Property Size Preferences & Value of Outdoor Space Under Intensification

How can high-density living be made more attractive for those living in low-density places? - Emma DeFields, 2013

Introduction
In 2012, DeFields surveyed 206 residents of the Kitchener-Waterloo area, living in homes with private yards, on their landscaping and property size preferences and their future residential housing plans and preferences. Her work analyzed who might be attracted to high-density living and trade offs between private and public open space. Similar surveys were conducted in 1995 and 2004 under the supervision of Dr. Roger Suffling.

Key Terms
- **Low Density**: single detached houses on medium to large properties
- **High Density**: small detached dwellings, townhouses, condominiums, and apartments

What density do people prefer?
- **Couples with children**: 25-45 year olds
  - Household Income $75K to $99K
- **Couples without children**: 46-55 & 56-65 year olds
  - Household Income $54K to $75K, $100K to $250K
- **66+ year olds**: Retired

These groups are interested in higher density homes!

When do people want to move to a new home?
- **6-10 yrs**: 25%
- **0-5 years**: 20%
- **11-25 yrs**: 10%
- **Indefinite**: 26%
- **Unsure**: 19%

What is the most desirable home size given current home size?
- **Small**: <1000 ft²
  - Of those in **small** homes:
    - Most would prefer to upsize to a medium sized home
    - Others would like to remain in a small home
    - The majority plan to move in the next 10 years
- **Medium**: <2500 ft²
  - Of those in **medium** homes:
    - Most would prefer to stay in the same size home
    - About a quarter plan to stay indefinitely, while the majority will move in next 10 years
    - Desire private greenspace if they were to downsize
- **Large**: >2500 ft²
  - Of those in **large** homes:
    - Most prefer an equally sized or medium sized home
    - Most plan to stay much longer in their current homes
    - Older (66+) express a desire to downsize to a small home with private greenspace
What are the most attractive landscape styles?

- Lawn & Foundation Plantings
- Flower Garden
- Natural Garden
- Xeriscape
- Stone & Ground Cover
- Leafy Perennials

How do people use their front & back yards?

**Back Yard**
- Relaxing
- Dining
- Reading
- Parties
- Good View
- Play Area
- Wildlife

**Front Yard**
- Gardens
- Car Parking
- Good View
- Watch Street
- Lawn Care
- Talk with neighbours

What factors are important when you have no yard?

- Having a nice view
- Close to a park or forest
- Having a porch or balcony
- Walking distance to urban centre
- Sense of privacy

How do we make higher density living more attractive?

1. Market high density living to aging populations (55 & older)
2. Incorporate private greenspace into higher density living
3. Design open spaces to accommodate private yard uses
4. Preserve urban area forests, parkland, and open spaces
5. Use attractive landscaping styles around buildings