hastings Sunrise, and Grandview Woodland. Other students travel from outside the school's catchment area or district to attend programs and students also benefit from the location of the school on the community center site where many Indigenous students and families spend time and which is also near the Urban Native Youth Association, the Aboriginal Friendship Centre, and the Aboriginal Mother Centre, three non-profit Indigenous-serving organizations. More than ten Indigenous-specific social housing buildings are in Grandview Woodland, in addition to many other social housing and inexpensive rental buildings with Indigenous tenants. The preponderance of fixed low-cost housing for Indigenous households is part of how Indigenous residents have sustained their tenure in the neighbourhood, which nevertheless has declined somewhat from 10% in the early 2000s to a reported 8.1% in the latest neighbourhood plan documents (City of Vancouver 2016b; Ley and Dobson 2008).

For Indigenous people, the threats to secure tenure, access to education, and creation of community in Grandview Woodland are faced in an overall context of extreme discrimination. Indigenous people face inequitably low funding in education and health and inequitable treatment in many public programs, particularly child welfare (McCartney 2016). Housing overcrowding on reservations, generally in more remote areas of the country, but also located on the borders of the City of Vancouver, is one of many issues pushing people from reservations into urban areas (McCartney 2016). As

Walker (2006) notes, recent statistics from Canada and Australia show, that “indigenous households in urban centres are much more likely than non-indigenous households to live in rental housing and in homes that are crowded or in need of major repair” (2006:2345). Further, Indigenous homelessness in Canadian cities ranges from 20% to 50% of the overall homeless population, figures completely disproportionate to the size of the Indigenous population in Canada (Walker 2006). Working-class and poor residents and residents of colour depend on each other in neighbourhood spaces, and even more so Indigenous residents who have often been forced off reserves, into precarious situations, an extreme minority population in their home territories with access to only minimal public resources.

The lived experience of displacement described by activists within No Tower, and indeed by all activists I spoke with over the course of my research, is part of an ongoing process of displacement that extends back into the history of the establishment of neighbourhoods and cities as settler rather than Indigenous spaces. This ongoing process of displacement has impacted Indigenous tenure in cities for Indigenous people whose claim is on the urban land in question and therefore face displacement within their home territories, as well as those who have been displaced from other home territories into urban centers, or who have been denied official recognition as Indigenous people. For many Indigenous residents in urban centres, they will never have a claim to urban land even if such claims are recognized as they either do not have ancestral ties to the land or have been denied Indigenous status. Thus, for many Indigenous residents, claims to the right to the city may more likely be expressed as a claim to place or to the capacity to make place. Yet, as Blomley (2004) argues, there are still many impediments to

recognizing a community right to land as a result of use and the meanings created therefrom. Further, the push on Indigenous residents in Grandview Woodland has important implications given the constant pressure on Indigenous tenure in the city. As numerous theorists of settler colonialism in multiple urban centres in Canada, the U.S., and Australia note, Indigenous and urban are often treated as opposite categories, an incoherent construction given that Indigenous people are seen as non-urban, non-modern, and/or annihilated (Lawrence 2004; Stanger Ross 2008). Yet, as Lawrence (2004) argues, cities are not only important sites of Indigenous tenure, but of Indigenous resistance to settler colonial projects. However, being able to articulate such resistance requires proximity to each other within the city, to institutions that can support meeting as well as cultural and political production, and to access within the larger society where that is desired. When Britannia Secondary was threatened with closure and the Indigenous students, fully one third of the school's enrollment were threatened with dispersal, this had the potential to initiate a wider dispersal of the associational community founded on public investment and longstanding land uses, including institutions such as the high school, community centre, Friendship Centre, Urban Native Youth Association, and the Aboriginal Mother Centre.

As over fifty percent of Indigenous people in Canada now live in cities, many far from their home territories, claims on rights to the city may be made both on the basis of land title and on the basis of community. Yet, there are few mechanisms in Canadian law or in the existing arrangement of Indigenous-settler relations to accommodate such claims. In Vancouver, and many other Canadian cities, Indigenous residents have struggled to make place in cities given dominant settler colonial cultural and property

forms (Blomley 2004; Grandinetti 2017). While the social housing in which many Indigenous households in Grandview Woodland reside may be saved from demolition, the neighbourhood around them and their ability to influence it and participate in it may be fundamentally altered, especially when public disinvestment combined with real estate investment. This is likely to act as a continuation of now centuries of displacement through settler colonial processes. As discussed above, displacement is not only experienced by those who are physically removed from home and neighbourhood, but also as the loss of the security and agency to make place. In Grandview Woodland, Indigenous residents have succeeded in creating and sustaining multiple institutions, venues, and instances of place making through which they experience greater security of tenure, greater access to public institutions, and greater and more opportunities for practice of valued cultural, linguistic, and political expression. Their success and their capacity to make and claim space is threatened as the neighbourhood gentrifies, particularly in conditions of disinvestment from public institutions and services.

Neighbourhood Character in the Joyce Station and Chinatown Organizing

The Joyce Area Residents' Association (JARA) formed in late 2015, galvanized by the impending release of a preferred option for rezoning around the Joyce transit station, to mobilize a more widespread community response and ensure protection of the neighbourhood. On February 3rd, 2016, the City of Vancouver held an open house at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, about 2 blocks south of Joyce Station to present rezoning options. JARA members organized residents to attend as a group and voice their skepticism and criticism of the City's proposals, particularly the threat of

displacement that so much new development would bring to the area. Arriving at Collingwood Neighbourhood House just before 5pm, I proceeded to the JARA meeting first. It was in a room just across the hall on the main floor of the Neighbourhood House from the city meeting. The room normally housed a daycare or preschool activity room. Stacked all around the room were child-sized plastic chairs and tables, several dozen of which were also arranged theater style for attendees. Surrounding us were the toys of the daycare: a play kitchen, colourful posters, and bins containing blocks and other toys. There were also two long couches on which people sat and chatted waiting for events to begin. On the short kid-friendly tables by the door and the play kitchen were poster board and felt pen signs with slogans and protest messages in English and Chinese. Examples of messages included: “~~Transit Oriented Development~~ Transit Induced Displacement” and “Affordable Housing Now”. I sat-crouched on a preschool sized chair waiting as the room began to fill with participants and JARA members. Arriving were a diverse group of people, mostly young in their twenties and thirties along with some senior citizens, many residents of Joyce Collingwood mostly Asian and white, some recognizable activists from other neighbourhood organizations, and small business owners from the area. Two news outlets were also there with reporters and camera crew.

Once everyone had gathered, the meeting began with one of the lead organizers, an Asian woman in her late twenties, introducing JARA and the event. She described the history of JARA arising from the city’s announcement of their new zoning plans for Joyce. While planning had been ongoing for several years, she explained, many people in the neighbourhood had only just recently found out. Further, the city notices had mostly been in English, meaning inaccessible to many neighbourhood residents, of whom

a large portion speak primarily Mandarin, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Hindi, Korean, Tagalog, and Spanish¹⁷. This development, she argued, will displace low-income, immigrant families and the businesses that serve them. Several other people also got up to speak starting with a middle-aged immigrant man from Iran who owns a local pizzeria. Although his business was located right where the new zoning and development would occur, he said he was not officially notified of the City's plans. He argued that many people would be affected if his business was forced to close, including the ten families employed there. An Asian man in his twenties got up to speak next. He lived with his family in a rented home near the station. He was worried that zoning changes at the station would lead to demolition of the detached homes running adjacent along the Western and Northern sides. His family rented a suite in one of these houses. They have had to move six times in the last 10 years and had just received notice that they would have to move again due to neighbourhood changes and the fact that the landlord wanted to take back control of the home. Another one of the JARA organizers read a letter from a local homeowner who lived with his elderly grandmother. He was very concerned about disrupting the neighbourhood, where his family had lived since the 1960s and about having to move such an elderly woman. His house was right in the zone the city wanted to change to high density. While they would not be forced to sell the house, there would likely be enormous pressure to do so, especially if their land was desired for assembly with other lots or if nearby lots were assembled and their property was surrounded first by construction and then by tall buildings blocking out sunlight. At

¹⁷ Census data for the larger census area reveal that for 56% of residents, a language other than English or French is their mother tongue and that approximately 35% of residents speak a language other than English or French in the home (Statistics Canada, Census 2016).

other open houses in neighbourhoods already under redevelopment, I heard multiple stories of harassment by real estate agents repeatedly coming to the door early in the morning and late at night, asking to purchase homes, and threatening loss of property value and quality of life when owners refused (Fieldnotes September 23, 2015).

Once the short speeches about the impacts of upzoning and development on residents and businesses were done, we were encouraged to choose one of the signs on poster board to suspend around our necks and wear into the City-hosted meeting. Going into the city open house was initially tough. I stood out like a sore thumb with my sign and, once in the other room, we all parted ways, so I was left alone to deal with my own conflicted feelings of wearing a confrontational opinion in an otherwise staid and polite venue. Other attendees who had not been in the JARA meeting as well as city staff looked over at the sign. Some of them seemed uncomfortable. Some smiled. Touring the room, I passed by the usual City-produced poster boards on easels. These were arranged in a semi-circle along one side of the room. The rest of the room was taken up with tables and chairs at which attendees sat to fill out forms requesting comments on the proposed changes.

I made my way to the easel containing the poster board listing the affordable housing possibilities that might result from zoning changes near the Station. Once there, I ended up in conversation with a City of Vancouver planner, an early thirties white man, in the Housing Department and two late-twenties or early-thirties Asian women, residents in the neighbourhood. The city planner seemed quite nervous, rubbing his hands together frequently and sweating a little as we asked him various questions about CACs, the amount of affordable housing that will be built, the disparity in costs between the market

housing and the affordable housing, the potential for displacement of existing residents, and the rental housing replacement policies of the City. In response to our questions, he only offered pat answers, mostly that he supports social and affordable housing and that he would like to see more of it in Vancouver. He told us that we should put all our comments on the comment sheets provided.

Realizing nothing could be accomplished in this conversation, the group dispersed, and I came across one of the members of JARA, a late-twenties white woman. She was in conversation with a middle-aged Asian man who is also a resident of the neighbourhood, and two professionally dressed people, a South Asian man and a white woman both in their early thirties. The two in professional dress were with Westbank, the developer that drove the largest upzoning on one corner near the transit station. The JARA member was trying to ascertain information about how much money Westbank would pay as a community amenity contribution if the upzoning was approved. Arguing that this amount could not be known because it was still under negotiation, the male Westbank staff member stated that if the community asks for the community amenity contributions to be spent on affordable housing, then that's what will happen. He added that the height and density being proposed at the open house was really the City's idea because the City wants to achieve more CACs. He argued that the rezoning and development in the 1980s resulted in fabulous public amenities, like the neighbourhood house in which the open house was held, and this could surely be repeated in this round. I pointed out that the neighbourhood house was only built as a result of vociferous community organizing at that time. He shrugged and smiled saying he didn't know that, but not reflecting further on any of his previous glib encouragements. After a few more

similarly fruitless stonewalling conversations, I thanked the organizers for their efforts, left my sign, and headed back to the Skytrain station to catch the train home.

Over the course of JARA's campaign, which lasted until September 2016 when City Council adopted the new plan and zoning for the area adjacent to Joyce Skytrain Station, their description of the threat of such upzoning, development, and planning activity shifted as they organized within the neighbourhood and met with city staff, non-profit agencies, and other activists in other neighbourhoods. From their website, early statements of concern argued that the neighbourhood was under threat from the upzoning that would lead to market-rate condominium development, particularly the three condominium towers nearest the station. They argued that: the neighbourhood would become unaffordable and retailers and residents would be displaced; there were no concrete plans for affordable housing or meaningful amenities; the consultation process was inaccessible, especially that there were not enough language services for all residents to participate in the open houses; and that gentrification was already displacing residents (joyceareara.wordpress.com Accessed February 2017).

Through February and March 2016, the messages and activities of JARA expanded to reflect deeper understanding of the conditions impacting their neighbourhood, the threats posed, and their own power in the process unfolding at the behest of the City of Vancouver and a major developer. Finding that consultation processes and documents did not reach many residents since they were only held or printed in English, JARA sought volunteers speaking Mandarin, Cantonese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Punjabi, Hindi, Korean, and Spanish to conduct door to door surveys of all the detached homes that were to be upzoned. They reached 93 out of the 161 homes

affected. They also held their own community dialogues in which non-profit proponents of the upzoning and development plans along with residents met to discuss their concerns and compile these into statements and questions for city staff and Council. This information gathering and organizing work led JARA to call on the City to slow down the approval process for the upzoning, noting that many pressing concerns were not being addressed. They also noted that while affordable housing was promised, no clear plans for this had been made and the provincial housing authority was indicating that they were unaware of the request for funding for new affordable housing in the area. Further, the City of Vancouver “does not have a clear definition of what affordable is” (joyceareara.wordpress.com) and therefore promises could be empty rhetoric. And, they saw that while the developments would be large, the amenities they would fund would be small. Further, they were mostly allocated to pedestrian right of way improvements, rather than to expanded recreational and public facilities sought by residents. Finally, even though for many neighbourhood residents English was an additional language, proper translation and interpretation services were continuously refused at City-held meetings and in city documents.

Despite this diligent, resourceful, vital information gathering and organizing, including the support of many residents, JARA failed in opposing the new plan. Failure is the most common outcome of resident campaigns opposing zoning changes in Vancouver whether in neighbourhood plans, small site rezonings, or single site rezonings. Members of JARA argued that failure in this case had to do with the political framework that privileged high density development around transit and the desires of real estate developers. Coupled to a short approval timeline, English-predominant City-distributed

information, and what JARA members described as disrespectful treatment at Council, it was difficult to organize widespread neighbourhood resistance large enough to stop the upzoning (joyceareara.wordpress.com Accessed February 2017). Reflecting in frustration on the Council decision, one organizer asked

What are the negative impacts? They can't tell us because they have refused to provide an impact assessment. If this was a pipeline review, the whole process would be illegal, and there are parallels to be drawn. We have been stone-walled, but we do know we have to continue to resist to protect our neighbourhood and get ready to support people through difficult transitions.
(joyceareara.wordpress.com Accessed February 2017)

While the City's plan for upzoning around the Skytrain station advertised the possibility of up to 650 new non-market housing units, JARA members' own reading of the plan and their experience of trying to achieve verifiable commitments to housing affordability led them to discount that affordable housing would be achieved. As in Grandview Woodland, they focused instead on the cost to the neighbourhood of the upzoning, that while over a relatively small portion of the neighbourhood, would have long and deep effects immediately around the station and throughout the area, driving land prices and rents higher, and pushing out the largely working class and immigrant residents of colour. JARA's opposition took many different forms, from neighbourhood surveys, to hosting community meetings, to pressuring the City for adequate language interpretation and translation services, among others, but became focused on trying to stop approval of the upzoning itself.

Their version of neighbourhood character built over time as they organized to try to create some authority for neighbourhood residents to direct the planning process and have their concerns meaningfully included in the plan. In an April 2016 post on their

website, the neighbourhood was described as a “a working-class, multi-racial, and intergenerational community with affordable housing, small businesses, community spaces, and services that reflect the diverse needs and interests of local residents” (joyceareara.wordpress.com Accessed February 2017). In an interview with a group member following the passing of the new plan, when the group felt defeated and had temporarily disbanded, the threat from zoning changes was described as the “gentrifying of the neighbourhood” that would undermine the “unique character and make up of our neighbourhood”, namely that it’s a

multi-generational, working class neighbourhood with immigrant families, seniors, and youth, so just the diversity and the uniqueness that we felt that when you bring in development, there's, it narrows down the group of people that are eligible or have the opportunity to afford to live in newer places. ...Local businesses being protected because a lot of displacement is needed for the development that they're proposing. (Neighbourhood Activist, Personal communication November 18, 2016)

In conversation with JARA members, and for that matter with Chinatown organizers, the discussion of preserving neighbourhood character, while it included rejecting high-density redevelopment of detached homes, did not focus only on the height and density of buildings. Rather, rejection of added height and density was rejection of private, for-profit condominiums and the impact of demolition, eviction, and the arrival of new wealthier and whiter residents on the existing community of residents. In both Joyce Station and Chinatown, residents depend on the relatively low cost of housing available in their neighbourhoods, the existing culturally and linguistically meaningful shops and services, and the public institutions as well as informal gathering places for creation of community. For many residents even the food shops that were available in

their local area were important as they acted as “cultural food hubs” (Neighbourhood Activist, Personal Communication, November 18, 2016) supported by the surrounding residency of shoppers who were in turn supported by the relative affordability of the housing units and the flexibility of having so many detached homes with room for large multi-generational households and rental units in an urban setting.

If the JARA organizers pointed out that working-class, multi-racial, and multi-generational neighbourhoods are not served when existing relationships between residents, shops, services, and land use are disrupted, the organizers in Chinatown made clear that the creation of such neighbourhoods and the pressure currently being exerted on them are different facets of the same forces of race and class exclusion. Though the Chinatown group originally formed to oppose Beedie Living’s mixed condominium and social housing proposal, they expanded their mission over time to propose an alternative vision for the future of Chinatown, *The People’s Vision for Chinatown*, which proposes “not just buildings and parks, but also ways to develop democratic decision-making and the leadership capacity of community members” (chinatownaction.org Accessed February 2017). Developed over two years of surveys and discussions in the neighbourhoods, *The People’s Vision* argues that “Chinatown remains the centre of a predominantly working-class Chinese community that extends across Vancouver and even the province” (chinatownaction.org Accessed February 2017). Further, the neighbourhood is threatened by development interests and property value increases, which is likely to displace both residents of Chinatown and nearby residents of Oppenheimer and Strathcona, two other residential sub-areas within the low-income

Downtown East Side, who depend on Chinatown services and businesses for their needs.

Less than a century ago:

Chinatown was an internal colony. Chinese workers laboured in mines and on the railroads, and then in sawmills, canneries, laundries, groceries, restaurants, and domestic service, even while they were subjected to legislated discrimination and physical violence from white settlers. From the 1800s through the 20th century, municipal, provincial, and federal governments disqualified Chinese residents from voting in elections; prohibited new immigration from China; restricted Chinese workers and businesses; and segregated Chinese residents into undesirable locations, including Vancouver Chinatown. Chinese residents endured by building housing, schools, businesses, and community associations together in Chinatown.

Today the land in Chinatown is increasingly valuable to investors and developers. ...The location of the neighbourhood is now extremely desirable, but the working-class community cannot afford the rent increases. Existing government policies are only worsening socioeconomic inequality. Zoning and tax policies value real estate speculation and development profit more than the community members who pay rent and earn wages; heritage policies are focused on protecting only cultural objects, not the people in the community. (chinatownaction.org Accessed February 2017)

Similar to Grandview Woodland and Joyce Station, new high-density condominium development, and the rezoning and CAC negotiations that would accompany it, would overwhelm the existing neighbourhood. However, in this case, neighbourhood character is not only tied to the attitudes and values that are preferred by residents, but to the histories of racial and class segregation that are at the foundation of the development of many east side neighbourhoods in Vancouver and especially to the development of Chinatown (Anderson 1987). These organizers directly argued that Chinatown was a community where arrangements of housing, shops, services, and neighbourhood activities sustained people otherwise placed at the margins of society, including those who lived in the neighbourhood and those who travelled to it to

participate in linguistically and culturally meaningful community. One Chinatown organizer I interviewed, a working-class Asian woman originally from Latin America with more than a decade of organizing against racial, class, and gender injustice in Vancouver told me that she recognized what was happening to Chinatown in Vancouver as part of a reality of Chinatowns across North America. She noted that the experience of Chinatowns and other similar working-class communities of immigrants and people of colour with development pressure is different from other neighbourhoods experiencing development pressure. This is because

the risk that Chinatown is facing is obviously the loss of not only the history but the destruction of a community and the history of it. I think that's what's unique about Chinatown. It was created out of communities of colour, Chinese people who were marginalized and segregated and extremely poor. And they had nowhere to go. And you know they settled in that area of Vancouver because it was a ghetto. And it was also you know by the mills and it was convenient for them to transit in and out of the city and to work in other parts of BC. So, it was created out of survival and solidarity and mutual aid. And that's how it evolved. You know in the last couple of decades I think the development process you know it's not specifically targeting Chinatown because it wants to destroy that history. It's because you know it's a process that happens inevitably, I think, under capitalism. And it's a way of accumulating more wealth and property by the richest people in our society. It's a systemic problem. And it's affecting Chinatown I think more so than other communities because of the people who live there, many of whom you know face the discrimination and the racism when they first arrived in Vancouver many decades ago during the creation of Chinatown and continue to experience that in new forms. So, I think that's where the intensification of the racism is felt. Generations of people who fought so hard to live and challenge the racism and to create a community where they could be respected and feel comfortable and are now being attacked again. And that's a struggle that working-class people continually face all the time because they're always at the most risk of losing anything that they ever gain. So, I think that's the heart of the struggle for me. (Neighbourhood Activist, Personal communication December 13, 2015)

While organizing in Grandview Woodland, especially in the latter half, also took account of the class impacts of development, most group members were not at risk of being pushed out of the neighbourhood. They were at risk of having the neighbourhood become a place not recognizable to them, as were organizers around Joyce Station and Chinatown. By contrast, for members of JARA and the Chinatown Action Group, as well as those residents who opposed the threatened closure of Britannia Secondary, the class and race impacts of neighbourhood plans, rezoning, demolition, and development were fundamental to their campaigns for preservation of neighbourhood character. The threat of displacement, including physical and “everyday” displacement, was a key part of their definition of threat. Organizers in these formations recognized that the character of their neighbourhoods arose from the forces of race and class exclusion that would be exacerbated by new high-density residential development that would ultimately disperse value community and re-segregate these spaces as wealthier and whiter.

Neighbourhoods as a Larger Space of Home

Neighbourhoods are inhabited through their histories, which have shaped how people are included and excluded, such as in the case in Greenpoint where the initial waves of Polish immigration set the path for future waves, but also pushed out Latino/a households (Stabrowski 2014). This is also the case in Downtown Eastside Vancouver, the locus of Blomley’s (2004) work, where a history of imposed poverty has shaped both deprivation and neighbourhood-specific institutions of communal action. Shaw and Hagemans (2015) examine the experience of residents in secure community housing in gentrifying neighbourhoods in Melbourne, Australia who manage to stay put. They find

that the absence of displacement is not sufficient to mitigate the negative impacts of gentrification on these residents. Rather, tempering the negative impacts of gentrification, which change the familiar neighbourhood around them, requires maintenance of shops, meeting places, and the nature of local social structures and governance in the interests of those residents (2015:339). The authors concur with the findings of Fried and Marris (as cited in Shaw and Hagemans 2015) that residents who have few resources and reasons to travel and develop social ties outside of neighbourhood form a tighter attachment to place of residence as an important nexus of identification and belonging (2015:326-7).

Cahill argues that place attachment and the loss of rich networks of social capital are reasons residents of gentrifying neighbourhoods might do everything possible to stay, even as rents climb (2010:306; see also Nguyen 2018). As Cahill (2010) notes, gentrification effaces the multiple signs of community and culture and is experienced as such by the residents who remain. In her research from the Lower East Side of New York, the young Puerto Rican women she worked with described the visual loss of Puerto Rican culture, including in murals, businesses, and street culture, as well as the influx of whites and strange juxtapositions of gentrified businesses next to ones that had managed to hold on from the old neighbourhood. These experiences helped produce a sense of ‘I don’t belong here’ (2010:307) among her interlocutors. When neighbourhood is one of the few places in the city in which not only your class, but racial, immigrant, Indigenous, or cultural identity is represented and lived, the feeling of being made out of place through demolition and redevelopment of the neighbourhood is exacerbated. Especially as gentrifiers assert a “white Anglo appropriation of urban space and urban history”

(Atkinson and Bridge 2005; see also Nguyen 2018) re-segregating the city, but excluding working class, immigrant, and Indigenous residents and residents of colour from the neighbourhoods they built and use.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the concept of preserving neighbourhood character articulates the shared experience of neighbourhood that comes from the existing disposition of (mostly) private property, including the social relations this enables in the larger neighbourhood. While such relations are not always inclusive or egalitarian, they are lived and valued by residents. Further, in the historically working-class east side of Vancouver, they enable important forms of mutual aid, shared cultural and other experiences, familiar life patterns, and some protection from the forces that have created these neighbourhoods as segregated spaces. When these are interrupted, residents, even relatively privileged ones, lose the capacity to “make place” or to sustain the valued social relations of their neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, residents of these neighbourhoods also faced different degrees of impact from gentrification, particularly as habitation forms and private institutions received new private investment and public institutions received less public investment. Grandview Woodland was among the most gentrified of the three neighbourhood studied with an already larger white population and substantial pockets of more middle-class residency. Yet, the neighbourhood also had substantial pockets of low-income residency, with overall lower rents and income levels than the neighbourhood of Renfrew Collingwood in which the Joyce Station area is located, but higher rents and substantially higher incomes than the residents of Chinatown and the

larger Downtown Eastside neighbourhood (Statistics Canada, Census 2016). As residents are pushed out of one east side neighbourhood, they are either pushed into another less expensive east side neighbourhood or into suburbs, where inevitably they displace others. Homeowners and social housing occupants in all neighbourhoods have more power to stay put than private market renters, yet they still experience everyday displacement, which in turn has the greatest impact on residents who depend on neighbourhood institutions for social and cultural ties, as a bulwark against race and class exclusions, and for the life sustaining relations, institutions, and services they cannot afford to pay for in the market. Both physical and everyday displacement have particular ramifications for Indigenous residents who experience further diminishment in their capacity to make and sustain place as a result of ongoing settler colonialism. Both exacerbate extreme discrimination in the larger Canadian society.

VI. IMPEDING PROTEST: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STATE, FOR-PROFIT AND NON-PROFIT ENTITIES IN NEOLIBERALIZATION

Introduction

The threats perceived from proposed development projects and zoning changes in Grandview Woodland, Chinatown, and Joyce Station led to concerted efforts to halt these incursions. Activists in all three neighbourhoods saw zoning change and higher density development as disrupting familiar and valued patterns of housing and retail, patterns that supported valued neighbourhood character including the cultures, institutions, and relationships on which residents depended for a range of benefits. The opportunity to achieve new amenities, particularly social housing, while generally valued by activists in the three neighbourhoods, did not assuage the perception of threat. Nor did the involvement of non-profits in land development partnerships and negotiations. This was particularly so in Grandview Woodland where the involvement of the Kettle Society and provision of new social housing units were ultimately perceived as part of the threat. Government disinvestment places non-profits at the heart, rather than on the periphery, of service delivery with minimal and insecure resources (Evans, et al. 2005). This change in the role of non-profit societies results from a combination of disinvestment and privatization. Together, these have created a “dispersed state” (Clarke 2004:36) in which there is a multiplication of the number of agencies and agents that act as proxies of state power, while fewer individuals receive public goods and services. Privatization also challenges “conceptions of the public interest, striving to replace them by the rule of private interests, co-ordinated by markets” (Clarke 2004:31). Together disinvestment and

privatization have proliferated the incorporation of private interests, non-profit and for profit, within state institutions and as proxies for state power (Clarke 2004; Whiteside 2011). As Laforest (2012) argues, these facets of neoliberalization have also impacted collectivist advocacy organizations. Since the mid to late-1990s, the federal government defunded such organizations on the basis that they reflected only “special interests” and interfered with the expression of broad public concern. As welfare state programs were disinvested and downloaded to non-profit agencies and the for-profit private sector, and organized groups within civil society, including advocacy-based non-profit societies, have lost their public funding and place within politics, the channels of public participation have become more individualized and the opportunity for such participation more unequal. Those with more resources of their own or whose interests are aligned with state-capital goals are more likely to be able to participate in political process in these conditions. In neighbourhood-based politics, this has meant that residents attempting to participate in public planning and development processes are resisted by a combination of state, capital, and non-profit interests. In Grandview Woodland, it was primarily the Kettle Society, placed as the face of the Boffo/Kettle development proposal and city development goals, that appeared to block the success of the No Tower campaign.

No Tower Coalition members proposed a mostly publicly-funded alternative development. This proposal proceeded from a rejection of the argument that the Kettle Society’s partnership with Boffo Properties was a necessary component of service expansion. However, such conviction did not account for municipal, provincial, and federal “reinvestment” in social housing construction and operation during the time

period of the No Tower campaign. “Reinvestment”, a misnomer given that it continues disinvestment and privatization in social housing policy, makes non-profit housing agencies autonomous owner-operators expected to leverage their land assets within the private market, including through partnerships with developers among other for-profit private investors. This upscaling of CAC land value extraction logic from its origins in municipal land use and development policy to its new articulations in provincial and federal housing policy, ties new social services, especially low-income housing, to high-density condominium development and private investment in and ownership of formerly public land. This chapter will explore the creation and promotion of the No Tower Coalition’s alternative development proposal for the land parcel at Venables and Commercial, the site of the Boffo/Kettle development proposal. In doing so, it examines the splitting of interests within the neighbourhood as the dispersed state, in the form of non-profit-developer partnerships reflecting municipal, provincial, and federal policy, privatizes and downscales social housing decision making and resources to neighbourhoods, land parcels, non-profit societies, developers, and residents. This chapter argues that the success of No Tower’s alternative development proposal was impeded by government’s incorporation of private capital interests in land development and social housing policy, which made the Kettle Society a proxy for state political goals and private capital profit goals. Further, it argues that this contributed to No Tower Coalition’s distrust of government and the Kettle Society, a situation that if writ large could diminish social cohesion, support for services to the poor, and undermine possibilities for rebuilding public services and public institutions.

No Tower Coalition members generally believed that the Kettle's publicly-provided revenue stream was guaranteed, expansion would only result in greater government funding, and that the organization was "empire building" or building its own power rather than its service capacity. There were good reasons for such arguments, including that the inner workings of government-non-profit contracts are hidden from public view, the Kettle Society had recently expanded its complement of managed housing units through other government and charitable programs, and that Kettle Society ties to a for-profit condominium development were supported by powerful political actors such as municipal politicians and bureaucrats as well as other prominent non-profit agencies. However, disinvestment from the welfare state and the creation and concentration of poverty has also made non-profit societies important sites of relief, however minimal and sometimes short-lived, for destitute, homeless, and mentally ill Vancouverites. The remaining welfare system depends on the services non-profit agencies provide and increasingly their funding sources are limited and privatized. No Tower campaign members found that their valid criticism of non-profit/for-profit land deals were dismissed and diminished through name calling and outsized accusations, as evidenced by the discussion at Council excerpted in Chapter 3. They developed strong feelings of distrust toward the Kettle society and municipal government as supposedly public processes, public policy, and non-profit services were enacted through the logic and requirements of private capital. Such distrust, if writ large, can diminish social cohesion, support for services to the poor, and undermine possibilities for rebuilding public services and public institutions. In contrast, real estate developers and other land investment entities are recognized as acting within their mandates, which are, by

definition, tied to the interests of private capital, even while they disproportionately benefit from disinvestment policies including when government programs and activities function to minimize market risks.

The Alternative

It wasn't until July 6, 2016 that the No Tower Coalition received conceptual drawings of their proposed alternative development plan for the land parcel at Commercial and Venables. These were done by an architect invested in neighbourhood-based decision making on planning issues and were done on a pro bono basis. The conceptual drawings came about after a late spring 2016 series of in-person meetings with three influential planning and architecture professionals in Vancouver who had noticed the acrimony of the debate about development at this corner of Commercial and Venables and, for various reasons, were invested both in Grandview Woodland and in a more open development process at city hall. Meetings were, unfortunately, halted with the release of the neighbourhood plan in late June 2016 and Council decision on the site in late July 2016. The conceptual drawings produced in early July are the ones No Tower put forward to city councilors and City of Vancouver planning staff ahead of the late July 2016 hearing excerpted in Chapter 3. As mentioned in that earlier chapter, the No Tower proposal encompassed only the public land component (5 in the image below), specifically the parking lot, of the Venables and Commercial site, which they believed could be sold or leased for a nominal fee to support Kettle renewal and expansion as well as additional low-cost rental housing large enough to house multi-person households.

No Tower viewed the smaller scale, publicly funded, mixed use with rental not condominiums, and larger rental unit size (allowing for multi-person households) nature of their proposal as neighbourhood character preserving. The alternative development proposal put forward by No Tower included almost 15,000 square feet of program and administrative space for use by the Kettle Friendship Society, just over 16,000 square feet of single-occupancy housing units for Kettle clients as would have been provided through the Boffo/Kettle partnership, and just over 23,000 square feet of rental housing including 6 3-bedroom units, 12 2-bedroom units, and 3 1-bedroom unit. The predominantly larger size of the rental units was important given that many existing units are not built for larger households. The majority of older rental buildings in the city contain studio and 1-bedroom units (Former city planning staff, Personal communication, November 25, 2015). The No Tower Coalition believed that the capacity to retain households with children at this site near to the community center and schools was important. The rental units in this proposal were also designated as renting at below market rates. It was hoped by No Tower that the public funding, publicly provided land, and attachment to a non-profit complex would mean that these units would be covenanted at below market rents rather than subject to market forces. The Coalition originally advocated development no taller than four storeys to match the zoning limitation along most of Commercial Drive and minimize the development potential at the site. However, for this alternative proposal, the Coalition agreed to put forward a six-storey building. This was in large part because of the pressure on affordable rental housing in the neighbourhood, as evidenced by conversations at the petition table and through the loss of friends and acquaintances from the neighbourhood through eviction and rent increase and because the Coalition

perceived that such housing reflected neighbourhood needs, which they, by this time, had separated from Kettle Society needs.

These rental units were also key to the funding schema the Coalition proposed, which while focusing much more heavily on public funding than the Boffo/Kettle proposal, also acquiesced to the prevailing politic that viewed private and tenant funding sources as necessary to the sustainability of new social and low-income housing. Along with the July 2016 design drawings No Tower put together a loose funding proposal. In this aspect of the overall proposal, they asked the City of Vancouver to provide the land at low or no cost, support the Kettle Friendship Society in seeking Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation¹⁸ (CMHC) Seed Funding to finalize architectural drawings and other start up costs, as well as support the Kettle to acquire capital contributions from CMHC and BC Housing¹⁹ through recently announced programs including the federal *Investment in Affordable Housing Initiative* and the provincial *Investment in Affordable Housing Program*. Further, the 30-single occupancy units renting at a deep subsidy rate to individuals likely reliant on welfare or other government cash assistance programs might be subsidized in part with the rent from the other units renting to households with slightly higher, though still low, incomes. Finally, in the Coalition's proposal, construction and operating costs would be offset when the Kettle also sold their existing land and/or fundraised to generate capital.

¹⁸ Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation (CMHC) is a federal housing agency at arm's length from the federal government, but accountable to it. They administer social housing programs, create housing policy, research housing trends, and provide mortgage loan insurance, among other activities (<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca>).

¹⁹ BC Housing is the provincial housing agency, also an arm's length body accountable to the provincial government. They administer social housing programs, including distributing funds from the federal government, undertake provincial housing policy and research, and are responsible for consumer protection measures for homebuyers (<https://www.bchousing.org>).

This hodgepodge of private and public funding sources recognizes the prevailing social service funding regime, which, while not fully accepted or understood by most members of No Tower, seemed at the time like the best shot No Tower had for making their proposal successful. Both municipal social housing programs and the ones announced in 2016 by provincial and federal governments, while allocating some public funds, also required that non-profit agencies enter into long-term financing arrangements, or loans, for construction costs and that operational costs be subsidized in part through their own operations. These sorts of requirements are part of what make development partnerships with for-profit developers so attractive, especially when they mean all construction costs will be covered. In that case, rents and other operational revenues need only cover operational costs, not also service debt for capital construction and renewal. Of course, both the Boffo/Kettle proposal and the hodgepodge of public and private funding suggested by No Tower also reflect prevailing austerity-type thinking, namely, that public funding is inadequate and not forthcoming. Austerity-type thinking was reinforced every which way No Tower turned such as in meetings with other social service providers, city politicians and bureaucrats, neighbourhood planning, and in the new housing funding announcements themselves all of which juxtaposed an enormous need to a discourse of “not enough” in order to make the case that private investment was necessary. The primary motivation of the Coalition, by July 2016, was to prove that Boffo Properties and the proposed 150 to 200 condominiums were not needed to net new Kettle program and administrative space and social and rental housing in Grandview Woodland.

In addition to the housing and funding proposals, the No Tower proposal as presented before Council in July contained a proposal for a public square or piazza. This proposal would close most of Commercial Drive (plot 6 in Figure 18 below), which becomes a side street rather than the main street at this point, between Venables and Adanac streets. The traffic is directed along the curved street, Commercial Diversion, that connects the sections of Commercial Drive across a jog at Venables, the street along the bottom end of the image. Car traffic would not be permitted on the piazza. Instead, the area would be furnished with public seating, large planters that could accommodate trees for beauty and shade, and smaller ones that could accommodate shrubs and flowers for additional greenery. Part of the piazza would be open space in order to accommodate “impromptu gatherings, community events, farmer’s markets, small local vendors, and the like” (Fieldnotes, Piazza Proposal). The idea was to keep the space generally non-commercial, even if some commercial events, like a farmer’s market, would occasionally be held there. The piazza, unlike the growing abundance of coffee shops and high-end restaurants, “would allow people from all walks of life to feel comfortable” using the space. The piazza was to be accessible from Commercial Diversion, the main traffic street at that geographic point. Traffic from the bus stop along the Diversion and other foot traffic could use the existing laneway (4) to get to the new piazza, which would be transformed as well into a route that could “safely accommodate both pedestrians and utility/delivery truck traffic” (Fieldnotes, Piazza Proposal). This aspect of the proposal was extremely important to the members of No Tower as they saw the piazza as the true community amenity arising out of development at Commercial and Venables. As new and additional public space, No Tower argued the piazza would “augment” Grandview

Woodland’s public space roster and could contribute to “greening” that area, which borders industrial land to the west. It would allow a continuous pedestrian right of way further north along Commercial Drive connecting to the northern section of the street (at the top of the image). The Coalition also believed, it would greatly “enhance” the new Kettle building and the existing uses in that area, including a very longstanding bakery/café (7) (Fieldnotes, Piazza Proposal).



Figure 18: Site of public piazza. Photo credit Stephen Bohus.

In part, the reason the Coalition developed and presented the alternative development proposal for the public land portion of the site at Venables and Commercial was not because they ultimately supported Kettle expansion, but because they could not politically refuse it. As was discussed in the previous chapter, the vulnerability and poverty of Kettle clients, and lack of public funding for renewed and expanded Kettle

services, produced an economic, political, and moral imperative for this development, including the 150-200 condominiums. Through the first months of the campaign, the No Tower Coalition came to see the Boffo/Kettle development proposal as a wedge issue in the neighbourhood that could lead to overdevelopment, speculation, displacement, rising land value, and rent rates. Over time the potential impact of the development on land speculation, price increase, and gentrification also began to take a role in the internal conversations and public messages produced by the campaign. As members tried to promote their alternative vision for development at Venables and Commercial, and experienced mostly rejection from anyone with any power to implement it, No Tower increasingly expressed suspicion and disgust at the commodification of public land, at undemocratic and non-transparent processes at city hall, and at the Kettle Society for being willing to stand as the face of condominium development. At every turn, the Kettle and their needs were put front and center as the *raison d'être* of this development proposal, which No Tower didn't want because they found the architectural form to be an affront, they believed the upzoning and condominiums would act as an overwhelming political and economic precedent for further such development, and understood that condominiums would induce greater displacement in the neighbourhood.

Some examples of the Kettle being made the face of the development were discussed in the previous chapter such as when No Tower members felt they could not insist on using the parking lot at the back of the Kettle Society building for the balloon raising. Or, in press coverage of the balloon raising that focused on the needs of the Kettle Society and clients and the lack of public funds for facility and service expansion. The letter from Mayor Robertson referred to the proposed development site as the "Kettle

site” even though the site includes two plots of city land and two owned by the developer. Outside of the No Tower Coalition, the development proposal was invariably referred to as the Kettle/Boffo proposal or the Kettle proposal even though it was Boffo Properties who would undertake the rezoning and development and net the profits from the sale of 150 to 200 condominiums, the lion’s share of the development height and density. The proponent’s website, that would launch right around the time the Coalition was first articulating its alternative vision for development at Venables and Commercial, would refer to the Kettle Boffo Project (kettleboffo.com) and feature the Kettle Society and its services.

Further, the Kettle Society is central to the ability of Boffo to achieve rezoning and redevelopment across all five land plots: Kettle-owned land is centrally located among the five plots (2 in the image above) and the Kettle is a politically and legally appropriate recipient of a community amenity contribution. However, the moral weight of the Kettle and the ability to claim a pro-poor outcome from this large condominium development was also key to the neighbourhood and municipal politics of the development proposal. For example, at kettleboffo.com, the first description under the heading *What is The Kettle Boffo Project?* reads:

At the northwest corner of Venables and Commercial Drive is a remarkable place called The Kettle Society. For almost 40 years, our non-profit group has offered housing, employment, advocacy and mental health services to people normally overlooked in our society. The elderly, the homeless, those with drug and alcohol issues, and those people coping with mental health challenges — they’re in need of help.

That’s why it’s so important for The Kettle Society to stay working in this neighbourhood — where the need is so great — and to do so in a larger, improved space that better meets our clients’ needs.
(kettleboffo.com)

Only below this statement of the Kettle Society's longstanding neighbourhood tenure and client needs is the full project description offered. This description again foregrounds the space within the proposed building that will be reserved for Kettle Society services, even though this is a relatively small space when compared with the condominium units (and 18,000 square feet of retail being proposed). The good reputation, relationships, and important service work of the Kettle was and is an important aspect of the marketing of this development proposal, particularly marketing aimed at quelling neighbourhood opposition. The new facilities of the Kettle Society wait on those with considerably more power and more money than they, specifically municipal land regulators and a real estate developer. Yet, noticeably, throughout the promotion of this development proposal and of the Boffo/Kettle partnership, the power appeared to be reversed, with the Kettle Society presented as the unassailable face of the development.

“Empire Building” and the Roots of Distrust

While the website extracted above was not published until just after the Coalition first developed the outline of an alternative proposal in early October 2015, the centrality of the Kettle, ideologically and physically, had already been made abundantly clear. Through what was called an *Imagination Session* held at the Family Activity Center at Britannia Community Center, where most No Tower meetings were held, the Coalition discussed what they imagined as an alternative development for the Commercial and Venables site. Sitting in the triangular shaped room facing on to the community center's

central courtyard and the front doors of the public library branch located on the complex, No Tower members and supporters, about 20 in all gathered to imagine what they perceived as a beneficial alternative development at Commercial and Venables. As with most meetings of the Coalition, the mood was interested, cooperative, and engaged. A volunteer visual note taker stood at the front of the room at an easel with poster-sized paper and coloured pens ready to capture in images the concepts arising from the discussion about an alternative development proposal for the Commercial and Venables site.

Early in the meeting, one of the Coalition members described a meeting she and another member had with a different mental health and poverty serving non-profit organization in Vancouver. This meeting was initiated as part of an attempt to understand how the Kettle might be thinking about expansion and funding. Given that the Kettle Society had refused to meet with the Coalition, members had sought and attended a meeting with another similar non-profit organization to discuss the political, funding, and operational context for non-profit agencies generally. The director they met with suggested that the Coalition try to come up with an alternative that could, in the words of one of the No Tower members, “give the Kettle what they need without the tower”, arguing that this might change the minds of Kettle directors. This suggestion was the impetus for the *Imagination Session*. While some Coalition members were not entirely supportive of the session, with one who had been particularly insistent that it’s not our responsibility to “solve the Kettle’s problems for them”, the group was overall in favour of building a positive representation of what could happen at that corner of the neighbourhood. As conversation got going at the meeting, yet another member strongly

insisted that we get into the “meat and potatoes” of an alternative development proposal, namely a four-storey building for Kettle Society expansion, including their desired housing units, on the public land portion of the Commercial and Venables site.

The conversation kicked off slowly with agreement to this proposal fully emerging through discussion of the unusual street scape where Commercial Drive ends in a T with Venables to the south of the site, continuing around a curve as Commercial Diversion, while the Drive continues to the west of the site. This configuration gives the Commercial and Venables site its unusual triangular shape and creates the opportunity to make a plaza, or piazza, out of Commercial Drive since it is not a traffic thoroughfare at that point. The member who originally pointed out that we could come up with an alternative that might cause the Kettle to go in a different direction noted that she wanted our alternative to keep 30 units of housing for the Kettle and encourage public space, stating that our whole impetus is to show how the Kettle can “get what it needs” without Boffo Properties. Boffo Properties is offering “free money” to the Kettle, saying to them “you partner with us and be our front person, we’ll give you x.” However, she argued, we must show that they don’t need Boffo Properties. One of the ways to do this is to take account of the fact that the City could always give the land, she argued. Later, she also argued that the City could be a funder since they have a housing endowment fund and that BC Housing, the provincial housing authority, could loan additional money. In her view, accepted largely by the other members, there are ways that if the “Kettle and the City partner, cutting out the developer, the Kettle and the City and us could get what we need”. A sub-conversation bubbled away under the surface throughout the meeting that ensued, coming to the fore in moments when members asked if or asserted that the Kettle

was “building an empire”. Many group members saw the Kettle as having “guaranteed revenue” from government and that they would benefit from expanding their services because they would get increased operating revenues to match. This view was bolstered by others who argued that the Kettle (and presumably other non-profit societies) operate like businesses and are “empire building” or creating more and more opportunities to expand their service in ways that are not fundamentally about serving their clients but rather about their own power.

These visual notes from the *Imagination Session* (Figures 19 and 20 below) reveal the significance of the Piazza Proposal as an expression of neighbourhood changes that the Coalition saw as meaningful and integrated with existing neighbourhood values and land uses. They also reveal that the Kettle Society was perceived as a business seeking to expand and as an organization with a “strong balance sheet”. Such analysis appeared to be correct to Coalition members in part given the prominence of the Kettle Society in the development proposal as described above and their ability to call forth such powerful political and economic actors and support. It also appeared to be correct when the Coalition looked at recent service and particularly housing unit expansion undertaken or acquired by the Kettle in two large social housing developments in Vancouver. Annual reports at the time revealed an operating budget of over \$11 million dollars and the Kettle Society was further involved in another East Vancouver development partnership that would also expand their administered housing units. The political and funding arrangements by which such housing had been obtained and under which it was being run were well hidden in service-delivery contracts and private charitable foundation decision making. In addition, their multiple housing and program spaces and

properties appeared as though they were all owned by the Kettle Society, when Kettle directors insisted that they only held title to the property along Venables. The duplicity of the political process discussed above and further below led Coalition members to suspect any statement of need made by the Kettle Society. Finally, the political salience of providing new support and housing programs to destitute and homeless people in Vancouver appeared to Coalition members as indication that the Kettle Society had a “strong balance sheet” or a guarantee of operational funding from government.



Figure 19: Imagination session notes 1. Photo credit P. Street.

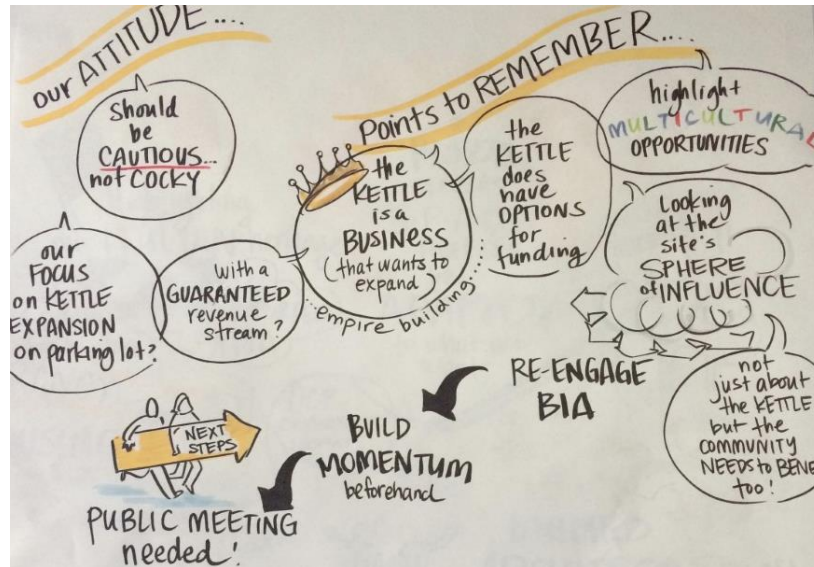


Figure 20: Imagination session notes 2. Photo credit P. Street.

Disinvestment and Privatization, the Dispersed State, and Political Participation

As was initially discussed in Chapter 2, while in Keynesian welfare state structures, non-profit organizations played a peripheral or additional role in welfare state service delivery, through disinvestment, non-profits have become central to service delivery in remaining welfare state programs (Baines 2010; Bode 2006; Cairns, et al 2007; Evans, et al 2005; Gazley and Brudney 2007; Milbourne 2009). They now deliver a larger portion of welfare services in many countries (Evans, et al. 2005; Fisher 1997). In the social housing sector in British Columbia, non-profit societies operate most of the social housing under contract from the provincial government, which directly operates only 7500 to 8000 units out of approximately 58000 provincewide (Wenmann 2009). The role of non-profit societies within the welfare state structure, while it appears central, is not stable. Non-profit organizations are subject to the instability of contract rather than core funding, short term rather than stable funding, underfunding rather than adequate funding, highly regulated contract terms, and increased bureaucratic regulation. In

Canada, non-profit organizations' own assessment of their capacity to deliver on their mandates given the downloading of welfare state functions indicate organizations experience increased demand for services, greater complexity of client needs, and are more often helping people meet basic needs for food and shelter rather than assisting with more complex problems (Burnley, et al 2005; Woolford and Curran 2011). Given constraints as a result of insecurity and instability as well as inherently limited capacity to be providers of collective goods on an equitable basis to all (Evans, et al. 2005:75), non-profit organizations increasingly position themselves as political actors influencing governmental and policy decision making (Laforest 2014). Through a combination of diminished or eliminated national standards in social programs such as in housing, health, and welfare (Brodie 2002; Kingfisher 2002; Pulkingham and Ternowetsky 1999), and a changing federal interest in supporting the advocacy activities of nonprofit advocacy groups beginning in the mid to late-1990s (Laforest 2012; Lakeman 2005), non-profit organizations became primarily, and sometimes inadequately, welfare state service providers with advocacy organizations sidelined or eliminated. As Laforest (2014) argues,

it is important to recognize that there are multiple, sometimes conflicting interests, within the [nonprofit] sector, each vying to be heard. Foundations and philanthropic organizations may be mainly concerned with regulatory issues such as tax laws and charitable status; service based organizations may be more concerned with the contracting regime and accountability issues; social economy organizations or social enterprises may particularly interested in asset-building tools and innovation; some organizations may be more concerned with advocacy and autonomy issues; others still may be concerned primarily with the state of volunteering. (2014:1186).

Just as non-profit organizations may select certain interests over others, they may also be useful to certain political interests over others. Given growing polarization in income and wealth highly visible in the east end of Vancouver, non-profit organizations may become important to the politics of municipal politicians, along with provincial and federal ones, if relationships with non-profit organizations or associations taken between public, non-profit, and for-profit entities can be made to reflect arguments that governments are doing something to respond to the impacts of growing inequality, but in ways that reflect prevailing societal attitudes that favour smaller government, cost-effective social programs, and lower taxes. On their end, non-profit organizations may well be willing to represent such politics if it means a new or expanded source of funding for capital or operational growth and stability. Through the combination of disinvestment and downloading, or privatization to both the non-profit and for-profit sectors, many more agencies and actors come to act as proxies of state power (Clarke 2004), which more heavily incorporates and relies on private capital interests. This relationship to state power may be somewhat obscured by the fact of dispersal; non-profit societies are not state institutions even though they may reflect state political and economic goals. This can mean that for members of the public who do not align their politics with non-profit organizations, state-non-profit allegiances create a block against rather than for their political expression and effect. This is similarly the case for members of the public who do not align their politics with for-profit entities incorporated into and/or reflecting state political goals. For members of No Tower, they opposed both non-profit and for-profit land development interests that were both supported by and supportive of municipal, provincial, and federal social housing policies and politics.

An important aspect of the conditions under which members of the public can engage with the state is the “discursive practices and processes through which the state promotes and justifies routes to political representation” (Laforest 2012:184). In the mid to late 1990s, the federal government moved toward decentralized service delivery accountable to governmental outcomes not national standards and forced, through tax laws and other measures, service delivery organizations to abstain from advocacy. In doing so, they constrained “possibilities for citizens to mobilize, make claims and successfully influence policy” (Laforest 2012:183). Accompanied by a vision of small government not beholden to “special interest groups”, nonprofit advocacy organizations lost credibility and the combination of direct citizen engagement and organized group representation was supplemented by direct citizen engagement alone. According to Laforest (2012), this has meant that the public in Canada has fewer not more opportunities to act collectively with diminished opportunity for democratic participation. This context is reflected globally in the actions of non-governmental organizations that both block collective expression and favour elite expression (Fisher 1997; Ganti 2014; Schuller 2009). Overall, the combination of shifts including replacing public institutions with private ones, reducing the number of government programs, eliminating national standards in health and welfare programs, and reducing public support for democratic engagement have reduced the capacity of the public in Canada to organize to represent their interests to government unless they can call on independently obtained financial or similarly effective independent resources.

Many non-profit organizations experience a near constant pressure to maintain and grow their programs and funding. The terrain on which they do this is shifting

constantly. For non-profit organizations, the impetus to participate in CAC-involved development or other forms of private funding support is married to the constraints they face in a disinvested welfare system. For residents, however, the involvement of non-profit organizations in development proposals inhibits the effectiveness of their protest, presenting the opportunity for a growth in much-needed services, especially low-income housing, that is not otherwise forthcoming from public sources. In the case of the debate for and against the Boffo/Kettle development, it appeared in the public as if it was occurring between the No Tower Coalition and the Kettle Friendship Society. To the No Tower Coalition, it further appeared that the Kettle Friendship Society had access to economic and political resources that the Coalition could not match, no matter their hundreds of hours of signature gathering, conversation, protest, and meetings. As a result of disinvestment-related welfare state policies not immediately visible within the context of the fight, both parties struggled to sustain themselves and/or their interests in the debate. However, for No Tower this ultimately led the group to be deeply suspicious of the motivations, actions, arguments, and, ultimately, services of the Kettle Society.

Engaging the (Undemocratic) Political Process

Between September and December 2015, though primarily following the October *Imagination Session*, No Tower met with almost every Vancouver city councilor. Only two councilors and the mayor refused to meet with the group. I attended all but one of the meetings members of No Tower held with City of Vancouver politicians, four of which were with city councilors from the ruling Vision Vancouver party, two of which were with councilors from the second most powerful municipal party, the Non-Partisan

Association, and one was with the sole Green Party member of Council. It's this last that I did not attend. The Coalition was not in this time able to meet with any senior bureaucrats with influence in planning, zoning, and public land sale decisions at city hall such as the planning staff assigned to Grandview Woodland, staff at the Vancouver Affordable Housing Association, or the City Manager. Though attempts were made to meet with individuals in each of these roles, such requests were either ignored or declined.

In meetings with city councilors, No Tower Coalition members asked that the parking lot and laneway, the public land in question, be leased long term or be otherwise made available to the Kettle for a nominal fee to better enable expansion of Kettle Society services without a for-profit developer partner. To No Tower members, most councilors argued that they could not give a strong opinion for or against the Boffo Kettle development proposal. However, in the analysis of No Tower members, much of which was shared during group car rides back to the neighbourhood from city hall, many city councilors gave the impression of being for the development. Some made statements to the effect that social housing is an important public amenity for which developers are an important source of funding. Others argued that since the provincial and federal governments do not spend enough on housing and other public amenities, the City of Vancouver is forced to use their role as land regulator to achieve these needed amenities. While one councilor argued that the proposal is still being worked out and hasn't met staff and council satisfaction yet, he also noted that when the Kettle came to the city looking for help to build housing, city staff and councilors told the Kettle Society to "find a partner" meaning a developer or other private sector funds. Still other councilors

argued that a development partnership is positive for the Kettle Society since in the end, they will own part of the new building, giving them security of ownership. Of the City Councilors, only one focused on Daniel Boffo, principal at Boffo Properties, specifically, claiming his right to profit as a factor necessitating the height and density proposed. In other words, City Councilors overall gave the strong impression that the alternative was not considered feasible and that the partnership with Boffo Properties was the only way to expand Kettle Services, a political goal they supported.

As No Tower members struggled to convey the issues as they saw them, build support in the neighbourhood and at city hall, as well as propose alternative Kettle Society renewal options, they met with resistance, closed doors, mixed messages, and a dearth of information about how the rezoning process would unfold given the simultaneous and ongoing neighbourhood planning process. Though attempts were made repeatedly to puzzle it all out, the political decision-making process and No Tower's opportunities to intervene remained unclear. By December 2015, No Tower had much visible public support, including over 3000 petition signatures, and their suspicions of the Kettle Society had been amplified by their many meetings with city councilors who insisted on the primacy of the Kettle Society and Kettle client needs. While Boffo/Kettle interaction with staff and politicians at city hall was not definitively known, little clues and other experience with city hall processes made No Tower members suspicious that access was being granted to the proponent team and not them. By December 2015, however, they had raised enough visible public opposition and made enough of a reasonable case, that city councilors, among others including members of the public at the petition table, were asking No Tower to meet with the Kettle to present the

alternative. Believing a request coming from No Tower would be rebuffed as it had in the past, No Tower members asked one of the city councilors to broker such a meeting, which they hoped to have without Boffo Properties in attendance.

The city councilor did initiate communication about a meeting with the Kettle Society, which precipitated a long and convoluted chain of emails attempting to set, the date, time, and terms of a meeting between two groups that clearly did not trust each other. Seven exchanges beginning on November 24th left the issue unresolved. No Tower's initial invitation to meet was followed by an offer to meet at the Kettle Society offices, with a chance to see the facilities and meet the staff, but with a limited time to do so, only half an hour. This was countered by No Tower with a suggestion of a neutral meeting place, Britannia Community Center, and a statement that No Tower would like to bring eight members. This was followed by a couple exchanges indicating that positions had not changed on either side, except that the Kettle conceded that the meeting, since short, would be focused on the issue of the proposed development and No Tower's alternative without a tour and staff meet and greet. The Kettle requested that fewer than eight No Tower members be present. On December 2nd, the No Tower Coalition responded noting that City Councillors had had no problem meeting with such a large group and that they would insist on a neutral location. Finally, on December 4th, the Kettle replied that they would invite three representatives of No Tower to meet with three representatives of their partnership at the Kettle offices for a half hour meeting, requesting a yay or nay by December 9th, 2015. Thus, on the evening of December 8th, No Tower members decided to meet to discuss how to proceed. Just after 7pm, having got our cups of tea, we crowded into one member's dining room. A showcase of wood of

different varieties, from the floor, to the moldings, to the table, chairs, credenza, and window benches, the room's sharp corners were muted by the wood tones and soft light. As the group gathered, the room felt warm and inviting. Members of the Coalition sat on the dining table chairs, on the window bench and on extra chairs brought in from the kitchen, fourteen people in all.

In the meeting, No Tower members were faced with a decision as to what to do. Go with the terms set out by the Kettle or refuse the meeting. The Coalition perceived this decision as a dilemma and agreed to hear a round of opinions from each member on the best course of action and to work toward consensus in the group, a common practice in No Tower meetings. The member who had conducted the email exchange opened with a proposal that members go to the meeting prepared to raise an argument against the development bringing a letter that invites the partnership to a community meeting, that is a larger meeting with more neighbourhood residents that would not be run by Vancouver city government. The idea would be to present to the Kettle Society that they have not yet truly met with the community and that they need to spend some time really listening to the community. She argued that we could ask another group to set up the community meeting, since then we wouldn't be accused of biasing it. Though receiving some initial support, as the round continued, support waned. Further responses turned to fear of manipulation, mistrust of the meeting at all, and a general sense that if No Tower cannot set the terms of the meeting, the group should not move forward with it. Members perceived that they were being manipulated into being tools within a political process in which their opposition had been effective but was now going to be neutralized. They perceived "danger" in a community meeting where residents will be asked to accept a

compromise or an “olive branch” that is still harmful. Residents wondered how the meeting would come back to “haunt us” since the Kettle Society seemed so unwilling to compromise. Would it provide them with a photo opportunity, or another means of promoting their version of the development options? Overall, members thought that going to Kettle Society offices was like walking into “shark infested waters”. As one member put it, the Kettle, Boffo Properties, and the City have “boxes to tick and we don’t know that this meeting isn’t allowing them to say they’ve consulted with the community” making the project that much closer to being approved.

Overall, the tone of the meeting was thoughtful, if fearful and suspicious reflecting strong relations within the group and a sense of being manipulated by more powerful political actors, particularly the non-profit Kettle society, which should be politically accountable to the neighbourhood they would impact, according to No Tower members. The final decision, arrived at about 2 hours into the meeting, was that one of our members would send an email stating simply “Looking forward to seeing you on Monday at 10am at Britannia” as if no objection to that plan had been raised by the Kettle at all. This strange non-sequitur-type position was arrived at because ultimately, the group perceived a persistent dilemma: that both refusing and going to the meeting would be detrimental. While the Kettle had never accepted the No Tower terms of the meeting, they had never refused the meeting, either. No Tower decided to do the same as this seemed like the best possible PR tactic for them.

Distrust of City Government by No Tower

In addition to distrust of the Kettle Friendship Society, members of the No Tower Coalition became increasingly distrustful of city government and the political process itself. Over the period in which No Tower was meeting with politicians at city hall, and being refused meetings with city staff, it was frequently suspected and that the Boffo/Kettle partnership, and particularly the development company, Boffo Properties, was meeting frequently with both staff and politicians. Eventually, this was revealed to have been the case, when requests for city records of communication with the Boffo/Kettle partnership, made through the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, were finally answered, months after they were made. These revealed that senior staff at city hall did meet and correspond with the Boffo/Kettle partnership through email correspondence, in formal meetings, and at other meetings around the city such as at the Urban Development Institute, a lobby group for the development industry.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act in British Columbia is meant to, among other goals, ensure public access to governmental records. Members of the No Tower Coalition made at least four such FOI requests over the course of the campaign, the majority of which took months to fulfill and/or were subject to a discretionary \$600 charge. The need to apply for fulfillment of a FOI request is itself an indication of a lack of transparency at city hall. This was confirmed in November 2015 when the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner launched an audit of the City of Vancouver's access to information policy (Lupick June 23, 2016). The information about Boffo's interaction with City of Vancouver departments comes from one fulfilled FOI request about communication regarding the public land component of the development proposal, namely the parking lot and laneway. Of the 435-page

document received by one member of No Tower and shared with the group, only 254 pages had not been fully redacted. Of those 254 pages, many reveal email correspondences between Boffo Properties, sometimes Boffo Properties and the Kettle Society, and city departments. However even the content of that communication has often been partially or fully redacted leaving only email addresses, salutations, and minutiae for the FOI recipient to read.

Despite the redactions, these FOI documents reveal that, unbeknownst to No Tower at the time, the sale of the parking lot (part of the public land component of the development site) was initially scheduled to go for discussion by Council on September 15, 2015, around the time at which the Mayor sent his letter to the neighbourhood assuring residents that they would have plenty of time to voice their concerns about redevelopment at the site. Further, while councilors were meeting with the No Tower Coalition and arguing that they had not made up their minds about the Boffo/Kettle development proposal, they had, at the very least, already been briefed on the development proposal and offered staff analysis of the proposal and potential sale of public land. The sudden departure of then City Manager Penny Ballem delayed what likely would have been a closed-door meeting regarding the sale, according to FOI documents. The meeting regarding the sale of the parking lot was planned again for September 24th, 2015, but for reasons that are unclear, did not go ahead at that time either.

At the point in September at which City Council was prepared to discuss if not decide on the potential sale of the parking lot and laneway to the Boffo/Kettle partnership, the development proposal and the rezoning required had not been formally

presented to Council or to the public. In Vancouver, once a development and rezoning proposal has been put forward to the City, usually after rigorous conversation with city staff in at least the planning and real estate departments and negotiation of the CAC agreement (City staff, Personal communication July 20, 2016 and September 20, 2016), and the City accepts to consider the rezoning request, the proposal must go forward to a public presentation in the neighbourhood of the rezoning. Further, the City must accept to hear from the public on the rezoning at a rezoning hearing at Council. Yet, Council was in the process of discussing the sale of public land to the Boffo/Kettle partnership ahead of such a rezoning hearing, and indeed ahead of the then still ongoing neighbourhood planning process. This pre-empting of public process is not unusual in Vancouver. In one case, an already contracted land sale and swap between the City of Vancouver, the developer, and the non-profit agency involved vitiated, in the opinion of one resident group, the public rezoning hearing. The resolution of court proceedings brought by the resident group determined that rezoning hearings were a formality without legal weight (Neighbourhood activist, Personal communication March 22, 2016; Smith April 23, 2015).

From the FOI documents, the Boffo/Kettle partnership had been in conversation with staff at city hall since 2011, at which time rezoning and the sale of public land had been agreed to in principle. Another Freedom of Information request, one that took over a year for the City of Vancouver to fulfill, and has 35 of 102 pages fully redacted, reveals that the Boffo/Kettle partnership and numerous city bureaucrats were discussing the development proposal, including its component parts, costs, height, density, and amenity contributions directly with each other over a period of years. Actions of city bureaucrats

reveal offers of assistance to the Boffo/Kettle partnership to help them meet technical requirements such as of the Engineering Department, advise them on costs associated with purchase of the public land component, discuss the impact of height limitations imposed in 2013 by Council (a maximum of 13 storeys), offer urban design expertise, and help with the planning and design of public meetings in the neighbourhood. Of course, no such assistance was offered to the No Tower Coalition in their attempt to make an alternative proposal for construction of a building serving Kettle Society needs, providing social and rental housing, and adjacent public piazza on the public land component of the Commercial and Venables site.

Although city councilors are publicly elected, city hall bureaucrats are publicly employed, rezoning is a public process, some of the land in question is publicly owned, and community amenity contributions are supposed to go to support needed social services and public amenities, all processes involved in shepherding the Boffo/Kettle development proposal through the approval process were non-transparent and outside of public control. Rather, public institutions and public employees worked in support of private entities in ways that circumvented or overrode the expressed opposition of the No Tower Coalition and their supporters. When the No Tower Coalition attempted to advocate for an alternative Kettle Society expansion on the public land with public funding, they were dismissed as naïve and, paradoxically, as NIMBYs, or proponents of an attitude that social housing and services should be located elsewhere and “not in my backyard”. When they attempted to make the alternative proposal a reality by producing it to the professional specifications necessary for it to be legitimate within the context of city planning, they were not offered any assistance from city staff or city councilors.

When No Tower attempted to understand, participate in, and intervene in the process moving the Boffo/Kettle proposal inexorably forward, they were forced to use the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to compel public records and even so were arbitrarily charged \$600 on several such requests, and in some cases waited over a year, even after paying the charge in one case, for the documents to be made available. These experiences were, overall typical of the experience of resident groups, including those around Joyce Station and Chinatown. In Chinatown, the example is particularly egregious as the development proponents were able to use public resources to bring their development proposal forward five times despite continued visible and vociferous public opposition.

When interviewing members of the No Tower Coalition in the fall of 2016, following the decision at Council discussed in Chapter 3, I asked each member how they would describe the role played by each of their opponents: The Kettle Friendship Society, Boffo Properties, and the City of Vancouver government. One of the founding and most active members of the group, a dedicated researcher and publisher of neighbourhood history and a longtime political activist on planning and development issues in Vancouver, gave an apt response. Jak was vociferous on the degree to which Vancouver's planning and development processes were manipulated and undemocratic. His strong commitment to neighbourhood and anarchist politics made these aspects of planning and development particularly galling. He stated straightforwardly that:

***Jak:** The Kettle plays the spoiler role. They stopped us being political. Very clearly they stopped us being political. If you go through it, Daniel Boffo [principal at Boffo Properties] said very little over the last 4 years and the Kettle has said a lot. So, they were the front. They were always the face. [They made it seem like] this was not somebody forcing themselves into a community, this was a*

community wanting something. And that was very deliberately played. That was their role. And, for them to reject outright our alternatives, which gave them everything they could possibly want, it showed it to be a political stand rather than a functional one.” ... It’s interesting to play the thought game of taking the Kettle out of it. Had Boffo just come up with this proposal, it would have been a very different campaign. I think we would have had more people early come on side. I think we would have had more media on side from the beginning. If it had just been another Yaletown situation – big boy developer wants to put a big box there – I’m not sure the result would have been different because of the [City] Council, but I think the campaign would have been very different. We would have been much more explosive as a campaign.

Kathleen: The divisions were very intense and especially around the Kettle. There’s this other division point in the development, which is about affordable housing, by which they don’t mean social housing, they mean condos. Condos are more affordable than single family homes and therefore this is really good for this neighbourhood.

Jak: Yeah, well that’s the Vision [political party] bullshit. Because they’re using language. This is newspeak. This is Brave New World newspeak. When they say affordable, they mean cheaper. Cheaper doesn’t mean affordable. The analogy I say is I want a Lamborghini. I can’t afford a Lamborghini. So, someone says well buy a Ferrari instead. Ok, it’s cheaper. I still can’t afford the damn thing. So, they’re playing with language and that’s all.

Kathleen: Do you think that the project was a done deal from the beginning.

Jak: Yes

Kathleen: Because of the [City] Council investment?

Jak: Yes

Kathleen: Do you think that the parties dealt fairly from the start?

Jak: No

Kathleen: What were the unfairnesses?

Jak: Well, the unfairnesses were the fact that it’s a done deal and they didn’t tell anybody. It’s the fact that it’s secret, private. It’s undemocratic in every possible way. And, if this had been the only time when 4000 people had objected to a project and it had gone ahead, then you could say well we made mistakes and whatever. But, it’s not. We’ve had a history of this going back to 2008, you know. Of massive meetings. Of massive writing campaigns and the [City] Council ignoring it completely. This is the modus operandi.

(No Tower Member, Personal communication, October 4, 2016)

He was far from the only member of the No Tower Coalition to describe the role of the Kettle Society as a “spoiler” of politics, a “front”, duplicitous, and manipulative. While many of the details of the interactions revealed in the FOI were not known to No Tower members until late in the campaign or even after the Council decision in July 2016, every interaction they had with government, press, other non-profit societies, and many they had with the public had revealed to them that the political process was not being run in their favour. While members certainly criticized the developer, Boffo Properties, many also stated that they expected his (Daniel Boffo’s) behavior given that he is, after all, a developer. However, the higher standards members expected from politicians, bureaucrats, and non-profit agencies combined with the fact that it was those entities they had primarily had to fight galled them. Not only has disinvestment created new opportunity for profit making from formerly public institutions, processes, and programs, but the difficulty residents have in accessing public processes, especially without public resources or, very often, many resources of any kind, have particularly soured them on those institutions that are meant to represent the public interest or the public good. In all the neighbourhoods in which I researched, resident groups watched already well-resourced development companies make use of the public processes of city government over and against the interests of residents often with the support or partnership of non-profit service delivery organizations. Public processes, such as city hall expertise and attention, bent toward these pro-development interests, but did not equally bend toward resident groups. The difficulty No Tower had in developing and promoting their alternative vision for development on the public land is one important example. The difficulty residents around Joyce Station and in Chinatown had in being

able to read, discuss, and respond to development plans, presented on the city website and in city-hosted open houses, in their primary languages is another. Lack of access was likely compounded by the overall policy shift, at municipal, provincial, and federal levels, in social housing development and operations funding. Though largely unknown to No Tower members at the time of their campaign, deeper privatization of social housing funding at provincial and federal levels made their expectations that public funding could be acquired to support Kettle Society expansion unrealistic. Though No Tower members understood they were up against municipal land use politics, in reality they were going against the grain of land use and housing policies at all governmental scales.

Increasingly, there is an alignment of discourses and mechanisms arising through government, market actors, and non-profit housing agencies themselves that push toward the idea that non-profit and public lands and housing are better thought of as private property rather than collective resource, or as equity on the market rather than resource for decommodification of housing. Compared to older housing funding models, wherein public resources were allocated to meet major capital and operational costs, current models achieve public investment only once equity is leveraged from land through engagement with the market. The result is that land that was not subject to fluctuations in the real estate and land market, because it was valued and used as a source of non-market or decommodified housing, is now private property, investment site, and revenue/profit generating. Through new housing funding models at all levels of government, the commodification of public and non-profit lands and buildings is becoming necessary to sustaining its “non-market” or social uses and values.

Further, the logic of commodifying public and non-profit lands aligns well with the logic and practice of community amenity contributions in which need for welfare state and other public amenities become an avenue of commodification as well. Both new non-market housing funding models and the processes that enable a CAC negotiation rely on an extractive conceptualization of land. In this view, all land has value in the market. In the case of non-profit-owned and public land, as in the case of land serving existing neighbourhood uses, this value that is latent or untapped as a result of ownership type, housing covenants, or existing neighbourhood uses. The latent or untapped nature of this land can be released through public processes, both housing and land use policies and practices, that support greater market engagement, such as “partnerships” with real estate developers, or investment by equity funds and global financial actors, or the actions of non-profit housing agencies to secure debt and investment equity against land.

Conclusion: Impeding Public Accountability

Disinvestment and privatization have proliferated the institutions that deliver what the public still thinks of as welfare state services, yet they do so in ways that are less accessible to the public because they are dispersed without accountability to national or other transparent standards. Further, the dispersal of public services through non-profit societies has both enabled and required deeper engagement by non-profits with private market entities and processes. In turn, this has made social housing and public land into sites of private profit making. When No Tower attempted to interrupt the tight nexus of relationships between a non-profit society, city government, and a real estate developer, it

looked like they were intervening in a highly localized land use decision. When they proposed an alternative, largely publicly funded expansion for the Kettle Society, including new rental housing and new neighbourhood public space, they inadvertently stepped into an emerging political shift that was leading to even deeper privatization, commodification, and financialization of social housing and public land than ever before. This larger political context was not visible on the ground – it was occurring at much more encompassing provincial and federal scales. However, the effect of the pressures it was producing were experienced at the scale of neighbourhood and land parcel, especially as the Kettle was made the face of the development proposal being directed at least equally, if not more so, by the developer, Boffo Properties, and the city government.

The effect of making the Kettle Society into the face of the development that would primarily benefit Boffo Properties and serve City of Vancouver political goals, was that the No Tower Coalition was pitted against the Kettle Society rather than these more powerful actors. While evidence suggests staff and supporters of the Kettle Society came to distrust members of No Tower, my closer involvement with No Tower strongly reveals that members of this group deeply distrusted the Kettle Society. This was partly because the insecurity of non-profit societies was not clear to the group, especially when the Kettle was visibly supported by powerful entities. However, the bigger factor was the role the Kettle played as a “spoiler” of a more transparent and accountable political process. In the dispersed state, where both non-profit and for-profit entities come to reflect and represent state power and where members of the public have fewer avenues for political expression, protest is impeded. Non-profits are considered members of civil society, and in this case the Kettle was often interpreted as representing the

neighbourhood or community. However, No Tower's analysis was that the Kettle reflected their own interest, which was aligned with and reflecting the interests of Boffo and the City. This ultimately made No Tower suspicious not just of this one organization, but of their services overall, reflecting that such tight relationships between state, non-profit and for-profit entities in the dispersed state could further impede expressions of solidarity that could ultimately lead to more robust public programs and political participation.

VII. CONCLUSION: VANCOUVER IN CONTEXT

Walking home one day in Spring 2016 from an interview in the Chinatown area of Vancouver, I passed through Strathcona, a mixed residential and industrial area that borders the northwestern edge of Grandview Woodland. Turning up toward Prior Street to head toward and across Clark Drive, the boundary between the two neighbourhoods, I passed by a development application at 970 Union Street, the Villa Cathay Care Home, a non-profit care home for Chinese seniors. The Development Application billboard erected at the property edge was more graffitied than most, so it caught my attention. As I perused it, trying to make out the messages, a small sticker affixed on the lower left caught my attention. Showing a demonic rendering of Vancouver's then mayor, Gregor Robertson, the sticker ominously read "I AM YOUR DENSITY" (Figure 21).



Figure 21: "I Am Your Density". Enlarged sticker (left), located in lower left of development application (right). Photo credit author

Months later in January 2019, I would take another walk along Union St and notice that instead of a development application, a 10-storey tower (Figure 22 background) rose above the original 3-storey building (foreground).



Figure 22: Development underway. Photo Credit Louise DeGagné

Unlike the development proposals in Grandview Woodland, around Joyce Station, and in Chinatown, I did not study the Villa Cathay development proposal. Nor do I know what if any for-profit interests are involved in constructing the new facility or running their care services. Instead, I use this example to reveal that ad hoc and organized rejections of land development cropped up continuously throughout my dissertation research, especially on development application billboards, which can be found in many

neighbourhoods in Vancouver, along with billboards advertising lots for land assembly, future condominiums, and townhomes.

In Grandview Woodland, there were many examples of this phenomena such as the text on the nearest land assembly billboard located at Broadway and Lakewood in Figure 23. It reads “end gentrification” and “greed kills”. On Victoria Drive and Georgia, Figure 24, the fence surrounding a new development is graffitied with “no housing, no peace”.



Figure 23: Graffiti Broadway and Lakewood in Grandview Woodland. Photo credit author.



Figure 24: Graffiti Victoria and Georgia in Grandview Woodland. Photo credit author.

These billboards are visible representations of growing unease and outright rejection of the “densification” projects going on around Vancouver and particularly of the notion that adding residential density, the route to extracting CAC revenue, has positive impacts on existing neighbourhoods and residents. Prominent, too, are unmarred large for sale signs sometimes on houses that are clearly well maintained yet advertised as ready for demolition to make way for new high-density development. The three photos below were also taken in Grandview Woodland on East 1st Ave (Figure 24), East Pender St (Figure 25), and East 1st Ave (Figure 26) respectively. Since the new neighbourhood plan has passed, these indications of certain or pending demolition and density along with development application signs are increasingly common. They advertise land assemblies of multiple properties and new zoning permitting higher density construction on single lots.



Figure 25: "Rezoning Approved" on East 1st in Grandview Woodland. Photo by author



Figure 26: "Potential Townhouse Development" East Pender St in Grandview Woodland. Photo by author.



Figure 25: "Land Assembly" on East 1st in Grandview Woodland. Photo by author.

Small and ad hoc protests of sale, demolition, and development were accompanied by highly visible and organized groups of residents, such as the Chinatown activists in the next two images, who protested demolitions and new developments at city hall (Figure 27) and in their neighbourhood (Figure 28) in ways designed to promote messages of neighbourhood preservation and to gather supporters.



Figure 28: Chinatown residents protesting at city hall. Photo by author.



Figure 29: Opposing the development proposal in Chinatown. Photo credit author.

Organized groups of residents also protested on and with signage, using these displays to stake claims against development. This included the No Tower lawn signs depicted in Chapter 5 that created a sense of the proportion of resident opposition, not

only in numbers but in space as they cropped up on front lawns and in windows all around the neighbourhood. Around Joyce Station, JARA devised and distributed a lawn sign that proclaimed the neighbourhood as “our home” (Figure 29).



*Figure 30: “This is Our Home” lawn signs around Joyce Station.
Credit joyceareara.wordpress.com*

Visible protest was also directly confrontational as residents of the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood in particular allied with the growing numbers of homeless people, rallying and blocking traffic in the Downtown Eastside (Figure 30).



Figure 31: Rallying before occupying an abandoned lot to establish a tent city for homeless people and demand immediate access to housing. Photo credit author.

Condominium owners, evicted renters, and homeless people allied to squat a rental building in the neighbouring suburb of Burnaby. The building had been emptied of tenants in preparation for demolition and construction of a large condominium tower.



Figure 32: Outside the squat in Burnaby where people rallied to protest multiple rental building demolitions and evictions. Photo credit author.

All over Vancouver, and increasingly in the metro area and other cities in the province, disenchantment with the promises of density flourished. Residents argued that instead of accommodating population growth, bringing down housing costs, creating “complete communities”, and producing public amenities through CACs, development designed to add residential density to existing neighbourhoods was pushing people out, raising housing costs, creating impoverished communities, and undermining public amenities, institutions, and processes.

Summary

Disinvestment

In this dissertation, I have argued that the community amenity contributions policy is, in part, a response by the government of the City of Vancouver to diminished welfare state and infrastructure funding, including in inter-governmental transfers and welfare state programs such as in housing and cash assistance. It produces new public amenities, particularly social housing, not otherwise available in a time of retrenchment. Paradoxically, however, CAC policy, like disinvestment from welfare state and infrastructure spending, also contributes to polarization of income and wealth. Urban centers are increasingly redeveloped with high-density and high-end condominiums for a wealthier and whiter population with, as the ad hoc and organized protests above make clear, low-income residents, Indigenous residents, and residents of colour pushed to the periphery and suburban areas. On Vancouver's east side, where most poor and working-class Vancouverites continue to reside, gentrification impacts have been accruing since the mid-1990s, accelerating in Grandview Woodland, the neighbourhood of focus in this ethnography, since the early 2000s. When, in the context of neighbourhood planning, residents were asked to name their desired new and renewed public services and amenities, there was diminished or no public money to fund them. Increasingly over-used, at-capacity, and rundown amenities must be funded through land value extraction and private land investment negotiated through CAC policy, making the municipality of Vancouver a central arena of welfare state funding and decision making, an unusual role for a city in Canada.

CAC policy at the municipal level seems to have inspired further disinvestment as the provincial and federal levels through new social housing policies and revenue streams announced in 2016, during the period of my research. New social housing policies and

revenue streams do not directly allocate public dollars to capital and operational funding for renewed and new social housing units. Rather, they require that non-profit agencies leverage the latent equity of non-profit and public land and housing operations to build and operate new housing units. The new policies enable rather than reverse the tendency toward privatization and marketization already present in Canadian housing policy. They also maintain the scalar relations of CAC policy, wherein social housing construction, renewal, and funding become the domain of the smallest scales of government and decision making, namely the municipality, non-profit housing societies, and tenants and other residents. These new policies at the provincial and federal levels appear to extend the scalar arrangements that I have argued are present in Vancouver to all other municipal jurisdictions across the country. In turn, new roles for global capital, whether in the form of developers or investors, are extended across jurisdictions as well.

Final elements of disinvestment are found in the treatment of non-profit housing societies and residents, not just in terms of the economic resources provided, but in terms of their role in public services and democratic processes. The political actions of non-profit societies as they engage with the private market are shaped by the constraints of disinvestment, namely unstable and insufficient welfare state funding. Societies may be willing to support further privatization if through this they can partner with for-profit entities and achieve new services and facilities in an era of constraint. Disinvestment and the turn to the private market has made public processes and institutions more accountable to the interests of capital than residents while organized groups of residents are more commonly demonized as special interest groups impeding rather than fostering democracy. Members of the public may come to see non-profit societies who support

privatization as “spoilers” of genuine political process. Such distrust can contribute to diminished social cohesion and inhibit formation of a more robust democracy and welfare state. Disinvestment and privatization reduce available resources and downscale decision making, disaggregating the moments and locations in which important needs can be acted upon and met. As a result, rather than being able to count on national or provincial standards, or work to change such standards overall, provisioning and protest are brought down to the smallest scales in iterative and exhausting battles against globally resourced and politically connected entities.

Assembling Land for Investment

The City of Vancouver enacts its new role as a convener and funder of welfare state programs and related public amenities by assembling land for investment and development. The arrival and growth of CAC negotiations and revenues, forming an increasing proportion of Vancouver’s capital budget, follows the arrival, growth, and spread of condominiums, which intensify private interests in land by stacking them vertically rather than horizontally (Harris 2011). CACs are a version of inclusionary zoning increasingly used with social mix policies that together aid the in-migration to central urban areas of wealthier and whiter households. The impacts of real estate development are uneven; all over the globe gentrification of urban areas is increasing and often treated as a positive outcome of urban policy and development even though it is displacing neighbourhoods, communities, and industries. These urban governance and development changes are further bound up with global changes in the housing and land markets where housing, a common outcome of urban land investment and development,

is increasingly a means to wealth the value of which is less in providing home and more in generating additional wealth through continuous growth and rapid exchange.

As Li (2014) argues, land is not naturally an asset, a commodity or a site of investment. Rather, it must be assembled as such. Through the assembly, land's many and often contradictory meanings, values, and uses become aligned toward investment. In Vancouver, neighbourhood planning is a method of aligning disparate conceptions of land's meanings, values, and uses to enable investment. Discourses, such as of "high amenity needs", elaboration of the neighbourhood's poverty through statistics and by eliciting resident worries and desires, of "not enough" public funding, and of the "obsolescence" of existing buildings, zoning, and public institutions helped propel forward an argument that new amenities were vital to neighbourhood continuity and that CACs had to be extracted to afford them. The race and class inequalities that shaped these neighbourhoods and that would be exacerbated by new development were ignored or used as justification for renewal in the planning process. This was so even when residents argued that amenities could be provided publicly. It was so even when residents pointed out that everything determined to be needed, obsolete, or insufficient was still highly relevant because it supported low income and Indigenous communities and communities of colour in each neighbourhood.

Impeding Protest

The zoning options ultimately offered through neighbourhood planning divided neighbourhoods into areas of large and minimal zoning changes, presenting a case that change can be contained. Yet, neighbourhoods are collections of related properties and relationships dependent on certain kinds of land uses that encode certain meanings and

values, which are disrupted by land development. Resident groups often claimed that new zoning and land development would alter neighbourhood character. The concept of neighbourhood character arises from the many types of property uses and the social and cultural relations these produce that create a sense of a neighbourhood place that residents rely on, value, and seek to preserve. When residents depend on neighbourhoods for relationships, goods, and services they could not get elsewhere, more likely in the case of low-income residents, immigrant residents, residents of colour, and Indigenous residents, neighbourhoods are life, community, and culture sustaining with few similar alternatives. Even residents who manage to stay put may experience displacement as they lose the capacity and agency to make place in neighbourhoods once familiar to them. Yet, their calls for public accountability are impeded by the incorporation of market logics and goals.

Broader Contexts and Consequences

Changes in the meanings, values, and uses associated to non-profit-owned and public land, and to land that supports existing neighbourhood uses and relationships has not happened immediately or in Vancouver only. Both time and multi-scalar governmental and economic changes have contributed to their production. Changes in the meanings, values, and uses of land is a reality faced in urban, rural, and other resource-rich contexts globally. As Li (2017) argues, time is key to assembling the technologies, infrastructure, regulations, and interests needed to make land investible. Often these elements must align in ways that facilitate or speed up investment. Investment itself proceeds in boom and bust phases with long-lived consequences that cannot be predicted at the outset. The “housing crisis” and “crisis of disinvestment”, or

of “not enough” public money, arose over decades of disinvestment, downloading, and privatization in housing policy, among other policies. While the notion of housing crisis gives the sense of suddenness, in truth, the “crisis” has arisen over time, accruing gradually as government and welfare state services shifted through the 1970s up to the present. Though accruing gradually, it now has a sense of urgency that is helping propel new non-market housing funding models and deeper engagement with market actors, instruments, and institutions. Yet, much like subsistence farmers who trade their land access rights in new property systems to large agribusiness that does not need their labour (Li 2017a), we cannot predict how such privatization will shape our capacity for provisioning. As public land is transferred to private ownership and social services are decided based on their capacity for producing private profit, it seems likely that the options for course change in future are limited.

In neighbourhoods, as revealed most clearly in Chapters 5 and 6, these threats also produce a sense of urgency. This is the urgency of those who fear and experience displacement pressures, both those of physical displacement and those of “everyday displacement” (Stabrowski 2014). The urgency of residents is to create genuinely affordable housing, but also to preserve neighbourhood character or the familiar patterns of neighbourhood social relations on which residents depend for their sense of familiarity as well as for day to day life needs. Such urgency is exacerbated as changing land uses and the governance structures that shape those uses become facets of political and economic relations the world over. The urgency of residents in Vancouver is seen in many other conflicts over land appropriation, sale, and development globally (Leitner and Sheppard 2018; Weinstein and Ren 2009). Further, as policies in Vancouver and Canada

shift to accommodate investment interest, the investments and profits made in Vancouver contribute to the circulation of global capital in and out of land investments globally. Thus, what happens in Vancouver matters tangibly to what happens in major urban centers globally as well as potentially to non-urban land investments as land is increasingly financialized in global markets (Visser 2017).

Public disinvestment, downloading, and privatization are integral to private reinvestment not just in the context of Vancouver or Canada, but globally. By opening the means for private investment in non-market housing, supposedly new money comes into the public sphere through the provision of housing and public services. However, this new money comes through intensified private investment in housing overall. Supporting such private investment has political ramifications, including loss of trust in political and public institutions that, if reoriented toward public investment and genuine public accountability could create institutions and amenities responsive to both the needs of the poor and of neighbourhoods. Thus, such policies undermine social cohesion and the establishment of more publicly accountable institutions and more robust public welfare state programs. Heightened divides as a result of privatized service delivery are already experienced in the arena of international development where NGOs are viewed as challenging the governance capacity of states, providing high-paying jobs for an educated middle class, and acting as a buffer between elites and the larger public thus hindering public participation and priority setting (Schuller 2009). Everywhere there are cracks in the neoliberal fabric as privatized programs don't deliver (Goode and Maskovsky 2001; Morgen, Acker, and Weigt 2010), projects fail forward rather than leading to a new direction (Kingfisher 2002; Peck 2010), and as disparities become ever more apparent

(Clarke and Newman 2012). As government aligns itself more and more with capital and these cracks emerge and are criticized, participating non-profits and NGOs open themselves up to related criticism. This presents a danger that criticism of non-profits and NGOs, however valid, may open the door for further cuts to public services, risking the lives they support.

Ending a Project but not a Process

In a surprise June 19, 2018 message to their supporters, the Boffo/Kettle partnership announced that they were canceling their proposed development project stating that the “project is no longer economically feasible” given “recent financial requirements placed on it by the City of Vancouver” (<http://www.kettleboffo.com/> Accessed January 21, 2019). Directors of the Boffo/Kettle partnership argued that though the 30 housing of units and expanded administrative and program space would be “financed by the construction of up to 200 units of market housing and 18,000 square feet of retail space” at a cost of \$39 million dollars but with “no cost to taxpayers”, the City of Vancouver required an “additional cash community amenity contribution of between \$6 and \$16 million”, thus rendering the project economically unviable. Excoriating the City for demanding further contributions, the statement argues that despite City of Vancouver commitments to housing that “nurtures a more compassionate, diverse, and inclusive community where neighbours care for and about each other” the City was “unable” to make this project work.

In an unusual publicly-released letter dated June 27, 2018 and addressed to Nancy Keough, Executive Director of the Kettle Society, City Manager Sadhu Johnston outlines

the reasons the City of Vancouver expected a larger CAC payment. This letter argues that based on the development proforma (budget) provided to the City as part of the negotiation for rezoning, the new Kettle facilities would cost a total of \$12 million and that 75% of the land lift, or land value appreciation due to rezoning, was estimated by the City to equal \$18.1 million dollars. The letter states that it is “the City’s expectation that 75% of the land value appreciation gained through rezonings be contributed back to the community rather than kept by the developer. This expectation remains consistent whether or not the developer is partnering with a worthy non-profit organization”. Further that a review by external consultants indicated that even with a payment of \$18.1 million in CACs, the developer would still achieve a profit of 15% plus 25% of the land value appreciation. Finally, the letter states that “[i]f you [Kettle Society] and your development partner chose to abandon your current development, we [the City] would be happy to explore other opportunities to support the Kettle’s aspirations” (Johnston June 27, 2018).

As of June 2018, the development proposal appears halted. Likely, the City of Vancouver, as reported in the communication by the City Manager, did request a larger than expected CAC payment. Likely, too, the decision to cancel the project was made entirely by the developer, Boffo Properties, who according to the Master Agreement signed in 2011 with the Kettle Friendship Society, retained sole discretion as to the feasibility of the project. Perhaps, the developer was not satisfied with the potential profit margin given the additional funds requested by the City. Perhaps, the developer perceived other opportunities elsewhere, opportunities in a more receptive or at least pliant neighbourhood where city council and staff may not be pressured to ask for so

much. Of course, it remains possible that the announcement of Boffo's withdrawal is a ploy. Yet another round of development proposals may come forward in the next years when its suspected that the opposition has died down.

However, the threat to the neighbourhood from this development proposal is, in some ways, carried out despite the project cancelation. The threat is not just the fact of new development itself, or of its immediate impact in terms of change of land use and displacement of existing uses. The threat is also in the change of attitude toward land, namely, the opening of all land, no matter its current meaning and value within the context of neighbourhood, to for-profit development. It's not that the Commercial and Venables site has phenomenal meaning and value in Grandview Woodland. The site is not beautiful or central or even extremely well used, other than the Kettle space. Rather, it's commodification and redevelopment, the allowance of large upzoning, of profiting from public land, and profiting from non-profit services and from the growing desperation and homelessness in the city imposes new attitudes toward neighbourhood land in general. These attitudes encourage profiting at the expense of existing meanings, values, and uses. They spread out to other parts of the neighbourhood, until their impacts are inescapable, as they are in Grandview Woodland now that the neighbourhood plan has been approved.

Tenants of the property immediately west of the Boffo/Kettle development site have been evicted and a proposal for a 6-storey market rental building has been put forward for the site. Such rental buildings, while called affordable housing by the City of Vancouver, rent at rates that far exceed current median rent rates in the neighbourhood. Longstanding businesses along the high street have shut down as commercial rents have

climbed beyond their capacity to pay. Adjacent warehouses have been bought by numbered companies, some for astronomical sums that will require further change of use and upzoning to recoup. Some warehouses long ago converted to artist studios have recently notified tenant artists of rent increases between 60% and 100%. Stories abound about which residential rental buildings have been bought by which big development firms. At city hall, the planning staff that handle development applications for Grandview Woodland are so overburdened by the number of applications received, they have told the development community that applications will take a minimum of five years to process. While it is not possible to directly attribute all these changes to the Boffo/Kettle development proposal, time and time again, neighbourhoods in Vancouver experience a relationship between upzoning and neighbourhood change. The relationship is not just in the developments carried out, but in the changed attitude and behavior around land enabled by the promise of further upzoning and the windfall profits that accrue through rising land value, rent rates, and condominium development.

This dissertation has argued that public disinvestment measures in Canada have resulted in a rescaling of the city as an arena of welfare state funding, which is enacted by assembling land for investment and development, such as through neighbourhood planning. It has also argued that urban residents articulate alternative understandings of the value of land and place through anti-development campaigns and in other protests in support of neighbourhood-based public institutions. However, when they do so, they are often unsuccessful because city government has incorporated and come to rely on intensive capital investment in land in order to achieve the resources no longer provided by federal and provincial governments. Supporting these capital investments in land are,

increasingly, non-profit housing agencies that experience the opportunity for an expansion in their needed services in an overall time of retrenchment. The consequences of this unusual juxtaposition of for-profit, non-profit, state, and real estate interests is a disruption to the capacity and freedom of urban residents to make place. Not all residents experience this disruption to the capacity and freedom to make place in the same way or to the same degree. Residents who have fewer resources or who depend on their neighbourhoods as places of life, language, and culture-sustaining relationships experience disproportionate loss, not only by being physically pushed out of neighbourhoods, but because neighbourhoods change around them. Without a more responsive public structure, capital investments in urban land are difficult to oppose, but privatization of welfare state institutions and services is also leading to even deeper privatization. The possibilities for building a renewed public and accountable provisioning structure are limited. Yet, importantly, the capacity of residents to articulate the value of public programs and public provisioning, as was done by residents in this dissertation, remains hopeful.

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