

Connections and Engagement

A Closer Look



The effect of apartment living on neighbourliness

Vancouver is one of the most densely populated cities in North America. In 1990, less than 25% of the population lived in apartments/condominiums. Now it's over 40% and rising. The region's housing needs and the desire to build more sustainable cities, means even more high-rise apartment buildings will be needed. Our survey found that this type of dwelling presents unique challenges to those who live in them. The debate for our community will be how to improve high-rise design and living so that more of us can feel connected and engaged.

Key findings and quick facts

Living in a high rise can:

- diminish neighbourliness
- lower trust
- make it harder to make new friends
- increase isolation.

Quick facts:

- 45% of people living in high rises rent their apartment
- 76% are between the ages of 18 and 64
- 37% live alone, 35% live with one other person
- 90% have no children under the age of 12 living with them
- 44% have lived in their neighbourhood for under five years.

Knowing your neighbours' names

People who live in high rises — meaning apartments over five stories high — are less likely to know at least two of their neighbours' names than people living in single detached houses.

81%

of people in single detached homes know their neighbours' names

56%

of people in high rises know their neighbours' names

Frequency of conversations with neighbours

People in high rises have fewer chats with their neighbours. And they are less likely to do small favours for their neighbours, like pick up their newspapers or mail when they are away.

48%

of people in single detached homes did a favour for a neighbour

23%

of people in high rises did a favour for a neighbour



Neighbourhood ties

Our survey shows that the more often people talk to their neighbours, the higher the trust levels in the neighbourhood. In high rises, where people are less likely to have regular chats with neighbours or even know their neighbours' names, the trust levels are significantly lower.

60%

of those in single detached homes trust their neighbours

40%

of those in high rises trust their neighbours

These lower trust levels extend to how people in high rises judge their neighbours' sense of moral obligation. Fewer believe that one of their neighbours would return a lost wallet or purse to them.

68%

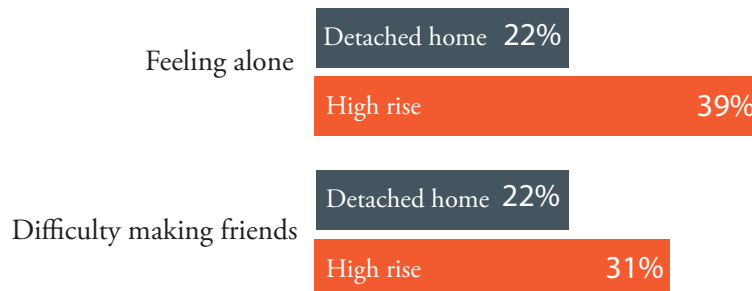
of those in single detached homes believe their wallet would be returned

55%

of those in high rises believe their wallet would be returned

Loneliness and isolation

There's also evidence that high-rise life increases isolation and loneliness. People in high rises report a higher level of loneliness and they have a harder time making new friends.



About this publication

A Closer Look is a series that explores, in more detail, some of the interesting findings from our Connections and Engagement Survey released June 2012. The survey and analysis was done by Sentis Market Research, who interviewed 3,841 people across metro Vancouver.

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