

Child and Youth Friendly Housing & Neighbourhood Design

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
BACKGROUND.....	3
<i>CONSIDERING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH</i>	3
LITERATURE REVIEW	4
<i>CO-HOUSING</i>	4
<i>COURTYARD HOUSING</i>	5
<i>FLEX HOUSING</i>	6
<i>MIXED-USE/GREYFIELD DEVELOPMENT</i>	7
<i>NEIGHBOURHOODS</i>	8
<i>Porch Communities</i>	8
<i>Row Houses/Townhouses</i>	9
<i>Shared Streets/Woonerf</i>	10
<i>SECONDARY SUITES</i>	11
<i>URBAN FORM AND AMENITY SPACES</i>	12
<i>Connected Natural Pathways, Bicycle Paths, Active Transportation</i>	12
<i>Child and Youth Peer Interaction Spaces and Places</i>	14
CHILD AND YOUTH DISCUSSIONS.....	15
<i>ABBOTSFORD RECREATION CENTRE</i>	16
<i>MATSQUI RECREATION CENTRE</i>	18
<i>CHILD AND YOUTH FRIENDLY ABBOTSFORD COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS</i>	20
SUMMARY.....	21
DESIGN GUIDELINES.....	21
<i>CHILD AND YOUTH FRIENDLY DESIGN CHECKLIST</i>	22
RECOMMENDATIONS	24
BIBLIOGRAPHY	25
APPENDIX 1: FACILITATION NOTES	27
<i>ABBOTSFORD RECREATION CENTRE</i>	27
<i>MATSQUI RECREATION CENTRE</i>	30

INTRODUCTION

“The state of the young in any city is the litmus test for the city’s level of sustainability and vibrancy” – Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director, UN HABITAT

In 2009 the City of Abbotsford received two grants for Child and Youth Friendly City research. The results of this research are integrated into this study and the Abbotsford Child and Youth Friendly Community Strategy (2009), funded by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). As an outcome of this research, Abbotsford City Council directed staff to work with the community to develop an implementation plan. This plan will be developed throughout 2010 and 2011. This study presents findings related to the Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) grant funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The focus is outlining Child and Youth Friendly design and building policies. These policies are being reviewed to integrate into the Official Community Plan and zoning guidelines.

Child and Youth Friendly housing and neighbourhood design is an important topic for consideration of all levels of government, especially municipal. Such consideration is not only necessary due to international advocacy of child and youth rights, such as that of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which guarantees their rights as citizens of their city, country, and of the world, but also considering the fact that our current children and youth are the future and sole beneficiaries of their current cities and nations.

By including the needs of child and youth within neighbourhood and housing design, a municipality can create dynamic, liveable, complete communities that promote healthy lifestyles, affordable housing, and social integration. Historically, neighbourhood design has only taken into account current market trends, economic diversity and growth, middle class valuations and the needs of the community at the particular time of development rather than considering long-term trends, growth, and future populations. This study presents several options for neighbourhood design that take into account the three pillars of sustainability, future demographic trends and future housing demands through a Child and Youth Friendly lens.

Current studies prove that there is a need for basic/core housing for individuals and families as there is a concurrent lack of inventory of affordable housing, income/wage and housing market disparity (City of Surrey, 2007). Thus it has become apparent that there is a need for more flexibility regarding density and density requirements, and regional coordination regarding housing supply, its affordability and availability (City of Surrey, 2007).

BACKGROUND

The Child and Youth Friendly Abbotsford Community Strategy (2009) set forth a goal of “being responsive to the needs of children and youth, enriching the lives of young people through deeper consideration of their particular needs, intelligence, and abilities, and bringing a child/youth voice to planning and development policies and practices”. It also identified priorities of the Abbotsford Child and Youth Friendly Abbotsford working group (2009) which are to “support development that encourages and implements Child and Youth Friendliness; to review City policies, such as OCP and development permit guidelines to reflect Child and Youth Friendly practices and design guidelines; and to develop collaborations with child and youth organizations.” All of which provide the foundation for research into the current and future needs of Abbotsford children and youth, particularly with housing developments and affordability.

According to the 2006 Census, 27% of Abbotsford’s population is made up of young people between the ages of 0-19 years.

Age	Male	Female
0-4	4,080	3,800
5-9	4,250	3,875
10-14	4,575	4,320
15-19	4,660	4,410
Total	17,565	16,405

Land use planning is at the core of the development of Child and Youth Friendly neighbourhoods. Such zoning practices as mixed-use, Flex Housing, cohousing, secondary suites, and courtyard housing, all lend themselves to developing affordable housing initiatives included in neighbourhood design and implementation. Additionally, key urban design principles, such as complete communities and nodal development aid in creating neighbourhoods that help in such development initiatives.

CONSIDERING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

“My father always says, “You are what you do, not what you say. Well, what you do makes me cry at night. You grown-ups say you love us. I challenge you, please make your actions reflect your words.” Severn Suzuki, Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, 1992

Due to the inherent violent nature of today’s cities, there has been a natural response of fear in allowing children and youth to be active in the community through play, volunteerism, or through intergenerational interaction (Hart, 1995). It is important to consider how to create communities that are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable that will enable children to grow to be healthy, active participants of their local community (Hart, 1995).

Coulton and Korbin (2007) summarize that there are tangible and intangible neighbourhood conditions that could affect the well-being of children and youth, particularly housing and neighbourhood conditions, the amount of and access to green and/or open space, and the sense of neighbourhood identity and belonging.

When taking a *rights-based* approach to housing and neighbourhood development, it is clear that some considerations of Child and Youth Friendly neighbourhood design and housing development would include education, health, income, safety and protection, and the ability to gather and associate with their peer groups (Dee, 2008).

Cooper and Sarkissian (1986) identified several needs of children and youth as they pertain to housing and neighbourhood. These include safe and uninhibited play, need for non-supervised outdoor interaction, housing and neighbourhoods safe from physical, social and environmental hazards, interaction with nature, peer group interaction and assimilation, private spaces, and mobility.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Co-HOUSING

Cohousing is a socially constructed housing typology that is designed and operated by residents (Cohousing, 2010). The ideology behind cohousing is to create a community in which the residents have a common goal or perception of what a community should be and how to meet the needs, while also balancing perceptions. Cohousing is multigenerational and intertwines public and private spheres to create a more open neighbourhood and sense of community. Private space is usually contained within a conventionally built home, within close proximity or often attached. Public spaces are delineated as communal spaces that include playgrounds, courtyards, and usually a common house (Cohousing, 2010).

Cohousing provides a safe environment for children, and is often a more affordable option for residents. In most cases, there are limited or no rental options within cohousing, providing insurance over the type of resident who wishes to move into the community. If there are rental accommodations within the community, there are strict screening processes that are built in place to ensure there is no risk to the current residents. Cohousing is similar to courtyard housing, porch neighbourhoods, and often has similarities to the shared-street ideology. They are pedestrian friendly and walkable, environmentally friendly, and provide optimal social interactions. Cohousing communities may consist of single detached dwellings that are close in proximity with a common courtyard, community garden or other communal open space (Figure 1), or may be built as townhouses with a common and covered corridor with shared outdoor space (Figure 2), or they may be built as apartment style housing that shares common pathways entrances and corridors (Figure 3).



Figure 1. Cohousing communities can be single-detached dwellings that are placed in close proximity to one another, often resembling courtyard housing . Source: <http://www.cohousing.org>



Figure 2. Some cohousing models, such as Windsong, are townhouse style housing units with covered corridors for communal space. Source: www.windsong.bc.ca.



Figure 3. Other cohousing models, such as that seen in the Eastern Village resemble apartment style housing has a community vision and common idea for environmental protection. Source: <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2008/06/buy-or-rent-other-options.php>

COURTYARD HOUSING

Courtyard housing has historically been developed around the spatial alignment of single-family dwelling types. The form and spatial qualities are different than those of prototypical housing developments. The courtyard, its size, space, and alignment are the main feature of the development and set the spatial dimensions and spatial alignment of the housing accordingly (Polyzoides et al.1992). The courtyard creates a specific public space that is shared by the residents and promotes public gathering and a distinct separation from the public and private spheres of housing. Courtyard housing is a medium to high density typology that is often synonymous with mixed-use developments, walkability, and liveability (Polyzoides et al. 1992).

The common courtyard helps to define the neighbourhood, and creates a safe and nurturing place for children and youth, and provides a social connection that is not found in many medium to high density developments to date. Additionally, courtyard housing provides an inviting housing for which the residents take ownership, and have the ability to ensure security and peace. Courtyard housing has the opportunity to increase the affordable housing inventory

as it reduces development costs through efficient use of land and energy. The courtyard may be used as a Child and Youth Friendly amenity space or common pathways and corridors (Figure 4), or simply as shared entryway where public interactions will occur (Figure 5).



Figure 4. Courtyards may be hard or soft landscapes for child and youth amenity spaces or as common pathways and corridors for the residents. Source: <http://www.courtyardhousing.org/about.html>



Figure 5. Housing alignment with entryways facing toward the courtyard create an atmosphere where social interactions may occur. Source: <http://wall.aa.uic.edu62730/> www.architectureweek.com/2002/0724/index.html

FLEX HOUSING

Flex Housing varies in size and design, environmental friendliness, but has several main inherent principles. These principles include adaptability to permit the conversion of a larger room, attic or main floor to be converted into a secondary suite, apartment, or in some cases a store; adaptability and accessibility of all rooms to meet the changing needs of the residents as they age or as their circumstances may change; affordability as a result of a reduction of costs due to renovations, moving or repurchasing; and “healthy” housing that has low-emissions, and energy and resource efficacy (Figures 6&7) (CMHC, 2010). Flex Housing provides alternative

affordable housing that can meet the future needs of children and youth as they grow from single young adults to married couples, mothers/fathers, or empty nesters and retirees. The housing provides financial support through rental income or live/work units and variability that can meet their changing needs.



Figure 6. Solar powered homes with flex main floor provide the opportunity to create a main floor suite, or home occupation.
Source: <http://homegallerdesign.com/passive-solar-house-design/>



Figure 7. Abbotsford Flex Housing project provides an affordable option within the community.
Source: City of Abbotsford, 2009

MIXED-USE/GREYFIELD DEVELOPMENT

Greyfield (re)development uses land that is currently being wasted, neglected, or degraded through lack of use, reduced use, or through the dilapidation of land, buildings, or both. Historically, this has mostly included central business districts in cities that were developed through concentric planning and design. Greyfield development has potential for the creation of mixed-use development that inherently includes pedestrian friendly design, density, affordability, accessibility, and the integration of land use zones and uses. In the past, mixed-use development has been similar to transit oriented development, and active transportation. Mixed-use development creates greater housing options with diverse household types, reduction of auto dependence, social interaction and a sense of community (Figure 8). Mixed-use development also assists in the creation of safe and liveable streets through ensuring greater activity and more “eyes on the street”. Mixed-use development can be developed to be affordable by utilising City lands that have been neglected or dilapidated. The design of affordable mixed-use development must include high density residences, alternative

transportation options, and mixed land uses. Additionally, they can provide a valuable housing alternative for young adults (particularly students), married couples, and small families as they are walkable and easily accessible.



Source: <http://urbanplacesandspaces.blogspot.com>

<http://transitorienteddevelopment.dot.ca.gov>

Figure 8. Mixed-use development provides a valuable alternative for affordable housing and safe neighbourhood design.

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Porch Communities

Porches have played a unique function and form in history as they date back as far as Ancient Greece, and are common around the world. The porch, romantically described as a narrator of American history, has played a vital role in the built form and the social formation of many towns and cities. Typically a projection of the suburban home, the porch house or brownstone has slowly been eradicated over the years (Porch Project, 2010). Research shows that the porch not only served as an entranceway and, if covered, protection from the elements (Figure 9), but also meets the needs of the community through providing access to nature and a sense of ownership and belonging in the community (Porch Project, 2010).

The porch has been an agent of social interaction through the creation of a space that is both personal, public, and hospitable (Figure 10). Jane Jacobs states that a successful neighbourhood has three qualities, clear separation between public and private spaces, “eyes on the street” to ensure safety, and pedestrian friendly design, which includes the ability of child and youth to play and interact (Jacobs, 1961).



Source : <http://www.torontoloftblog.com?p=1016>



<http://www.rpointe.org/>

Figure 9. The front porch creates an inviting and hospitable character to a neighbourhood, while also creating safety through social interaction.



Source: <http://www.oldhousejournal.com>



<http://aroundtheapplegroupontoursnyc.com>

Figure 10. Porches that extend from the public to the private or vice versa and that provide an opportunity for social interaction also provide a safer environment for the residents and for children and youth who wish to play or “hang out”.

Row Houses/Townhouses

Row houses started off as a type of workers’ cottage from the period of industrialization to increase the profits of the enterprise rather than to fulfill the needs of the residents. Row houses are close in proximity and identical in structure, colour and linear design. There is a basic lack of uniqueness and privacy. There are major economic advantages, as they are simple and use minimal land to develop in comparison to the modern single family dwelling (Gunter and Brauneck, 2008). Row houses, often joined together, increase energy and land efficiency, and create neighbourhood connections. They may be single-story (Figure 11), split-level (Figure 12) or multi-story with terraces (Figure 13), and may be renovated to fulfill the changing needs of the occupants. Historically, single story row houses were added on the same level, yet the split and multi-story row houses often offer the option to lease or rent a room or create a secondary suite (Gunter and Brauneck, 2008).



Figure 11. Rancher row houses were commonly used as workers' cottages and were easily added to as the family grew or changed.
Source: www.heritagetexas.com



Figure 12. Split level row houses offer an opportunity for secondary suites or apartments.
Source: <http://www.stayz.com.au/37651>



Figure 13. Multi-story row houses, common in Eastern Canada, provide an opportunity for family growth, and/or income supplementation through renting or leasing suites/apartments/rooms.
Source : http://www.flickr.com/photos/visual_guy/3323947173/

Shared Streets/Woonerf

Shared streets remove the car as the principle user, and, as a result, create a dynamic streetscape of pedestrian movement, child's play, social interactions, retail transactions and vehicular patterns (Figure 14) (Ben-Joseph, 1995). Children and youth benefit from the design of shared streets as they provide options for play and social interaction in a safe environment (Ben-Joseph, 1995). The design of the street ensures the residents taking ownership of the public space, as it is similarly to the porch community viewed as an extension of the personal space (Ben-Joseph, 1995). In the Netherlands, the "woonerf" is viewed as an extension of their own space as it has been translated as "residential yard" or public living room (Hand, 2006). There are several criteria for the development of a "woonerf", which include signage or gateways that introduce the public to the street, traffic calming measures (curved roads, speed bumps, etc) (Figure 15), must have play equipment, trees that serve as outdoor amenities, no curbs, and intermittent and staggered parking between houses and roadways (Hand, 2006).



Figure 14. Woonerf's or shared streets create a unique style of liveable street.
 Source: <http://www.greencascades.com/design.html>



Figure 15. Woonerf's implement traffic calming measures and signage to inform the public of the type of street they are entering. <http://streetswiki.wikispaces.com/Woonerf>

SECONDARY SUITES

Secondary suites are living units that are separate and distinct from the primary residence from which they are located (Figure 16). Secondary suites provide municipal residents with affordable rental options. There are a variety of types of secondary suites, including suites above a garage, above or below the main living space, attached at grade, or a separate detached living space (often referred to as a guest house) (Government of Alberta, 2010).



Source: <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/page313.aspx>



www.infotube.net

Figure 16. Secondary suites are an affordable housing option for municipalities that seek to improve their affordable housing inventory.

URBAN FORM AND AMENITY SPACES

Connected Natural Pathways, Bicycle Paths, Active Transportation

Research has shown that the urban form that is prevalent in many cities has resulted in an increase of many childhood disorders, including obesity, ADD/ADHD, asthma, and an increase in lead poisoning. Current global research and evidence proposes that the reliance on automobiles for child transportation to and from school and leisure activities is also a mitigating factor. O'Brien and Gilbert (2010) found that as of 2004:

- 26% of Canadian children and youth aged 2 to 17 were overweight or obese with 8% being obese.
- Over 50% of Canadian children and youth rely solely on inactive modes of transportation to travel to and from school, with a further 21% using inactive modes for at least part of the journey. Adolescents are more likely than children to commute to school using sedentary forms of transport.
- Less than half of Canadian children and youth are active enough to ensure proper growth and development.
- Among teenagers, less than 20% get sufficient exercise.
- Boys were more physically active than girls.
- There's a trend toward less physical activity in higher grades.

In the development of Child and Youth Friendly cities, it is imperative that active play and transportation are included in the urban fabric (Figure 17). It is equally important to ensure that there are areas with natural vegetation, including trees, flowers, and other plants that not only provide an environmental benefit to the community, but aid in the promotion of active and creative play (Figure 18).



Figure 17. Creating opportunities for active play help prevent many childhood disorders, such as obesity, asthma, and general ill-health.

Source: <http://www.planning.org.au/policy/child-friendly-communities>



Figure18. Creative play is important to the social and physical well-being of children and youth. Source: www.blommit.com

In conjunction with the assurance of natural play spaces and pathways it is important to incorporate “active transportation¹” friendly guidelines as they have been proven to be an inherent part of child health, and affordability (especially when families cannot afford the time or expense of owning a vehicle and driving children to and from school). Active transportation increases the ability of children and youth to participate in their community, have peer interaction, and connect to their natural environment. Including active transportation into neighbourhood design with delineating bicycle traffic from pedestrian and automobile traffic (Figure 19), creating pathways for skateboards, rollerblades, and other transportation (Figure 20), and separating pedestrian pathways from traffic (Figure 21), while ensure barrier-free design.

¹ Active transportation is being used rather than pedestrian friendly as children and youth use more than one mode of transportation, such as skateboarding, bicycling, scootering, roller blading etc.



Figure 19. Delineating areas for bicycling is an important urban design method for safe and active alternative transportation.
Source: www.brownstoner.com



Figure 20. Brussels, like Vancouver, has recognized the need for incorporating skateboarding and rollerblading into the urban form by providing connected skate parks and skateboarding friendly bylaws. Source: <http://shop.soxsixtyfour.com>



Figure 21. Separating traffic from pedestrian friendly pathways (sidewalks) is an important aspect of active transportation friendly design principles and incorporates indigenous plantings that provide a healthy environment for the community.
Source: <http://dic.co>

Child and Youth Peer Interaction Spaces and Places

Peer group interaction, whether through sports or “hanging out”, provides children and youth with physical, social, and emotional benefits that cannot be underestimated. Research completed by Payne and Fogary (2007) show there are a number of physical, emotional, social benefits to ensuring that there are sports opportunities within the community, including life skills, competition skills, conflict resolution, communications, and have a “protective” factor for high risk-youth in keeping them in school and providing a foundation for success in the future (financial, social, and emotional success).

Social interaction with youth is an important factor to consider as this is the social practice that slowly ensures successful integration into the community and separation from parental control and care. It has also been proven to benefit in school achievement and growth (Jin et al., 2009). Interactive spaces and places may be as simple as a meeting space near a local park, a child and youth centre, Child and Youth Friendly coffee shops, or the front porch of a home. It may even

be as complex as a specialized place such as the Youth Pod (Figure 22), that is youth friendly, environmentally friendly (powered by a hand-turned crank), and provides youth with an interesting place to meet (pod also has Bluetooth capable music player options).



Figure 22. Places that include technology, play, and social interaction, such as Sutcliffe's Youth Pod are an important part of Child and Youth Friendly communities, especially in meeting their social, physical, and emotional health needs.

Source: <http://sutcliffeplay.co.uk>

CHILD AND YOUTH DISCUSSIONS

The approach to developing this study and design checklist included the following:

- Development of a Child and Youth Friendly assessment lens tool based on where we “live, work, play and care” (April-May 2009)
- Community consultation sessions with youth, children, parents, and caregivers (May-June 2009)
- Intergenerational activities consultation session with community stakeholders (July 2009)
- Community Leaders Forum to establish Child and Youth Friendly priorities for Abbotsford (October 2009)
- Community Stakeholders Event to identify actions based on priorities identified (October 2009)
- Statement of Intention for making Abbotsford a Child and Youth Friendly City (November 2009)
- Abbotsford Child and Youth Friendly Community Strategy (November 2009)
- Further consultation and sessions with youth related to housing (September-October 2010)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE PROJECT *(including roles of each and audiences reached)*

1. Project Coordination: City of Abbotsford - Planning Services Department
2. Project Advisory: City of Abbotsford - Child and Youth Friendly Abbotsford Working Group
3. Consultant: Lucie Honey-Ray, Life Changes
4. Key Partners: Abbotsford School District No. 34, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Literacy Matters Abbotsford, Abbotsford Police Department, Abbotsford Restorative Justice and Advocacy Association, Abbotsford Youth Commission, Abbotsford Community Services, Vibrant Abbotsford, Abbotsford Early Childhood Committee, Abbotsford Child and Youth Committee, BC Healthy Communities, Impact Youth Addiction and Prevention Services, the Reach Gallery and City of Abbotsford Parks, Recreation & Culture.
5. Focus Group and Survey Participants: Children, youth, parents and caregivers (100+ participants)
6. Community Stakeholders and Leaders (60+ participants)
7. Youth groups at Abbotsford Recreation Centre and Matsqui Recreation Centre

For the purpose of this report, consultations with youth related to specific housing forms are documented below. Details on broader consultations are available in the Abbotsford Child and Youth Friendly Community Strategy (2009). The design checklist and guidelines integrate findings from all community sessions.

ABBOTSFORD RECREATION CENTRE

Children and youth with the Abbotsford Youth Commission that attend the Abbotsford Recreation Centre generally come from more affluent homes than those in other areas of Abbotsford. The youth in these neighbourhoods, in general, live in larger single family dwellings that are owned by their family. However, it is important to note that some of the youth in this particular discussion did live in rental housing, particularly secondary suites.

During the facilitation, the group was asked to answer several questions that pertained to their community, housing, and what they feel would be their future needs. The most common comments made during the facilitation, as they pertain to the good of their neighbourhoods were:

1. There are a lot of homeless people
2. Neighbourhood is close to school and is friendly
3. A lot of friends in the neighbourhood
4. Close to pool
5. Close to ocean
6. In the middle of everywhere and everything
7. Close to Zeller's
8. Like my huge house
9. Close to tennis courts

The most common comments made during the facilitation, as they pertain to the challenges of their neighbourhoods were:

1. There are a lot of homeless people and too many drug addicts so it is scary to go outside
2. Live across town from school, want to live closer to the school
3. There are too many people
4. There is a lot of crime in Abbotsford
5. Can be scary to walk around at night
6. Don't like living beside a main road
7. Needs more parks

From the discussion focusing on the needs of the neighbourhood and future needs regarding housing the following statements/observations were made:

1. Bigger apartment suites
2. Reduced rent prices in buildings
3. Homeless shelters
4. More spaces with upstairs and downstairs
5. Two car driveways
6. View
7. Parks nearby
8. Want a mansion
9. Clean up the lake
10. Housing close to friends, stores, and bank
11. Housing close to downtown
12. Housing by friend's house
13. Suites over garages
14. Convenience stores closer to home
15. Less drug dealers
16. More public spaces

The following comments were made after the discussion regarding different housing options:

1. The co-housing option was met with mixed emotions. Some really liked the idea because it was "homier" and environmentally friendly. However, for the most part the youth did not like this option as there were too many people around and not enough privacy.
2. Courtyard Housing was accepted as a really good idea as it was safe and protected. They thought it was good for raising kids as it was a nice community where people would have to agree on the communal property.
3. Flex Housing was noted as being a great idea, especially considering the subsidized mortgage through renting and possibly opening a business below the house. It also seemed that the units were of a good size and looked like regular housing.
4. Greyfield/Mixed-Use Some of the youth liked this neighbourhood design because it has most of the items that the residents would need and it is convenient. Other comments

included that it would be too loud, too busy, too crowded, too public, and too small to live there.

5. Neighbourhood Design The different neighbourhood designs were noted separately and included the following comments: Porch Communities/Playborhoods would give a good place to be with friends and would be better socially. The row houses were good because they are private and the appearance was nice. Others felt that the row houses were too close and too similar. The woonerf was accepted by several as a good idea by several youth, as a good place for children. Contrarily, others thought the woonerf seemed more dangerous than anything.
6. Secondary Suites/Granny Suites Most of the youth really liked the idea of secondary suites, as they could “move up” if needed and it would provide a large space for a lower cost. Additionally they like the idea that it would subsidize the mortgage and other household expenses.

During the facilitation it became evident that the main needs in the neighbourhood, as perceived by the youth, are safety and the reduction of illicit drug use, drug sales and the related crime. Additionally, a significant number of comments expressed the need for pedestrian friendly, mixed-use neighbourhoods that provided a decent sized house with nearby convenience stores. The youth really like the idea of the secondary suites and Flex Housing, mostly because they understood the gap between income and affordable housing and can help subsidize mortgages. Finally, during the discussion, it became apparent that although not all of the neighbourhood designs were accepted, the incorporation of the safety principles and the idea of having a particular space and place to gather with peers were important.

MATSQUI RECREATION CENTRE

Children and youth with the Abbotsford Youth Commission that attend the Matsqui Recreation Centre come from varying socio-economic backgrounds. Many of the families in the area rent their housing, or own older more affordable housing, such as cooperative townhouses etc.

During the facilitation, the group was asked to answer several questions that pertained to their community, housing, and what they feel would be their future needs. The most common comments made during the facilitation, as they pertain to the good of their neighbourhoods were:

1. Good public transportation
2. Quiet streets
3. Police help
4. Hospital
5. Parks
6. Security
7. Abbotsford Youth Centre
8. Well lit places
9. Mall
10. Skate park
11. Bike park

The most common comments made during the facilitation, as they pertain to the challenges of their neighbourhoods were:

1. Not enough street lights in dark places
2. Gangs and guns
3. Lack of public transit in certain areas
4. Lots of litter
5. Speeding
6. Youth violence
7. Lack of maintenance of roads and sidewalks
8. Too many grow ops
9. Too much crime
10. Lots of “druggies”
11. Not enough skate parks

From the discussion focusing on the needs of the neighbourhood and future needs regarding housing, the following statements/observations were made:

1. More hospitals
2. More youth centre buildings
3. More parks
4. Less grow ops
5. More recycling areas
6. More police
7. More street lights
8. Less drug shops
9. Rehabilitations centres
10. Homeless shelters
11. More colleges/universities
12. Less gangs
13. Less highways
14. Long term lease/housing
15. More affordable housing
16. Security for houses
17. Less apartments
18. Smaller housing
19. Housing with more bedrooms
20. Neighbourhood watch

The following comments were made after the discussion regarding different housing options:

1. The co-housing option was met with mixed emotions. Some really liked the idea because it is interesting, and is environmentally friendly. However, for the most part the youth did not like this option as there were too many people around and not enough

privacy. However, many of the youth felt that if the co-housing was for students of a particular age that it would be ideal.

2. Courtyard Housing was accepted as a really good idea as it was safe and protected. They thought it was good for raising kids as it was a nice community that seems really affordable.
3. Flex Housing was noted as being a great idea. Others wondered if it was worth it, and several were not overly enthusiastic about this style of housing.
4. Greyfield/Mixed-Use Some of the youth really liked this neighbourhood design because it is convenient, uses less land, is pedestrian friendly, and safe. Others thought this type of housing would be ideal for seniors, and others did not like it at all.
5. Neighbourhood Design The different neighbourhood designs were accepted as being safe, and a good place to hang out and raise kids. Some did not like the idea of attached row housing, but the idea behind row housing as an affordable option and as being good for the family. The woonerf was perceived as being a little bit dangerous because of the cars being allowed on the road.
6. Secondary Suites/Granny Suites Most of the youth at this facilitation did not like the suites as they need more room and surface area. Others felt that it would be better housing options for poorer people. Youth that lived in secondary suites previously stated that such housing makes sense and would be beneficial.

During this facilitation, it became evident that the principle concerns within the neighbourhood include safety and the reduction of drug-related crime. There were several comments that pertained to specific design elements of the community, including lighting, transportation, and road building/construction, that provide a different perspective of the neighbourhood other than the socio-economic status. There is a strong emphasis on the reduction of the number of drugs and crime.

CHILD AND YOUTH FRIENDLY ABBOTSFORD COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Through the community consultations for the Child and Youth Friendly Abbotsford Community Strategy, the top five priorities were noted as:

1. Supportive neighbourhoods
2. Unified complete communities
3. Child and Youth Friendly communities
4. Affordable housing in close proximity to stores and services
5. Neighbourhoods that were secure, safe and appropriate for families

(Life Changes Consulting, 2009)

The priorities that were shown through the “four lens” Live, Work/Go to School, Play, and Care included:

1. The need for walkable safe neighbourhoods and places
2. More recreation and neighbourhood unification
3. Mixed-use
4. Mixed income housing
5. Adaptable housing

Key elements such as improved access to affordable housing, improved public transportation, improved awareness of school and youth-centred events, and improved opportunity for input into developments were also noted through the specific lenses as defined above (ibid.).

SUMMARY

Through the many consultations carried out in 2009, and the recent child and youth facilitations through the Abbotsford Youth Committee, valuable information regarding the current and future needs of Abbotsford, as it pertains to housing inventory and neighbourhood design guidelines, has been gathered. The current focus of many of the participants of the consultations is to create a safe Abbotsford free from crime, where child and youth can have the freedom to go outside without feeling that they are in danger. The main response regarding what is most needed for future housing development has been the need for mixed-use neighbourhood design with affordable rental and owned housing.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

Within the development of Child and Youth Friendly neighbourhoods, it is important to include several aspects of design that will provide unique, dynamic, and creative features, and public and private integration helping to create a liveable community. Some design principles that should be included are:

1. Discernible social centres, such as plazas, squares, or green spaces with transportation located nearby.
2. Widening sidewalks and pathways, and implementing quality streetscapes, thereby creating cohesion throughout the community.
3. In commercial or mixed-use areas ensuring that the buildings are located close to the sidewalk and to one another in order to create an “urban sense of spatial definition.
4. Pedestrian and active transportation (bicycling, skateboarding etc) friendly.
5. Mixed building and housing types, including live-work units, offices, row houses, apartments, shops etc with higher densities.
6. Elementary school no more than one mile from the housing units.
7. High streets, treed boulevards, and street trees separating the street from the pedestrian (but not obstructing the view of the sidewalk).
8. Gateway signs and access points into the neighbourhood with traffic calming measures.
9. Provide sufficient hard-surface and soft-surfaced landscaping to promote a variety of outdoor activities (Tolmic, 2009).
10. Create technological areas for free Bluetooth connectivity, Wi-Fi, etc that is easily accessible for children and youth.

Cooper and Sarkissian (1986) identify several key design guidelines as they pertain to housing and neighbourhood development which include:

1. Areas for family play.

2. Personal space for peer group interactions (child’s play space) and many different activities within the house.
3. Outdoor playspace that is close to the house, and safe.
4. “Buffer zones” that demarcate private, semi-public, and public spaces.
5. Front porch or transitional areas that provide a safe area of play for children.
6. Private areas around the dwellings that provide privacy, noise buffers, and private amenity space (for gardening etc).

The particular design guidelines of the housing developments may include:

1. Having the availability of three bedrooms.
2. Rooms large enough to hold a bed, dresser, desk, and playspace (City of Vancouver, 1992).
3. Storage spaces that have bulk storage units where families can store bicycles, toys, strollers, etc. that is safe and easily accessible (City of Vancouver, 1992).
4. An open design that facilitates the movement of children through the living room, to the bathroom, and to the kitchen with ease.

CHILD AND YOUTH FRIENDLY DESIGN CHECKLIST

Neighbourhood: Design	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood design facilitates interaction and observance of children playing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to public transportation is within walking distance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood design provides walking access to retail and other services
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood design incorporates a local community centre or public space such as a library
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing and neighbourhood design incorporates safety, accessibility, and child independence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Design incorporates amenity space for children, youth and seniors
Neighbourhood: Amenity Spaces	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Play spaces are well maintained and offer a variety of facilities, such as playground equipment, youth amenity space, natural landscapes (trees, grass, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Parks include designated play areas for age appropriateness, while also incorporating a space conducive to family gatherings
<input type="checkbox"/>	Picnic and seating areas are available
<input type="checkbox"/>	Both sunny and shaded areas are incorporated in the public spaces and are easily accessible
Neighbourhood: Housing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A variety of affordable housing options are available in the community (one, two and three bedroom apartments, condos, single family dwellings, townhouses, row houses, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing developments are built to national safety codes, local building codes, and are safe for children of all ages

<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing is developed with the goal of long-term residency and are therefore adaptable
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing is developed to meet the current and changing needs of the resident(s), and incorporates barrier free design, accessibility, sustainability and adaptability
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing is developed to promote safety and security within the neighbourhood, i.e. “eyes on the street” principles
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing is developed to promote sustainability and environmentally friendly improvements
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dedicated space for children and youth is integrated into multi-family development and provides both active and passive outdoor and indoor space
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing is located close to corner stores, amenities, day care, schools (including university linkages), and employment
<input type="checkbox"/>	Housing options are inclusive of all members of the community
Neighbourhood: Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood design incorporates lighting, safe crosswalks, sidewalk maintenance and connected pathways
<input type="checkbox"/>	There is safe, accessible and linked/connected transportation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood design incorporates pedestrian pathways, active transportation, and natural environmental features
Neighbourhood Facilities: Schools	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools plan family events
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools are open to different family types/structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools are open to the larger community and may be used as youth centres, community centres etc. after school hours
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public participation is inherent in the operations and changes in operations that affect children and youth
<input type="checkbox"/>	Before and after school care, bussing arrangements, to aid in single family homes, or homes where two parents are in the workforce
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bussing protocol changes to meet the needs of the children and youth in the community and ensure there is freedom of mobility
<input type="checkbox"/>	School design incorporates active transportation, child and youth play spaces, recreational areas, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools implement policies that provide healthy food and meals to students and families who may need extra support
<input type="checkbox"/>	Schools provide adequate training and skill development for future employability
Neighbourhood: Security	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fire, police, ambulance, and other emergency services have an adequate response time to all areas of the neighbourhood
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate support for children and youth is available in the community
<input type="checkbox"/>	There are opportunities for crime prevention programs in the neighbourhood, including Neighbourhood Crime Watch, Block Watch, Block Parents, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood design incorporates lighting for all streets, buildings and public spaces

<input type="checkbox"/>	Community members are involved in development and changes that effect them in their neighbourhood
<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies for active transportation in the neighbourhood and for clear delineation of the transportation sites etc. are developed
<input type="checkbox"/>	Neighbourhood design incorporates community safety principles, such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), “eyes on the street”, etc.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop policies based on the design of lively, inclusive, creative, and liveable communities.
2. Encourage land use planning that promotes open spaces, pedestrian movement, age-appropriate independence and transportation, especially within Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan, and the Official Community Plan.
3. Implement Child and Youth Friendly amenity space into checklists for multi-family development.
4. Create land use bylaws that preserve the natural environment surrounding neighbourhoods, or the use of natural vegetation or ‘greening’ in new developments.
5. Implement Child and Youth Friendly guidelines and housing policies, including zoning for varied housing forms such as Flex Housing in the Official Community Plan and area plans.
6. Work with the Abbotsford Social Development Advisory Committee to ensure that there is adequate youth representation in Official Community Plan and land use bylaw amendments, etc.
7. Within area plans, the Official Community Plan, and the Parks, Recreation & Culture Master Plan, ensure there is design that reflects the local environment, takes in consideration of energy efficiency, and to encourage diversity in stakeholder involvement.
8. Implement policies and bylaws that promote Child and Youth Friendly activities, such as skateboarding, in-line skating, and reduce the restrictions to protect the rights of every citizen under the guidelines of the freedom of mobility and movement.
9. Ensure there are programs for sports and recreational activities for children and youth.
10. Integrate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) mechanisms into planning and development.

The City of Abbotsford is currently reviewing affordable housing, Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw guidelines in order to integrate Child and Youth Friendly design guidelines identified in this study. Several of the affordable housing concepts, such as Flex Housing, are being facilitated through new zones and this is a direction the City is exploring further through the development of affordable housing projects.

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APPENDIX 1: FACILITATION NOTES

ABBOTSFORD RECREATION CENTRE FACILITATION – SEPTEMBER 20, 2010

What do you like about your neighbourhood?

- Neighbourhood is not friendly – lots of homeless people
- Close to ocean
- Neighbourhood is close to school and is friendly x3
- Close to Zeller's
- A lot of friends in neighbourhood
- A lot of room
- In the middle of everywhere and everything
- Close to pool x5
- Can hangout with friends in park
- Quiet neighbourhood, awesome place to live
- Tennis court
- A lot of people
- Huge house

What are the challenges in your neighbourhood?

- Neighbourhood is not friendly – lots of homeless people
- Live across town from school, want to live closer to school x2
- A lot of people
- A lot of crime in Abby
- Can be scary to walk around at night

How can your community or neighbourhood be made better?

- Homeless people – way too many drug addicts so it is scary to go outside – need to find a place to go
- Don't like living beside a main road
- Huge yards
- More parks x3

What do you think your housing needs will be in the future?

- Bigger apartment suites are needed
- Rent prices in building should not be raised again as they are not worth what they cost
- Homeless people need somewhere to go – not outside where I live
- Need more spaces (more bedrooms) with upstairs and downstairs
- Two car driveways
- View
- Parks nearby
- Housing close to friends, stores and bank
- Close to downtown (banks and store) and/or school x2
- I want to live by my friend's house x2
- Suites over garages
- Party house
- Convenience stores closer to home/more corner stores
- Need to change neighbours

- Want a mansion/big house x3
- Clean up Mill Lake
- Get rid of the lots of bugs

- Less drug dealers
- More public spaces

Cohousing

- Like it
- Dislike – no bus, no pool, no personal space, and too small
- Good idea, in theory, too crowded. Never want to live there, not enough personal space
- I like it because it feels more private and homier. I wouldn't want to live there though
- I don't like it because it is very impersonal (too open to others)
- No space in between, easier for the environment but no privacy
- Need more "private" time
- Good idea – green
- No, not enough privacy, fun if lots of people the same age
- Too crowded
- Needs more privacy

Courtyard Housing

- I like it – it is safe, protected
- Really good idea. Easy to keep an eye on kids. Also, its spacious, but people are easily connected
- I would like this because it's a lot more friendly and provides safety
- Really like it because you can keep an eye on the area and keep it safe
- Less room for kids in some, but more protection
- Good for raising kids
- Could have a rugby field – safer, more natural, same ideal, people have to agree on the use
- Like it, nice little community
-

Flex Housing

- Like it
- Cheap
- I think it is a great idea. It is great to be able to rent out to people to help pay for the mortgage
- I think Flex Housing is awesome. I would have a business below my actual house. Or I would rent it out. You could also work in the store you run.
- Okay
- I like the Flex Housing – good price, smart idea, and amazing size
- Good
- Like it because it is like a normal house
- Like it because it can be above a store

Greyfield Redevelopment

- Okay – has most of the stuff you would need
- It's alright. Ideal for shopping or socializing. It would be loud to live there though.
- It's okay – I wouldn't want to live there because
- Too public
- Over-crowded, no trees
- Like it because it is convenient

it would be too loud and exposed

- Dislike it – too busy
- More crowded no place for cars – NO

Neighbourhood Styles

- Does not all seem safe– don't like it
- Awesome styles I'd love to live in a "playborhood" It would give a good place to be with friends. Row houses are pretty good – I would like to live there. It's too expensive for what it is though. Woonerf is a good idea if you have lots of kids.
- I like row styles because it's private and I like the appearance; Woonerf I don't like because it seems more dangerous and there is more cars. I would not want to live there
- They are ok

Secondary Suites

- Like it
- Okay but too small
- Also a good idea – helps pay the mortgage or other expenses. Also looks attractive. I'd for sure like to live here.
- I like this because if you didn't need the whole house, you could rent out either the top or the bottom. It would also help pay the mortgage.

- Too small

- Good
- Porch communities – better socially; row house – good if sound proofed – fun with roommate, Woonerf – unconventional
- Too close and too similar
- All three types – like it because it is "cool"

- Okay
- I like it because it is very large, cheap and you have lots of space to live
- I like it because it is like a house but smaller

What is good about your neighbourhood?

- Good public transportation
- Quiet streets
- Police help
- Hospital
- Running water (Abbotsford Waterworks)
- Parks x4
- Security
- Abbotsford Youth Centre
- Well lit places
- Mall
- Skate park
- Bike park

What are the challenges in your neighbourhood?

- Not enough street lights in dark places
- Gangs and guns
- Lack of public transit in certain areas, how long it takes
- Lots of litter
- Construction (too much)
- Speeding
- Youth violence
- Lack of maintenance of roads and sidewalks
- Too many grow ops
- Too much crime
- Not enough skate parks
- Lots of druggies
- Not enough jail time
- Cops are too lenient

How can your community or neighbourhood be made better?

- More hospitals
- More pizza places
- More youth centre buildings
- More parks
- Less grow ops
- Security cameras
- More recycling areas
- More police
- More street lights
- Less taxes
- Less drug shops
- Exhibition/fair in Abbotsford
- Rehabilitation centres
- Homeless shelters
- More colleges/university
- Crime prevention programs
- More trash cans
- Less gangs
- Less highways
- No more trespassing signs

What do you think your housing needs will be in the future?

- Mansion
- Long term lease/housing
- More housing that is cheaper x5
- More security for houses
- Less apartments x3
- More eco-friendly housing
- Smaller housing
- More price fixing
- Housing with more bedrooms
- Neighbourhood watch x4
- Affordable private property

Cohousing

- Really like the idea a lot x3
- Interesting idea
- Not enough privacy x3
- Don't like them
- Cool looking
- Would like it to have cool transportation
- Fun if all same age
- More eco-friendly

- Great if it was just students – form of student housing

Courtyard Housing

- This is my favourite type shown
- Put an AYC in there? Or a preschool?
- Like it a lot
- Looks really affordable
- Seems really safe
- Don't like it
- Good idea

Flex Housing

- Like it
- Love the idea – could this change to a homeless shelter after being used up?
- Seems alright
- Don't like it x2
- Not sure

Greyfield Redevelopment

- Very interesting
- More safe
- Don't like it
- Like
- Really like
- Like it because it takes less land
- More environmentally friendly
- Better for seniors
- Easier to walk – pedestrian friendly

Neighbourhood Styles

- Porch housing, woonerf, and row housing looks good for family, safety, etc
- Really like all of these ideas
- Don't like them x4
- Cool – like the movies – sitting on the porch
- Seems really safe
- Like the idea of having a place to hang out – porches
- Woonerf seems a bit dangerous
- Row housing – seems a good idea, don't like the look of it
- Do they have to be attached (row housing etc)?

Secondary Suites

- Abby has multiple suites in basements – they need more room, more surface space
- Don't like it x3
- Already live in one – makes sense
- Might be better for poorer people