HEY NEIGHBOUR!
Collective

Evaluation Report

Impacts and Learnings From Our First Five Years

2019-2024

Learn more:
HNC Evaluation Report

HEY
NEIGHBOUR!
Collective

Land Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge that the learnings represented in this guide were gathered from Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC) partners working in numerous unceded, traditional and ancestral territories, including those of the following peoples: Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səl̓ilw̓ətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh), xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) qʼʷaːn̓ƛ̓ən̓ (Kwantlen), q̓iċəy̓ (Katzie), kʷikʷəƛ̓əm (Kwikwetlem), sɛmiˈɑːmu (Semiahmoo), Qayqayt, sċəwaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen), Syilx (Okanagan), and Lək̓ʷəŋən (Esquimalt and Songhees).

HNC recognizes that colonialism has isolated Indigenous Peoples intentionally and by design through, for example, prohibiting cultural practices, separating communities, and weakening family and language ties. HNC recognizes these historic and ongoing inequities and systemic barriers and strives to be part of movements to correct them.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- WHAT did we do 3
- SO, WHAT were the impacts? 4
- SO, WHAT are we learning? 5
- NOW WHAT? 6

INTRODUCTION

- About Hey Neighbour Collective 7
- Theory of Change 9
- About the Evaluation 10
- About this Report 12

PART 1 - WHAT DID WE DO?

- Key Strategies 14
- Strategy 1: Testing and Piloting Community-building Programs and Activities 15
- Strategy 2: Action Research and Learning 24
- Strategy 3: Story Sharing and Knowledge Mobilization 26
- Strategy 4: Housing Industry and Policy Engagement 27

PART 2 - SO, WHAT WERE THE IMPACTS?

- Impacts for Residents 32
- Impacts on Housing Operators 40
- Impacts on Community-based Organizations 44
- Impacts on Policy and Systems Change 46
- Impacts of Working Collectively 49

PART 3 - SO, WHAT ARE WE LEARNING?

- Learnings about Context 58
- Learnings about Effective Strategies 59
- Learnings about Roles of Housing Operators and Community-based Organizations 60
- Learnings about Policy and Systems Change 61

PART 4 - NOW WHAT?

- SCALING OUT: Spreading demonstration programs and sociable building design to more people, buildings, and communities 63
- SCALING UP: Building support for systems and policy change 63
- SCALING DEEP: Shifting attitudes and creating a culture of support for socially connected and resilient housing 64

APPENDIX

- APPENDIX A - Theory of Change 66
- APPENDIX B - Resources and Links 69

Acknowledgements

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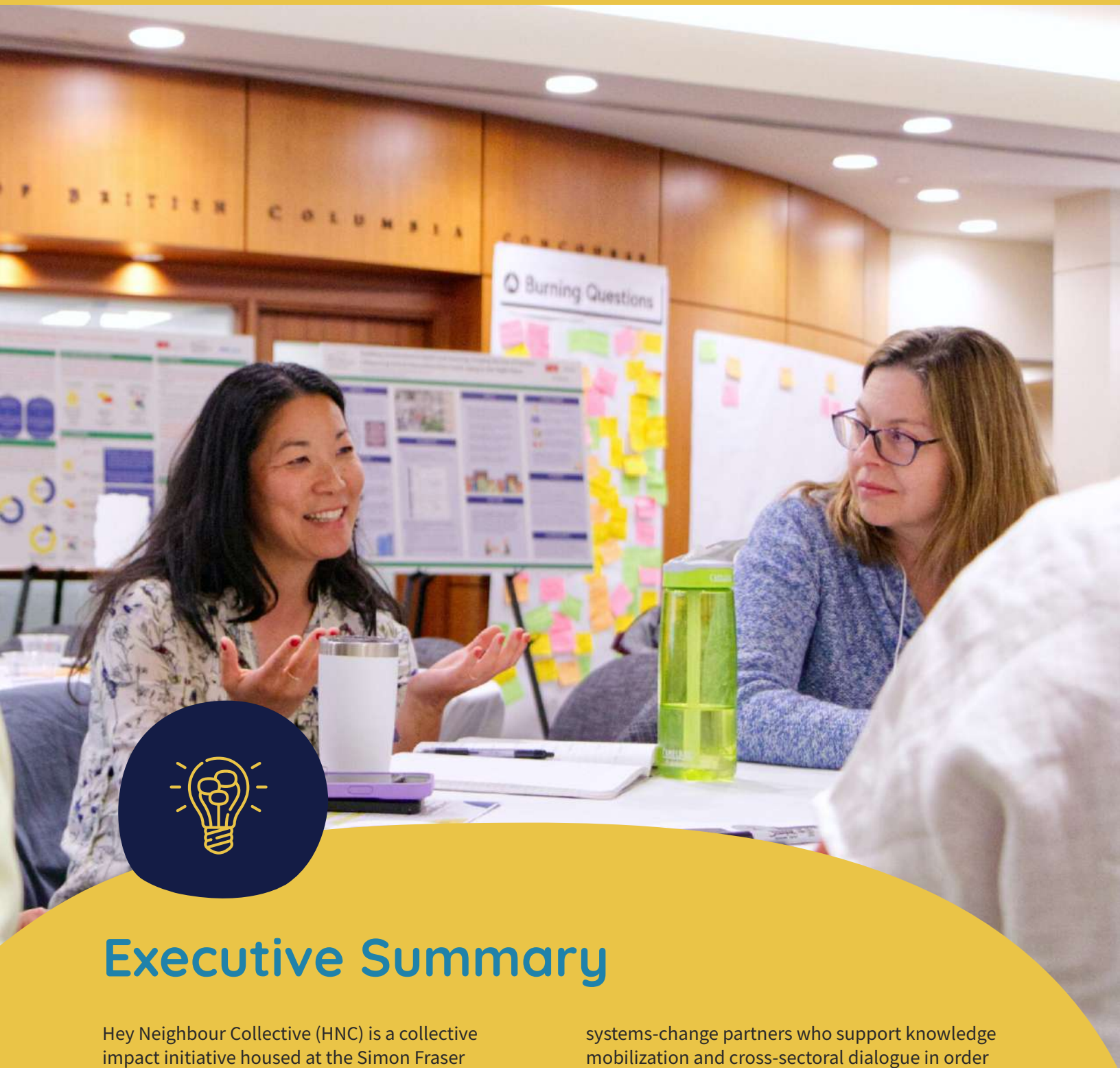
FUNDERS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

HNC's work would not be possible without the support of our funders and sponsors from 2019 onwards. They are:



Executive Summary

Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC) is a collective impact initiative housed at the Simon Fraser University (SFU) Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. HNC brings together housing operators, community-based organizations, researchers, policy makers, governments, housing associations, and health sector organizations. Together with residents of multi-unit housing, these core partners take action to build social connectedness, resilience, and capacity for neighbourly mutual support in multi-unit housing. In addition, HNC works with a team of systems-change partners who support knowledge mobilization and cross-sectoral dialogue in order to bring promising innovations to scale and effect greater systems change on these issues.

This report summarizes key learnings from HNC's first five years of operation from 2019 to 2024, and is organized into four parts that describe HNC's activities and their impacts, collective learnings, and shared priorities moving forward.

Part 1:

WHAT did we do?

HNC's key strategies involved four main areas of activity.

1. Testing and Piloting Community-building Programs and Activities

HNC tested, evaluated, and shared learnings about diverse activities and approaches to increasing neighbourliness, social connectedness, and resilience in multi-unit housing pilot sites. The main demonstration programs included:

- **Brightside Community Homes Foundation** - Community Engagement
- **Building Resilient Neighbourhoods** - Connect & Prepare
- **Building Resilient Neighbourhoods** - Neighbours Helping Neighbours
- **Catalyst Community Developments** - Community Connections
- **Concert Properties** - Community Connectors
- **Seniors Services Society of BC and City of New Westminster** - Seniors Integrated Services Program
- **West End Seniors' Network** - Close To Home

2. Action Learning and Research

HNC generated evidence-based data on issues related to social connectedness in multi-unit housing that highlighted inspiring ideas and opportunities for changes in professional practices, systems, and cultures for residents, housing operators, and cross-sectoral policy makers.

3. Story Sharing and Knowledge Mobilization

HNC showcased and engaged others in learning about promising practices and policy solutions through sharing stories and evidence related to social programming and improving the management, design, and community culture of multi-unit housing.

4. Housing Industry and Policy Engagement

HNC engaged housing professionals and cross-sectoral policy makers in understanding and implementing opportunities to foster healthier and more resilient communities through shifts in policy, programming, and practice.

Part 2:

SO, WHAT were the impacts?

Impacts of the Demonstration Programs

IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS

Demonstration programs contributed to important impacts for residents through the shared activities, and residents themselves also had important, direct impacts on each other.

- Increased **social connectedness** and **sense of belonging**
- Enhanced **mutual assistance** between neighbours
- Increased **safety and emergency preparedness**
- Strengthened resident **leadership capacity**
- Strengthened **engagement with community services**
- Improved relationships with **housing operators**

IMPACTS FOR HOUSING OPERATORS

Some HNC demonstration programs were led or hosted by housing operators who embedded the engagement of residents into their own operations. The impacts of these programs frequently reflected common themes and benefits.

- Improved **relationships with residents**
- Enhanced **brand profile**
- **Supportive benefits** from partnerships
- Better **emergency preparedness** and/or **community mutual support**
- Changes in **organizational practices and/or policies**

IMPACTS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

A number of demonstration programs were led by community-based organizations, and in some cases these organizations also engaged other partners. These organizations proved to be effective and often critical actors–and also reported receiving benefits from their involvement.

- **Expanded outreach**, especially to more isolated residents
- Better **leveraging of resources**

IMPACTS ON POLICY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

Social connectedness and resilience have become more elevated as priorities in British Columbia's policy landscape. HNC and its partners have played increasingly significant and influential roles in growing public knowledge and awareness and influencing changes in systems and policies.

- **Social connectedness** has been embedded in regional policy
- Housing industry representatives and local governments are engaging in **sociable** and **age-friendly design and policy**
- There is **increased action** on the linkages between housing, health, aging, and social connectedness

IMPACTS ON THE COLLECTIVE AND ITS MEMBERS

HNC has functioned as a collective impact hub and the partners have identified a number of key impacts in this collective process.

- Feeling **uplifted and inspired** by each other
- More effective internal and external **advocacy**
- Multiplied **cross-sectoral collaborations**
- Collective **field building**

Part 3:

SO, WHAT are we learning?

Learnings from the Demonstration Programs

1) LEARNINGS ABOUT CONTEXT

- Context matters, and there is no "one size fits all" approach for creating neighbourly connectedness.
- "Success" should be defined by residents themselves.

2) LEARNINGS ABOUT EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES

- Consistent and reliable third party "people-support" over time can be vital for many resident groups.
- A little can go a long way, and a small group of engaged neighbours can gradually change the culture of a whole building.
- Emergency preparedness is a popular "gateway" to building social connections between neighbours.
- There are recognizable "enabling factors" that make positive outcomes of social programming more likely.

3) LEARNINGS ABOUT ROLES OF HOUSING OPERATORS AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- Housing operators can be "enabling hosts" (and benefit from third party partnerships).
- Community-based organizations can be critical facilitators, but are underfunded to play this role.

4) LEARNINGS ABOUT POLICY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

- Social connectedness is a multi-solver in the midst of a polycrisis.
- Sociable design for new housing is increasing – but getting support for linked social programming remains challenging.
- Local governments are often siloed and stretched to meet other needs – and not currently well-structured to resource this work.
- Health and housing sector leaders are caught in "crisis intervention" – which drives a lot of their policy, funding, and decision-making.
- Better data would strengthen messaging to funders and decision makers.
- Strengthening social connection is important for everyone – but belongs to no one when it comes to key funding and policy decisions.

Part 4:

NOW WHAT?

Social connectedness programming in multi-unit housing is effective – but even with the growing recognition about the value of social connectedness, social programming is not yet receiving sufficient support for scaling. And social programming is especially challenging in buildings that don't have safe, accessible, welcoming spaces in which neighbours can gather.

Moving ahead, there is an opportunity for Hey Neighbour Collective to focus more intensively on addressing the gaps in policy and funding and creating more enabling policy environments. For this work to be successful, there are key questions that need to be tackled.

"SCALING OUT": Spreading demonstration programs to more people, buildings, and communities

- How do we ensure community-based partners have sustainable resources to deliver and scale their programs?
- How can we continue to nurture work on sociable design?
- How can we engage more market housing operators?

"SCALING UP": Building support for systems and policy change

- What are the top priorities for policy and systems change?
- What are the "measurables" of neighbourly social connectedness that will best "speak" to the public, policy makers, funders etc.?
- How can we elevate the multi-solving potential of social connectedness to build more buy-in and investment?

"SCALING DEEP": Shifting attitudes and creating a culture of support for socially connected and resilient housing

- How can HNC support culture change in the housing industry to expand the pool of housing operators committed to building neighbourly social connections and resident resilience?
- How do we change the attitudes and values that see social connectedness as merely "nice to have" but not essential?
- How can we help build a more visible, influential movement of resident voices in support of social programming and sociable design?

Introduction

About Hey Neighbour Collective

Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC) is a collective impact initiative housed at the Simon Fraser University (SFU) Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

HNC brings together landlords, housing operators, community-based organizations, researchers, policy makers, governments, housing associations, and health sector organizations. Together with residents of multi-unit housing, these core partners take action to build social connectedness, resilience, and capacity for neighbourly mutual support in multi-unit housing.

HNC's "backbone" team facilitates peer learning, developmental evaluation, and capacity building across the partnerships and demonstration programs. HNC also provides support to document and mobilize these approaches and evaluate impacts. Together, this research, evaluation, and learning is creating a growing body of evidence to support systems change, scaling, and replication strategies.

In addition, HNC works with a team of systems-change partners who support knowledge mobilization and cross-sectoral dialogue in order to bring promising innovations to scale and effect greater systems and policy change.

Hey Neighbour Collective's **Structure**

Lead Demonstration Program Partners

- Brightside Community Homes Foundation
- Concert Properties
- Building Resilient Neighborhoods Society
- Seniors Services Society of BC and the City of New Westminster
- Catalyst Community Developments Society
- West End Seniors' Network

Research & Engagement Team

- Simon Fraser University- Urban Studies
- Simon Fraser University- Gerontology
- Simon Fraser University- Health Sciences
- Happy Cities

Systems Partners

- LandlordBC
- BC Non-Profit Housing Association
- Metro Vancouver
- City of Vancouver
- City of North Vancouver
- City of New Westminster
- Vancouver Coastal Health

Theory of Change

The partners of Hey Neighbour Collective are working together towards a future where more of Canada's multi-unit housing is socially connected, age friendly, neighbourly, health-promoting, and resilient.

Intended Impact

HEY NEIGHBOUR COLLECTIVE is working to create the conditions for these intended impacts and related long-term outcomes, including:

- **A measurable increase** in social connectedness and resiliency among residents of multi-unit buildings in BC's urban communities, leading to improved resident health and well-being.
- **Positive transformation** of the ways in which multi-unit buildings are engaged, managed, and designed, in order to foster more socially connected, vibrant, and resilient communities.
- **Shifting attitudes, beliefs, and values** about the desirability of living in multi-unit housing – where multi-unit housing is seen as a "home" rather than a temporary place of residence.

What Supports These Changes?

ENGAGED, SAFE, AND EMPOWERED RESIDENTS
Healthier residents through increased engagement, sense of community, safety and belonging

PROACTIVE LANDLORDS AND PROPERTY OWNERS
Improved business practices and results

IMPROVED HOUSING DESIGN
Guidelines and practices that support the creation of environments which foster social connectedness and resilience

SUPPORTIVE POLICY
Resources and direction for planning, design, and programming

About the Evaluation

Hey Neighbour Collective undertook an evaluation of its first five years of activities, from 2019 to 2024. The evaluation focused particularly on HNC's work and demonstration partners' programs, with a view to understanding the impacts on the residents, community organizations, and housing operators directly or indirectly involved in these activities and programs. The evaluation also reviewed the impacts on broader policies and systems related to building social connectedness and resilience in multi-unit housing.

Evaluation Guiding Questions

Impacts and Effectiveness of Demonstration Program Activities in Multi-Unit Housing:

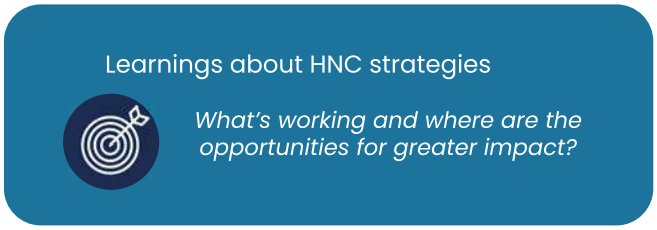
- What impacts are the demonstration programs having on **residents, community-based organizations, and housing operators?**
- What types of approaches are proving most effective in enhancing **social connectedness and resilience** among residents?
- What enabling factors are contributing to **enhancing social connectedness and resilience** among residents in multi-unit housing, and what are the **limiting barriers and challenges**?
- What are the **'core roles'** that are needed to strengthen social connectedness and resilience among residents where they live–**who needs to be involved and how?**

Impacts and Effectiveness of Policy and Systems Change Activities:

- What are the systems-change impacts occurring in the field, and what is enabling these?
- What are the key systemic barriers that are limiting progress on these issues?

Impacts and Effectiveness of Collective Field-building Activities:

- How have collaborative efforts through HNC contributed to greater impacts, as compared to organizations working alone?
- What does HNC bring to its partners to support efforts on shared goals?
- What are the most significant opportunities for HNC partners to work together to continue to strengthen the field of social connectedness and resilience in multi-unit housing in BC?



Evaluation Methods

The evaluation was guided by HNC's Theory of Change, and incorporated developmental and impact evaluation approaches.

Developmental evaluation is conducted "in real-time." Partners' experimentation, testing, and shared learning are followed by adaptations to practices and renewed testing in ongoing ways. This process also continually informs partners' scaling and knowledge dissemination activities.

Impact evaluation measures changes and progress over time toward shared goals – in HNC's case, especially focused on impacts on specific groups (e.g. residents and housing operators) and areas of common interest (e.g. the housing and social programming policy landscape).

The HNC evaluation process involved gathering and analyzing information from a wide variety of sources, including:

- **16** partner and staff interviews and focus groups
- **3** HNC partners' surveys
- **200+** residents engaged in interviews, focus groups, and surveys
- **9** evaluation reports
- **24** research publications and reports
- Notes from **50** Community of Practice meetings and developmental evaluation discussions

About this Report

This report summarizes key learnings from Hey Neighbour Collective's first five years of operation. It is organized into four parts that describe HNC's activities and their impacts, collective learnings, and shared priorities moving forward.

Part 1: WHAT did we do?

Part 2: SO, WHAT were the impacts?

Part 3: SO, WHAT are we learning?

Part 4: NOW WHAT?

Part 1:
What did we do?

What did we do?: Key Strategies

The Collective engaged four key strategies to work towards its Theory of Change:

1. TESTING AND PILOTING PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES

a. Overview Infographic
b. Demonstration Program Snapshots
c. Spotlights

2. ACTION RESEARCH & LEARNING

a. Overview Infographic
b. Spotlights

3. STORY SHARING & KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

a. Overview Infographic

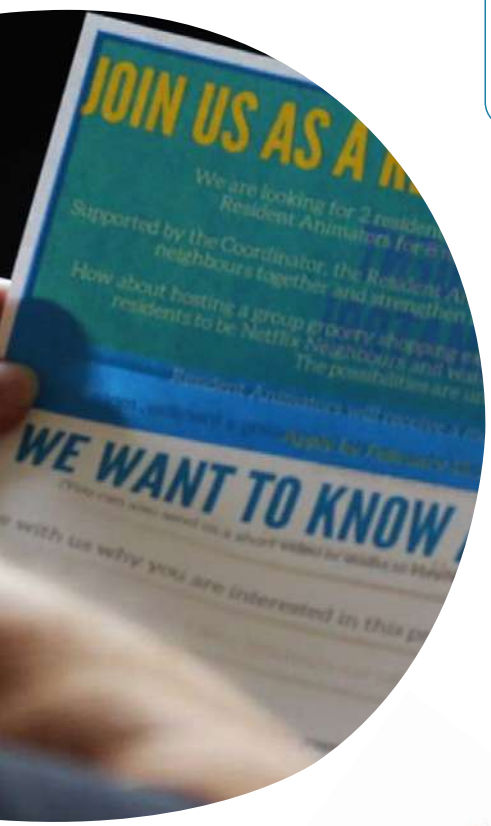
3. HOUSING INDUSTRY & POLICY ENGAGEMENT

a. Overview Infographic
b. Policy Demonstration Snapshots

Strategy 1. Testing and Piloting Community-building Programs and Activities

HNC tested, evaluated, and shared learnings about diverse activities and approaches to increasing neighbourliness, social connectedness, and resilience in multi-unit housing pilot sites

7 Demonstration Programs led by:



3 Housing Operators

- **Catalyst Community Developments**
  Non-market rental
  Community Connections
- **Concert Properties**
  Market rental
  Community Connectors
- **Brightside Community Homes**
  Non-market rental
  Community Engagement

3 Community-based Organizations

- **Seniors Services Society of BC**
  In partnership with City of New Westminster
  Integrated Services Program
- **West End Seniors' Network**
  Close to Home
- **Building Resilient Neighbourhoods**
  Connect & Prepare and Neighbours Helping Neighbours

*Trained **27** Delivery Partner Organizations*

100+ Buildings*

MADE UP OF

7,300+ Households*

**Some buildings and households were engaged by multiple partners working together, but were only counted one time for these totals.*

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Brightside Community Homes Foundation
Community Engagement

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Non-Market Rental Housing Operator

2019-Present

9 Vancouver neighbourhoods

Brightside is a non-profit organization that owns and operates 26 buildings across Vancouver. Brightside provides safe and secure affordable homes for those struggling to meet the costs of market housing, and is building toward a future where people of all income levels have a home within a vibrant and healthy community.

Participating Buildings:

- **26** buildings
- **1,216** units
- Low-rise, high-rise, townhouses
- Non-market rental

Highlights:

- Integrated resident engagement into strategic and operational plans
- Assigned dedicated Community Engagement staff
- Facilitated Resident Advisory Circle (BRAC)
- Held biennial resident surveys with Simon Fraser University research team
- Did age friendly sociable design "building audits"
- Hosted multiple program delivery partnerships

5 Delivery Partners

- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Oasis Senior Supportive Living
- Seniors Services Society of BC (SHINE program)
- Building Resilient Neighbourhoods
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House

Brightside has integrated resident engagement and community development goals into its strategic and operational plans, and employed a dedicated, full-time Community Engagement Coordinator. In collaboration with SFU Urban Studies, Brightside carried out bienniel community enhancement surveys to assess residents' well-being, and also participated in building audit and sociable design-focused workshops with Happy Cities and SFU Gerontology. Brightside has supported many community development initiatives for residents, including launching a mobile app to connect residents with community resources, supporting food security programs, and making amenity spaces available for accessible social events, information workshops, health fairs, and community gardens.

Brightside's main approach to supporting tenant connections and resilience has been through partnerships with other community organizations to bring social programming into Brightside buildings, where approximately 70% of residents are seniors, 20% people have disabilities, and 10% are families. These have included the SHINE housing navigation project with Seniors Services Society of BC, Connect & Prepare and Neighbours Helping Neighbours with Building Resilient Neighbourhoods and Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House (including workshops in Mandarin), and an Oasis aging-in-place expansion project with Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

In 2023, Brightside also launched a Resident Advisory Circle (BRAC) to engage residents in identifying more opportunities for social connectedness initiatives and taking leadership in implementing them. This led to a variety of resident-led activities, including lobby intercepts and discussions over meals.

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods
Connect & Prepare

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Community non-profit organization

2019-Present

Victoria, Vancouver, North Vancouver, New Westminster

Since 2012, Building Resilient Neighbourhoods (BRN) has been developing and testing different on-the-ground programs to help build neighbour connections and community resilience. Their flagship "Neighbour-to-Neighbour" programs—delivered by BRN and their network of community-based delivery partners—bring neighbours together to strengthen social connections, foster mutual support, and become better prepared for and resilient to different kinds of emergencies and chronic stresses.

Participating Buildings:

- **39** buildings
- Low-rise, high-rise, townhouses
- Non-market rental, market rental, owner-occupied condominiums, co-operatives

Highlights:

- Provided series of facilitated workshops and resident coaching
- Established social connectedness as a foundation for emergency preparedness and resilience
- Resident groups led action projects (e.g. shared emergency supplies, buddy check-in systems, food security etc.)

20 Delivery Partners

- BC Housing, Sustainability and Resiliency; Housing & Health Services
- Brightside Community Homes Foundation
- Catalyst Community Developments
- City of New Westminster Community Planning Division, Emergency Management Office
- City of North Vancouver's
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Community Planning Department
- Concert Properties
- City of Vancouver Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction Team
- City of Victoria Emergency Management Division (VictoriaReady)
- Good Neighbour Kitsilano
- Lionsview Seniors' Planning
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
- North Shore Community Resources
- North Shore Emergency Management
- Oasis Senior Supportive Living Inc
- REACH/Vancouver Coastal Health
- RISE Community Health
- Seniors Services Society of BC
- Silver Harbour Centre
- Victoria Downtown Residents Association
- West End Seniors' Network

Building Resilient Neighbourhood's (BRN) Connect & Prepare program focuses on building community emergency preparedness and resilience by strengthening social connections and fostering protective "social infrastructure" between neighbours, especially in response to the growing impacts of climate change.

Connect & Prepare was originally created in 2018 by BRN, in collaboration with the City of Victoria's Emergency Management Division, VictoriaReady. Through facilitated presentations, interactive games, and friendly discussions, neighbours get to know each other, identify assets and priorities, and implement shared preparedness projects. Each group of neighbours receives free workshops alongside guidance and assistance to build stronger social networks and take collective action to prepare for and respond to acute emergencies and chronic stresses.

In 2022, BRN collaborated with HNC to further develop and scale the model, training a cohort of ten community organizations in the Connect & Prepare program and delivering workshops in ten multi-unit housing communities across three lower mainland municipalities. The resulting activities, impacts and learnings were summarized in a Scaling Pilot Learning Report. In 2023 and 2024, BRN trained 25 representatives from another 13 community-based organizations, and collaborated with them as they adapted the Connect & Prepare approach for their different delivery contexts. In many cases, delivery partners focused on reaching residents at greater risk during emergencies, such as seniors and people with disabilities.

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods
Neighbours Helping Neighbours

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Community non-profit organization

2023 to 2025

Victoria, Vancouver, North Vancouver, Toronto

Since 2012, Building Resilient Neighbourhoods (BRN) has been developing and testing different on-the-ground programs to help build neighbour connections and community resilience. Their flagship "Neighbour-to-Neighbour" programs—delivered by BRN and their network of community-based delivery partners—bring neighbours together to strengthen social connections, foster mutual support, and become better prepared for and resilient to different kinds of emergencies and chronic stresses.

Participating Buildings:

- **51** buildings
- Low-rise, high-rise, townhouses
- Non-market rental, market rental, owner-occupied condominiums

Highlights:

- Facilitated workshops about mutual assistance and aging in place
- Program adapted to resident and delivery partner circumstances
- Coaching support provided to resident champions
- Resident-led activities included social events, buddy check-ins, floor connectors

6 Delivery Partners

- Brightside Community Homes
- Good Neighbour Kitsilano
- James Bay New Horizons
- NORC Innovation Lab, Toronto
- North Shore Community Resource Centre
- West End Seniors' Network

Building Resilient Neighbourhood's (BRN's) "Neighbours Helping Neighbours" (NHN) pilot aimed to bring residents of multi-unit housing together to learn about the value of intergenerational neighbourly support. Through an asset-based community development approach, this program supported neighbours to engage in mutual assistance activities in ways that can potentially help aging adults to live comfortably in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.

BRN worked with partner community-based organizations to embed neighbour-helping-neighbour ideas, activities, and tools into their existing programs, many of which focused primarily on reaching older adults. In this way, NHN was iterative and customized for each context – an approach that allowed partners to explore various strategies for building neighbourly mutual support and test ways of fostering mutual support as a "multi-solver" for different kinds of shared challenges. Some neighbour groups, for example, held social events to discuss and plan, launched buddy check-ins, or developed floor connector systems.

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Catalyst Community Developments Society
Community Connections

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Non-market rental housing developer and operator

2019-2022

Victoria, Penticton, Richmond, Vancouver

Catalyst is a not-for-profit real estate developer, owner, and operator that partners with community non-profit organizations and municipalities to build and operate new, below-market, affordable rental homes.

Participating Buildings:

- **8** buildings
- **542** units
- Low rise, mixed use, townhouses
- Non-market rental

Highlights:

- Hosted "town halls," welcome parties and community-building social events
- Enhanced communications with residents

From 2018 (a year before joining HNC) until 2022, Catalyst ran a Community Connections program informed and guided by a philosophy embodied in an earlier Catalyst research report on "Homes That Connect Us." The staff lead focused on acknowledging the symbiotic relationships between landlord and tenants and lessening the impacts of the inherent power dynamics. Tenants were invited to inform building designs, and new buildings were constructed to create welcoming, sociable spaces for tenants. In five Catalyst buildings in Penticton, Victoria, and Greater Vancouver, the staff lead also supported tenant social connections and well-being through a range of activities.

These included "town hall" meetings and other communication systems to support interaction with and among residents and to maximize the neighbourly social potential of the buildings and properties. Catalyst also collaborated with PASS Adult Services on a project to support people on the autism spectrum to live independently, and hosted Connect & Prepare workshops delivered by BRN and the City of Victoria.

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Concert Properties
Community Connectors

Real estate corporation, including market rental housing

2019 to 2022

Vancouver and Victoria

Concert Properties is a Canadian-owned real estate corporation owned by 49 union and management pension plans and institutional investors that represent over 200,000 Canadians. It develops, owns and manages rental apartments; develops condominium homes; and develops, acquires and manages industrial and office properties.

Participating Buildings:

- **11** buildings
- **1,519** units
- High-rise, low-rise
- Market rental

Highlights:

- Integrated social connectedness as a key component of their Sustainability Framework published in 2019
- Dedicated a Social Sustainability Coordinator staff member, secured building manager support
- Conducted resident wellbeing surveys with Happy Cities
- Resident Connectors hosted social events and activities (e.g. mural painting, neighbourhood walks, zoom meetups etc.)
- Provided training, a Community of Practice and honoraria for resident Connectors
- Participated in age friendly sociable design "building audits"

In 2018, Concert Properties collaborated with the City of Vancouver on the initial Hey Neighbour! pilot project, which aimed to foster greater social connections within rental housing communities. The success of the pilot project led to the creation of Hey Neighbour Collective (HNC), and its evolved mandate to unite housing providers, researchers, governments, housing associations, and health authorities to explore and learn effective ways to build community, social connections, and resilience. Concert Properties was inspired by the positive outcomes of the pilot and integrated social connectedness as a key component of their Sustainability Framework published in 2019.

In collaboration with HNC, Building Resilient Neighbourhoods, and Happy Cities, Concert Properties ran the "Community Connectors" program from 2021 to 2022. They scaled their social programming activities across eleven rental properties in British Columbia. Despite the pandemic and lockdowns, resident connectors launched a variety of remote or safe in-person activities. The residents received support from a full-time Social Sustainability Coordinator, training, and a small monthly stipend. Activities included bingo nights, lobby games, outdoor mural painting, and walking clubs. Building managers supported these efforts, and resident connectors also learned from each other through an online peer "community of practice" cohort.

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

Seniors Services Society of BC and City of New Westminster **Seniors Integrated Services Program**

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Community non-profit organization

Local government

2021 to 2023

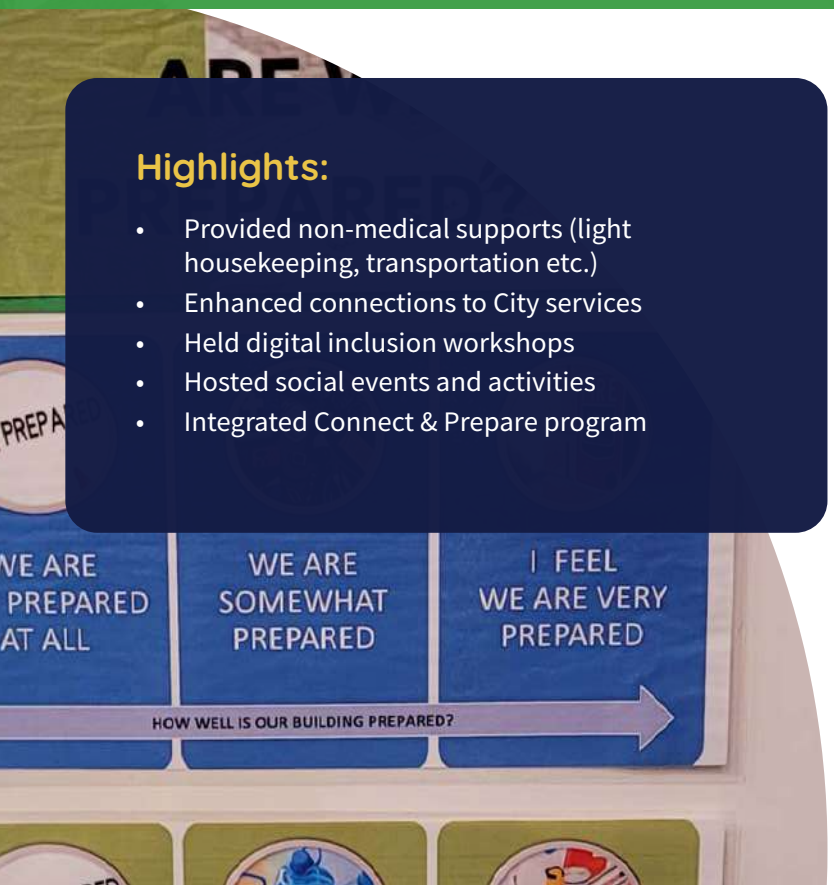
New Westminster

The Seniors Services Society of BC (SSSBC) has over forty years of experience in providing programs and services for vulnerable older adults. SSSBC connects people 60+ with individual supports, housing, and system-navigation services to enhance their lives.

The City of New Westminster is focused on improving equitable citizen engagement and participation, community belonging and connecting, and the safety of all community members.

Participating Buildings:

- **3** buildings
- **402** units
- Mid-rise, high-rise
- Non-market rental



Highlights:

- Provided non-medical supports (light housekeeping, transportation etc.)
- Enhanced connections to City services
- Held digital inclusion workshops
- Hosted social events and activities
- Integrated Connect & Prepare program

From 2021 to 2022, Seniors Services Society of BC, with support from HNC, partnered with City of New Westminster staff at a BC Housing building with 100 units for low-income seniors. They tested an "Integrated Services Program" as a way of strengthening benefits for residents and delivering services more efficiently. This included providing non-medical supports for aging in place such as light housekeeping and transportation, workshops like digital inclusion, and social-connection activities. The project also involved collaboration with other community organizations. In 2023, SSSBC partnered with BRN and City of New Westminster social planning and emergency services staff to deliver Connect & Prepare in the same BC Housing building and two other multi-unit buildings in New Westminster.

DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

West End Seniors' Network
Close To Home

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Community non-profit organization

2019 to present

Vancouver (West End Neighbourhood)

The West End Seniors' Network (WESN) supports and empowers older adults in Vancouver to live involved, healthy, and fulfilling lives. WESN works to enhance the quality of life of older adults by providing social, recreational, educational, and supportive programs and services that foster connection and inclusion in the broader community.

Participating Buildings:

- Close to Home: **4** buildings with **1,025** units
- Neighbours Helping Neighbours: **14** resident champions in **10** buildings (number of units unknown)
- Non-market rental, owner-occupied condominiums, co-operatives
- Low rise, high-rise

Highlights:

- Worked with residents and/or building staff to bring activities into buildings
- Hosted lobby intercepts, craft groups, buddy outings, recreational activities etc.
- Provided support and coaching for resident champions
- Hosted Neighbours Helping Neighbours workshops
- Delivered Connect & Prepare

WESN's "Close To Home" project works to build connections and address isolation and loneliness in buildings with high percentages of older adults by offering onsite programs and events. In the initial stage, with support from resident volunteer leaders and WESN staff, residents organized activities over lunches to encourage older adults to step out of their units and into the common area to talk, eat, learn, and share with their neighbours of all ages. Activities included lobby intercepts, craft groups, buddy outings, and recreational activities.

Later, the Close to Home program grew from one building to four, each with a high percentage of older residents. WESN staff supported resident champions in each building to bring neighbours together for activities that built social connections, and also introduced other WESN programs and services to residents.

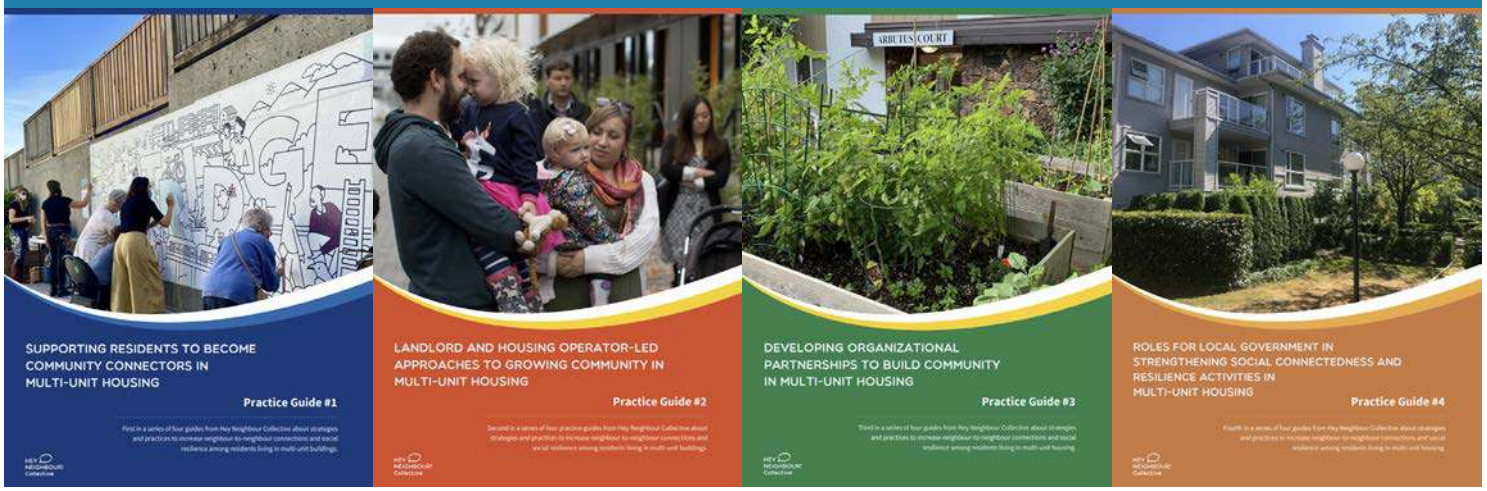
WESN also joined BRN's Neighbours Helping Neighbours cohort, and WESN staff hosted workshops with resident champions from additional buildings across the neighbourhood around opportunities for helping, neighbourliness, and aging in place. After some residents expressed interest in emergency preparedness, WESN staff also hosted a series of Connect & Prepare sessions in two buildings to foster opportunities for residents to strengthen neighbourly support through creating collective preparedness.

Strategy 1. Testing and Piloting Community-building Programs and Activities

Spotlight

HNC Practice Guides

In 2023, based on learnings from HNC's demonstration programs, HNC published a series of practice guides. Each guide provides insights and tips for a specific group: residents; landlords and housing operators; non-profit organizations, and municipal governments.



Strategy 2.
Action Research & Learning

HNC generated evidence-based data on issues related to social connectedness in multi-unit housing that highlighted inspiring ideas and opportunities for changes in professional practices, systems, and cultures for residents, housing operators, and cross-sectoral policy makers.

138
publications

Engaging
13
research assistants

31
research reports and publications

Involving a wide range of articles, learning reports, practice guides, and tookits.

Including 2 comprehensive reports based on resident surveys at housing operator partners' sites.

2
building audits on sociable design for aging in place

2
HNC evaluations (3 year and 5 year), plus ongoing developmental evaluation

Hosting
50
Community of Practice (CoP) Sessions

25
Hey Neighbour Collective CoPs
(2019-2021)

17
Connect & Prepare CoPs
(2022-2024)

8
Neighbours Helping Neighbours CoPs
(2023-2024)

HNC Research

Spotlight

Countering Canada's Emerging Asocial Society

With funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Simon Fraser University-based research team completed a major knowledge synthesis about living socially in high-density built environments around the world.

Their review revealed important interactions between social quality of life and built environment design, housing management, and resident and household characteristics. The researchers also provided recommendations for change as they concluded that "planning for neighbourly social connections in high-density environments can make a significant contribution to housing, health, and social policy goals that will counter the trends of an Emerging Asocial Society." Their findings were subsequently disseminated through conferences, webinars, and media coverage, and have led to a forthcoming collaborative project "Scaling Up Social Infrastructure" with partners including Metro Vancouver.

Spotlight

Resident Surveys

Simon Fraser University Urban Studies researchers completed three full rounds of resident surveys and engagements with Community Housing Canada partners (Brightside and Catalyst in rounds one and two, Brightside and New Chelsea Society in round three) and published two comparative survey reports that also integrated data from Happy Cities-conducted surveys with Concert residents. Other resident-engaged research included engagement events, online surveys, interviews, focus groups, and a photo-voice project.

Spotlight

Housing Operator Building Audits

Happy Cities and Simon Fraser University Gerontology researchers explored how social interactions in multi-unit housing are influenced by the physical environment in 20 buildings in Vancouver and Victoria that are owned and operated by Brightside Community Homes Foundation and Concert Properties. The researchers examined shared indoor and outdoor spaces through an environmental lens to identify the necessary qualities and features that make these areas successful for social interaction and aging in place.

Strategy 3. Story Sharing & Knowledge Mobilization

HNC showcased and engaged others in learning about promising practices and policy solutions through sharing stories and evidence related to social programming and improving the management, design, and community culture of multi-unit housing.

18 **Workshops, webinars, and symposiums**

Which engaged
600
Organizations

Made up of...

1813 *People, which included*

- **20%** community non-profits
- **20%** housing sector professionals
- **27%** municipal or regional gov planners
- **16%** researchers
- **8%** health sector
- **4%** architects
- **2%** philanthropic / investment
- **2%** provincial government
- **3%** federal government

49
presentations at conferences and webinars
which engaged over ***3,000*** *people*

80+
HNC knowledge products (articles, blogs, case studies, papers, evidence back-grounders, reports, practice guides, toolkits etc.)

over half of these were focused on influencing policy for systems change

19
e-newsletters to our broader network

Strategy 4.
Housing Industry & Policy Engagement

HNC engaged housing professionals and cross-sectoral policy makers in understanding and implementing opportunities to foster healthier and more resilient communities through shifts in policy, programming, and practice.

Worked with **local/regional governments** on **sociable design policy**

6
Local and First Nations Government Partnerships

11
Workshops and Webinars

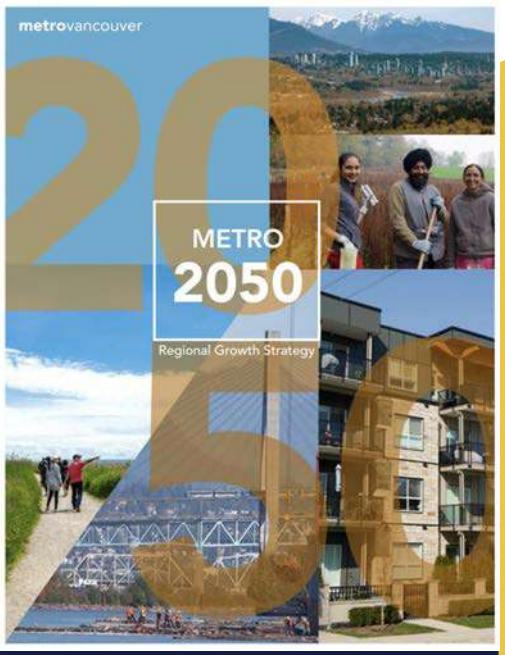
*Engaged **1,050** people*

31
local government participants from other parts of Canada

7
articles, papers, reports, toolkits/guides

1
Policy Discussion Paper

Resulted in enabling
Regional Policy in **Metro 2050**
Metro Vancouver' Regional Growth Strategy



Research paper with **21 market** and nonmarket housing operators

1
Housing and Health Research Round Table

*engaged **13** organizations*

> Member jurisdictions will... identify policies and actions that contribute to... increased social connectedness in multi-unit housing.
>
> *- Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy*

POLICY DEMONSTRATION SNAPSHOT

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Building Social Connections
Sociable Design Guidelines

Demonstration Program Lead: Happy Cities

Type of Organization: Research and Planning

- Hosted a series of four day-long workshops with a learning cohort of six Metro Vancouver jurisdictions.
- Produced a toolkit that has been shared around the world.
- Developed a series of online workshops for planners across Canada to be hosted January - April 2025.
- Worked towards enacting new policies, guidelines, and/or incentives.

Participating Jurisdictions:

- City of Burnaby
- City of New Westminster
- City of North Vancouver
- City of Surrey
- City of Vancouver
- Tsawwassen First Nation

Rental Housing Operators and Neighbourly Social Connectedness

In 2022, HNC consultants conducted focus groups and interviews with 21 medium- and larger-sized owner-operators and third-party property managers from both the market and non-market rental housing sectors.

The resulting "Making Connections" report discussed the participants' awareness of loneliness and social isolation as issues relevant to housing operation, perceived concerns and barriers to taking action, and programming and design ideas to help strengthen social connectedness in multi-unit buildings.

Informed by its earlier sociable design work, Happy Cities and HNC led workshops in 2023 and early 2024 with representatives of six Metro Vancouver jurisdictions and dozens of other key actors from the housing and health sectors. The workshops involved policy co-creation, and subsequently influenced movements towards the development of policies in multiple jurisdictions.

Happy Cities also produced a sociable design toolkit, and then age-friendly design tips were also incorporated in a follow-up edition. Work from this initial demonstration has since informed the development of a national training program, in collaboration with Renewable Cities, designed specifically for local planners working on housing, community planning, and development policy in Canada. This national learning cohort - made up of planners and others from over 40 communities across Canada - will meet from January through April 2025.

Part 2: **So,** what were the **Impacts?**

1. IMPACTS OF THE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAMS

a. **Impacts for Residents**
b. **Impacts for Housing Operators**
c. **Impacts for Community-based Organizations**

2. IMPACTS ON POLICY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

3. IMPACTS ON THE COLLECTIVE AND ITS MEMBERS

1. Impacts of the Demonstration Programs

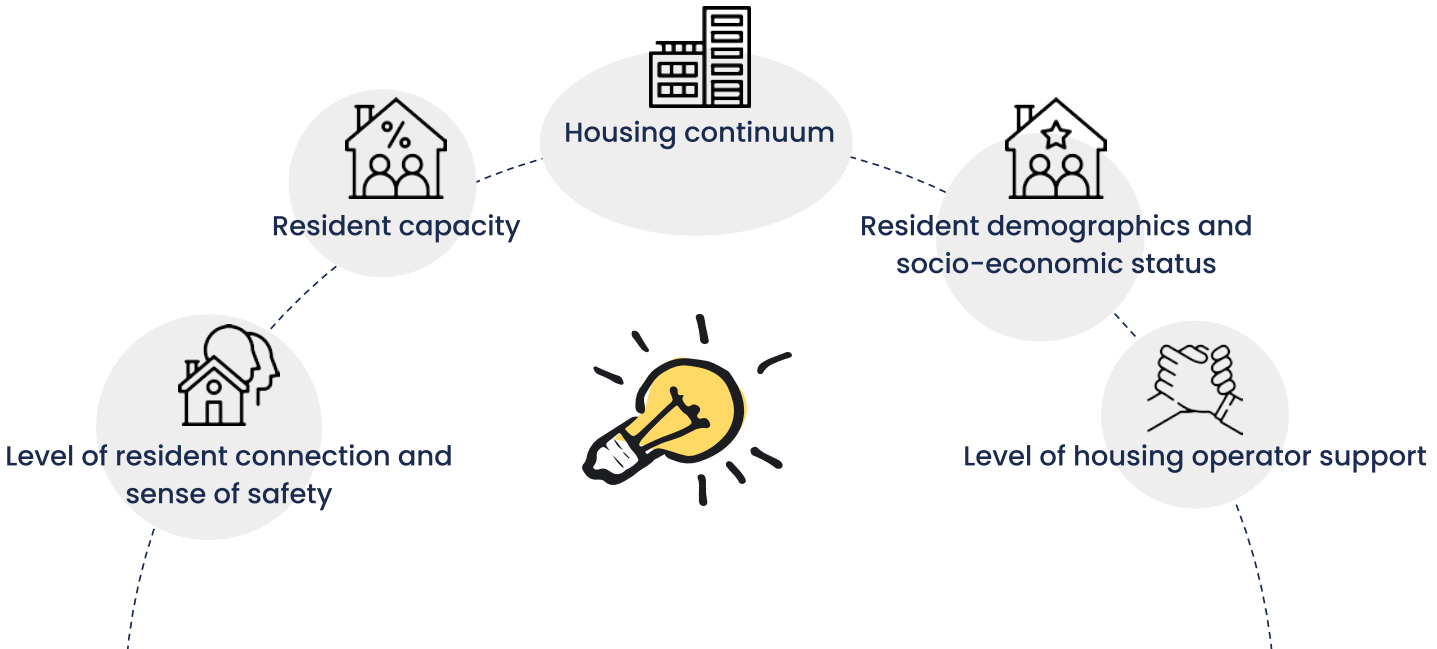
All of the demonstration programs focused on strengthening social connections in multi-unit housing; however, they varied greatly in terms of their specific program goals, resident and building context, and program delivery methods and timelines. While the diversity of these approaches presented challenges for comparing and evaluating data and impacts across all of the different programs, many types of impacts were strikingly common across these diverse contexts and are examined in this section.

Most of the programs were "pilot" projects that involved testing innovative approaches in varied circumstances and discovering what worked best for engaging residents. Some demonstrations such as Connect & Prepare, Community Connectors, and Close to Home also moved into a scaling phase to explore expanding the overall numbers of residents and buildings that could be reached through the programs.

Diverse Goals

- Strengthen **social connections** and relationships between residents
- Reach and engage residents who are more **isolated**
- Improve access to **community resources**
- Increase resident **mutual support**
- Improve relationships between **residents and housing operator**
- Increase individual and collective **emergency preparedness** and resilience
- Increase residents' ability to live and **age well at home**
- Support resident **leadership and action**
- **Embed in the operations** of the community-based organization or housing operator
- **Scale** program

Diverse contexts



a. Impacts for Residents

Demonstration programs contributed to important impacts for residents through the shared activities, and residents themselves also had important, direct impacts on each other.

Among participating residents...

70-100%
developed new or deeper connections

60-90%
increased leadership capacity

70-90%
increased sense of belonging

60-86%
increased sense of safety

70-73%
became more likely to ask for or offer help to a neighbour

30-100%
gained access to additional community services

IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS

Resident Impact 1: Increased social connectedness and sense of belonging.

When residents had opportunities to connect socially with each other on multiple occasions, they consistently reported feeling more connected to their neighbours in ways that led to increases in their sense of safety, sense of belonging, and self-reported feelings of general health and wellbeing. Even very "light-touch" events and small interactions often led organically to new and/or deeper enduring connections.

70%-100% established **new or deeper connections.**

70-90% of residents reported an increased **sense of belonging.**

Spotlight

Concert Community Connectors

During the pandemic, an eleven-year-old Community Connector spearheaded many "passive" activities in her building's lobby and lounge – puzzles, candy giveaways, and communication boards. "It's been a lot of fun! And everyone felt more connected even when we weren't seeing each other so much," she said. **Read her story here.**

> Since participating in the program, I talk more to my neighbours. I'm excited to host more events. I see neighbours wanting to make a connection.
>
> *- Community Connector*

Spotlight

West End Seniors' Network's *Close to Home* Social Meals

Regular gatherings for "social meals" hosted by West End Seniors' Network in one building led to new connections, spontaneous networking, and people starting to attend other events together.

> The nice thing about social meals is that it's less awkward than coming to an event. At a meal, it's been nice to see two people sharing a newsletter to look at it, and then they'll start talking about going to the birthday tea together.
>
> *- WESN Staff*

IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS

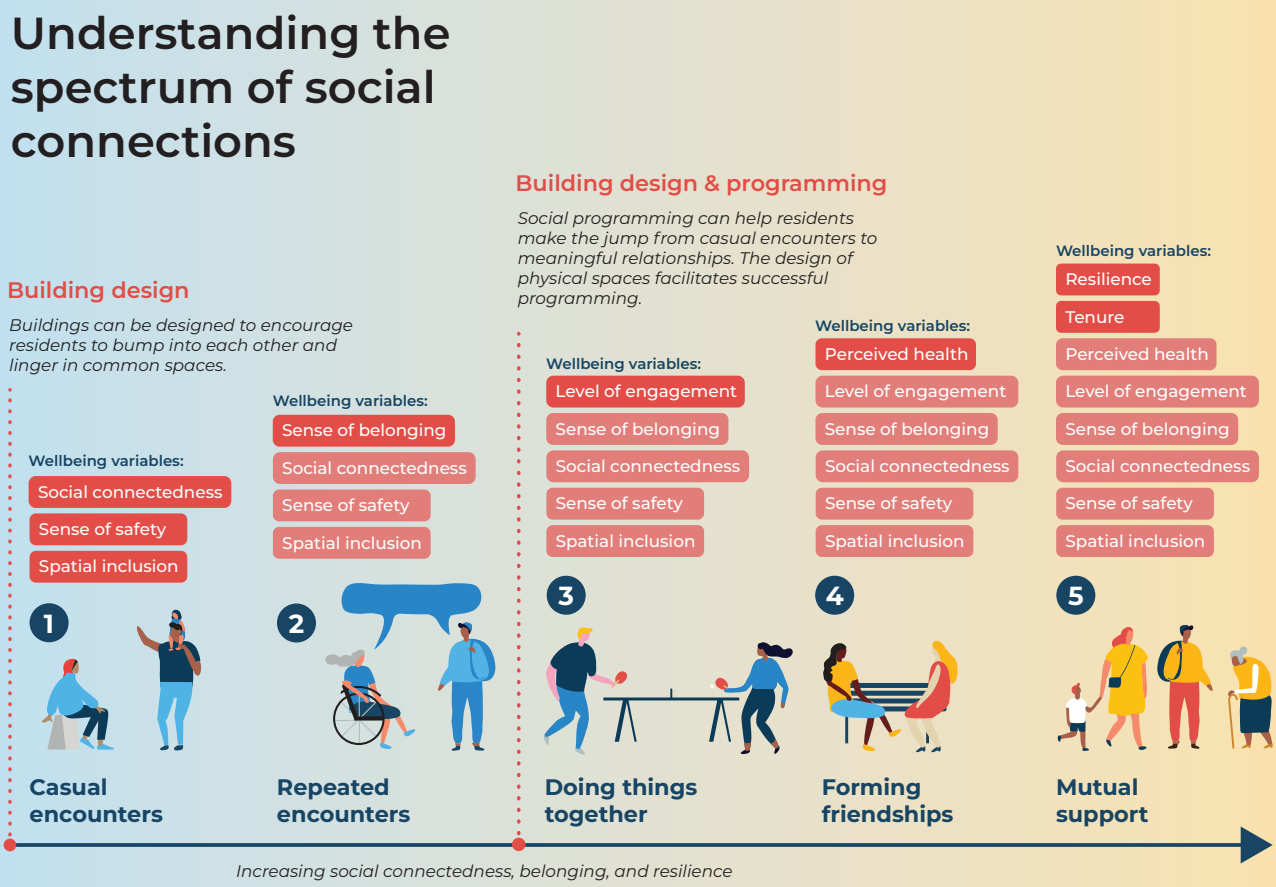
Resident Impact 2: Enhanced mutual assistance between neighbours.

After achieving expanded social connections with neighbours, some residents reported that they engaged in more diverse or deeper kinds of helping activities and mutual support. In some cases, residents described how participating in these kinds of activities also had significant positive effects on their emotional and mental well-being.

70-73% of residents reported they became more likely to **ask for or offer help to a neighbour**

Source: Happy Cities

3 | Measuring the wellbeing impacts



> There isn't really a nice way of putting it, but we struggle with consistency. We struggle. The tenants struggle with consistency. They struggle self-initiating activities, getting together, conflict resolution. And through this program, a lot of these interpersonal problems were rectified through mutual understanding, mutual aid and the mutual knowledge that they're there to help each other… that if they work together, they can meet a common goal–which was something that I truly believe without this program, we would not have been able to achieve.
>
> *- Community-based Organization Staff*

IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS

Spotlight

Catalyst's Town Halls

Catalyst Community Development Society hosted "town halls" that created more regular, open communication among residents, and in turn led to many spontaneous helping activities among the neighbours. Residents with dogs began dog-sitting and play dates. A resident took a day off work to help another who was ill. Many neighbours rushed out during the night to help someone whose apartment had flooded.

> The real work for developers, landlords, and property managers is to facilitate the creation of relationships that allow people to care for and about one another.
>
> *- Catalyst Staff*

Spotlight

Neighbours Helping Neighbours in James Bay, Victoria

"We've had two serious medical emergencies in the building, which is what really made me feel that we needed to do something," said a resident champion in James Bay.

She and some of her neighbours held meetings with other residents in their building, and began coordinating a wide variety of helping activities, including emergency preparedness planning, providing as-needed support for a neighbour whose partner struggles with dementia, and a "senior safety" anti-fraud educational event.

The resident champion later gave a presentation about neighbourly mutual support to other prospective resident leaders in other buildings. "I talked about what we do in our building, and encouraged them, and let them know that it can be done."

IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS

Spotlight

Both Practical and Emotional Supports Close To Home

A resident of a multi-unit building in Vancouver's West End was caregiving for her mother with dementia, and hadn't had any breaks, showered recently, or slept much when she started imagining solutions. Couldn't a neighbour watch TV with her mother while she ran errands? Couldn't there be group activities right in the building that her mother could safely attend? She brought these ideas to West End Seniors' Network, which launched the pilot that became Close to Home. WESN helped residents organize activities in the building lobby with food and refreshments, games, educational events, and social interaction.

The resident described the pilot as both practically helpful and emotionally uplifting. "It was great. And a couple neighbours offered, 'if you ever want to go to the store and you need me to sit with your mom, just ask.' We used to live in villages, right? We all took care of each other."

WESN later brought Close to Home to more buildings. A resident in one building said that participating and helping organize has helped with her mental health issues. "Connecting with my neighbours and having good times and laughter is really good for me. And I love giving back; it makes me feel good that I'm contributing."

Resident Impact 3: Increased safety and emergency preparedness.

Strengthened connectedness and feelings of belonging were linked to feelings of increased safety for many residents. Especially after working together on emergency preparedness, residents reported increases in both individual and shared preparedness, and a greater ability to respond to chronic challenges and crises (e.g. medical) that strengthen the capacity to age in place.

60-86% of residents increased their sense of **safety and/or preparedness for emergencies** and crises.

Spotlight

BC Housing and BRN's Connect & Prepare

BC Housing residents participated in an adapted version of BRN's Connect & Prepare program and then created a floor-connectors team, deepened connections, and obtained funding to distribute emergency kits in their building. The participating residents reported increased positive feelings of confidence and safety.

> When we gave the go-bags away in the lobby that day, there were a lot of people who came out and were talking to me that normally won't say hi… We're trying to get a system going where everyone who's handicapped has a backup neighbour to make sure they're all right…I'm definitely motivated to keep going.
>
> *- BC Housing Resident*

IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS

Spotlight

Seniors Services Society of BC's Seniors Integrated Services Program and Connect & Prepare

In a social housing building, facilitators from SSSBC and the City of New Westminster found that, at first, residents with physical disabilities, mental health struggles, and food and income insecurity felt cautious about interacting with others. However, many gradually became more involved through their shared interest in emergency preparedness.

> As more seniors began to participate, it was incredibly rewarding to see gradual progress. It was heartening to see the transformation of isolated seniors into active participants and contributors within their communities.
>
> *- SSSBC Staff*

Resident Impact 4: Strengthened resident leadership capacity.

Residents who were actively supported to take on the role of being community "connectors" or neighbouring "champions" reported developing practical skills and a greater sense of confidence and agency, along with heightened feelings of purpose associated with being active contributors to community-building.

60-90% of resident champions reported **increased leadership capacity.**

What Resident Connectors Said:

- "The training and support I received as a connector made all the difference."
- "I now feel like I have the confidence and tools to engage my neighbours better."
- "Having a guidebook and toolkits helped me feel more confident."
- "Being a connector has given me leadership skills I never thought I'd develop."
- "The training gave me the tools to not only run events but also handle conflicts between neighbors."
- I never thought I'd be leading a group, but now I am organizing regular meet-ups."

IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS

Resident Impact 5: Strengthened engagement with community services.

When community-based organizations and local government agencies were involved in the delivery of social programming, residents were more likely to learn about and access other community and public services and supports, and sometimes join in advocacy efforts and civic engagement activities.

Overall, across multiple HNC demonstrations, a range of **30-100%** of residents and partners surveyed indicated that residents had gained access to **additional community services.**

> Presence in the buildings means that, through casual conversation, I can connect people to services… Were it not for the opportunity to have a conversation with someone from a seniors-serving organization, I don't know if the residents I was talking to would have connected with those resources.
>
> *- Community-based Organization Staff*

> Since participating in Connect & Prepare, several older adult residents, who previously identified as being socially isolated, have taken their own initiative to directly engage City staff and Council to advocate for resources and supports to increase safety and resiliency in their buildings. Their efforts were successful, and this directly helped improve the quality of life for these tenants and their neighbours. This is direct evidence that the Connect & Prepare program can increase resilience in powerful ways.
>
> *- Local Government Staff*

> Connect & Prepare facilitated a valuable pathway to help participants learn about community resources. Such knowledge empowers residents, and bridging connections to needed services can help mitigate social isolation and improve wellbeing. At the same time, neighbours who are informed about local supports can also help each other more effectively during challenging times, and this contributes to enriching neighbourhood resilience.
>
> *- Community-based Organization Staff*

IMPACTS FOR RESIDENTS

Resident Impact 6: Improved relationships with housing operators.

Especially, but not only in situations where a housing operator was a delivery partner, residents reported experiencing more engagement and better relationships with building managers and housing operator staff.

Overall, across multiple HNC demonstrations, a range of **50-90%** of residents and partners surveyed indicated that residents had **improved relationships with building staff or managers.**

What resident participants in social programming said about their building management

- "I never used to have much communication with our building management, but now they are engaged and actually attend some of our activities."
- "We started to trust management more because they were involved in the process."
- "Management now sees us as partners rather than just tenants."

Spotlight

Brightside Builds Trust

The Brightside Resident Advisory Circle (BRAC) met monthly between September 2022 and July 2023. One of its core goals was to provide "discussion, ideas and insights toward generating meaningful resident engagement and co-creating strong Brightside communities."

As part of the process, both resident leaders and Brightside staff shared their knowledge, views, and experiences, educating each other about living and working in Brightside buildings. Then, gradually, the BRAC members and Brightside staff collectively moved towards engaging other residents.

Alongside creating a resident-run newsletter and establishing active resident-run bulletin boards in several buildings, according to an external evaluation report, one of the biggest impacts of the BRAC pilot project was actually on the relationships between the resident leaders and the participating Brightside staff themselves. The report found:

- "Empathy and understanding was generated between staff and resident members about the tough decisions needed to be made by Brightside and also the impact of some of those decisions on residents."
- "Resident perspectives had shifted as they began to appreciate individual staff within the organization rather than interacting with Brightside as an impersonal entity."
- "[T]he increased transparency and information sharing increased empathy and feelings of trust in staff."
- "BRAC supported residents and staff to break down the 'them and us' to become only 'us'."

IMPACTS FOR HOUSING OPERATORS

b. Impacts for Housing Operators

Some HNC demonstration programs were led or hosted by housing operators who embedded the engagement of residents into their own operations. These organizations hosted or supported community-building activities, or allowed access for community-based organizations to engage residents. The impacts of these programs frequently reflected common themes and benefits that are outlined in this section.

Housing Operator Impact 1: Improved relationships with residents.

In situations where it was clear to residents that housing operators were proactively supporting socializing and other activities, housing operators reported that it contributed positively to residents' views of them. In many cases, on-site staff reported feeling a boost in morale, and felt the programs appeared to contribute or have the potential to contribute to a greater trust and sense of stable tenancy/community, as well as to fewer complaints and/or conflicts in the building.

Spotlight

Catalyst: Building Trust through Collaboration

It's not uncommon for housing operators to express concern or anxiety about meeting with groups of residents. But Catalyst Community Developments Society took a proactive approach to nurturing open communication through its "town halls," where staff and residents delved into sometimes uncomfortable topics such as income testing, and explored more collaborative approaches to resolving conflicts between residents, and between the housing operator and residents. The mutual understanding and trust that gradually developed proved especially helpful during the pandemic and lockdowns, when residents and Catalyst were better able to navigate together emerging financial and safety issues.

> "When an organization's core values include a commitment to creating beautiful, affordable homes with vibrant resident communities, it sets a higher bar than aiming for just affordable housing alone. It says something about how you feel about people and about what your residents deserve. You have to be committed to creating a welcoming environment through a collaborative process.
>
> *- Catalyst Staff*

IMPACTS FOR HOUSING OPERATORS

Housing Operator Impact 2: Enhanced brand profile.

By supporting social programming for residents, some market housing operators believed that their organizational brand profile had, or could likely be improved in ways that would help their market advantage.

Spotlight

Concert Community Connectors: Building Manager Survey

After the Community Connectors program had been operating for only eight months, surveyed Concert building managers reported these impacts:

- **57%** saw an increased sense of belonging for residents
- **57%** saw greater mutual aid or support between neighbours
- **43%** saw increased community safety
- **43%** saw residents accessing community resources or services
- **43%** saw greater care of property
- **14%** saw decreased conflict between residents
- **14%** saw decreased conflict between residents and staff

IMPACTS FOR HOUSING OPERATORS

Housing Operator Impact 3: Supportive benefits from partnerships.

Through partnerships with community-based organizations and local governments, housing operators gained increased capacity to engage residents, offer community-building supports in-house, and connect residents to community services. These partnerships also made it easier and less costly for housing operators to have social programming delivered.

Spotlight

Brightside Leverages Partnerships

Brightside partnered with Oasis Senior Supportive Living and Collingwood Neighbourhood House to bring the Oasis Communities for Aging Well program into a number of Brightside buildings. The partners organized and facilitated fitness activities, health education, nutrition and cooking classes, emergency preparedness workshops, social events, and other activities focused on reducing isolation, improving health, and supporting aging-at-home in naturally occurring retirement communities.

> “Partnerships extend the work we can do. We want partnerships because we don’t always have the skills or expertise to assist in all of the areas of daily life that may be affecting our residents. But there are often existing community agencies that have extensive experience in those areas.
>
> *- Brightside Staff*

IMPACTS FOR HOUSING OPERATORS

Housing Operator Impact 4: Better emergency preparedness and/or community mutual support.

Housing operators reported finding immense value in residents becoming more knowledgeable and better prepared for emergencies. With residents better prepared and willing to assist each other in an emergency, housing operators believed the building was safer.

Spotlight

What housing operators and building managers said about the impacts of social programming in their buildings:

"Reputationally, it's fantastic if we're the landlord of choice for people… there are intangible benefits that come from that, through recommendations and referrals and those sorts of things."

"From a building manager's perspective, Connect & Prepare was very positive for me. And it's all to the building owner's advantage as well, if the tenants who live in this building are thinking about safety, prevention, and preparedness."

"Tenant issues were being resolved by tenants because the on-line platform facilitates communication/ problem solving and mutual aid around things that previously would have gone to the manager as a concern."

"I think it did enhance the perception of what (the housing operator) is doing for their tenants, and (the housing operator's) own on-site staff have even begun actively requesting more programming that could help reduce tenant conflicts or enhance safety and resilience."

"If our residents are better prepared for emergencies together, that's better for us as a housing operator, too."

Housing Operator Impact 5: Changes in organizational practices and/or policies.

Some housing operators reported that the positive impacts of supporting resident engagement led to shifts in internal organizational attitudes, policies, and practices. These shifts created internal support for similar activities in the future and embedded this in their organizational culture and practice.

> "We have a large organization, and we have the tendency of working in silos. This initiative has helped us to make more direct connections among the different business areas within (the organization), and has also improved our planning with our community partners.
>
> *- Housing Operator Staff*

IMPACTS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

C. Impacts for Community-based Organizations

A number of demonstration programs were led by community-based organizations, and in some cases these organizations also engaged other partners (such as neighbourhood houses or seniors service organizations). Although not included in HNC's original Theory of Change, these organizations proved to be effective and often critical actors. They also reported receiving benefits from their involvement, identified in this section:

Community-based Organization Impact 1: Expanded outreach, especially to more isolated residents.

Through partnering with housing operators and implementing resident engagement programs in buildings, community-based organizations found that they were better able to reach key target populations – particularly more isolated residents who were less likely to leave their buildings to participate in outside community activities or services.

Spotlight

WESN Does "Inreach" More Effectively

WESN went into multi-unit residential buildings with high proportions of residents who were seniors, people with disability, and/or people living on a low-income, to identify and collaborate with resident connectors on organizing social events and activities in the buildings.

> "Going off our own premises to meet in these places is a new development compared to WESN's traditional programming. The business case for doing this is very strong for us. We're reaching people we wouldn't otherwise be able to reach. It increases people's awareness and connections to us and to other services and experiences that we're able to offer.
>
> *- WESN Staff*

IMPACTS FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Community-based Organization Impact 2: Better leveraging of resources.

The active partnerships between community-based organizations, housing operators, and municipal government agencies helped all three better leverage their capacities and resources to engage residents.

Spotlight

City of New Westminster leverages partnerships

In rapidly densifying New Westminster, the majority of new homes are multi-unit housing with significant proportions of residents who are older adults, living with disability, or lower-income renters. Because of this, the municipal government started collaborating with community organizations and residents with lived experience, to develop strategies for fostering greater social connections in multi-unit housing.

> “As social planners we have only so much capacity and can’t be experts in everything, so we rely on non-governmental organizations to bring their experience, knowledge, and skills, and help us connect with and support some of our city’s most vulnerable residents.
>
> *- City of New Westminster Staff*

2. Impacts on Policy and Systems Change

The importance of social connectedness has long been recognized by agencies and organizations involved in public health and emergency preparedness. Social connectedness and resilience have become still more elevated as priorities in British Columbia's policy landscape as a consequence of the 2021 heat dome, the COVID pandemic and lockdowns, and continuing large-scale extreme weather events. Alongside this growing interest, HNC and its partners have played increasingly significant and influential roles in growing public knowledge and awareness and influencing changes in systems and policies.

Policy and Systems Change Impact 1: Social connectedness has been embedded in regional policy.

HNC's submission to the Metro 2050 regional growth strategy consultations, developed through HNC-led engagement of a wide range of partners, led to the approved strategy (passed 2023) including a requirement for member municipalities to show how their "local actions and policies" will increase "social connectedness in multi-unit housing."

Spotlight

Regional Policy Supports Strengthening Social Connectedness

In 2021, Hey Neighbour Collective submitted a discussion paper to the Metro 2050 Regional Growth Strategy consultations, "Developing Truly Complete Communities: Social equity, social connectedness, and multi-unit housing in an age of public health and climate crises."

To support more equitable, socially connected housing, HNC recommended that "the Metro 2050 update should take advantage of this opportunity to update planning goals to align with the principle of social equity. Working towards greater neighbourhood-based social connectedness for our region without a grounding in social equity approaches would be fundamentally incomplete."

HNC's efforts were successful. In early 2022, the final draft of Metro 2050 was released with a specific requirement for member municipalities to show how their local "actions and policies" will support "social connectedness in multi-unit housing."

Policy and Systems Change Impact 2: Housing industry representatives and local governments are engaging in sociable and age-friendly design and policy.

After engagement through a variety of HNC initiatives, webinars, workshops, and other activities, a growing number of leaders in the housing industry reported increased interest in sociable design opportunities and social programming for multi-unit housing. HNC partners also helped get municipal government resolutions passed in support of HNC projects, and influenced policies recognizing social connectedness and resilience as priorities. Building on HNC's work supporting six Metro Vancouver jurisdictions, multiple municipal governments began moving towards enacting new sociable design policies and incentives.

Spotlight

Changes in Sociable Design Policies and Practices

HNC sociable design policy educational events have attracted the participation of **160+ planners from 30+ jurisdictions**, and have helped shift local government policies and practices related to age-friendly, sociable design.

In follow-up surveys for these events, participants reported:

90% had increased awareness and motivation around sociable design policy and practice.

96% learned new ideas of how to make key housing policy changes in their jurisdiction.

86% increased their knowledge of how housing design can impact social connectedness and climate resilience

92% increased their understanding of multi-solving opportunities with sociable design and climate resilience

Policy and Systems Change Impact 3: Action on linkages between housing, health, aging, and social connectedness.

Provincial government agencies in both the health and seniors/aging sectors have begun collaborating with HNC and other partners, including academic housing and health researchers, housing operators, and community organizations, with a goal of determining the best role for their agencies in fostering social connectedness and housing as key determinants of health and aging in the right place.

3. Impacts on the Collective and Its Members

HNC functions as a collective impact hub and, through interviews and surveys, the partners have identified a number of key impacts of this collective process.

Working Collectively Impact 1: Uplifted and inspired by each other.

Partners reported that regular sharing of difficulties and solutions reduced the sense of isolation and provided feelings of camaraderie and inspiration. Through engagement in this peer sharing and learning, partners have enjoyed a sense that they are contributing to "creating and growing the field" of building neighbourly social connections in multi-unit housing.

Working Collectively Impact 2: More effective internal and external advocacy.

Partners reported that the profile and work of HNC has helped them be stronger and more effective advocates in educating, raising awareness, and influencing social connectedness practices and policies among their colleagues, at their own and other organizations and public agencies, and generally in the community.

Working Collectively Impact 3: Multiplied cross-sectoral collaborations.

According to HNC partners, many partnerships, leverages of shared resources and skills, and collaborative projects would never have occurred without the opportunities and connections provided through participation in the growing collective.

Spotlight

Partnerships drive all of HNC's work

Partnerships allow core partners to leverage resources for demonstration projects, draw in additional supports from the collective's broader networks, and improve learnings and practices in collaboration with research partners.

Partnerships between Hey Neighbour Collective **demonstration partners**

2 HNC Partners Supported Concert Community Connectors (Happy Cities and BRN)

5 HNC Partners Implemented or Hosted Connect and Prepare

Happy Cities

Building Resilient Neigh-bourhoods

SSBC & City of New Westminister - Seniors Integrated Services Program

Catalyst Community Connections

Concert Community Connectors

BRN Neighbours Helping Neighbours

WESN - Close to Home

Brightside Community Homes

BRN Connect & Prepare

2 HNC Partners Implemented Neighbours Helping Neighbours

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Policy Demonstration Partnerships **between** HNC **and** Local Government Partners

Partnerships **between** demonstration partners **and** additional delivery partners

- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Oasis Senior Supportive Living
- Seniors Services Society of BC (SHINE program)
- Building Resilient Neighbourhoods
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House

5 Community Delivery Partners

SSBC & City of New West - Seniors Integrated Services Program

Concert Community Connectors

Catalyst Community Connections

Brightside Community Homes

WESN - Close to Home

BRN Connect and Prepare

24 Additional Program Delivery Partners

BRN Neighbours Helping Neighbours

15 Additional Delivery Partners

4 Additional Delivery Partners

Neighbours Helping Neighbours

- Good Neighbour Kitsilano
- James Bay New Horizons
- NORC Innovation Centre, Toronto
- North Shore Community Resources Society

- BC Housing, Sustainability and Resiliency; Housing & Health Services
- City of New Westminster Community Planning Team, Emergency Management Team and Senior Services Teams
- City of North Vancouver's Community Planning Department
- City of Vancouver Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction Team
- City of Victoria- Emergency Management Division (VictoriaReady)
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- Lionsview Seniors' Planning
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House
- North Shore Community Resources
- North Shore Emergency Management
- Oasis Senior Supportive Living Inc
- REACH/Vancouver Coastal Health
- RISE Community Health
- Silver Harbour Centre
- Victoria Downtown Residents Association

Research partnerships **between** HNC demonstration partners **and** research team

HEY NEIGHBOUR! Collective

Working Collectively Impact 4: Collective field building.

The collective efforts by HNC partners to raise awareness of the impacts of social connections have been instrumental in establishing shared understanding, a common language, and access to research and tools, while weaving partnerships within and across sectors. In essence, HNC has founded a field in BC linking housing, health, social connectedness, and community resilience, and this has also begun contributing to national and even international conversations.

HNC Partners agreed:

95%
HNC is contributing to greater impact by working collectively, as opposed to single organizations working on their own on these issues.

100%
HNC's role in convening and connecting organizations across sectors and roles has been useful.

89%
Participating in HNC has resulted in new connections and relationships.

84%
Participating in HNC has resulted in tangible, specific partnerships.

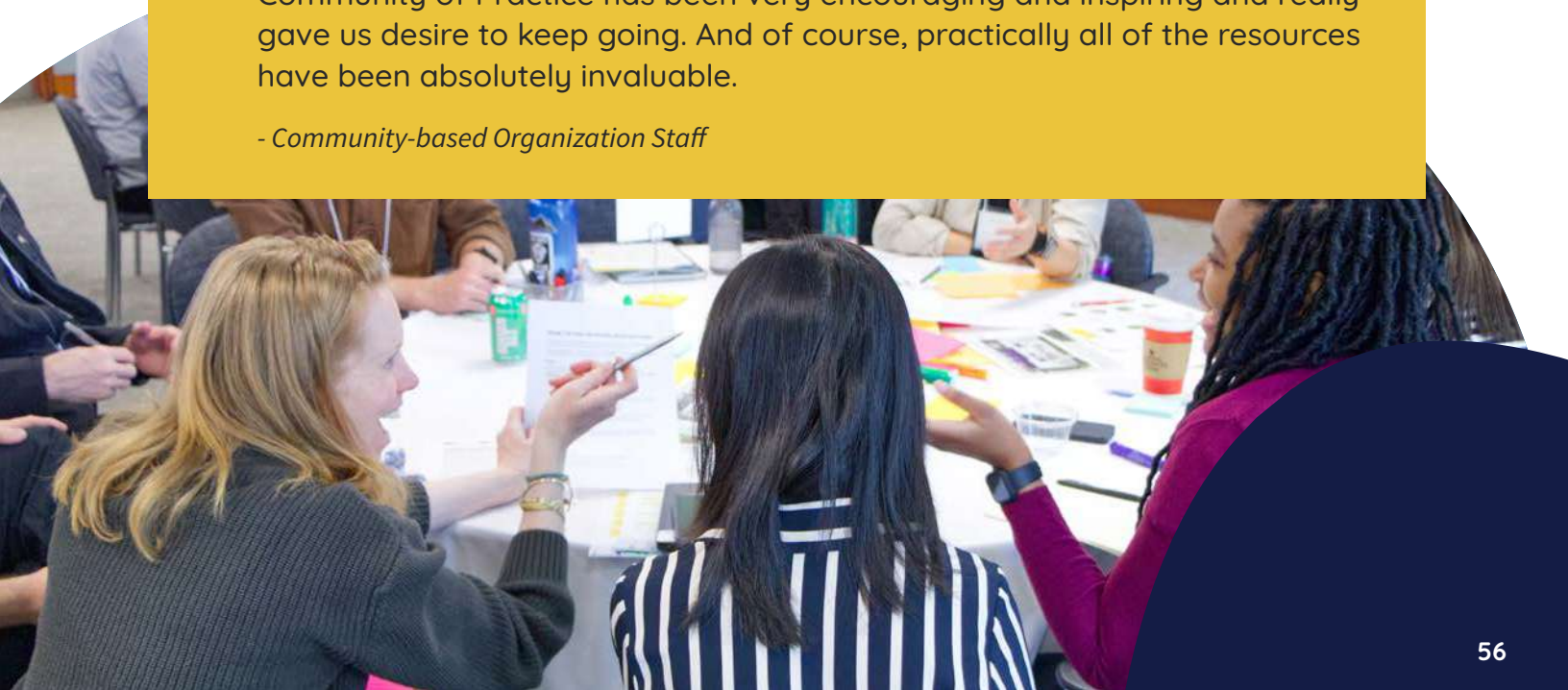
100%
HNC has been effective at generating relevant research and evidence-based data.

Spotlight

> I can't describe for you how lonely it is to have everybody in the world telling you that what you're wanting to do is impossible or silly... HNC was the only group that was like, 'This is awesome!'... Finding your people to talk to and having that support and that validation and that connection, it is so huge.
>
> *- Housing Operator Staff*

> Personally, the most valuable part of being involved in HNC is being able to connect with planners from various jurisdictions and identify an area of common interest where we can help support the work they're already doing. It's been a great way to get the temperature of the state of dialogue and understand where we can play a role that supports the work rather than telling them information that they already know. Though this has proven to be a particularly beneficial personal benefit, it's also benefited our organization to ensure that we're bringing relevance into our conversations with others.
>
> *- Local Government Staff*

> With this work, especially as it's grassroots and volunteer-led, a lot of the time, when we encounter some challenges, it gets very frustrating and disappointing. But being part of the (HNC) collaborative environment and Community of Practice has been very encouraging and inspiring and really gave us desire to keep going. And of course, practically all of the resources have been absolutely invaluable.
>
> *- Community-based Organization Staff*



Part 3: **So, what** are we **learning?**

1. LEARNINGS ABOUT CONTEXT

2. LEARNINGS ABOUT EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

3. LEARNINGS ABOUT ROLES OF HOUSING OPERATORS AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

4. LEARNINGS ABOUT POLICY AND SYSTEMS CHANGE

1. Learnings about Context

Context matters

HNC partners have worked in diverse socio-economic contexts and with diverse groups of residents across the housing spectrum. These experiences have reinforced the learning that social connectedness programming is not "one size fits all" and needs to be adapted – sometimes substantially – for different circumstances.

"Success" should be defined by residents themselves.

Measures of "success" can be – and indeed must be – context-sensitive and variable. While one group of neighbours may be satisfied only when they implement a major, ongoing project, another group may feel a resounding sense of achievement, confidence, and potential for more through simply connecting, socializing, and discussing possibilities without conflict. When a group of residents achieve success – *on their own terms* – it builds confidence and a greater sense of agency and possibility among those residents.

Spotlight

DIVERSE RESIDENTS ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN DIFFERENT WAYS: SAMPLE CASES

A small group of residents persuade a housing operator to renovate and furnish a long-closed amenity room and leave it permanently unlocked and available for use.

A third-party facilitator helps resident leaders to reach out and invite more isolated residents, and then supports residents to participate to varying degrees in a structured collaborative activity that's accessible to people with disabilities.

A monthly casual social dinner brings residents together, and gradually new friendships form and people spontaneously offer each other help with errands or small tasks around the home.

With the support of a third-party facilitator, residents with a long history of interpersonal conflicts have a number of constructive meetings to discuss shared concerns about emergency preparedness, and establish a working group to purchase shared emergency supplies.

A large group of highly skilled, mostly-retired residents in a condominium get a government grant and create five subcommittees to work on a residents' communication platform, regular social events, a floor-connectors system, shared emergency supplies purchasing, and an ask/offer mutual help system.

Residents with disabilities, working on their own, organize small social events in their building that significantly strengthen their sense of agency, mental health, safety, and well-being.

In a building where six different languages are spoken by residents from ten different countries, a third-party facilitator and group of resident champions get nearly all of the residents together for an outdoor barbecue and party.

2. Learnings about Effective Strategies

Consistent and reliable "people-support" over time can be vital.

Residents often crave connection, but can feel awkward reaching out. Residents appreciate support from a third party who brings a program or "structure" to inspire residents to come together. Honoraria and incentives can also help, but a coordinator with expertise in community-building makes virtually any resident engagement program more sustainable. Longer-term, third-party support is especially helpful for reaching isolated residents, keeping programs fair and inclusive, or launching larger group projects.

A little can go a long way.

It's not necessary, and can even be daunting and ultimately discouraging for both facilitators and resident leaders, to start with large-scale goals such as expecting to engage everyone in a building immediately in a complex group project. A simple, achievable goal is often more inviting. A small group of engaged neighbours can, over time, gradually change the culture of a whole building. Just bringing neighbours into the same room and establishing familiarity between them can and often does lead to much more.

Emergency preparedness is a popular "gateway."

Everyone has touchpoints in their own lives where they felt more vulnerable and a neighbour could have provided, or did provide meaningful assistance, and they can easily imagine such circumstances being created by a fire, earthquake, illness, or injury. Essentially, emergency preparedness is a very "relatable" idea and people find it relatively easy to use this idea to reach out and engage their neighbours.

Preparedness is an effective "gateway" for fostering social connectedness and mutual support.

There are recognizable "enabling factors" that make positive outcomes more likely.

Across widely varying circumstances, there are key enabling factors that appear to fairly consistently increase the overall likelihood of residents strengthening social connections or collaborating on activities. Notably, many of these are similar to supportive factors identified in other organizations' social programming work nationally and internationally. **See insert below:**

Spotlight

ENABLING FACTORS FOR RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

FOR ORGANIZATIONS:

- Senior-level support (enabling policies, dedicated roles, authorizations to on-site or delivery staff etc.)
- Consistency over time in programming, funding, and dedicated staff
- External/third-party facilitation or program delivery (usually easier if not the housing operator)
- Delivery partners that can help connect residents with other organizations and resources
- Delivery staff trained in Asset-based Community Development, facilitation, and social programming skills
- Expanding or deepening programming over time (e.g. tackling new issues; moving from connecting to helping etc.)

FOR RESIDENTS:

- Supportive housing operator and building manager
- Accessible common spaces (for meetings, programs, activities etc.)
- Resident champions/connectors/leaders (more are better)
- Activities that produce tangible benefits even for non-participating residents (e.g. outdoor social event, giving out emergency kits)
- Honorariums/Incentives for resident connectors; grants for resident projects
- Consistent facilitation or coaching
- Capacity building and skills development for community engagement

3. Learnings about Roles of Housing Operators and Community-based Organizations

Housing operators can be "enabling hosts" (and benefit from third-party partnerships).

Housing operators, including landlords and property managers, can be vital enablers by supporting connectedness between neighbours with proactive policies, open amenity spaces, communication platforms, and allowing third-party access to buildings. However, the relationships of power between tenants and housing operators can affect trust and collaboration. With dedication from both sides, better understanding can lead to improved relations and successful social programming. Generally, though, third party organizations can more comfortably engage residents.

Community-based organizations can be critical facilitators, but are underfunded to play this role.

Creative partnerships are powering this work – but still have limited capacity. Many community-based organizations are well-positioned to do social connectedness programming and connect residents to other community resources; however, they're generally not sufficiently funded to gather, teach, support, and coach resident leaders in ongoing ways.

4. Learnings about Policy and Systems Change

Through the work on policy and systems change that HNC has done, a number of significant challenges and important learnings have become clearer.

Social connectedness is a multi-solver in the midst of a polycrisis.

Social connectedness is a "multi-solver" with important roles to play in building community resilience and responding to pressures as varied as aging in place, loneliness, pandemics, extreme weather events, financial instability, social determinants of health, and more. Consequently, there is an opportunity to engage policy and decision makers in different sectors about the value of social connectedness.

Sociable design for new housing is increasing – but getting support for linked social programming remains challenging.

Among governments and developers, interest in best practices and supportive policy for sociable design of housing has been growing; however, so far, there's no linked funding for social programming to animate these spaces.

4. Learnings about Policy and Systems Change

Local governments are often siloed and stretched to meet other needs – and not currently well-structured to resource social programming in multi-unit housing.

Local governments must be constantly responsive to an array of political pressures, and have limited revenue streams. In this environment, it's challenging to present a case that social programming in multi-unit housing is "more" important than other needs. However, there does appear to be a strengthening case among local governments to work on shifting housing design guidelines and policies to incentivize developers to consider social connection in their designs.

Health and housing sector leaders are caught in "crisis intervention" – which drives a lot of their policy, funding, and decision-making.

Most funding in the health and housing sectors goes to downstream crisis intervention, such as funding emergency shelters and emergency health services, rather than to upstream prevention. Social connectedness is often seen as a "nice-to-have" add-on rather than as essential for health, well-being, and housing stability.

Better data would strengthen messaging to funders and decision makers.

Impacts of social programming can vary dramatically in different resident circumstances, particularly in the short term. More longer-term projects are needed to demonstrate impacts on housing stability, health, mental well-being, and other key measurables known to be linked to social connectedness, loneliness, and isolation.

Strengthening social connection is important for everyone – but belongs to no one when it comes to key funding and policy decisions.

Even as it's increasingly well-recognized that social connection is a multi-solver amid a polycrisis, there is no federal or provincial ministry or agency or local government department that has a clear, strong mandate to support the fostering of social connectedness. And neither are there policy frameworks to facilitate cross-departmental, cross-sectoral funding and collaboration to foster social connectedness. Therefore, policy changes, especially with respect to funding, are essential and urgent.

Part 4: **Now what?**

Social connectedness programming in multi-unit housing is effective – but even with the growing recognition about the value of social connectedness, social programming is not yet receiving sufficient support for scaling. And social programming is especially difficult in buildings that don't have safe, accessible, welcoming spaces in which neighbours can gather.

Moving ahead, there is an opportunity for Hey Neighbour Collective to focus more intensively on addressing the gaps in policy and funding and creating more enabling policy environments. For this work to be successful, there are key questions that need to be tackled.

"SCALING OUT": Spreading demonstration programs and sociable building design to more people, buildings, and communities

How do we ensure community-based partners have longer-term sustainable resources to deliver and scale their programs? There are currently no reliable systems in place to obtain multi-year financial support for social programming work to scale. Who pays, who needs to be at the table and involved? What would a sustainable business/funding model look like for this work?

How can we continue to nurture work on sociable design? Can funding for new housing be leveraged to include incentives for sociable design? And might government funding initiatives for retrofitting older buildings for climate resilience be an opportunity to rally support for linked sociable design upgrades and social programming?

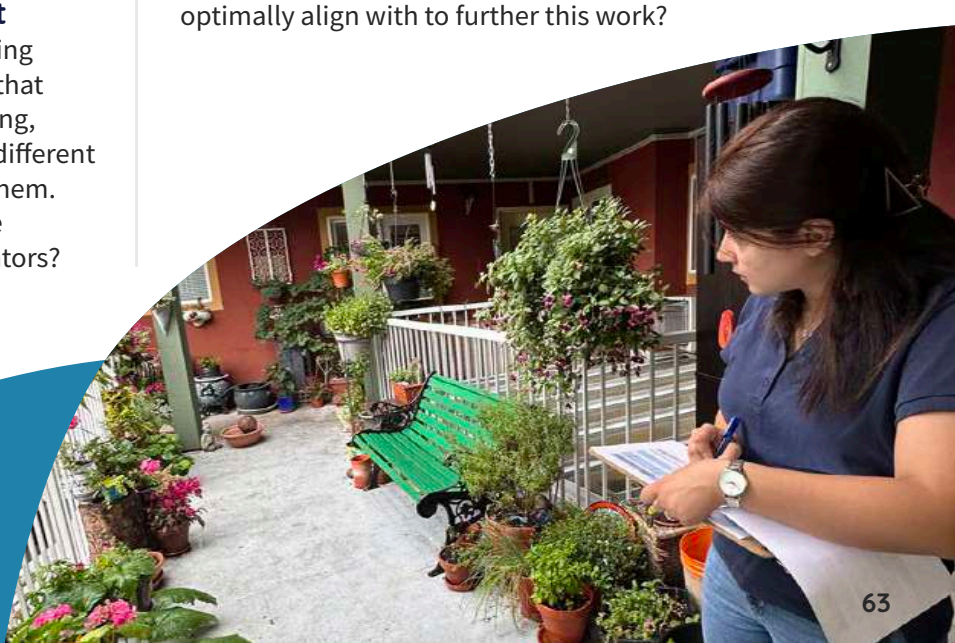
How can we engage more market housing operators? Non-market housing operators often share key value alignments that support a commitment to social programming, while market housing operators often have different values and pressures that come to bear on them. What are some of the benefits that will more strongly connect with market housing operators?

"SCALING UP": Building support for systems and policy change

What are the top priorities for systems and policy change? And while it's important for HNC partners to establish shared priorities, there are also important questions about how to best advocate for the systems and policy changes we envision.

What are the "measurables" of neighbourly social connectedness that will best speak to policy makers and funders? Sharper alignments must be created between demonstration projects, outcome measurements, evaluation, research, and key policy questions. This will in turn help clarify messaging about how, where, and for what social programming and sociable design are most effective, so as to strengthen advocacy work on systems, funding, and policy change.

How can we elevate the multi-solving potential of social connectedness to build more buy-in and investment? And at the same time, what specific issues, departments, ministries, and sectors can we optimally align with to further this work?



"SCALING DEEP": Shifting attitudes and creating a culture of support for socially connected and resilient housing

How can we build a more visible, influential movement of resident voices in support of social programming and sociable design?

Residents' views and voices are central to all of HNC's work, and residents are often invaluable supporters and promoters as well. Capturing more resident experiences and forefronting more resident voices will continue to play vital roles in HNC's ongoing work, including engaging policy leaders and decision makers. And can resident leaders across communities become linked to help create greater impacts?

How can HNC support culture change in the housing industry to expand the pool of housing operators committed to building neighbourly social connections and resident resilience?

Although housing operators are not always ideally positioned to lead social programming, they have a vital role as "enabling hosts." It's important to continue to learn about what kinds of approaches work best for market and non-market housing operators, how to navigate concerns some housing operators have with the prospect of residents gathering and organizing, and what the best evidence is for outcomes that housing operators value. Housing operators are also in the business of acquiring, retrofitting, and/or redeveloping buildings, so how can we get more of them integrating age-friendly, sociable design principles? How can we get industry leaders to work with HNC to advocate for policy change that will reward their efforts and bring others along?

How do we change attitudes and values that see social connectedness as merely "nice to have" but not essential?

There is growing support for initiatives that directly address housing affordability and homelessness, and there's expanding recognition of the role of secure-tenure, affordable housing as a key determinant of health and enabler of the ability to age in place. But housing can be so much more than four walls and a roof. How can we help the public, governments, funders, and others to more strongly recognize the value of socially-connected housing as an effective intervention before crises emerge? How can we create new mindsets and a culture of robust, deeper support – where social connectedness is recognized as essential?

Appendix

APPENDIX A - Theory of Change

APPENDIX B - Resources and Links

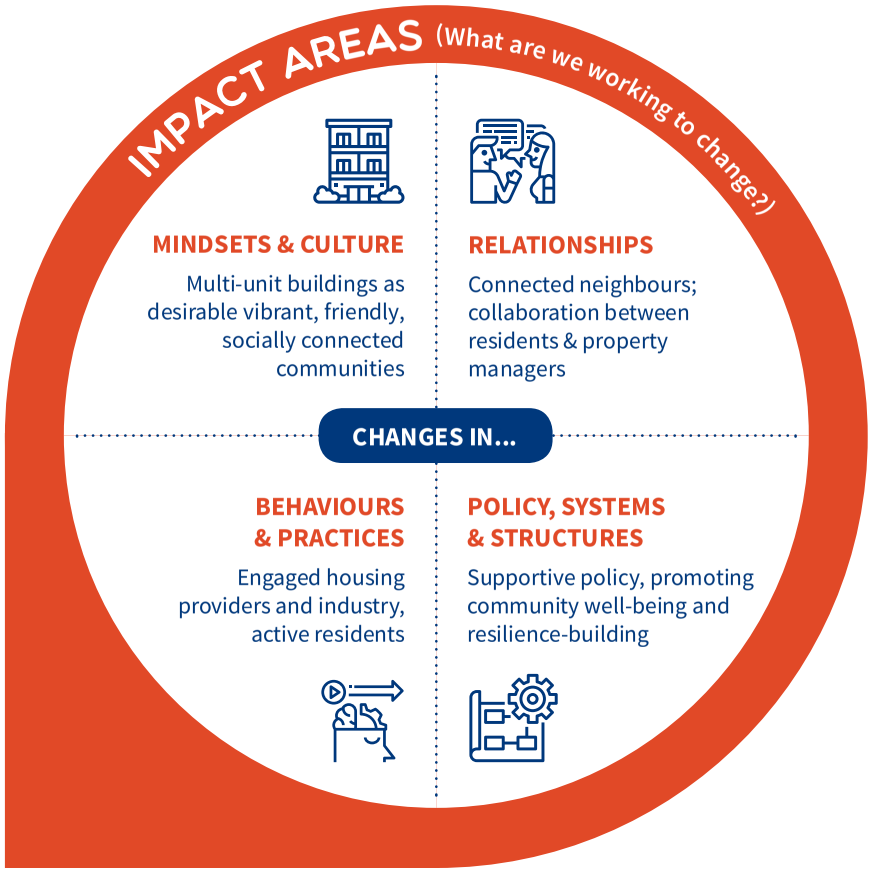
THEORY OF CHANGE

MULTI-UNIT HOUSING IS: SOCIALLY CONNECTED • DESIRABLE • NEIGHBOURLY • HEALTH-PROMOTING • RESILIENT

INTENDED IMPACT

HEY NEIGHBOUR COLLECTIVE helps to create the conditions for these ***LONG-TERM OUTCOMES***:

- → **A measurable increase** in social connectedness and resiliency amongst residents of multi-unit buildings in BC's urban communities, leading to improved health and well-being.
- → **Positive transformation** of the ways in which multi-unit buildings are engaged, managed and designed, in order to foster more socially connected, vibrant, and resilient communities.
- → **Shifting attitudes, beliefs and values** about the desirability of living in multi-unit housing – where multi-unit housing is seen as a "home" rather than a temporary place of residence.



WHAT SUPPORTS THESE CHANGES?

- ✓ **ENGAGED, SAFE & EMPOWERED RESIDENTS**

  Healthier residents through increased engagement, sense of community, safety and belonging

- ✓ **PRO-ACTIVE LANDLORDS & PROPERTY MANAGERS**

  Improved business practices and results

- ✓ **IMPROVED HOUSING DESIGN**

  Guidelines and practices that support the creation of environments which foster social connectedness and resilience

- ✓ **SUPPORTIVE POLICY**

  Resources and direction for planning, design and programming

KEY STRATEGIES (How do we do this?)

1 PROTOTYPING AND PILOTING COMMUNITY-BUILDING PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Test, evaluate and share learnings about diverse activities and approaches to increasing neighbourliness, social connectedness and resilience in multi-unit housing pilot sites.

2 ACTION RESEARCH & LEARNING

Generate evidence-based data and inspiration for residents, housing operators and cross-sectoral policy makers which highlights professional practice, systems and culture change opportunities.

3 STORY SHARING & KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION

Showcase and engage others in learning about promising practices and policy solutions through sharing stories and evidence related to improved programming, management, design, and community culture of multi-unit housing.

4 HOUSING INDUSTRY & POLICY ENGAGEMENT

Engage housing professionals and cross-sectoral policy makers in understanding and implementing opportunities to foster healthier and more resilient communities through shifts in policy, programming and practice.

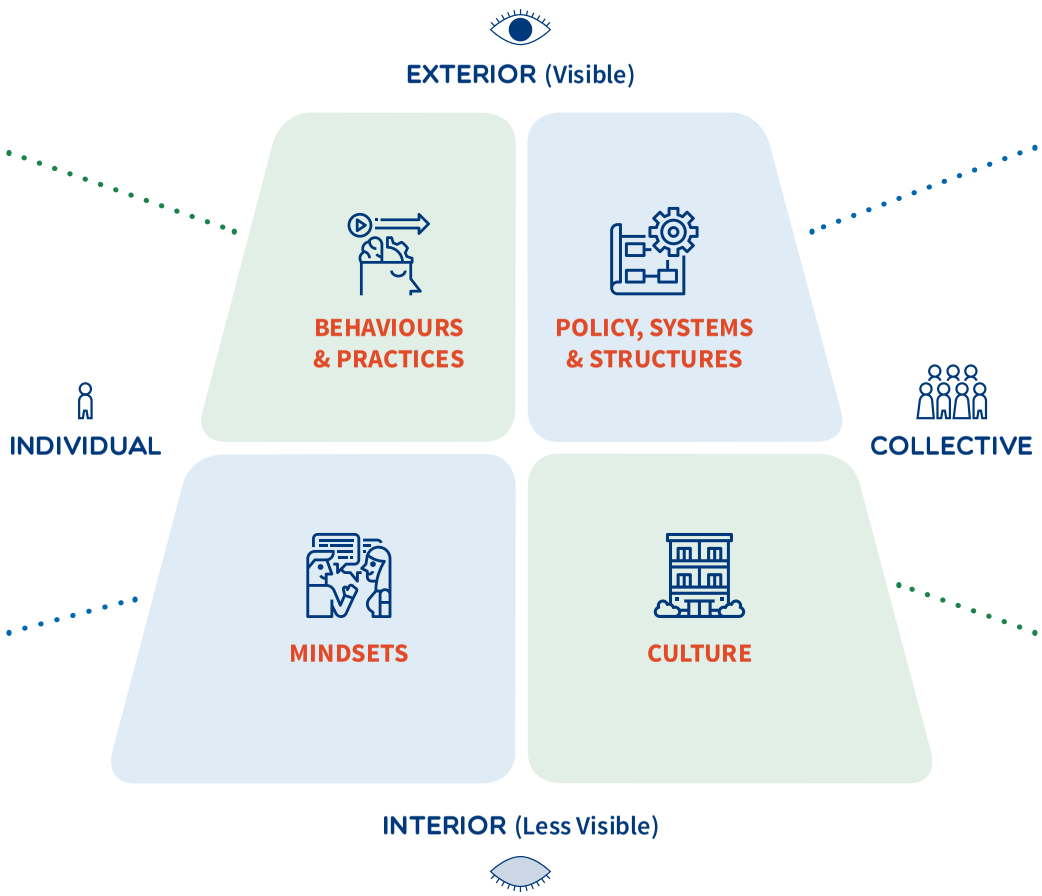
WHO DO WE BRING TOGETHER?

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

- Housing as a Human Right
- Equity
- Relationships & Trust-building
- Asset-based Community Development
- Addressing Root Causes
- Multi-sectoral & Interdisciplinary Collaboration

HNC IMPACT AREAS

- More residents in multi-unit buildings have the **capacity and skills** to take action to build greater connections with their neighbours, and to help each other out.
- More **residents are engaged as "champions"** and are actively engaging their neighbours in intentional community and resilience-building activities
- Housing providers/associations, landlords and property managers are **taking action** and playing a role in creating the conditions for socially connected, resilient buildings
- Policy makers are **including a focus on well-being and resilience** in multi-unit buildings in policy, planning and programming.



- Housing providers and property management are **incorporating policies and practices** that support and facilitate residents connecting and engaging with each other.
- There are **new policy and action directions** for social connectedness and resiliency programming in multi-unit housing contexts, and **new design and planning guidelines** for multi-unit housing.

- More residents in multi-unit buildings have the **motivation and sense of agency** to take action to build greater connections with their neighbours, and to help each other out.
- Housing industry professionals, property managers and policy makers have increased their **understanding of the relationship between multi-unit buildings, social connectedness and community resiliency**, and of their potential role as champions and change agents.
- Housing industry professionals, property managers and policy makers have increased their knowledge of **diverse approaches and business opportunities** related to potential programming, design, management and policy solutions that can contribute to more socially connected buildings.

- Residents in pilot buildings have increased their **sense of "neighbourliness", community, safety and belonging** through connecting with their neighbours in diverse ways.
- There are **collaborative relationships between residents and property managers/landlords** which support the co-creation of a connected and resilient building community
- There are shifting beliefs and attitudes about the **value of fostering connectedness, neighbourliness and sense of community** in multi-unit buildings.
- There are **shifting attitudes, beliefs and values about the desirability of living in multi-unit housing** where multi-unit housing is seen as a "home" rather than a temporary place of residence.

APPENDIX B - Resources and Links

Hey Neighbour Collective

- Hey Neighbour Collective Website

Demonstration Program Partners

- List of Demonstration Program Partners

Policy Demonstration: Housing that Connects Us

- About the *Housing That Connects Us* Policy Demonstration

Webinars, Videos, Podcasts

- List of HNC Webinars, Videos, and Podcasts

Reports and Publications

LEARNING AND EVALUATION

- Learning report: Hey Neighbour Collective's first three years (2023)
- Building Resilient Neighbourhoods' Connect & Prepare Scaling Pilot Learning Report (2023)

PRACTICE GUIDES & TOOLKITS

- Together, Apart: Ideas for staying connected in times of physical distancing (2021)
- Practice Guide #1: Supporting residents to become community connectors in multi-unit housing (2023)
- Practice Guide #2: Landlord- and housing operator-led approaches to growing community in multi-unit housing (2023)
- Practice Guide #3: Developing organizational partnerships to build community in multi-unit housing (2023)
- Practice Guide #4: Roles for local government in strengthening social connectedness and resilience activities in multi-unit housing (2023)
- Practice Guide: Learning from the community connectors (2023)
- Building Social Connections: Toolbox of design actions to nurture wellbeing in multi-unit housing (2024)

RESEARCH

- Developing Truly Complete Communities, Discussion Paper (2021)
- Bursting social bubbles after COVID-19 will make cities happier and healthier again (2021)
- A Picture is Worth 1000 Words: A photovoice exploration into social connections at home (2021)
- How sociable is life in multi-unit rental housing: Results from Hey Neighbour Collective's 2020-21 resident surveys (2021)
- How social connectedness between neighbours supports health and well-being (2022)
- More housing supply isn't a cure-all for the housing crisis (2022)
- Reducing social isolation among older adults helps everyone (2022)
- How does housing density really affect life in cities? (2023)
- Aging in the right place: Designing housing for wellbeing and older adults (2023)
- Building social connections: Case studies to inspire socially connected multi-unit housing (2023)
- Making Connections: Rental housing providers and neighbourly social connectedness (2023)
- Age-friendly, socially connected multi-unit housing (2023)
- North Vancouver active design study (2024)
- Unlocking social connections in multi-unit housing: Insights from our 2021-2022 resident surveys (2024)

EVENT REPORTS

- Living Together 2022 Report (2022)
- Housing That Connects Us Design Jam Report Back (2024)

HEY NEIGHBOUR!
Collective

Evaluation Report

Impacts and Learnings From Our First Five Years