

integrating housing and transportation policy in BC: Implications for immigrant communities

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growth management

- bc municipalities are increasingly concerned with the location of new housing, new transportation infrastructure, and increased density along transit corridors
- does immigration impact growth management policy?
- how does policy affect immigrants' housing and transportation choices?

method

- policy review of official community plans, supporting housing policy and transportation plans for 6 bc cities
- comparison of policies
- discussion of the implications for immigrants, who show different housing and transportation patterns from the general population

6 bc cities:

vancouver
surrey
richmond
kelowna
kamloops
victoria

immigrant populations in selected bc cities

City*	Population	Immigrants (% of total population)	Immigration period		
			Before 1991 (%**)	1991-2000 (%**)	2001-2006 (%**)
Vancouver	571,600	45.6	50.0	33.4	16.7
Surrey	392,450	38.3	45.4	35.0	19.4
Richmond	173,565	57.4	36.3	44.9	18.8
Kelowna	105,160	15.0	72.5	16.2	11.3
Kamloops	79,445	10.7	79.3	13.0	7.6
Victoria	75,390	20.4	69.1	19.5	11.4

Notes: * For comparison purposes, cities were used rather than Census Metropolitan Areas, since some of these are not CMAs (defined by Statistics Canada as over 100,000 in population).

** The percentage of immigrants who entered the city in each time period.

Source: Statistics Canada Community Profiles from 2006 Census data. Accessed September 20, 2009.

housing policy: affordability

- all 6 cities have extensive policies in this area
- all had (or were developing) policies to sell city-owned land for social housing development
- all had affordable housing reserve funds
- all mention affordability for low-income groups and seniors, and the three largest mention the homeless
- only one (surrey) mentions affordability for immigrants (study on refugee housing needs)

housing policy: housing types

- all cite the need to maintain a diversity of housing types to suit various household sizes and lifestyles
- only one (richmond) places a moratorium on condo conversions, but others regulate (victoria, vancouver) or monitor it (kelowna)
- only one (richmond) places a priority on the construction of low-income rental

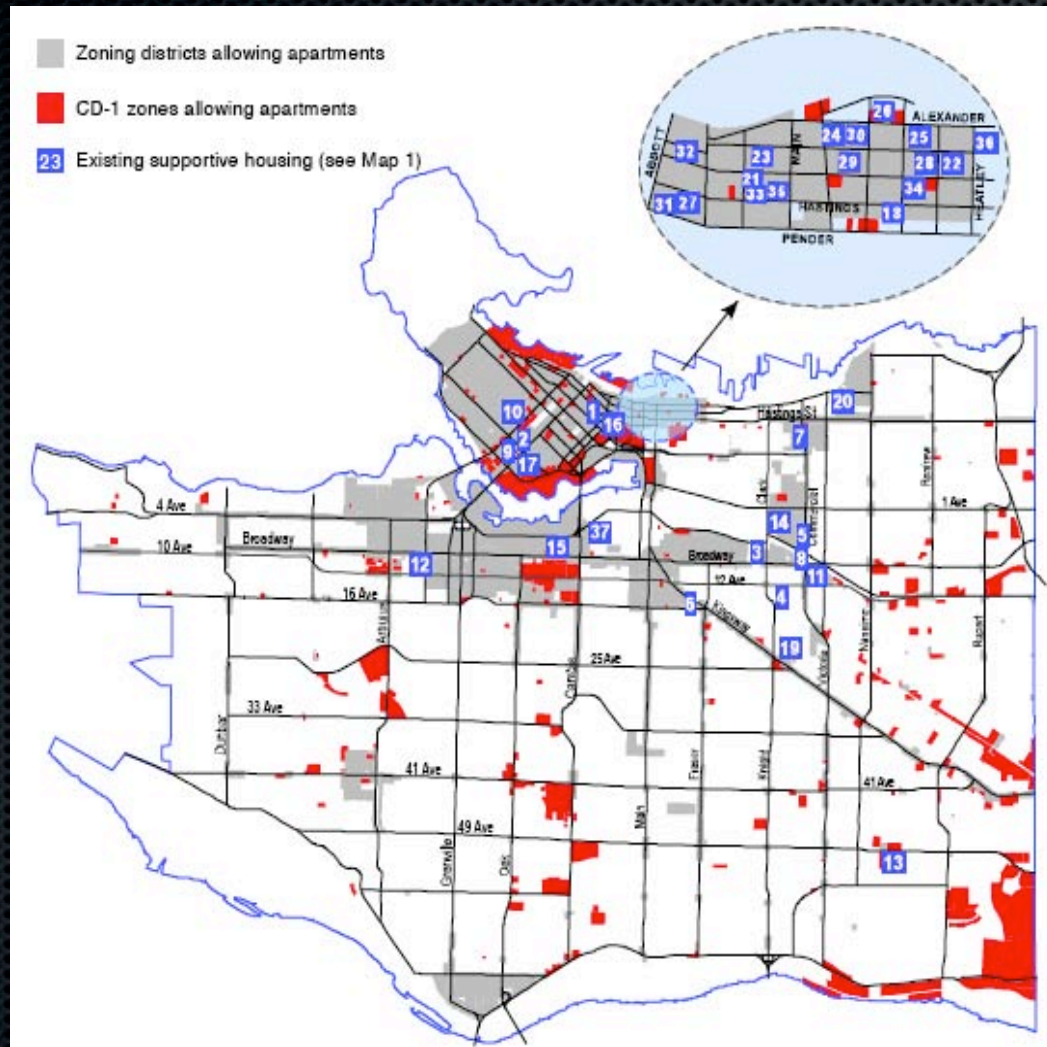
two-thirds of victoria's population are renters

29% of richmond's population are renters

transportation policy: sustainable modes

- all six cities have policies to encourage walking, cycling, and public transit use while discouraging car travel
- surrey, kelowna, and kamloops policies are complicated by the desire to maintain a number of urban centres
- smaller cities lack the funding to implement pedestrian, cycling, and transit infrastructure and initiatives

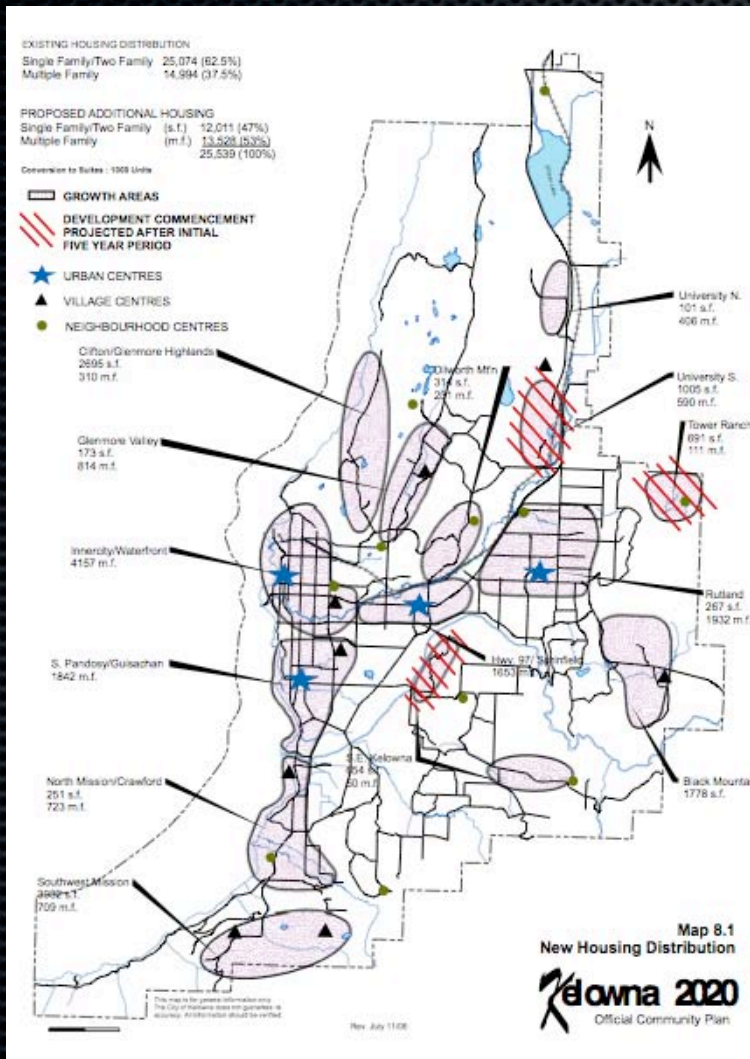
combining housing and transportation policy: growth management



vancouver, richmond,
and kamloops have
policies to locate
affordable housing in
transit-accessible areas

possible locations for supportive housing in the city of vancouver (2008 report)

combining housing and transportation policy: growth management



surrey, kamloops, and kelowna decentralize mixed-use development into a number of urban centres

kelowna and kamloops encourage new developments around transit routes and stops

combining housing and transportation policy: growth management

- vancouver and richmond generally integrate the need for neighbourhood walking, cycling, and transit; both cities prioritize walking for short trips
- victoria recommends higher-density housing along transit corridors

implications for immigrant communities

- affordable housing and transportation are significant issues for immigrants in BC cities
- all 6 cities have made significant attempts to address affordable housing, yet only one mentions the specific housing needs of immigrants
- the preservation of rental housing is crucial, in addition to developing partnerships with upper levels of government to develop new rental housing
- affordability issues are less extreme in the smaller cities, but even these have increasing immigration rates

implications for immigrant communities

- as cities encourage more transit-oriented development, it is crucial to develop tools to address gentrification in transit-accessible areas

preserving affordable and rental housing in transit corridors

below market rate (bmr) ordinances in the united states

community benefits agreements (cba's) between community coalitions, developers, and/or government entities to ensure affordable housing

conclusions

- the 6 bc cities studied have extensive policies around affordable housing, sustainable transportation, and concentrating future growth in transit-accessible areas
- without intervention, affordable, transit-accessible housing will be out of reach for immigrant households
- municipalities can do joint studies on immigrant housing trends, and advocate for partnerships between all levels of government to address affordable, transit-accessible housing

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