



NEIGHBOURHOOD CHANGE AND WOMEN IN SOCIAL HOUSING

**THE ONEESAN CONTAINER
HOUSING EXPERIENCE**
Vancouver, British Columbia

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NEIGHBOURHOOD CHANGE AND WOMEN IN SOCIAL HOUSING: THE ONEESAN CONTAINER HOUSING EXPERIENCE

by

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*Unless otherwise noted, all images were taken by the author.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Focus and Objectives: This research project explores the micro-level impacts of neighbourhood changes on the lives of women living in Oneesan Container Housing, a supportive housing site in Vancouver's Downtown East Side (DTES) Oppenheimer District (DEOD).

Research Contributions: Academic literature often depicts gentrification as a linear and nearly homogenous pattern; this study provides a nuanced picture of gentrification impacts and neighbourhood change impacts at the neighbourhood and street levels.

Findings on Neighbourhood Change: Three major neighbourhood changes have been noted in the years since Oneesan welcomed its first residents in 2013. First, the DTES Street Market has opened a new location at 501 Powell Street, on a lot that sits directly behind Oneesan. Second, there has been an increase in social housing in the neighbourhood, with over 380 units built since 2013. Finally, several new cafés and restaurants have opened in the neighbourhood. These businesses are perceived to mainly serve middle to upper class patrons, and are representative of larger gentrification processes in the DEOD neighbourhood.

Findings on the Impacts of Neighbourhood Change: Through surveys, interviews and observations, it was found that the impacts and perceptions of neighbourhood changes were mixed. While the DTES Street Market serves as an economic opportunity for DTES residents, most of whom are struggling financially, it also poses concerns for Oneesan residents regarding illegal activities and the people the market will attract. The new social housing in the neighbourhood serves as a positive neighbourhood change, housing many vulnerable individuals on the DTES. Oneesan residents saw the benefit of this housing, but also expressed some minor concerns regarding the addition of new people to the neighbourhood. Correspondingly, some understood the new cafés and restaurants as a negative neighbourhood change, while one resident noted her enjoyment of one of these new businesses. Ultimately, these major neighbourhood changes take place within a wider context of social, economic and political forces. Considering recent changes in city planning policy, it is hypothesized that Oneesan's neighbourhood will see even more changes in the future.

Recommendations: Recommendations are made with both current and future neighbourhood changes in mind, and with the hopes of addressing concerns and lessening the negative impacts of neighbour change on Oneesan residents, as well as other women living in social housing.

- 1.** Conduct targeted outreach with women living in Oneesan and the surrounding neighbourhood.
Implementer: The DTES Street Market Society
- 2.** Continue to pursue and encourage a women's only street market.
Implementer: The DTES Street Market Society
- 3.** Implement policies and programs that encourage new businesses in the DEOD neighbourhood to be socially responsible and community minded.
Implementer: The City of Vancouver
- 4.** Monitor the impacts of the new definition of social housing in the DTES Plan and DEOD Official Development Plan.
Implementer: The City of Vancouver
- 5.** Form a neighbourhood advocacy group amongst Atira residents.
Implementer: Atira Women's Resource Society
- 6.** Conduct research on the impacts of gentrification on the marginalized communities who remain in gentrifying neighbourhoods.
Implementer: Researchers, Academic Institutions



Image 1: A building on Powell Street

INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhoods are places of identity and community. They are not only geographic locations but also patterns of everyday life, interaction, work and culture. The word “neighbourhood” is ubiquitous in everyday conversation and can be a place that holds a great deal of emotion, sentiment and memory. Neighbourhood, as a word and a place, has both personal and collective meanings, with boundaries drawn both on maps and in one’s mind.

A neighbourhood’s role in the daily lives of its residents cannot be understated; a connection has been increasingly made between the physical and mental wellness of individuals, and neighbourhood factors (O’Campo, Salmon, & Burke, 2009; Plane, 2011). These factors include physical, social, cultural and environmental aspects of a neighbourhood, among others.

Factors unique to individuals have also been identified as shaping the way people interact with and are influenced by a neighbourhood. Women’s* feelings of fear and vulnerability to harassment and assault have been well documented in the context of studying the intersection between gender and public space, illustrating how women interact with a neighbourhood differently than men (Wesely & Gaarder, 2004). Other studies have also found that the neighbourhood environment has a unique impact on women and their well-being (Ivory, Collings, Blakely, & Dew, 2011; Yasuda et al., 1997).

* This research adopts Atira Women’s Resource Society’s understanding of the term woman as anyone who identifies and lives full time as a woman, this includes trans, two spirit and intersex women or those who identify with a femme of centre non-binary gender (Atira Women’s Resource Society, 2016)

Further, with over 1.5 million women live on low income in Canada (Canadian Women’s Foundation, 2013), many of these women are living in social housing- an experience that is often significantly different than that of women living in market-rentals or purchased homes. While the experiences of women both within social housing and in the larger neighbourhood context can be unique, they are also often left unheard. As a result, this research project seeks to understand the experiences of women living in social housing, as it relates to neighbourhood change.

BACKGROUND ON CASE STUDY: ONEESAN CONTAINER HOUSING

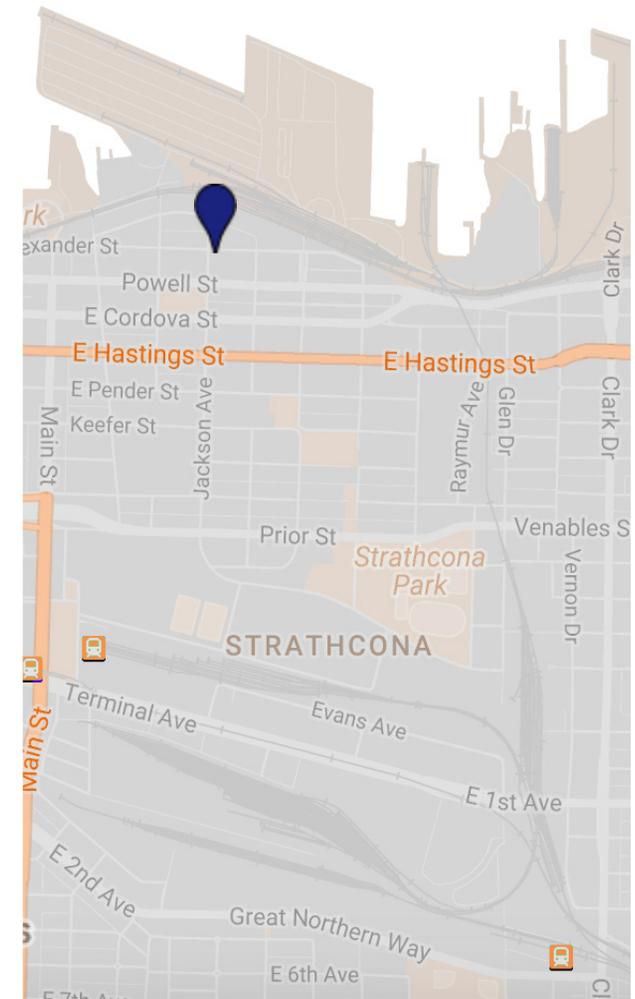
This project is centred on a small group of women living in Oneesan Container Housing (Oneesan). Oneesan is located at 502 Alexander Street in the City of Vancouver's Downtown East Side (DTES), and more specifically in the DTES's Japantown neighbourhood and Oppenheimer District (DEOD). This housing site serves as the focal point for this study and is the epicentre from which an examination of neighbourhood experiences expands.

The construction of Oneesan was completed in July of 2013 and it was first occupied as of September 1, 2013. The housing site received a significant amount attention as Canada's first recycled shipping container social housing development. The container housing has been considered a creative, environmentally conscious and cost effective way to address affordable housing needs. Not only are the housing units sustainable and cost effective, they are also beautiful and light-filled, a contrast to the commonly

held negative perceptions that many people have of both container housing and social housing.

Oneesan is owned and operated by Atira Women's Resource Society (Atira), a non-profit organization dedicated to the work of ending violence against women and children, primarily through the provision of housing, with ancillary support services. Oneesan provides 12 minimally intrusive supportive housing units for women, with the objective of helping women transition from single-room and or high-support housing to more independent living. The units within Oneesan are 290 square feet, and each unit provides a full-bathroom, kitchen and laundry for the residents.

Oneesan is a Japanese word for older sister, paying tribute to the Japanese heritage of the neighbourhood (JTW, 2014) and is located next to Imouto Housing, another Atira-owned social housing site that offers transitional housing for young



Map 1: Oneesan Container Housing located at 502 Alexander Street, Vancouver British Columbia, Canada (Source: Google Maps)

women. Imouto means ‘little sister’ in Japanese and fittingly, the women who live in Oneesan participate in an intergenerational partnership program, providing support and encouragement to the younger women residing next door.

In 2014, Atira, with the assistance of JTW Consulting, conducted a Post-Occupancy Liveability Survey at Oneesan, garnering responses from nine residents. At the time of the survey, residents of Oneesan reported a 92 percent satisfaction rate with the liveability and functionality of their units (JTW Consulting, 2014). In the time since Oneesan opened its doors, and since completion of the initial survey in 2014, Atira staff and local residents have observed changes in the surrounding neighbourhood. This has led the organization to question whether or not the changing face of the neighbourhood has had an impact on Oneesan’s residents, and if so, in what ways? Subsequently, it led to the desire for another survey to be conducted, similar to the one conducted in 2014,

but with a broader focus that includes not only the self-enclosed units, but also the neighbourhood in general.

As a result, the focus of this research is guided by the following questions:

- How has the neighbourhood surrounding Oneesan Container Housing changed in the years since Oneesan’s first residents moved in?
- What are the impacts of these neighbourhood changes on the women living in Oneesan Container Housing?
- How can the negative impacts of neighbourhood change be mitigated?

The three major neighbourhood changes explored in this research are:

- The DTES Street Market’s new location on the property directly behind Oneesan.
- The addition of a significant number of non-market housing units within the neighbourhood.
- The opening of new restaurants and cafés targeting middle to upper income patrons.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND INTENDED OUTCOMES

The intention of this research is to highlight the concerns and experiences of the women living in Oneesan Container Housing. This study aims to help Atira achieve a deeper understanding of the range of experiences of Oneesan's residents in relation to the neighbourhood. It also looks to generate ways to deal with challenges in the neighbourhood, and inform future services and initiatives undertaken by Atira.



Image 2: View of Oneesan Container Housing from the site's courtyard
(Source: Atira Women's Resource Society)



Image 3: Interior photo of an Oneesan Container Housing unit
(Source: Atira Women's Resource Society)



Image 4: Interior photo of an Oneesan Container Housing unit
(Source: Atira Women's Resource Society)



LION HOTEL

日本
JUNITE

Image 5: The corner of Powell Street and Gore Street

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHANGE: A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD?

In examining the research related to neighbourhood, it becomes apparent that, despite its importance and pervasiveness, it is a complex concept to define, and is multidimensional in nature. Aitken (1990) argues that neighbourhood can be assumed to be a perceptual cognitive space. On the other hand, Galster (2001) argues that the prevailing definitions of neighbourhood are deficient, including those definitions that are social ecological in basis. Offering an alternative, Galster (2001) defines neighbourhood as “the bundle of spatially based attributes associated with clusters of residences, sometimes in conjunction with other land uses” (p. 2112). Galster’s definition places an emphasis on neighbourhood as a bounded location, including its uses and characteristics. Yet another way to

conceptualize neighbourhood is as a place that provides community, “able to exist because of the intimacy of face-to-face communication, extending into a (common) past” (p. 737). Other ways to define and understand neighbourhood include neighbourhood as a context, neighbourhood as a commodity and neighbourhood as a consumption niche (Vaiou & Lykogianni, 2006).

In addition to the scholarly differences in understanding and defining neighbourhood, there are also differences in the personal definitions of neighbourhood. These definitions can vary by gender, age, ethnic group and the length of time a person has spent in a neighbourhood, among other things (Orford & Leigh, 2013). These factors are often missing from the definitions above;

they are also what are often missing in the study of neighbourhoods in general. As such, there is a need for more research on individual’s perceptions and feelings about neighbourhood; what does neighbourhood mean from a gendered perspective? How does the neighbourhood context impact women and other groups and intersectionalities uniquely?

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD EFFECT

Despite its many definitions and perspectives, there is a significant amount of research that links neighbourhood to health and well-being. For example, Sampson (2003), argues there is a link between community social characteristics, like those of a neighbourhood, and individual health outcomes. This link may be especially relevant when discussing women. Correspondingly, Ivory et al. (2011) found that both the material aspects of a neighbourhood as well as physical properties have been correlated with health outcomes. Material aspects of the neighbourhood may include poverty or deprivation, while physical properties include buildings, infrastructure and air quality (Ivory et al., 2011). Similarly, many have argued that neighbourhood plays an important role in facilitating or undermining access to services like education and employment, which in turn influence quality of life (Temkin & Rohe, 1996). Consequently, since women experience a greater vulnerability to poverty, (Wasylyshyn &

Johnson, 1998) they are more likely to be exposed to negative material aspects of a neighbourhood, resulting in negative impacts on their well-being.

Moreover, in addition to the material and physical aspects of a neighbourhood, there is also evidence that the social environment of a neighbourhood influences health and well-being. An increase in social fragmentation, which can be defined as “the neighbourhood-level conditions that fragment the social relationships within a neighbourhood, inhibiting the levels of social cohesion and social capital available to residents” (2011, p. 1994), has been associated with increased mental health issues. This relationship was more strongly factored for women and even more so for unemployed women (Ivory et al., 2011). This study suggests that particular personal characteristics and circumstances may contribute to an individual being more vulnerable to particular neighbourhood settings.

Similarly, Young et al. (2004) examined 9445 Australian women aged 73-78 and their sense of belonging in relation to their neighbourhood. Findings indicated that a better sense of neighbourhood was associated with a variety of positive health and well-being outcomes, including better physical and mental health, lower stress, better social support and physical activity. Items used to measure ‘sense of neighbourhood’ included sharing commonalities with people in the neighbourhood, trusting neighbours, friendship with neighbours and liking the neighbourhood, among other things (Young et al., 2004).

Others have also emphasized the influence of neighbourhood, specifically on women. Using Photovoice, Plane (2011) examined the significance of neighbourhood for women living in a supportive housing community in Ottawa. Her findings confirm the importance of neighbourhood for women living in supportive housing, especially as related to their health

and quality of life (Plane, 2011). The study found that for the women who participated in the study, feelings of home were not only applicable to the space of the supportive housing building, but also extended into the neighbourhood.

Further, it was found that four factors were especially important for the well-being of women studied: access to green spaces, the social environment of the neighbourhood, social stresses and access to neighbourhood amenities (Plane, 2011). Much like Ivory (2011) demonstrated, Plane's (2011) findings demonstrate that particular groups in a neighbourhood interact with, and are impacted by neighbourhoods uniquely.

While both personal and neighbourhood characteristics may mediate the relationship between individuals and a neighbourhood, other factors are also important in varying the level of neighbourhood impacts on health and well-being outcomes. This may include other settings in an individual's life, and the resources they provide (Ivory et al., 2011). This suggests that even if there

are challenges in a neighbourhood, a setting like a supportive housing site may be able to mitigate neighbourhood challenges by providing positive experiences and resources. Such settings may also be able to increase resiliency amongst its residents. However, as Plane (2011) notes, little research has been conducted in Canada on the topic of neighbourhood effect, especially from a qualitative perspective. Further, little research has been conducted on the neighbourhood effect in relation to women and more specifically, women living in social housing.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHANGE

If it is accepted that the neighbourhood context has an impact on the health and well-being of individuals, then change in the neighbourhood must also be impactful. However, it is difficult to ascribe an intrinsic value to neighbourhood change – while changes in a particular neighbourhood may be positive for some, they may be negative for others. As Aitken (1990) states, “the social and physical environment is not an unchanging backdrop to which urban residents simply learn to adapt. People are active participants, seeking out and processing information in an environment that surrounds and envelopes” (p. 247) and they may process that information in different ways, depending on their location in society. Aitken (1990) also emphasizes the difficulty in understanding perceptions of neighbourhood change and notes that there has been little research on this topic. Further, there is little research on women’s experiences of neighbourhood change, especially the experiences of women from marginalized communities,

such as those living in social housing.

With this understanding, Aitken (1990) offers a transactional model for studying neighbourhood change. From this perspective, an important point of study is the interdependence between people and environments, including a person’s history with a place and expectations for the future (Aitken & Bjorklund, 1988). The transactional model not only places importance on this interdependence but also the type of change in this interdependence. Therefore, change that is abrupt often causes serious disturbance to this relationship (Aitken, 1990). On the other hand, it can be incremental, at which point change is not so readily observed (Aitken, 1990). Neighbourhood change can also be categorized as critical or consistent. Critical change refers to change where the costs outweigh the benefits, while consistent change is defined as change that leaves people’s relationship with the environment in balance, such that change is consistent with the identity of

a neighbourhood or community (Aitken, 1990).

Temkin and Rohe (1996) offer a different model. Recognizing that studies of neighbourhood change have often been approached from a single-discipline theoretical perspective, they offer a model of neighbourhood change that is multidisciplinary in nature, based on ecological, subcultural and political economy theory. It is argued that neighbourhoods can follow three trajectories: stability, decline, or upgrading, and these trajectories are a result of financial, political and social external resources and forces (Temkin & Rohe, 1996). In this understanding of neighbourhood change, neighbourhoods “are involved in competition for scarce resources necessary to promote neighbourhood stability bounded by the political and social environments of the metropolitan area” (Temkin & Rohe, 1996, p. 166).

For neighbourhoods like Vancouver's DTES, this model suggests that the neighbourhood is competing with other, wealthier neighbourhoods inhabited by, in many cases, more privileged groups, to determine whether the neighbourhood will remain stable, decline, or upgrade in condition. Further, to influence forces of change, residents must possess the power to influence important decision makers (Temkin & Rohe, 1996). Again, for the DTES, this model suggests that inhabitants of the neighbourhood, such as women who are living in supportive housing, may lack the necessary power in the face of institutional barriers, to truly influence change in their neighbourhoods. This is in comparison to more affluent neighbourhood residents, who often have the time, resources and social capital to encourage or protest particular neighbourhood change.

Other studies of neighbourhood change also lead to questions of how neighbourhood change can affect those who hold different social and economic positions and resources in a city. For example, Feijten and van Ham (2009) studied the role of neighbourhood

change and its influence on residential stress, neighbourhood mobility and specifically, people's desire to leave their neighbourhood. The authors found that static neighbourhood characteristics and subjective and objective indicators of neighbourhood influenced people's wish to leave their neighbourhood (Feijten & van Ham, 2009). This research is very applicable to middle and upper classes that possess financial and other resources to act on a desire to leave a neighbourhood when they perceive a change to be undesirable. However, when considering women in supportive housing, they often have few in their housing options. Therefore, it leads to the question of how neighbourhood change that would normally result in a desire to leave a neighbourhood, influences those who simply cannot leave their neighbourhood as a result of a lack of resources.

GENTRIFICATION

Neighbourhood change in the form of gentrification is a process that can have a powerful impact on the lives of individuals, a neighbourhood and a community as a whole. Gentrification can be defined as “the invasion by relatively affluent households into marginal neighbourhoods, with the concomitant rehabilitation of housing and the displacement of previous residents (Beauregard, 1990, p. 855). It is a widely discussed topic and for many, a widely scorned process. While some argue that there are benefits to gentrification, encouraging community regeneration (Lees & Ley, 2008), Slater (2006), emphasizes that “the term was coined with critical intent to describe the disturbing effects of the middle classes arriving in working-class neighbourhoods” (p. 752).

As gentrification is a highly contested topic, a great deal of focus has been placed on the causes and processes of gentrification around the world. Ley (1986), in studying inner-city

gentrification in Canada, offers four major explanations for gentrification. These include changes in demographics, which started with the baby boomers, housing market dynamics that include rising housing costs, the value and amenity of an urban lifestyle, and an economic base that is increasingly service and white-collar oriented (Ley, 1986). In explaining gentrification, Hackworth and Smith (2001) offered ideas on the three waves of gentrification. These waves of gentrification move from gentrification that was sporadic and state-led in the 1960s to early 1970s, to resurgence in gentrification in the late 1970s that was accompanied by significant social protest, to the gentrification that took place after the 1980s stock market crash. In this ‘third wave’ of gentrification, Hackworth and Smith (2001) argue that private investors and individual gentrifiers have already gentrified those neighbourhoods which are considered easily gentrified. As a result, the state began to play a larger role in encouraging gentrification in

other neighbourhood that may be less desirable, for a number of reasons (Hackworth & Smith, 2001).

While there has been a great deal of focus on the causes of gentrification, there are those who feel there is a need for more focus on the experiences of the long-standing residents of neighbourhoods undergoing gentrification. In *There goes the hood: Views of gentrification from the ground up* Freeman (2011) describes significant gaps in the understanding of gentrification. He notes that it is common for the focus to be placed on the political conflict that is so often the face of gentrification (Freeman, 2011). Further, he notes that the loudest residents of a neighbourhood, often the people who are displaced, are not necessarily representative of the sentiments of the entire neighbourhood (Freeman, 2011). This is a common city planning problem and thus, reiterates the need for an exploration of a variety of experiences when seeking an understanding of gentrification. Freeman explores this

variety of experiences and at least one theme emerged from his research that is counter-intuitive to the commonly held negative view of gentrification. He found that long-term residents are appreciative of some of the improvements to a neighbourhood that accompany gentrification. However, the same residents were also sceptical about why changes are happening and remained fearful of displacement, stating that “the gentry are likely to be both an asset...and a drawback to indigenous residents” (Freeman, 2011, p. 157).

However, while there may be some aspects of gentrification that long-standing residents appreciate, there is also a plethora of problems that accompany gentrification for the residents who are not displaced. In addition to impacting the physical form as well as culture and symbolic meaning of a neighbourhood, gentrification can often decrease local access to affordable food (Burnett, 2014). This may be because expensive food grocers move-in to serve the more affluent

population, or because trendy and expensive restaurants and cafés move into the neighbourhood, pushing out older, more affordable establishments. This impact with regards to food, is noted in the DTES Plan (2014a), when poor nutrition is mentioned as one of the impacts of gentrification. Breyer and Voss-Andreae (2013) use the term ‘food mirages’ to describe this lack of affordable food, defining the term as instances where “full-service grocery stores appear plentiful but, because food prices are high, healthful foods are economically inaccessible for low-income households (Breyer & Voss-Andreae, 2013, p. 131).

Further, when researching the role of grocery store prices for low-income households in Portland, Oregon, the authors found that although there are few food deserts in the city, there are indeed many food mirages (Breyer & Voss-Andreae, 2013). More specifically, they found that the most extreme cases of food mirages were found in areas that were both gentrifying and had high rates of household poverty (Breyer

& Voss-Andreae, 2013). Undoubtedly, a lack of access to affordable food will have negative impacts on the quality of life and health of residents who cannot afford to buy food elsewhere. As a result, current research on gentrification leads to the conclusion, that, when studying a neighbourhood, overt indicators of gentrification must not be the only ones observed. Gentrification should also be observed at other micro levels, including relationship with neighbourhoods, the symbolic meaning of neighbourhoods and individual and collective well-being.

Thus, while there is great deal of literature on gentrification, with a particular focus on why and how it is happening, there is a lack of a more nuanced understanding of the local residents’ lived experiences of gentrification. This is especially true for the low-income, long-standing residents of a neighbourhood. Discussions of the experiences of gentrification are often boiled down to a binary viewpoint of either a positive or negative and perhaps, experiences of gentrification are not so simple.

HOUSING AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Since Oneesan Container Housing serves as the focal point for this study, it is worth examining the role that housing, and its many forms, can play in a neighbourhood and people's lives. The impact of housing is important because the physical, emotional and social aspects of housing influence the way that individuals interact with their surrounding neighbourhood and the people within it (Young et al., 2004). According to the City of Vancouver, housing can be described on a continuum. The continuum moves from emergency shelters to transitional housing, followed by supportive housing, subsidized housing, market rental housing, and market homeownership housing (see Figure 1). Oneesan is considered supportive housing, which in British Columbia, is defined as housing that "integrates long-term housing units for persons who were previously homeless or persons who are at risk of homelessness, who may also have mental illness, have or be recovering from drug or

alcohol addictions, or experience other barriers to housing" (Government of Canada, 2016). Supportive housing typically provides support services and programming to its residents.

The housing continuum plays an important role in providing a range of housing options for individuals and families, and some of these housing choices play an important role in diminishing homelessness, much like Oneesan does. For example, the City of Vancouver (2012) identifies supportive

housing, along with shelters and Single Room Occupancy Hotels (SROs) as important measures for mitigating homelessness in the city. Further, the City of Vancouver, when preparing Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2012), noted the importance of neighbourhood location and other characteristics when addressing the housing crisis. They found that location in relation to the home is significant when thinking about supportive housing. Specifically, that "people are more likely to come inside and be successful inside

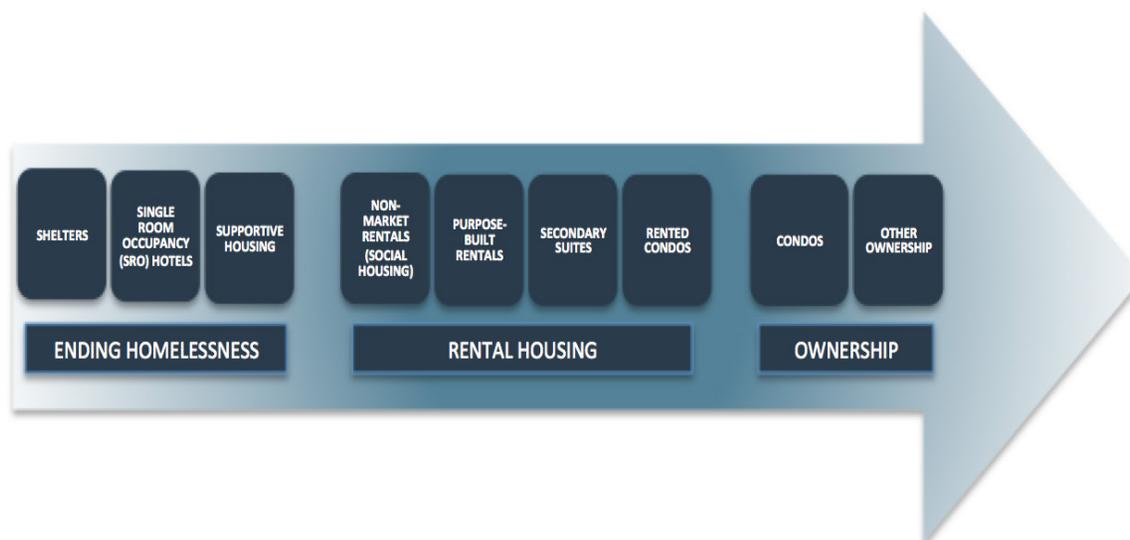


Figure 1: The Housing Continuum

when shelter and supportive housing is provided in the neighbourhood they call home” (City of Vancouver, 2012, p. 10). This point illustrates the importance of neighbourhood in the lives of individuals, and the attachment many hold for their neighbourhoods.

Accompanying the many different housing types along the housing continuum are associations of housing types with different life experiences, and often, stigmatization. For example, Lindheim and Syme (1983) argue that public housing is often observed as different compared to other types of housing in a neighbourhood, and that inhabitants are often stigmatized, which in turn, can cause negative health effects. Therefore, neighbourhood cannot be examined in isolation, and much like the characteristics of the individuals in housing, housing can also play an influential role in the relationship between individuals and the neighbourhood.

WHAT DO WE
DO WHEN WE
CAN'T BE 2GETHER.

WHAT DO WE
DO WHEN WE
CAN'T BE 2GETHER.

WHAT DO WE
DO WHEN WE
CAN'T BE 2GETHER.

+ live
+ LIVE! +

Image 6: Street art on Powell Street

METHODOLOGY

In the spring of 2015 I met with Atira to discuss potential projects. This meeting was facilitated by my professor and supervisor, Dr. Leonora Angeles, who initiated research opportunities for myself and one other graduate student from the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) at the University of British Columbia (UBC). As a planning student with a previous academic background in social work, and a strong interest in planning with an emphasis on equity, my interest was immediately peaked by the opportunity to work with Atira, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing housing to women. In my previous studies and work, I have seen how fundamental the environment, including both housing and the neighbourhood, is to health and well-being.

The topics covered in this research emerged from Atira's observations,

which were noted in initial meetings I had with the organization. As a non-profit organization that has been located within and providing housing to women in the DTES for many years, Atira's knowledge of the neighbourhood proved to be a logical starting point. I set out to explore the three major changes Atira had observed in Oneesan's neighbourhood since its opening, and how these changes have impacted the residents of Oneesan.

The three changes observed by Atira are as follows:

- The DTES Street Market's new location on the property directly behind Oneesan.
- The addition of a significant number of non-market housing units within the neighbourhood.
- The opening of new restaurants and cafés targeting middle to upper income patrons.

The sections below outline the approach I took to conducting this research, including a summary of the theory that influenced my research and data collection approach. This research approach was reviewed and approved by UBC's Behavioural Research Ethics Board.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

I have approached this research using a case study methodology. This methodology can be defined as an intensive study of a single case, with the hopes of providing information that is generalizable to similar case studies (Gerring, 2007). As Gerring states “we gain a better understanding of the whole by focusing on a key part” (Gerring, 2007, p. 1).

Oneesan, as a case study, and with its focus on the neighbourhood, is also the study of everyday life. Vaiou and Lykiogianni (2006) describe everyday life as “connected to the places where women and men live, work, consume, relate to others, forge identities, cope with or challenge routine, habit and established code of conduct” (p. 732). Smith (1987) argues that, especially in order to understand the lives of women, it is important to understand what happens to them daily, and the subsequent meaning they ascribe to their everyday activities and interactions. Through this method of

analysis, the researcher is then able to examine what is problematic in the everyday lives of women (Wasylishyn & Johnson, 1998). This study asked questions about everyday life, encouraging an understanding of the neighbourhood as seen through the personal definition of neighbourhood, and an understanding of accompanying subjective experiences.

I have also applied a mixed-methods approach, utilizing both qualitative methods, in the form of interviews and observations, and quantitative methods, in the form of surveys and neighbourhood data. I chose a mixed-methods approach with the purpose of triangulation. Traditionally, social scientists have used triangulation as a method of validation for the results of their research (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). However, the more applicable use of triangulation in this research is to seek a nuanced understanding of results, “clarifying disparate results by placing them in dialogue with

one another” (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012, p. 75). The survey and other data collection methods were used to provide a baseline of information. The subsequent interviews were meant to expand upon the questions asked in the survey, adding richness and depth to the understanding of the quantitative information gathered.

Finally, women’s experiences and Atira’s concerns for women’s experiences were the starting point for this research. With this focus on the experiences of women, I looked to conduct this research from a feminist perspective, with the goal of revealing subjugated knowledge (Hesse-Biber, 2012). In this vein, by both surveying and interviewing women who live in Oneesan, this research may place their narratives within the context of larger social and political forces that are impacting their neighbourhood and their daily lives.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

With the DTES Street Market, new social housing units and new cafés and restaurants noted as three important changes in Oneesan’s neighbourhood, I explored these changes and their impacts on Oneesan’s residents in several ways. First, I used secondary research practices to provide insight into the context of the neighbourhood. I also reviewed relevant city plans and studies specific to the DTES. This information provided both a theoretical background as well as contextual information. I then used primary research in the form of surveys, interviews and observations, to highlight the subjective and experiential aspect of neighbourhood change.

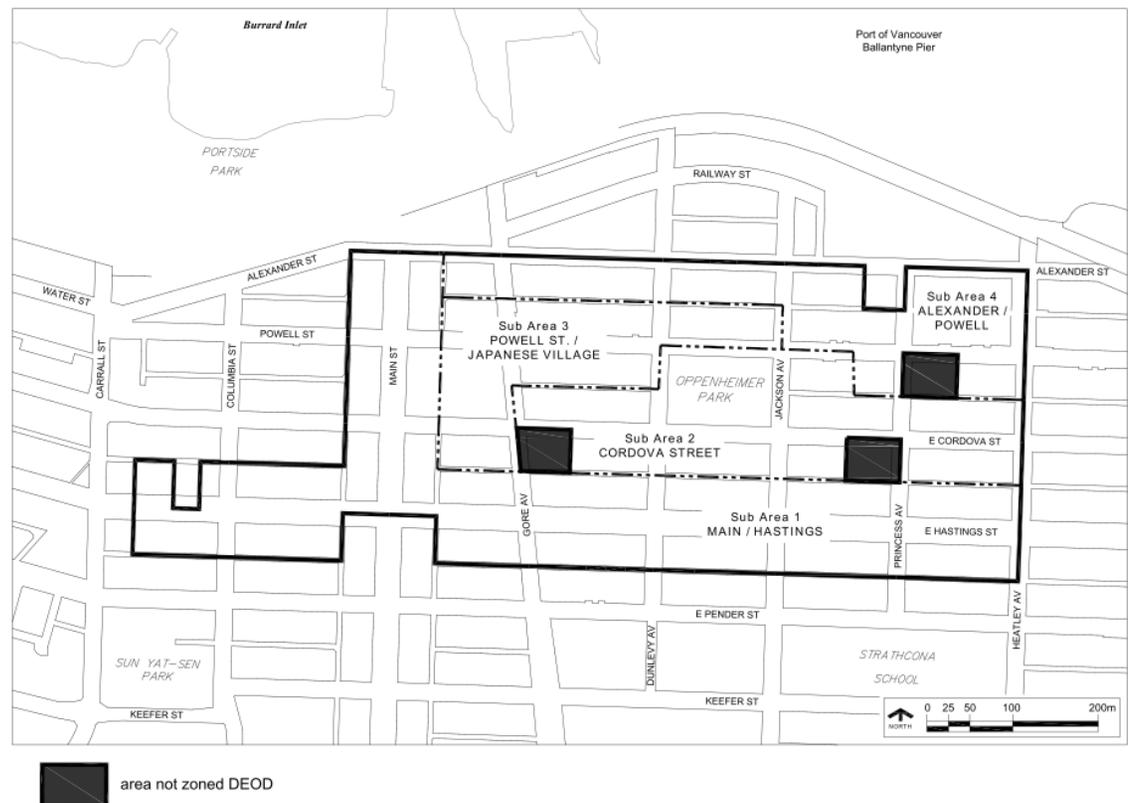
Neighbourhood Boundaries

While the word “neighbourhood” was used in the surveys distributed to Oneesan residents, boundaries of the neighbourhood were not provided to participants. This decision was so that the women could complete the survey based on their own fluid understanding and concept of their neighbourhood;

one that is likely influenced by their personal history, daily life, patterns and relationships. The same approach was used in the interviews.

Determining physical changes to the neighbourhood (as opposed to

experiential changes) was a process guided by defined boundaries drawn from the DEOD Official Development Plan (ODP), which splits the DEOD into four sub areas (see Map 2). Sub-area one includes the two primary corridors through the neighbourhood and the



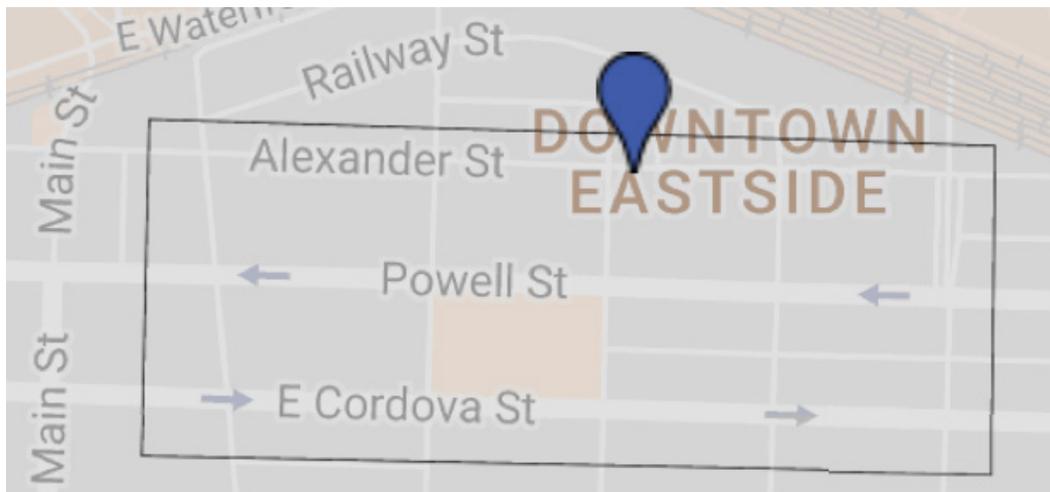
Map 2: Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan Sub-areas (Source: City of Vancouver, Downtown-Eastside/Oppenheimer Official Development Plan, p. 9)

DTES: Hastings Street and Main Street. In the ODP, this area is intended to be “a high-density, mixed commercial and residential area, appropriate for a mix of office, retail, local social services, and other similar uses” (City of Vancouver, 2014b, p. 10). As a result of the busy, changing nature of this area, sub-area one has been excluded from this study. The urban form is quite different from the more residential, quiet city blocks that directly surround Oneesan. As such, I have used the ODP’s sub-areas two, three and four as boundaries (see Map 3). Sub-areas two, three and four are located around Oppenheimer Park,

and as the DTES Plan points out, are “an important place to the Japanese-Canadian, Aboriginal and low-income communities” (p. 47). These sub-areas are more residential in nature, and closer in proximity to Oneesan. However, I was flexible with the use of boundaries as defined in the DEOD ODP, as sometimes it seemed only logical to stretch them slightly. For example, these sub-areas do not include the north side of Alexander Street. Since Oneesan is located on the opposite side of Alexander, it is likely that residents interact with this area of the neighbourhood in their daily lives, and thus, it was included.

Surveys and Interviews

In the end, five out of the eleven residents of Oneesan participated in the study. All five women completed the survey, and two women also participated in interviews. Though this number is small, these five women represent nearly 50 percent of the participant pool. At the time I began the study, 11 out of 12 units at Oneesan were occupied. One new resident moved in during my data collection phase; because the survey focused on experiences with the neighbourhood over the past three years, the new resident was not asked to participate. Though not the focus of this project, the survey also included the same liveability questions as those administered to the residents of Oneesan by JTW Consulting in 2014. These questions were included with the purpose of providing Atira with information on the satisfaction of the units today, as compared to satisfaction with the units in 2014. I also had discussions with Atira staff regarding the neighbourhood, its changes and the impacts of these changes. The recruitment poster and letter can be



Map 3: Project study areas and Oneesan Container Housing (Source: Google Maps)

found in Appendix A and B. The survey and interview guiding questions can be found in Appendix C and D.

Tracking Neighbourhood Change

To explore the changes that Atira had noticed in the neighbourhood with regards to social housing, I utilized VanMap*, which allows users to view Vancouver data in map form. I used the non-market housing layer to track the non-market housing located in the area. The non-market housing layer provides occupancy data and the total unit population. Using this information revealed the number of social housing units that had opened within the study boundaries since 2012, the year before Oneesan opened. The layer and accompanying report attributes are extracted quarterly from the City of Vancouver’s Community Services: Housing Centre Branch. A list of social housing sites in the neighbourhood can be found in Appendix E.

To explore the changes in the

* Accessible at: <http://vancouver.ca/your-government/vanmap.aspx>

neighbourhood with regards to restaurants, cafés and other food service providers, I utilized Vancouver’s Open Data Catalogue** , which provides free access to the City of Vancouver’s data sets. I used the Business License data sets for 2016 to date, and for 2012. Using the Local Area, I was able to determine which businesses fell within my study area. I compared business licenses in 2012 to the 2016 business licenses.***

The licenses I compared are as follows:

- LTD Food Establishment
- Manufacturer- Food with Anc. Retail
- Retail Dealer- Food
- Restaurant Class 1
- Wholesale Dealer- Food with Anc. Retail
- Ltd Service Food Establishment

These licenses represent establishments where food may be purchased, at either restaurants or food retailers.

** Accessible at: <http://vancouver.ca/your-government/open-data-catalogue.aspx>

*** From my neighbourhood observations, there was one restaurant that did not appear in the business license data. This restaurant was also added.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

In a paper on community-based research on the DTES, Boyd (2008) examined the challenges of doing research on the DTES. She noted that the DTES is a space where residents have become criminalized, radicalized and pathologized (Boyd, 2008). She also noted that it is often a place where researchers parachute in to benefit their own academic career, with little regard for how the research will benefit those being studied (Boyd, 2008). With this power dynamic in mind, I was sensitive to the degree of pressure Oneesan residents might feel to participate in this study. I also tried to be sensitive in my approach to recruiting participants.

In the end, participation in the surveys and interviews was somewhat lower than I had anticipated. I had also hoped that research participants would be willing to participate in neighbourhood walks, in which they could show me the neighbourhood through their eyes. However, interest in this aspect

of the study was low and this planned part of the research study did not take place. As a result, findings may be less representative of all of Oneesan residents. The results of this study cannot be expected to be generalizable to all women living in Oneesan, or all women living in supportive housing in the neighbourhood. I believe that the experience of neighbourhood and neighbourhood change is subjective, thus the findings from this study are meant to be illustrative of the possible experiences of neighbourhood change within the study area.

Finally, I am an outsider in Oneesan's neighbourhood and the DTES as a whole. Though I have tried to report on the findings of this research in a manner that stays true to what I heard from Oneesan residents, ultimately, this research was interpreted through my own lens.



Image 7: Mural by Joey Mallett and Rita Buchwitz, at the corner of Powell Street and Gore Street. The mural pays tribute to the Japanese and First Nations history of the neighbourhood.

CASE STUDY: ONEESAN CONTAINER HOUSING

CASE STUDY CONTEXT

To understand the impacts of neighbourhood change, it is first important to explore specific changes, as well as the context within which these change takes place. To provide this understanding, a description of the neighbourhood context and its changes are provided below.

The DTES is home to some of Vancouver's oldest neighbourhoods, and is located on unceded Coast Salish territory. The Musqueam and Squamish First Nations, as well as Japanese and Chinese cultural groups, among others, have strong ties to this area of Vancouver. It is a mixed-income neighbourhood of significant diversity, including single people, families, people of low-to-moderate-income, children, youth and seniors. The DTES faces many complexities and challenges, including homelessness,

poverty, a lack of affordable and quality housing, unemployment, mental health, drug use and crime (City of Vancouver, 2013). Despite these challenges, and despite the significant amount of negative attention this area of Vancouver receives, the DTES also possesses many assets. As the City of Vancouver's Local Area Profile (LAP) points out, "residents value the sense of belonging and feelings of acceptance experienced in the Downtown Eastside communities linked to their strong cultural heritage; and access to health and social services" (2013, p. 2).

The DTES Plan splits the DTES into seven subareas: Chinatown, Gastown, Industrial Lands, Oppenheimer District, Strathcona, Thornton Park and Victory Square (City of Vancouver, 2014a) (see Map 4). Amongst these neighbourhoods,

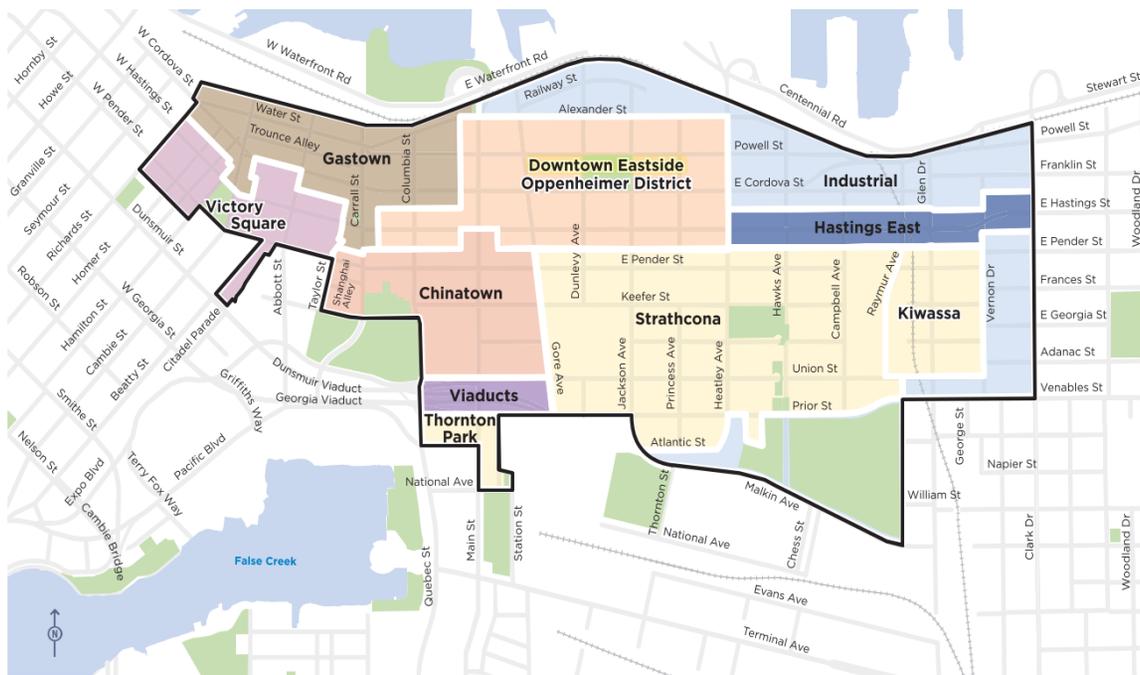
the plan estimates that 18,477 people live in the DTES, with approximately 33 percent or 6,108 of these people living in the DEOD, the most populated area of the DTES (City of Vancouver, 2014a). The DEOD is the location of Oneesan Container Housing and as such, is the focus of this study.

Oppenheimer Park lies at the heart of the DEOD neighbourhood and has historically served as a focal point and social space for the surrounding community. The park first opened in 1898, and subsequently was named for Vancouver's second mayor, David Oppenheimer (The Vancouver Heritage Foundation, 2009). During the Great Depression in the 1930s, it served as a place for protesters to meet and as a place where labour action and protests began (The Vancouver Heritage

Foundation, 2009). Maintaining this role as political hub and place for civil protest, in 2014, Oppenheimer Park was the location of a tent city, established by many of Vancouver's homeless, protesting the lack of adequate and affordable housing in Vancouver. The Park continues to play an important role for the surrounding community. In the LAP (2013), Oppenheimer Park was one of the most frequently mentioned "key

assets" by the community, and noted as a highly valued space by local residents. This neighbourhood was also the location of a strong Japanese community prior to World War II. Starting in the late 1890s, Japanese Canadians were the major ethnic group in the Powell Street area of the DTES (The Vancouver Heritage Foundation, 2009). As the area became settled by an increasing number

of Japanese families, many family businesses and houses were established and in the years that followed, the Japanese community thrived (Tsuyoshi Tiffin, 2012). That is until the 1940s, when the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour buoyed the already existing xenophobia in the city. This culminated in the relocation of Vancouver's Japanese community to internment camps by the Canadian Government in the spring and summer of 1942 (The Vancouver Heritage Foundation, 2009). While some Japanese Canadians did return to the Powell Street area following the war, the community did not return in the same numbers. Despite the dismantling of the community, the neighbourhood's Japanese history is evident today. In the blocks surrounding Oneesan, the Vancouver Japanese Language School, the Japanese Hall, and the Japanese Buddhist Temple (although at a different location than the original) can still be found, as well as several other buildings with ties to the Japanese-Canadian community.



Map 4: Downtown East Side sub-areas and neighbourhoods (Source: City of Vancouver, Downtown Eastside Plan, p. 38)



Image 8: A sign pointing to the Vancouver Japanese Language School during the Powell Street Festival



Image 9: The Japanese Hall, located at 487 Alexander Street

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHANGES

The neighbourhood surrounding Oneesan has both a rich history and today, a complex socio-political landscape. It is also a neighbourhood that is quickly changing. Between 2001 and 2013, the DTES Social Impact Assessment (2014c) reports a 303 percent increase in property values, a population growth of 9.8 percent, and 38 development permits issued annually on the DTES. With such a significant amount of development, it is not surprising that even during the short three year period that Oneesan has been in the neighbourhood, Atira has observed a great deal of change, some of which has caused concern for their residents. As mentioned above, these changes can be categorized under three themes: the DTES Street Market, social housing and new restaurants and cafés, or gentrification. These themes are explored below.

The DTES Street Market

The DTES Street Market is a controversial street market that has operated on the DTES since 2010. It was started by the DTES Neighbourhood Council (DNC) and the Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), and was initiated “as a response to the unregulated and criminalized street vending already taking place in the DTES” (The Downtown Eastside Street Market, 2014). The market is a non-profit and social enterprise, serving as a low barrier economic opportunity for many DTES residents. While the market has operated with autonomy for several years, the society has recently partnered with the Portland Hotel Society (PHS) (Lupick, 2016) who will largely take care of administration for the market society (Blythe, 2016).

The market reports that one third of its vendors are women, one half First Nations, and many others from the Chinese retirement community (The Downtown Eastside Street Market, 2014).

The market provides over \$500,000 a year in income to the marginalized communities that participate in vending at the market and prevents more than 20 tonnes of waste, annually, from going to landfills (The Downtown Eastside Street Market, 2014). Consequently, it is apparent that the market serves as an important economic opportunity for many residents of the DTES, many of whom are struggling financially.

The market began operating on Sundays in Pigeon Park, and has since expanded to include two other locations and hours for everyday of the week. In 2015, the City of Vancouver acquired 501 to 533 Powell Street, the lots directly behind Oneesan and neighbouring Atira residence, Imouto Housing. The portion of the site directly behind Oneesan was designated, and is currently being used for the market on Saturdays. The market is part of larger plans for the site, which include creating a Community Economic Development Hub (CED Hub) and social housing. Further, there

ONEESAN CONTAINER HOUSING

is mention of the opportunity for the PHS's Hastings Urban Farm to occupy the eastern portion of the Site, while providing spaces for artists and makers to work, is also being considered. The CED Hub is meant to be a community-led approach to economic development, that, in addition to addressing issues of poverty, will provide community building opportunities for the residents in surrounding neighbourhoods (City of Vancouver, 2015a).

However, the DTES Street Market and the informal vending that take place on the streets of the DTES are often muddled in many people's minds. The City of Vancouver reports that illegal street vending in the DTES has increased over the past year as a result of multiple and complex factors (City of Vancouver, 2015b). Consequently, the city has looked into preventing unsanctioned vending, with the new sanctioned locations playing an important role. It is

believed that the new locations will allow for "the ability to better consolidate the activity, along with a thoughtful and constructive enforcement approach, [which] will decrease and address unlawful vending taking place in other areas of the Downtown East Side, including the blocks of East Hastings between Main and Carrall Street" (City of Vancouver, 2015b, p. 4).

Regardless of its location and its distinction from informal vending, the DTES Market draws negative associations and concerns for many. For example, a petition titled "Stop the Junk Market" was signed in response to the market's expansion plans (Cheung, 2015). Cheung (2015) reports that those who signed the petition worried about increased drug activity, vandalism and other crime in the area, with local businesses concerned that, in addition to the sanctioned vendors, the new market location will also attract illegal vendors. Public consultation for the new location also raised concerns, including concerns for increased crime and disorder in the area, parking and



Image 10: 501-533 Powell Street, the lot directly behind Oneesan and the location of the DTES Street Market on Saturdays. Oneesan can be seen in the background.

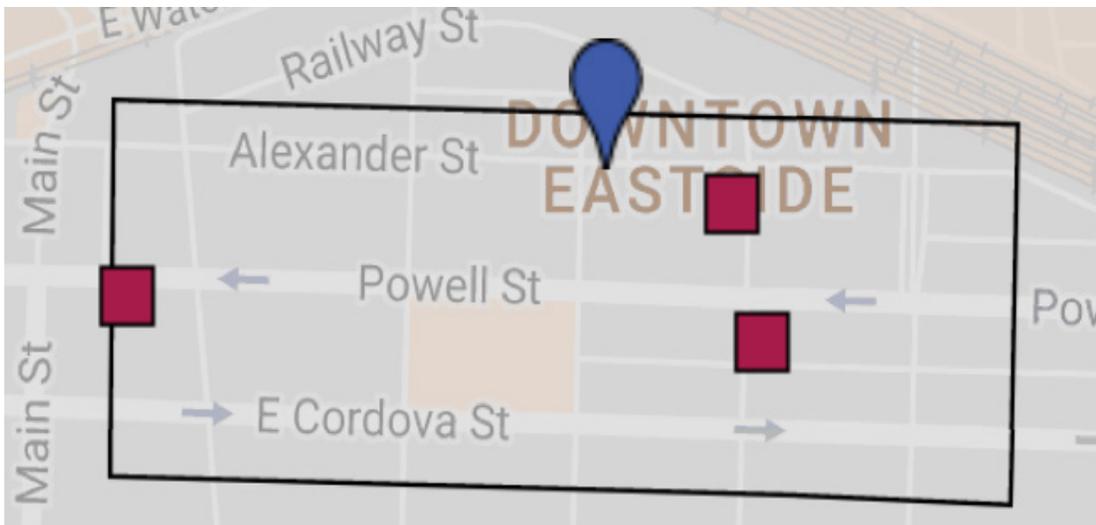
pedestrian safety problems, capacity to manage the market operations and lack of metrics to measure negative impacts (City of Vancouver, 2015b).

Daniel Mundeve (2015), a student who worked with the DTES Market for two semesters, reported on two common myths associated with the market. The first myth Mundeve (2015) debunked is that the DTES Street Market is a junk market, arguing that the market has many interesting, unique items to be bought, including First Nations arts and crafts. Second, Mundeve (2015) argued that the market is not full of stolen goods. He states that DTES Market Society is making a great effort to ensure the items sold at the market are legal, including welcoming the presence of the Vancouver Police Department, registering vendors, and training volunteers to monitor the market (Mundeve, 2015). This is especially crucial, as it seems that concerns around stolen and illegal goods are prevalent in debates around the market.

In response to the expressed concerns regarding the market, the City of Vancouver and the DTES Street Market Society has made it clear that creating safe and legal vending at the market's locations is of the utmost importance, stating that a number of measures will be taken to make the market safe at the new Powell location. These measures include placing greeters at the entrance and exits to ensure safety and keep unlicensed vendors out of the area, using trained security volunteers, implementing a formal complaint process and a Vancouver Police Department-assigned liaison (City of Vancouver, 2015a). Addressing concerns regarding stolen goods on its website, the City of Vancouver reports that "not only does 501 Powell Street offer a more permanent location for the DTES Street Market, but it also provides more security. The new space is enclosed, which will help the market ensure that stolen goods aren't sold there." Further, the expansion of the market triples the number of vending opportunities, allowing for more legal vending to happen in the DTES.

Social Housing

In addition to the DTES Street Market entering the neighbourhood, Atira has also observed an increase in social housing units in the years since Oneesan was built (see Map 5). One of these social housing sites is the Alexander Street Community, owned and operated by the PHS. Alexander Street Community provides low-barrier permanent and transitional housing at 111 Princess Ave – the opposite end of the same block in which Oneesan sits. Within Alexander Street Community, which opened in the fall of 2014, there are 139 housing units (Portland Hotel Society Community Services, 2016). The second building to open in the neighbourhood is the Budzey Building, located at 220 Princess Ave. The Budzey building provides 147 housing units for women (including trans and cis) and women-led families, and opened in the summer of 2015 (Rain City Housing, 2016). The third new social housing is the View, at 250 Powell Street, which opened in 2015. Formerly a jail, the View offers 96 units of affordable housing for residents of the DTES (The Bloom Group, 2016). Together, these



Map 5: Oneesan can be seen in blue, with the three new social housing sites marked in red (Source: Google Maps)

buildings offer just over 380 new social housing units in the neighbourhood, units that did not exist when Oneesan opened its doors.

These new social housing sites are indicative of the large amount of social housing that exists within the DTES, and more specifically, the DEOD. The LAP reports that based on 2006 census data, 33 percent of housing units are SROs, 32 percent are non-market, six percent are community care facilities, leaving 29 percent of housing as market housing on the DTES (City of Vancouver,

2013). However, despite the significant amount of non-market and SRO housing on the DTES, 1,847 people were counted as homeless in March of 2016 during the annual Vancouver Homeless Count (Thomson, 2016) and the waiting list for social housing in Vancouver is numbered around 10,000 applicants (Lee, 2016).

As such, although there has been an increase in social housing units in the neighbourhood surrounding Oneesan, the social housing supply in the city remains insufficient. Affordable housing in general, is also very much needed

in the city, the larger Metro Vancouver region and the province as a whole. Lee (2016) illustrates this need, stating that, “144,720 households in Metro Vancouver - more than one in six (17.7 percent) households — were in core housing need in 2011” (p. 23). Furthermore, approximately 7640 individuals living on the DTES live on social assistance, which provides only \$610 per month for single people and \$910 for people on disability (City of Vancouver, 2015b). Within the \$610, the government budgets \$375/month on rent and 235 for other needs. With only \$375 allocated for housing, and the average cost for a one bedroom in Vancouver’s census metropolitan area at \$1079 (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2015), it is apparent why those on social assistance require alternatives to the rental market, in order to access housing.

Thus, with many individuals struggling with homelessness and under-housing on the DTES, preserving and improving the social housing stock has been an important part of policy and planning for this area. This may be why, at least in

this particular area of the city, an increase in non-market housing was observed in recent years. Two documents play an influential role in the housing stock in the DEOD: the Downtown-Eastside Oppenheimer Official Development Plan (ODP), the bylaw that regulates development in this area of the city, and the Downtown Eastside Plan, a local area plan which outlines programs, policies and strategies to achieve a positive future for the DTES. In these plans, the DEOD has been prioritized as an area for affordable rental housing for those of low and moderate income, and as an area that should provide 60 percent social housing units and 40 percent secured market rental housing units in all new development (City of Vancouver, 2014a). The DEOD ODP solidifies this through zoning that states that for new development, the maximum density can be increased “if at least 60% of residential units comprising not less than 40% of the gross floor area above a floor space ration of 1.0 are developed as social housing” (City of Vancouver, 2014b, p. 12).

However, there are many that feel that this 60/40 ratio is simply not enough. For instance, some argue that the definition of social housing is inadequate. Some of this dissatisfaction stems from the new way that social housing is defined in both DTES Plan and the DEOD ODP. These documents define social housing as housing in which at least 30 percent of the units are occupied by those below housing income limits (at welfare or pension rate) and is owned by a non-profit, non-profit housing cooperative, or by or on behalf of the City of Vancouver, the province of British Columbia or Canada. This means that while 30 percent of the designated social housing will be priced with residents on income assistance in mind, the other two thirds of designated social housing’s rent can be set at Housing Income Limits (HILS) or at market rate, both of which likely well above what those on social assistance could afford.

The Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District... is the heart of the low-income community for a reason. It is the only neighbourhood in Vancouver that is protected against real estate development by city policy. Because of these protections the DEOD is the most low-income neighbourhood in the city. It has the most low-income housing, the most services and resources for low-income people, and the fewest condos and boutique restaurants. The area has been protected against the ongoing condo storm which is pounding the rest of the Downtown Eastside by a simple piece of city policy that acts like sandbag levees against a storm.”
-Carnegie Community Action Project, 2015

Gentrification

The third factor at play in the neighbourhood changes surrounding Oneesan is that of gentrification. Interestingly, Ley and Dobson (2008) found that gentrification had been stalled at the time of their research on the DTES. The authors made this conclusion after conducting research on the conditions that impede inner-city gentrification. Acknowledging that the DTES is an ideal location for renewal and redevelopment, Ley and Dobson (2008) attributed the lack of gentrification in the areas as a result of the large social housing stock and the “street scene” that is not typical of a middle-class neighbourhood. With this large proportion of housing units unavailable for the market, there is less opportunity for gentrification (Ley & Dobson, 2008).

However, by 2016, gentrification is highly associated with the DTES. This gentrification can be attributed to a number of connected factors, including the City’s social mix policies (Carnegie Community Action Project, 2013), global real-estate markets and forces, and

increasing property prices in Vancouver, among other things. The impacts of gentrification on the DTES have been observed in the form of increased rent, displacement, poor nutrition and lack of access to affordable programs and services (City of Vancouver, 2014a). Interestingly, in the DTES Plan, it is also noted that, while gentrification has the potential to “compromis[e] residents’ sense of inclusion, belonging, safety, and connectedness, the process of change can also bring benefits, new opportunities for employment, housing and amenities” (City of Vancouver, 2014a, p. 28).

Some typical identifiers in a trend of gentrification have been observed around Oneesan and one of the most obvious is the new upscale restaurants and cafés that have opened in the neighbourhood. Restaurants and cafés serve, as Burnett describes (2014), as spaces of consumption, and play a complex role in the gentrification of neighbourhoods “as upscale restaurants and trendy pubs move into the neighbourhood, consumers are

altering the spatiality of residents” (2014, p. 161). Therefore, though the presence of restaurants and cafés is obvious, their effects and influence on gentrification processes are less so. Correspondingly, in the DTES Plan, the DEOD is identified as a neighbourhood on the DTES in which to encourage commercial activity through the upgrading of existing commercial uses and developing new commercial uses. It is noted that these commercial uses should serve both local residents and the working population (City of Vancouver, 2014a). However, the worthy goal of serving both local residents and working populations seems both difficult to implement and monitor.

Of the new restaurants in Oneesan’s neighbourhood, Cuchillo is one that has received a great deal of attention. The restaurant is located at 261 Powell, and moved into a space that once hosted a Japanese bathhouse (Ellan, Marquez, & Richard, 2013). The address is also the location of the York Rooms, an SRO that also received a great deal of attention in 2014, when rent was raised from \$375 to \$600 per month. Shortly after



Image 11: With no street-facing sign, Cuchillo is marked by a scull motif

opening, Cuchillo was the target of anti-gentrification protesters. In an article written in the Georgia Straight on July 5, 2013, Richard Marquez, a social worker and activist, was quoted, pointing out the severe contrast between the restaurant and its surroundings, and illustrating the problematic nature of such restaurants for the neighbourhood: "It's in the bottom of a single-room occupancy hotel called the York Rooms.... Up above, the conditions are putrid and deteriorating. Upstairs, people are struggling with food security issues, affordability, nutritional deficiencies,

and health challenges. They have no kitchens, no bathrooms. But downstairs, they put in more than a million [dollars] in a brand new spanking kitchen to provide dining for the wealthy " (as quoted in Lupick, 2013).

So while restaurateurs seek business opportunities in an area of the city that has the most affordable rents, a sense of injustice also exists in regards to what these restaurants represent and the abject inequality between who these places serve, and the people that live around them.

Nearby, at 415 Powell Street, the Mackenzie Room, which opened in July of 2015, is also a new addition to the neighbourhood. The location was previously home to Parke Place Coffee Bar, which Atira staff described as a much more affordable options for Oneesan residents. Reviewers on Yelp, before the close of the Park Place Coffee Bar noted four-dollar meals. Meanwhile, a few doors down from the Mackenzie Room, is yet another addition to the



Image 12: The Uncommon, located less than five minutes from Oneesan



Image 13: The Mackenzie Room is another new restaurant in Oneesan's neighbourhood

neighbourhood. The Uncommon, located at the corner of Powell at Jackson and less than a five-minute walk from Oneesan. The Uncommon opened in the summer of 2015 and is in the same location as the now-closed Khan Convenience Store.

Burnett (2014) argues that many of the new and revitalized restaurants, café and bars in the DTES play a key role in its gentrification, and this gentrification has become more complicated because it is gentrification “in which the identities of low-income and marginalized residents are being commoditised even while the residents themselves are spatially managed and controlled, their bodies highlighted even as their communities may still be displaced” (p. 158). Burnett (2014) also notes the role that consumption plays in the gentrification of the DTES, where patrons of these upscale restaurants and cafés, despite not living in the area, are altering and impacting the culture and meaning of a neighbourhood. Further, restaurants and cafés increase the cultural value of a neighbourhood like the DEOD,

contributing to gentrification and leading to displacement, which may then mean that only those in social housing located in the neighbourhood are able to remain (Burnett, 2014). With these many factors related to gentrification in the neighbourhood in mind, Atira wondered how these new restaurants have impacted Oneesan residents and if they have influenced their relationship with the neighbourhood.

| ADDRESS | 2012 BUSINESS | 2016 BUSINESS |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 305 Alexander St. | 2 Chefs and a Table | Ask for Luigi |
| 255 Powell St. | Bean Around the World | Bean Around the World |
| 126 Gore Ave. | Rice World | Rice World |
| 269 Powell St. | Big Lou's Butcher Shop | OUT OF BUSINESS: Big Lou's Butcher Shop |
| 300 Powell St. | Sunrise Markets | Sunrise Markets |
| 260 Powell St. | - | Cuchillo |
| 338 Powell St. | Kay's Seafood | Kay's Seafood Ltd |
| 348 Powell St. | Downtown Pharmacy | - |
| 362 Powell St. | Lanalou's Restaurant | Lanalou's Restaurant |
| 342 Powell St. | - | OUT OF BUSINESS: Aristocrat Restaurant |
| 318 Powell St. | - | OUT OF BUSINESS: Kadbanoo Food Enterprises |
| 374 Powell St. | H.O.P.E. Culinary Training Society | H.O.P.E. Culinary Training Society |
| 398 Powell St. | New World Confectionary | - |
| 399 Powell St. | Dar Foods | Dar Foods |
| 365 Powell St. | Northwest Food Products | Northwest Food Products Ltd. |
| 429 & 461 Powell St. | Double Happiness Foods | Double Happiness Food |
| 469 Powell St. | Payless Meats | Payless Meats |
| 415 Powell St. | Parke Place Coffee Bar | The Mackenzie Room |
| 477 Powell St. | Khan Convenience Store | The Uncommon |
| 582 Powell St. | Shun Hing Grocery Store | Shun Hing Grocery Store |
| 55 Dunlevy Ave. | The Settlement Building | The Settlement Building |
| 566 Powell St. | The Bakery | Groundswell |
| 686 Powell St. | - | Ed's Daily |

Table 1: Business licenses within the project study area in 2012 and 2016. The licenses listed are licenses that fall under the categories of: LTD Food Establishment, Manufacturer- Food with Anc. Retail, Retail Dealer-Food, Restaurant Class 1, Wholesale Dealer- Food with Anc. Retail, Ltd Service Food Establishment. (Data source: Vancouver Open Data Catalogue)



Image 14: Alexander Street Community at 111 Princess Ave. One of the new social housing sites in the neighbourhood.

RESULTS

SURVEY RESULTS

| | RANGE | AVERAGE |
|---|-----------------------|----------------|
| PARTICIPANT AGE | 53 – 57 years old | 54.6 years old |
| YEARS LIVED IN ONEESAN | 2 - 33 months | 21.6 months |
| YEARS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIOR TO LIVING IN ONEESAN | 1 year- “a long time” | 9.5 years |

Table 2: Demographic background of survey respondents

As explored above, Oneesan’s neighbourhood has seen many changes in recent years. The new restaurants and cafés in the blocks surrounding Oneesan are indicative of gentrification. On the other hand, the influx of social housing

units and the new location of the DTES Street Market are not. Evidently, the neighbourhood changes are complex, and as such, the impact of these changes is also expected to be complex. The following is a summary of key survey results.

Of the women surveyed, respondents’ ages ranged from 53-57. The length of time participants had lived in Oneesan ranged from two months to 33 months, averaging a length of stay at 21.6 months. In addition to living in Oneesan, participants also reported having a longer history with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Respondents reported living in the neighbourhood the following lengths of time, prior to moving into Oneesan:

- A long time
- 20 years
- Five years
- One year
- 18 months and lived in Strathcona

Based on the survey questions regarding the liveability of the unit, tenants reported an overall satisfaction rate of 74 percent. This is in comparison to the satisfaction rate of 92 percent reported in 2014. However, the original survey was administered in March of 2014 after the opening of Oneesan in September of 2013. At this point in time, the residents had not spent a summer living in their housing units, thus no data was provided for the item that asks women if the units are cool enough on hot days. When this question was asked in the most recent survey, it received the lowest satisfaction rate of all the items, at 25 percent. If this question were eliminated, the satisfaction rate would be calculated at 81 percent, proving a closer rate to the previous satisfaction rate of 92 percent. A breakdown of the liveability survey results is provided below.

| SURVEY QUESTIONS | COMPLETED | YES | NO | SATISFACTION RATE MAY 2016 | SATISFACTION RATE MARCH 2014 |
|--|-----------|------|----|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Are the units large enough to live comfortably? | 5 | 4 | 1 | 80% | 78% |
| Is the kitchen sufficient for cooking healthy meals? | 5 | 4.5* | .5 | 90% | 100% |
| Is there sufficient ventilation when cooking? | 5 | 3 | 2 | 60% | 89% |
| Are bathrooms sufficient for personal care? | 5 | 3 | 2 | 60% | 89% |
| Is heating sufficient in wintertime? | 4 | 3 | 1 | 75% | 89% |
| Are units cool enough on hot days? | 4 | 1 | 3 | 25% | No data |
| Is there a lot of loud noise from adjacent suites? | 5 | 1 | 4 | 80% | 78% |
| Is there sufficient natural light from windows? | 5 | 5 | 0 | 100% | 100% |
| Do you feel safe and secure in your unit? | 5 | 5 | 0 | 100% | 100% |
| Overall satisfaction rate: | | | | 74% | 92% |

Table 3: Results from survey questions regarding liveability

* 1 respondent indicated a response halfway between yes and no, noting she was “in between”.

Comments regarding the liveability of the units include:

- The kitchens need mini-freezers
- The fridge is not large enough
- In the summer, two units get really hot
- There is too much unnatural lighting at night

The Neighbourhood

When asked about changes in the neighbourhood, three of the five women stated that they had noticed changes in the neighbourhood, with one participant noting “somewhat but not really.” Changes in the neighbourhood that were reported by residents in the survey, include:

- A few hundred residents within a one block radius of Oneesan
- Increased theft and loitering
- Visibly more tents and people with carts sleep at 500 East Cordova
- More mental health incidents – physical, emotional, abusive - outside front and back lane
- More Johns at night close to Alexander and Jackson driving by
- More work with the community

Amongst the respondents who noted changes in the neighbourhood:

- One resident felt impacted by these changes negatively
- One resident felt impacted positively
- One resident felt impacted both positively and negatively

When asked about their sense of well-being in relation to neighbourhood change, two of the respondents who noted changes in the neighbourhood felt their sense of well-being had been impacted positively by the changes, while one felt her well-being had been impacted negatively.

Regardless of whether or not respondents had noticed any changes in the neighbourhood, they all reported that they felt safe in the neighbourhood, with one respondent adding the caveat of “sometimes”. As noted above in the liveability questions, all women felt self and secure in their units. Correspondingly, all women responded that they felt welcome in their neighbourhood.

None of the respondents felt that there was anything that Atira, as an organization could do to improve their relationship with the neighbourhood. With one participant noting that “Atira doesn’t get told anything” implying that as an organization, Atira does not have the power or knowledge to impact the neighbourhood.

In response to the question, “Do you feel there are things missing from your neighbourhood?” three participants answered “No”. Two participants answered, “Yes” and noted the following as missing from their neighbourhood:

- Mental Health Workers
- Care Team for Oppenheimer area
- 24 hours Insite*
- Access to computers and Wi-Fi
- Recreation area (for youth and young adults)
- Skills development
- Shopping resources

* Insite is a legal, supervised injection site operated by Vancouver Coastal Health.

KEY FINDINGS

The DTES Street Market

As mentioned, the DTES Street Market's new location at 501 Powell Street is directly behind Oneesan. As a result of this close proximity to Oneesan, Atira wondered if the market's new location has impacted Oneesan's residents. Interestingly, among the residents who listed changes in the neighbourhood, only one resident noted the new location of the DTES Street Market. Despite not receiving a significant amount of attention in the survey, the women who participated in the interviews did comment on the new location of the DTES Street Market, and what it has meant to them.

Oneesan residents worried about the people and types of activities the market would attract, "I don't like that market here – there's too much dope, it brings in meth, brings in speeders..." Another resident echoed similar sentiments, "the people that walk the line go there – the drugs, the dirtiness", adding, "I don't like the location of the market, we're going

to get a lot of riff raff." One resident noted that as a person recovering from addiction, she finds exposure to drugs and alcohol in the neighbourhood difficult, and this caused concern for her with regards to the market. Atira staff also noted that there were concerns regarding the increased police presence that were expected to accompany the market's new location. Thus, the expectation that illegal activities would accompany the market, and that the market would attract particular people, did create concern for the residents interviewed. However, Atira staff also noted that despite the many concerns there were regarding the market, they have not heard a great deal about the market since its opening.

Social Housing

When asked about neighbourhood change, one resident noted an increase in residents in the neighbourhood, presumably from the new social housing, and four out of five surveyed women reported feeling impacted by

the new social housing units. When discussing the new social housing units in the interviews, there were two themes apparent with regards to this new housing.

First, the residents interviewed saw the value of social housing for people in the neighbourhood. For example, a resident alluded to the benefit of social housing sites, differentiating them from SROs, "social housing is good because in the SROs you can't cook, you can't live on 600 dollars a month. You'd have to be nuts to live in a SRO." A resident also supported the idea of housing on the block behind Oneesan where the market is located, however she did so as a preference over the market, "I would like to see more housing – just better than the market and people need housing here." Atira staff noted that the new housing has had some positive effects on the neighbourhood. For example, the new social housing buildings are aesthetically pleasing for the people who live within the units and the people who live in the

neighbourhood. The staff noted that when buildings are in good condition, such as the social housing, people tend to feel more positively about their lives in comparison to how they would feel living in a decrepit building. Second, a resident interviewed expressed some concern regarding the new people in the neighbourhood and their behaviour, and referred to social housing residents who may have mental health challenges, noting that she had observed an increase in people with mental health challenges in the neighbourhood.

Gentrification

When participants were asked to list changes they had observed in the neighbourhood, the additional new restaurants and cafés were not noted in the survey. However, in the interviews one residents did state that “the yuppies are wanting too much out of the neighbourhood,” referring to the young urban professionals opening businesses in the blocks surrounding Oneesan. The same resident also expressed concern regarding the alcohol sold at many of the new restaurants. She also pointed out

how a low-cost diner was turned into a more upscale restaurant and bar. When speaking to Atira staff, they discussed how it was observed that the new restaurants and cafés were not meant for the residents of the neighbourhood and they did not believe that the interior of the restaurants and especially the prices, were targeted towards the many people living in the surrounding areas.

In contrast, the second resident interviewed had relatively little to say about the new restaurants and cafes in the neighbourhood, other than pointing out that she enjoyed the new café that had opened on the corner, “I like the Uncommon. It’s a nice little coffee shop.” When asked about cost, she has found that, “the prices aren’t too bad.”

Safety

Despite confirming a strong sense of safety in the survey, residents also expressed concerns regarding safety during the interviews. For example, when asked about feeling safe, a resident responded, “Somewhat – some days I feel the vibes of angry people so I stay

away. I don’t say anything – I just keep walking.” The resident also expressed some concern about safety indirectly: when asked what was missing in the neighbourhood she stated that she would like more street lights, especially at the corner of Jackson and Alexander, and that because of a lack of lighting, she “sometimes doesn’t feel right going around the corner at night.” Finally, one resident had an interesting take on safety in the neighbourhood, explaining, “I feel very safe here because this is where all the criminals are, they aren’t going to do a crime where they live.”

Neighbourhood Satisfaction and Neighbourhood Concern

Overall, the interviewees expressed a general satisfaction with the neighbourhood, in addition to satisfaction with their housing units. One resident expressed that she enjoyed living in a neighbourhood where people have had similar life experiences to her: “for me, it’s a good neighbourhood, there are people who have more experience than I have. I have friends who were drugs addicts.” The other

resident interviewed also expressed a generally satisfied sentiment “Overall, its okay, some days are better than others.” Also stating, “I like it down this way – its quieter beyond Hastings.” Further, all survey respondents stated that they felt welcome in the neighbourhood and reported feeling connected to the neighbourhood. For example, one resident stated, “I like to say hi to everyone in the park. This is the type of neighbourhood where even when you’re 70, people will still say hello to you.” While another resident explained, “I feel connected because I’ve been down here a long time.”

The general satisfaction with the neighbourhood did not mean Oneesan residents were not concerned by the troublesome conditions that are prevalent on the DTES and within the DEOD. One resident pointed out that more resources were needed in the neighbourhood for women, as she felt the existing social services and resources targeting women were closer to downtown. Another resident interviewed again expressed

concern regarding drug use in the neighbourhood, “At night, it’s like the walking dead...a lot of hookers around, a lot of drugs in the area. Drugs are getting so strong – it’s scary. We need another Insite – too many people have been found dead in Oppenheimer Park.”



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Image 15: Storefronts on Powell Street

DISCUSSION

Survey and interview results did not reveal consensus among Oneesan residents regarding neighbourhood change; not all of the residents surveyed felt the neighbourhood had changed in recent years, while others felt impacted by the changes to varying degrees. The personal history of residents within this area of the DEOD, and their expectations regarding the present and future conditions of the neighbourhood likely impacted both perceptions and impacts of neighbourhood change (Aitken & Bjorklund, 1988). These mixed findings may also be a result of the interdependence between the individual respondents and the neighbourhood (Aitken, 1990); for some residents of Oneesan, the neighbourhood may play a lesser role in their daily lives and consequently, they are less impacted by its changes. The role of the neighbourhood may

also be influenced by other settings in participants' lives (Ivory et al., 2011), these settings might include Oneesan, an employment setting, and other places they spend time, which provide resources.

The differing responses to observed change may also be influenced by whether or not changes in the neighbourhood were experienced as abrupt or incremental, or whether or not the costs of change were perceived to outweigh the benefits (Aitken, 1990). If the changes were observed as incremental, they may not be seen as significant as ones that were perceived to be abrupt.

Thus, there are many factors beyond the scope of this study that likely explain why some, but not all residents felt the neighbourhood had changed in recent

years. These factors also likely explain why some participants experienced neighbourhood change as positive, while others experienced it as negative. With this variation in mind, below is an exploration of the impacts of these three major neighbourhood changes. In addition to these notable changes, other themes apparent in the survey and interviews are also explored.

DTES STREET MARKET

As a space for economic opportunity, the DTES Street Market is a change that is, in many ways, meant to benefit the low-income community in the surrounding neighbourhood. This is especially so considering the large low-income population living in the DTES, and the many individuals struggling to make enough money to survive. However, none of those surveyed or interviewed noted the benefits the market might provide for those living in the neighbourhood. Further, it was the one neighbourhood change explored that cohesively drew concern from Oneesan residents. Their concerns were with regards to safety and illegal activity at the market, similar to the concerns commonly noted in the media and city documents.

Likely, the women of Oneesan have adapted their daily patterns to ensure their sense of safety with regards to the market. Perhaps they avoid shopping or participating in vending at the market, or simply walking near the market,

when it is open. Adapting daily patterns in public space is supported by research that has found that women's use of public space is very much influenced by safety concerns (Trench, Oc, & Tiesdell, 1992). Further, aligned with the concerns expressed by Oneesan residents, it seems that the relocation of the market has also posed concerns specific to women vendors who have reported bullying and harassment at the market's new locations. In response, the DTES Street Society has said they are considering a women's-only market (Watson, 2016) and the DTES Women's Centre has recently started a market solely for women vendors (Mui, 2016).

However, in the same way that options are being explored as to how to make the market a safer-space for women vendors, options should also be explored to make the market safer and more acceptable for the market's patrons and neighbours, including how the market can exist in neighbourhoods like Oneesan's neighbourhood, without

the concern that the market currently draws.

This will mean securing an in-depth understanding of the unique needs of the different groups in the neighbourhood, as well as understanding the concerns that the market's neighbours, like the women living in Oneesan, have regarding the market. Public spaces that are planned and organized with women and their needs in mind are often much different than those that are planned and organized for men, especially when considering safety. Therefore, taking their needs into consideration is of the utmost importance.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Considering Vancouver's housing crisis and homeless population, the new social housing units in the neighbourhood are greatly needed. These units provide low-barrier, transitional, supportive and affordable housing for women, women-led families, aboriginal youth, and other vulnerable populations. Unlike the market, views of the new social housing in the neighbourhood were mixed; residents saw the value of the new social housing, but they also expressed some concern regarding the new people living in their neighbourhood. This may be linked to safety, unfamiliarity and feelings regarding change. Moreover, this influx of social housing happened in a relatively short period of time; because it was an abrupt change, it may have caused more of a disturbance in the relationship between residents and the neighbourhood, as compared to if the change had been more incremental.

In addition to noting the significant amount of new social housing in the neighbourhood and its impacts, the

addition of these new social housing units in the neighbourhood should not detract from other housing issues in the neighbourhood. Unfortunately, displacement is very much happening in the DTES. CCAP reports on the rate of change on the DTES- the rate of market housing developed as compared to social housing developed (Swanson & Herman, 2014). When considering social housing that is affordable for those receiving social assistance, CCAP found that for proposed and residential buildings from 2013 to 2014, this ratio was 4.7 (market housing) to 1 (affordable housing) (Swanson & Herman, 2014). Therefore, while recent years have seen an increase in social housing in the DEOD specifically, future years may see disappointing rates of change for affordable housing for those on social assistance.

While there are policies in place in the DTES Plan that protect both rental and social housing in Oneesan's neighbourhood, there are also pieces

of this policy that do not do enough to truly protect the social housing stock. The new social housing definition, which only ensures that 30 percent of the required 60 percent social housing in new development is set at rates that are affordable for those on social assistance. As development in the area unfolds in the coming years, this new definition may lead to displacement and contribute to gentrification. Observing and understanding the impacts of this new definition will be important for lobbying for changes in city policy that will do more to protect and provide housing for those in need.

GENTRIFICATION

Both the DTES Street Market and the new social housing in the neighbourhood have the intent of benefitting the community in Oneesan's neighbourhood. Gentrification does not have this same intent. Instead, it presents challenges in terms of affordability, belonging, community and displacement. Considering these various changes and their intended impact on the community, assigning a positive or negative value to the changes may not have been an easy task for survey participants, which is perhaps why questions regarding gentrification drew both positive and negative reactions.

Within the neighbourhood, there are many professionals opening restaurants and cafés, while a plethora of other new businesses are also located in the neighbourhood. Choosing to locate a business in the DTES and the DEOD more specifically, can be attributed to many things, including more affordable land values and rent compared to other parts of the city. It can also be

attributed to many seeing the DTES as a trendy neighbourhood, in which "the adventure of dining in a marginalized neighbourhood appears to be an increasingly important reason that some consumers patronize spaces of consumption" (Burnett, 2014, p. 163). Burnett (2014) likens these dining experiences to a form of poverty tourism, which offers diners a perceived "authentic" experience. However, as the low-cost diners continue to be converted to upscale dining experiences, not only are affordable options removed, but the cultural and symbolic meaning of the neighbourhood will change. This will impact who feels welcome in the neighbourhood and who feels a sense of belonging.

Though the DEOD ODP looks to encourage new commercial uses in the area that serve the "diverse residents and workers in the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District" (City of Vancouver, 2014b, p. 5), an examination of the new restaurants and cafés entering

the neighbourhood reveal that their target customers are not the residents that live in the surrounding blocks. For example, The Mackenzie Room's entrées range from 16 to 33 dollars, prices that are unlikely affordable for many living in the neighbourhood, and especially those living on social assistance. Though these restaurants may serve individuals who work in the neighbourhood, they may also be indicative of a concerning trend, in which the restaurants and other businesses in the neighbourhood are converted from ones that serve neighbourhood residents, to ones that serve only professionals in the area and those who live elsewhere in the city.

Correspondingly, it is not apparent that many of the new restaurants and cafés look to serve the interests of the neighbourhood residents and community. However, implementing socially responsible and community-minded policies and programs that address local social issues may lessen new businesses' impacts and perhaps

even contribute to positive change. The H.A.V.E. Culinary Training Society and Café provides an example of how this is being done in Oneesan's neighbourhood. The café provides culinary training to DTES residents facing barriers to employment. Students of the program receive training in the working kitchen for the café, while the café serves many people who work and visit the neighbourhood.

Conversely, one resident had a positive response to the new shops and restaurants in the neighbourhood. This was somewhat surprising and contrary to expectations regarding experiences of gentrification on the DTES. However, this resident's experience of gentrification is similar to the findings expressed by Freeman (2011), in which it was found that, while wary of gentrification, residents can also be appreciative of some aspects of neighbourhood change that accompany this neighbourhood process.

Moreover, Oneesan's neighbourhood has not taken a simple trajectory of

gentrification and displacement. With the large social housing stock in the neighbourhood, many residents in the neighbourhood remain, while pieces of the neighbourhood change greatly and gentrify. This may be impacting residents of Oneesan quite uniquely. With Oneesan owned by a non-profit organization with the purpose of providing housing for women, they are not at risk of displacement in the same way that residents of rental units or privately owned SROs are. This was also noted in conversations with Oneesan staff, who felt that as a large organization, Atira has the power and determination to withstand gentrification in the neighbourhood and continue to provide housing for women in need. This of course, does not mean those in social housing who remain in gentrifying neighbourhoods will not be impacted, but likely they will be impacted in different ways compared to those who face a more immediate threat of displacement.

SAFETY

In addition to insights on the three major changes in Oneesan's neighbourhood, both the results of the survey and the results of the interviews revealed a sense of safety for the women living in Oneesan. This was found in regards to both their units and the neighbourhood. This is contrary the large amount of research demonstrating needs for safety improvements on the DTES, especially in regards to safety for women. These findings, demonstrating a sense of safety, could be related to a number of factors.

First, there are many reports of the strong sense of community that exists on the DTES (City of Vancouver, 2014c; Funk & Hayward, 2013). This is important to note because a strong sense of community has been linked to improved feelings of safety and security (Francis, Giles-Corti, Wood, & Knuiman, 2012; Mahmoudi Farahani, 2016). Sense of community and safety were both alluded to in the interviews conducted with residents.

Second, many supportive housing units on the DTES are located in SROs. Ravn (2015) reports on a number of studies that have found the conditions in many supportive housing sites on the DTES do not promote feelings of well-being and safety. This is in contrast to the observed and reported conditions of Oneesan. The units have been designed to promote a sense of well-being and security, and provide a plethora of artificial and natural light and warm colour palettes (JTW Consulting, 2014). The units are also entirely self-enclosed, allowing residents more control over their personal space. The site also features a gate that controls who can enter and exit the property. As a result, it is likely that a sense of safety within the units promotes a sense of safety outside.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SATISFACTION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CONCERN

Related to the impacts of change and feelings of safety and community, the findings of general satisfaction with the neighbourhood may help to mitigate the concerns of residents and increase resiliency to the challenges of the neighbourhood. For example, Young et al. (2004) found that a strong sense of neighbourhood is often associated with more positive health and well-being outcomes. This sense of neighbourhood included sharing commonalities, just as one resident expressed by stating she has friends in the neighbourhood with similar life experiences. Likewise, feeling welcome in the neighbourhood likely also contributes to a stronger sense of neighbourhood for residents.

This suggests that sharing commonalities, and community building acts and initiatives, are likely an important component of Oneesan residents' continuing satisfaction with the neighbourhood.

In addition, it is apparent that Oneesan residents have both commonalities and differences in opinion on Oneesan's neighbourhood and its changes. Some felt changes were positive, others felt they were negative, while some did not notice any significant changes. Despite these differences, all of the opinions shared were valuable and deserve to be heard when decisions are made that shape Oneesan's neighbourhood and residents' daily lives. Further, many of the concerns expressed by residents about the neighbourhood were similar. This suggests that providing an organized means or platform for Oneesan residents to discuss neighbourhood issues and concerns, could be an important way for Oneesan residents' to have their voices heard and take action.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Though Oneesan's neighbourhood has seen a great deal of change since it opened its doors, a great deal of change is also yet to unfold. Though women felt impacted by neighbourhood changes in the past three years, no neighbourhood change was conclusively detrimental to the well-being of Oneesan residents. However, in many ways, the future of the DEOD and Oneesan's neighbourhood has been largely laid out in the DTES Plan. Approved by Vancouver City Council only two years ago, in 2014, its impacts are still very much to be felt.

These impacts may be seen in new housing and new local businesses, many of which may not be intended to serve low income residents. In addition, the DTES Street Market's new location is relatively new to the area and there are further plans for the site. With the changes explored in this research,

and the changes yet to come, in mind, the following are recommendations intended to mitigate the impacts of negative neighbourhood change for Oneesan residents, and women of a similar demographic, living in Oneesan's DEOD neighbourhood.

Recommendation 1: Targeted outreach with women living in Oneesan and the surrounding neighbourhood, conducted by the DTES Street Market.

Implementer: DTES Street Market Society

Justification: In researching the DTES Street and in speaking with women living in Oneesan, many concerns were expressed regarding the DTES Street Market and its new location. There were concerns regarding safety, illegal activity and goods, and whom the market would attract to the neighbourhood. On the other hand, the DTES Street Market is also implementing initiatives to ensure safety and legality at its market locations. As part of these safety initiatives, targeted engagement with women living in Oneesan and other non-market housing in the neighbourhood is recommended. It would allow the street market organizers to hear about the concerns of the women living in the neighbourhood, and how these concerns may be addressed. Outreach with women may help to improve the safety of the market, while also promoting a more harmonious relationship between the market and nearby residents.

Conditions for success: In order to thoroughly address the concerns of the women in the neighbourhood regarding the market, it is recommended that outreach is ongoing. It is also recommended that the market society is transparent in how it handles and addresses the feedback from this outreach, as well as how this feedback influences change.

Recommendation 2: Continue to pursue and encourage a women's only DTES Street Market.

Implementer: DTES Street Market Society

Justification: It was recently announced that a market in which only women vendors will be permitted, has been proposed, with a potential location of 501 Powell Street. The proposed women's only market is in response to safety concerns and harassment, which has been reported by women vendors at the DTES Street Markets. Considering the concerns expressed by Oneesan residents, a women-led market may improve feelings of safety not only for the vendors, but also for women who live nearby or choose to shop at the market. It has also recently been reported that a women-led market has been started by the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, in response to violence and safety concerns in existing vendor markets (Mui, 2016). There is potential for the DTES Street Market to partner with the DTES Women's Centre, to provide more safe spaces for women vendors to participate in the informal economy. Further, considering the market's close proximity to Oneesan and Imouto, Atira may be able to play a role in advocating for a women's only market.

Conditions for success: Consideration should be given to what will allow women to feel safe and free of harassment when acting as vendors on the DTES, as well as what will allow women who shop at the market or live nearby, to feel safe and comfortable.

Recommendation 3: Implement policies and programs that encourage new businesses in the DTES DEOD neighbourhood to be socially responsible and community minded.

Implementer: City of Vancouver

Justification: The DEOD Official Development Plan has the goal of improving “the viability of commercial activity by encouraging the upgrading of existing commercial uses and the development of new local commercial uses which provide a wide range of goods and services to serve the diverse residents and workers in the Downtown Eastside Oppenheimer District” (City of Vancouver, 2014b). As this research has demonstrated, the new commercial uses in the areas surrounding Oneesan are not always intended to serve the local community. To encourage businesses that serve a diverse range of residents in the area, including women in social housing, the City could implement programs and policies that, for example, encourage new businesses in the area to train and hire local residents, offer sliding scale menu prices, or provide welcome space for the neighbourhood’s residents, among other things.

Conditions for success: The City would need to secure the appropriate incentives to encourage businesses to incorporate more community-minded policies into their business plans.

Recommendation 4: Monitor the impacts of the new definition of social housing in the DTES Plan.

Implementer: City of Vancouver

Justification: A great deal of concern regarding the new definition of social housing in the DTES Plan has been expressed. Despite the DTES Plan ensuring rental housing in the neighbourhood, it may push those who cannot afford market rental and HILS rates out of the neighbourhood. Monitoring how this definition impacts the neighbourhoods, especially in terms of housing and displacement, will provide important information for decision makers.

Conditions for success: Monitoring and evaluating policy decisions, such as the change in the social housing definition, is often time consuming and expensive. The City must be willing to utilize resources to understand the impact of this important decision.

Recommendation 5: Form a neighbourhood advocacy group amongst Atira residents.

Implementer: Atira Women's Resource Society

Justification: As an organization that provides a significant amount of housing for women on the DTES, Atira is a unique position to assist in forming an advocacy group with the women accessing their services. By providing space for this group, women who have concerns about city planning issues, including the DTES Street Market, gentrification, and social housing will be able to voice their concerns and advocate for a neighbourhood that meets their unique needs.

Conditions for success: Many people outside of the planning world are not aware of the city processes and plans that impact their daily lives and neighbourhood. Providing information and education on such things will be important to the success of the group. Success of the group will also be dependent on whether or not Atira residents take interest and leadership in this initiative.

Recommendation 6: Conduct research on the impacts of gentrification on the marginalized communities who remain in gentrifying neighbourhoods.

Implementer: Researchers, Academic Institutions

Justification: A gap exists in research on the impacts of gentrification, specifically the impacts of gentrification on marginalized communities and individuals who remain in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Considering a neighbourhood such as the DEOD, and its large protected social housing stock, understanding how gentrification impacts the residents in protected housing will be important to understanding the impacts of gentrification. This is especially so when more obvious impact of gentrification, such as displacement, may not be as prevalent because of this protected housing stock. Such research will provide a more nuanced picture of the impacts of gentrification on specific individuals and groups within a neighbourhood.

Conditions for success: To gain a thorough and nuanced understanding of gentrification and its impacts, many complex city processes and factors will need to be considered. Furthermore, no one individual or group will be impacted in the same manner, therefore research on the impacts of gentrification on a variety of individuals and groups within a neighbourhood will be needed.



Image 16: A street view of Oneesan Container Housing

CONCLUSION

In the end, it becomes apparent that the neighbourhood surrounding Oneesan is one of juxtapositions. Visible homelessness can be found next to upscale restaurants, while well cared for social housing sites are found next to sites with dismal living-conditions. While some affordable amenities are being replaced by services that target those who live elsewhere in the city, others remain. Within the neighbourhood and around it, the urban landscape is quickly changing. The gentrification and transformation of neighbouring Gastown is nearly complete, and is highly contested in nearby Chinatown. As the city becomes increasingly more expensive, the neighbourhood surrounding Oneesan is a microcosm of a city struggling with challenges of affordability, a housing crisis and poverty.

Neighbourhood change in the DEOD, and more specifically the blocks surrounding Oneesan, are complex and multifaceted. Within the neighbourhood, there are changes that are representative of gentrification. There are also changes that are representative of opportunity and support for the low-income residents of the neighbourhood. As a result of these complex changes, the attitude towards and impacts of neighbourhood change are understandably complex. Residents expressed concern regarding the DTES Street Market, and the activities it may attract. They saw the benefit of social housing, but also noticed how it had contributed to change in the neighbourhood. Finally, they expressed concern regarding the new cafés and restaurants in the area, with one resident noting that she enjoyed one of these cafés. Residents also expressed a strong sense of safety in the neighbourhood, but also concerns for their safety. They

felt connected to the neighbourhood and generally satisfied, but not at the expense of recognizing the many social issues that are apparent around them.

As a result, this study demonstrates that there are many factors at play in the neighbourhood in which Oneesan is located. Moreover, these factors interact with individual characteristics to shape the experiences and lives of residents and their relationship to, and understanding of, neighbourhood change. More research is needed on the impact of neighbourhood change on vulnerable populations, like women in social housing, and the factors that encourage resiliency to negative change. Further research specific to the DEOD is also needed, in order to explore how changes are impacting the lives of those who live in the neighbourhood and the city's many low-income residents.



Image 17: Storefronts on Powell Street

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT POSTER



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Neighbourhood Changes & Oneesan Container Housing

Dear Oneesan Residents,

I am looking for volunteers to participate in a study on how changes in the neighbourhood surrounding Oneesan have impacted residents of Oneesan Container Housing. As a participant of the study, you will be asked to participate in one or all of the following:

- Survey
- Interview
- Neighbourhood Walk

Your participation in the survey will required approximately 20 minutes. The survey has been delivered to you. The interview and neighbourhood walk will require no more than 1 hour, each, of your time.

To become a participant, or for more information on this study, please contact co-investigator Andrea Haber at [redacted] or [redacted]

Professor Leonora Angeles
Principle Investigator
School of Community and Regional Planning
University of British Columbia
Phone: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Andrea Haber, Masters Student
Co-investigator
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APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT LETTER



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XX/XX/XXXX

Dear Oneesan Resident,

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in a research study about Oneesan Container Housing and neighbourhood changes.

I am a graduate student at the School of Community and Regional Planning (SCARP) at University of British Columbia. Part of my degree requirements includes a research project. After discussing a need for research with Janice Abbott, CEO of Atira Women's Resource Centre, I will be conducting a study about Oneesan Container Housing and the changes in the neighbourhood surrounding Oneesan. Specifically, I would like to understand the impacts that changes in the neighbourhood have had on you as a resident of Oneesan. I would also like to hear your observations about the changes in your neighbourhood and how they have affected your life.

I am hoping you would be willing to volunteer to participate in my study. Participation in this study would require one or all of the following activities:

- Filling out a survey
- Taking part in an interview
- Going for a neighbourhood walk with the researcher

The survey will not require you to provide any of your personal information. For information gathered during the interview and neighbourhood walk, your identity will be kept private.

My research will be submitted to UBC; Atira and research participants will also receive the results of my research. It is my hope that this research will help Atira to better understand its residents and the way in which their neighbourhood impacts them.

If you are willing to participate in an interview or if you have any questions about my research, please contact me at [redacted] or [redacted], or contact [redacted] to arrange a time.

Thank you and I hope to hear from you,

Professor Leonora Angeles
Principle Investigator
School of Community and Regional Planning
University of British Columbia
Phone: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]

Andrea Haber, Masters Student
Co-investigator
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APPENDIX C: SURVEY



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Resident Survey

The following survey is intended to provide tenants with an opportunity to comment and provide feedback on their homes at Oneesan Container Housing and the surrounding neighbourhood. The questions under the section "Neighbourhood" will be used for the research project of graduate student, Andrea Haber; which is exploring the impact of neighbourhood changes on those living in Oneesan.

Your participation is very much appreciated.

1. I have read the above statement and I consent to participating in this survey:

Yes No

2. How old are you? _____

3. How long have you have lived in Oneesan? _____

4. How many years have you lived in the neighbourhood before moving into Oneesan? _____

5. What ethnicity or cultural group do you identify with? _____

Personal Units¹

- 6. Are the units large enough to live comfortable? Yes No
- 7. Is the kitchen sufficient for cooking healthy meals? Yes No
- 8. Is there significant ventilation when cooking? Yes No
- 9. Are bathrooms sufficient for personal care? Yes No
- 10. Is heating sufficient in winter? Yes No
- 11. Are units cool enough on hot days? Yes No
- 12. Is there a lot of loud noise from adjacent suites? Yes No
- 13. Is there sufficient natural light from windows? Yes No
- 14. Do you feel safe and secure in your unit? Yes No

¹ Questions 5 through 13 have been taken from a previous survey conducted by Atira, with JWT Consulting, in 2014.

Neighbourhood

15. Have you noticed changes in the neighbourhood?

Yes No

If yes, please the list changes you have noticed:

16. Do you feel impacted by these changes?

Yes, positively Yes, negatively No I don't know

17. Have the changes in the neighbourhood impacted your sense of well-being?

Yes, positively Yes, negatively No I don't know

18. Do you feel safe in your neighbourhood?

Yes No

19. Do you feel welcome in your neighbourhood?

Yes No

20. Do you feel impacted by the new social housing units that have been built in the neighbourhood?

Yes No

21. Are there actions that Atira could take to improve your relationship with the neighbourhood?

Yes No

If yes, please list some of your ideas:

22. Do you feel there are things missing from your neighbourhood?

Yes No

If yes, please list what you feel is missing:

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS



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Resident Interviews Questions:

1. Tell me about the neighbourhood? What is it like to live here?
2. How do you define "neighbourhood"?
 - a. What areas surrounding Oneesan do you consider to be your neighbourhood?
 - b. Why?
3. Tell me about the changes you have noticed in your neighbourhood?
 - a. What do you think about the Downtown East Side Street Market's new location?
 - b. What do you think about the new shops, stores and services that have moved into the neighbourhood?
 - c. What do you think about all of the new social housing units in the neighbourhood?
4. Tell me about how any of changes have impacted you, if at all?
 - a. What are the ways in which the changes in the neighbourhood impact your daily life?
5. Do you feel like you interact with your neighbourhood differently because of the changes you have noticed in your neighbourhood?
 - a. If so, in what ways?
6. What changes have impacted you the most in the neighbourhood?
7. Do you feel connected to your neighbourhood?
 - a. What makes you feel connected/disconnected?
 - b. How does the neighbourhood make you feel connected or disconnected to other people? Why?
8. Do you feel safe in the neighbourhood?
 - a. What makes you feel safe in the neighbourhood?
 - b. What makes you feel unsafe in the neighbourhood?
9. Do you feel there are services, shops or other amenities that are missing from your neighbourhood?
 - a. If so, what would you like to see added to the neighbourhood?
10. What programs and initiatives could Atira implement that might help to balance the changes in the neighbourhood?
 - a. What things could Atira do to make your experience in the neighbourhood better?

