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EL DISEÑO

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A tale of two canadian towns: Part 2

Ramsay, Calgary

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Resumen

El crecimiento urbano que las ciudades norteamericanas han experimentado a lo largo del Siglo XX ha traído consigo una serie de retos. De forma similar a la Ciudad de México y otras metrópolis latinoamericanas, muchas ciudades más jóvenes han tenido evoluciones parecidas. *A Tale of Two Canadian Towns* (Una Historia de dos Pueblos Canadienses) abarca dos textos de investigación. Cada uno de ellos analiza la historia y los datos demográficos y de tendencias de vivienda de dos comunidades específicas: Mississauga, en el Área Metropolitana de Toronto, Ontario y Ramsay, un vecindario dentro de la zona central de Calgary, Alberta.

La recopilación de datos demográficos y archivos históricos permite tejer una historia entre ambas comunidades. Esta historia nos puede mostrar los hallazgos y aprendizajes sobre cómo planeamos, diseñamos y construimos nuestras ciudades, tanto en Canadá y México, como en el resto del continente y del mundo.

Palabras clave: Planeación, urbanismo, diseño, investigación, vivienda, historia

Abstract

The urban growth that Northamerican cities have experienced over the twentieth century has rendered a number of challenges. Not unlike Mexico City and other Latinamerican metropoli, younger cities have had similar evolutions. *A Tale of Two Canadian Towns* encompasses two research papers. Each of these analyze the history, demographic data and housing trends of two distinct communities in Canada: Mississauga, in the Greater Toronto Area in Ontario and Ramsay, within the inner-city of Calgary, Alberta.

The collection of demographic data and historical documents allows the threading of a story of two towns. This story can show us the insights on how we plan, design and build our cities and spaces, as well as what we can learn moving forward, both in Canada, Mexico and across the continent and planet.

Keywords: Planning, urbanism, design, research, housing, history

A city on the Rivers

The evolution of Calgary, and its history as a thriving North American city is best told through the history of its neighbourhoods and communities. One such neighbourhood is Ramsay. In the southeast quadrant of the city, along the Elbow River, Ramsay is one of the city's oldest settlements and incorporated neighbourhoods.

This paper explores the social and spatial diversity and history of Ramsay as a community, its history since establishment, challenges and potentials, and transitions throughout the twentieth century, specifically the last three decades of demographic and economic change, and how these changes have shaped the community.

Through the collection and analysis of historical documents, census data and current urban state of affairs, this paper tells the story of Ramsay and profiles it as a potential game-changer of its own liveability and sustainability, as well as that of the city.

History & background of Ramsay

"Ramsay was one of Calgary's earliest civilian settlements, making it one of the most significant cohesive early urban neighbourhoods in existence in the province." - Avitus Design Inc., The Ramsay Building Inventory, 1994.

The land on which Ramsay currently sits is one of the closest places to the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers, which is part of the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Îyâxe Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (Region 3), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

This land attracted migrating bison, which created a trade hub amongst First Nations populations and Western settlers. Early homesteads and land claims began to cluster along the East bank of the Elbow River. When the Canadian Pacific Railway made its way through the area expanding west, these land claims were subdivided, allowing for the creation of a traffic bridge over the Elbow and for the potential of development in the area along the escarpment (now

known as Scotman's Hill) and east into Inglewood (Ramsay Historical Context Report, Calgary Heritage Authority, 2013).

In the late 1800s, Wesley Fletcher Orr, a politician, entrepreneur and Calgary's 8th mayor, filed a claim for the land that is now Inglewood and Ramsay, in advance of the CPR coming to the city. He then subdivided the land into the A2 Subdivision Plan, following the construction of the 9th Ave (Atlantic Ave.) Bridge connecting the area directly with downtown, which was a pivotal point for the economic boom and vision for the city.

The turn-of-the-century development of Ramsay was led by W.T. Ramsay, a Scottish immigrant that came to Canada in 1865. The neighbourhood was imagined as an upper-class community in the early twentieth century, a subdivision adjacent to Inglewood and near Calgary's new industrial area. Many of the original houses built in the 1910s were inhabited by management and executive-level employees of the nearby industries. St. Anna's Parish was built in 1910 on 21 Ave SW, and the Ramsay School in 1912. The local industrial boom fostered commercial development and brought streetcar service to the area in 1911. This growth period was halted by the pre-WW2 economic depression and rebooted at the end of the 1940s with the Leduc Oil boom. In the 1950s, with the ceasing of streetcar operations, Ramsay transitioned to be serviced by Calgary Transit bus lines.

Even though there was development of multi-dwelling units, duplexes and affordable housing over the next decades into the 1970s and 1980s, Ramsay did not fulfill its vision of becoming an upper-class community and is one of the

inner-city communities that has seen the least amount of redevelopment in the twenty-first century.



Imagen 1. St. Anna's Parish, 1960. Glenbow Archives.

Key findings

The data collection, analysis and historical research of this paper has allowed for the demographic aspects, identity and character-defining elements -both tangible and intangible- of Ramsay to surface through key findings. These insights aid in telling the story, the current state and potential and possible futures for this community.

- 1.Ramsay was unable to fulfill the expectation of becoming a cohesive upper-class neighbourhood.
- 2.The community is an example of the duality of inner-city potential and neglect
- 3.Ramsay is the microcosmos of the development and growth challenge in Calgary.
- 4.Ramsay is an area of opportunity for either revitalization and urban/cultural heritage or gentrification and redevelopment

Ramsay was unable to fulfill the expectation of becoming an upper-class neighbourhood.

After Orr's A2 Plan Subdivision, W.T. Ramsay subsequently subdivided his land along the Elbow River, on what is now Scotman's Hill, and designed it by laying out plots that could fit homes worth at least \$2,000.00. With the recent railroad completion and the industrial and commercial hub booming in East Calgary, the objective was to create an area that housed the business owners, industry managers and executives of the area in an upscale community that was close to both downtown and said industrial area.

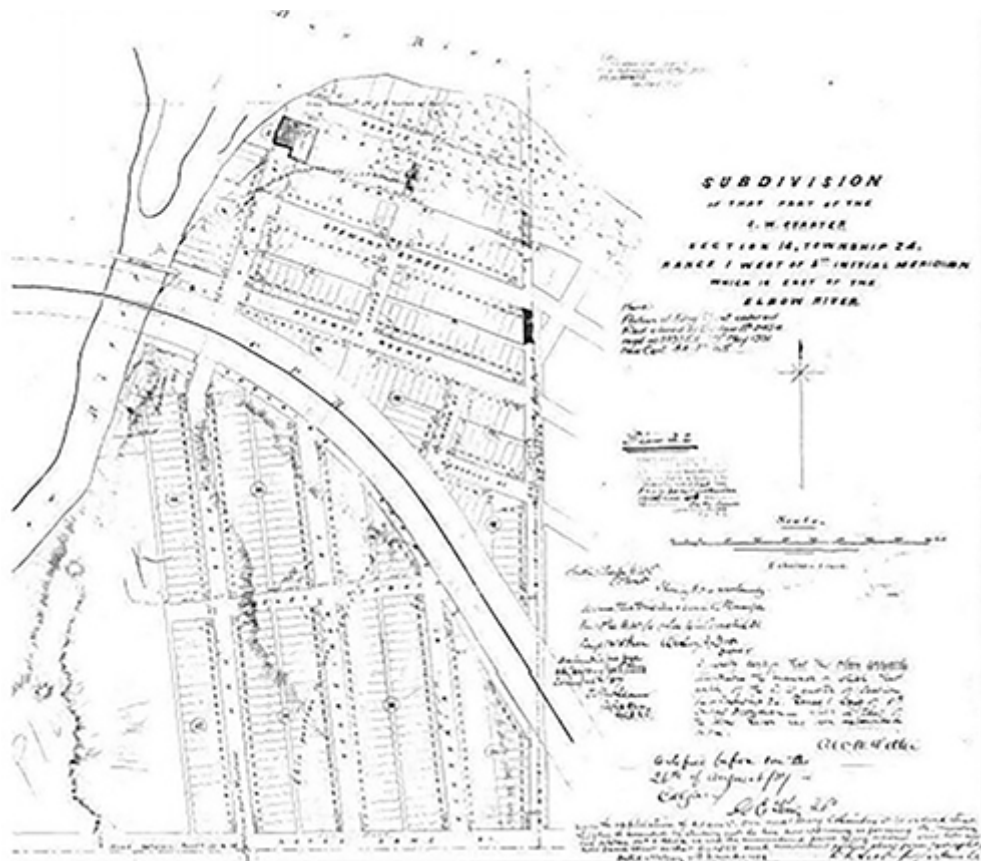


Imagen 2. Orr's A2 Subdivision Plan, City of Calgary.

Many of these lots sit on narrow, tree-lined streets filled with Edwardian-style cottages, gable-roofed bungalows and larger, Queen Anne style houses. However, the start of World War I, and its subsequent economic challenges, followed by the depression in the 1930s all but halted development in Ramsay. The following decades brought sparse and scattered new developments, mostly around the oil booms in the 1950s and 1960s, with the construction of duplex housing and low-rise apartment buildings, focused more on a working-class market than that of the original plan for Ramsay to become a residential hub for an upper-class demographic.

Even though W.T. Ramsay and his peers had planned a logical build-out plan for the area by betting on the connectivity to downtown and the boom of Calgary's eastside industrial hub, the boom-bust cycle of both the international and regional economies had direct effects on the small community's growth and evolution. Many of these effects are still noticeable now, especially when looking at the Census Data from the past 25 years. The analysis of the development shortcomings of Ramsay also render useful insights into Calgary's growth strategy throughout

the second half of the twentieth century and the current Municipal Development Plan for the city.

The community is an example of the duality of inner-city planning potential and neglect.

These specific insights refer to the duality of how many Anglo-American cities have managed the development of their inner-city neighbourhoods in the past 25 years. The downtowns and inner-city neighbourhoods have proven to either "make or break" a city throughout the recessions of the past three decades.

Calgary is decades behind the re-imagining of the downtown and inner city to create a more sustainable city. The downtown has seen a decline in both full-time residents and office space tenants. Office space vacancy is at an all-time high in downtown and fueling a "donut effect" (where the city centre becomes more hollow or empty, as businesses and people move into the outskirts of the city) for the city, while local developers keep seeking short-term investment opportunities by petitioning City Council to create more than 10 new communities on the outer edge of the city a year (14 in 2018/2019, 11 in 2020). Meanwhile, communities like Ramsay that lie adjacent to the

downtown area are neglected and become the first part of the “donut effect”, leaving a substantial void for either revitalization potential or risk of gentrification and overdevelopment.

An example of this is how Ramsay had been serviced by the Calgary Municipal Railway #8 Burns Ave. - Sunnyside Line. This streetcar line started operations in 1911 and ceased its service in 1947, effectively disconnecting the community from the downtown and other growing parts of the city. As Jeff Speck mentions in Walkable City “The biggest criticism of bus systems, that they lack rail’s permanence: how can you drive real estate investment around transit if transit might leave?” (Speck, J. Walkable City, 2012)

Real estate development in the second half of the twentieth century in Ramsay is still the lowest historically, and also coincides with the time period in which Ramsay, along with the rest of the city, transitioned to a more car-dependant mobility model. This has led to several potential outcomes in the upcoming years for Ramsay, especially considering its geographical location adjacent to the city centre.

Ramsay is the microcosmos of the Development and Growth Challenge in Calgary.

Calgary’s current strategy for growth into the future is determined, in part, by the Municipal Development Plan. Included in this plan are the objectives of Compact City and Connecting the City, which, on paper, give Ramsay a paramount

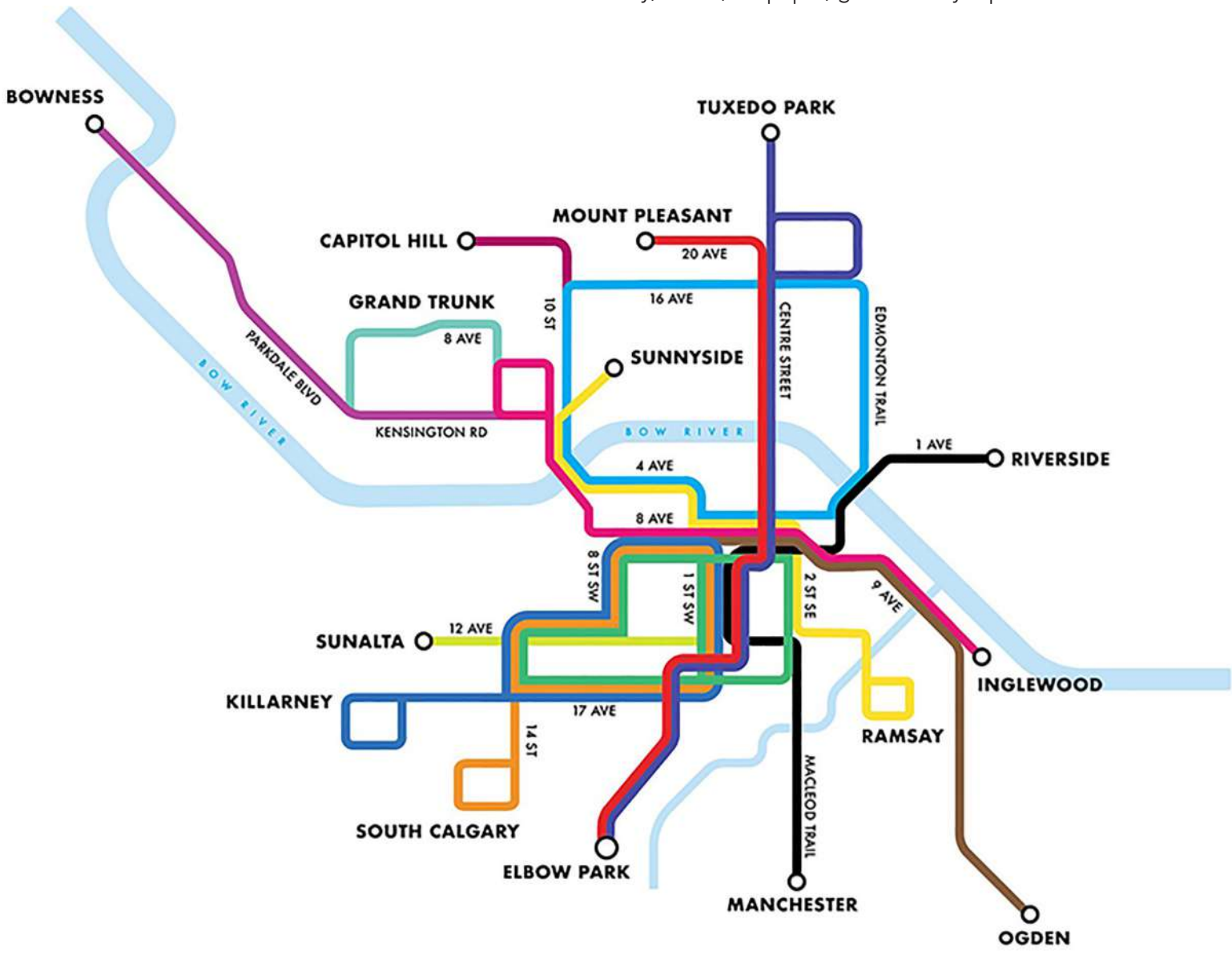


Imagen 3. Contemporary illustration of 1945 Calgary streetcar map.

Saadiq Mohiuddin.



Imagen 4. Historic East Calgary ARP Render. City of Calgary

position to orient itself as a thriving, placemaking community. However, the realities of Calgary's growth decision-making are often at odds with its own MDP charter. Again, Ramsay is an excellent case-study of this phenomenon.

The steady increase in Ramsay's average dwelling value parallel to the steady increase in its low-income household rate are evidence of the aforementioned donut effect, as well as the pricing out of the inner city for decades-long residents of communities such as Ramsay. At the same time, this has left a number of historic, character-defining properties at risk of being demolished and/or sold as lots for redevelopment.

A substantial factor in these effects is the upcoming construction of the Calgary Transit CTrain Green Line, which has a planned station adjacent to Ramsay. This is creating a number of potential real estate opportunities, which are not limited to Ramsay, but many communities along the proposed Green Line.

The paradoxes of Calgary's MDP vision and the reality of the suburbanization and short-term real estate business model make Ramsay a microcosmos of the city's overall challenges. The community becomes a proving ground for either policies that support long-term sustainable urbanism, or give in to short-term real estate interests that put the city's social equity and financial future at risk.

Ramsay is an area of opportunity for either revitalization and urban/cultural heritage or gentrification and redevelopment.

These paradoxes bring along not only challenges, but also opportunities. As is the case with many inner-city neighbourhoods, and the city itself, Ramsay is at a pivotal point where its his-

tory, demographic characteristics and real estate opportunities give it the potential of evolving into an urban culture-shifting place.

The inner-city redevelopment and revitalization strategies of the past decade include the creation of the East Village through CMLC, as well as the new Central Memorial Library, and more recently, an approved high-rise condo building on Inglewood's Atlantic Ave. main street business corridor. Although the mid and long-term effects of these strategies are yet to be experienced and analyzed, the population data for both Calgary as a whole and Ramsay specifically, reveal a slow but steady decline in the young (20-29 year old) population over the past 25+ years. This begs the question, what is the intended or realistic target for this new housing market?

The city's overall economic downturns and densification challenges arguably stem from the lack of a diversified economy and a downtown infrastructure built with a single industry/user/consumer in mind - oil and gas. This leaves both the city and Ramsay at a crossroads on how to evolve:

Invest in high-calibre, high-rise development that will drive market prices up in hopes of attracting an older demographic that can afford such housing products (while there is no substantial industry to attract said demographic) or bet on a more curated street-level, small-scale tactical strategy to revive Ramsay's cultural heritage as one of Calgary's oldest neighbourhoods through its character-defining housing stock.

Data Analysis & Visualization

In order to understand this crossroads, it is necessary to analyze and understand Ramsay's evolution over the past 29 years. Through the collection, comparison and analysis of demographic, real estate and economic data, Ramsay's story is more easily read. This section explores the following Key Demographic Aspects for said analysis:

1. Demographics and Age Groups
2. Population by Ethnic Origin
3. Occupational Structure
4. Households and Income
5. Household Typologies
6. Housing Costs & Affordability
7. Construction Era

DEMOGRAPHICS



Planning Policies

Currently, some of the planning policies directing the future growth and evolution of Ramsay include the Calgary Municipal Development Plan and the Historic East Calgary Area Redevelopment Plan. Both of these documents, as mentioned previously in this paper, aim at a more sustainable, vibrant city and community for Calgary, but face many pragmatic, logistical challenges upon execution. The most relevant driving principles for the revitalization and current and future development of Ramsay within the ARP and MDP are:

ETHNIC ORIGINS



RAMSAY

GRAPHIC BASED ON THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF ETHNIC ORIGIN RESPONSES FROM 2016 FOR THE COMMUNITY OF RAMSAY.

SMALL FLUCTUATIONS BETWEEN YEARS ARE PRESENT, BUT THE TOP FIVE ETHNIC ORIGIN RESPONSES FOR RAMSAY ARE CONSISTENTLY:

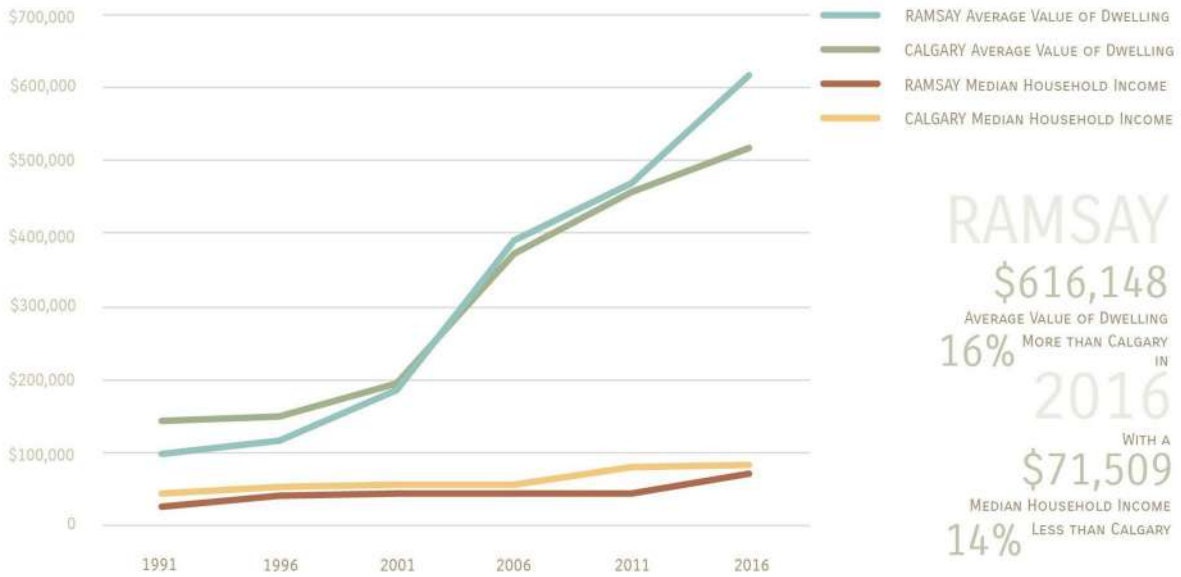
- SCOTTISH
- ENGLISH
- IRISH
- CANADIAN
- GERMAN

TOP THREE OCCUPATIONS BY YEAR RAMSAY

	1991	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
1	HEALTH PROFESSIONS, SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES	TRADES, TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT OPERATORS AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	TRADES, TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT OPERATORS AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	SALES AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	SALES AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	SALES AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS
2	BUSINESS, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OCCUPATIONS	BUSINESS, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OCCUPATIONS	BUSINESS, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OCCUPATIONS	TRADES, TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT OPERATORS AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	BUSINESS, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OCCUPATIONS	BUSINESS, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OCCUPATIONS
3	ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE TECHS. AND TRADES	SALES AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	SALES AND SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	BUSINESS, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION OCCUPATIONS	TRADES, TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT OPERATORS AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	TRADES, TRANSPORT AND EQUIPMENT OPERATORS AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS

COMPARISON

CHANGE IN INCOME & HOUSING PRICES

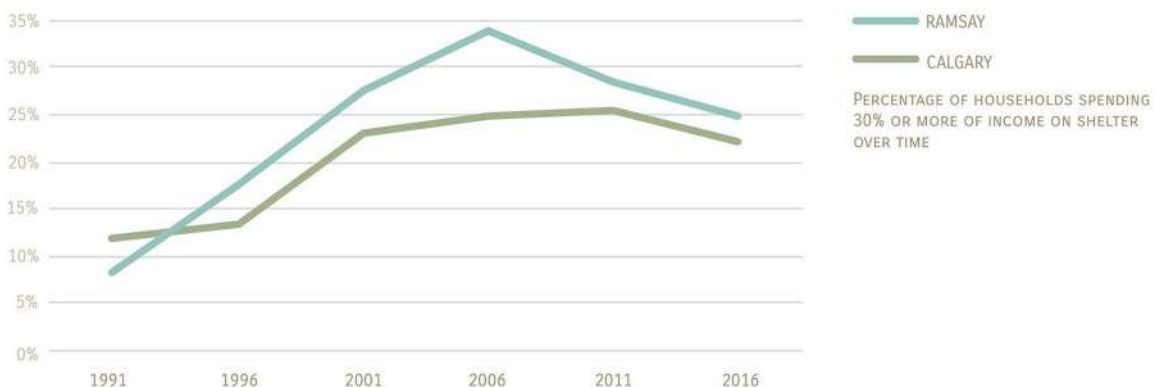


HOUSEHOLDS & INCOME

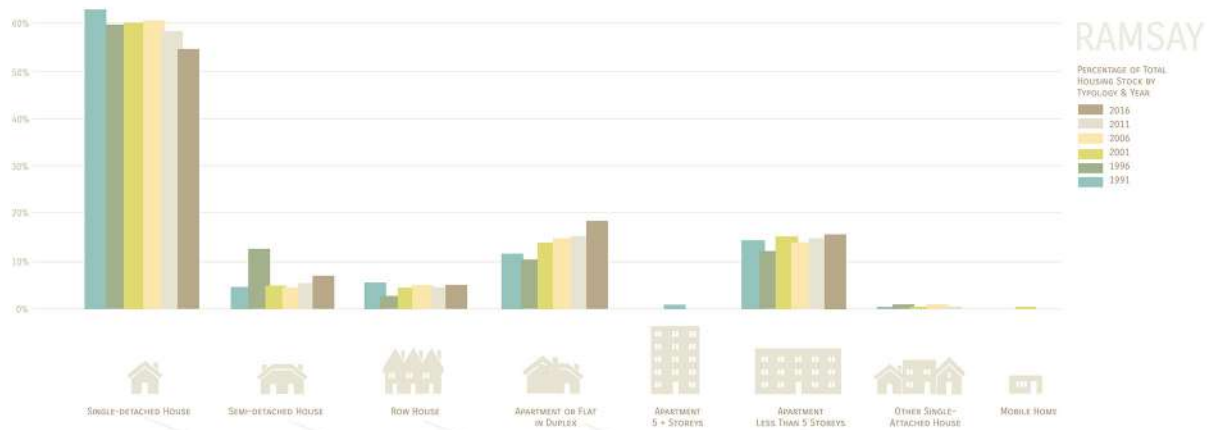


HOUSING SITUATION

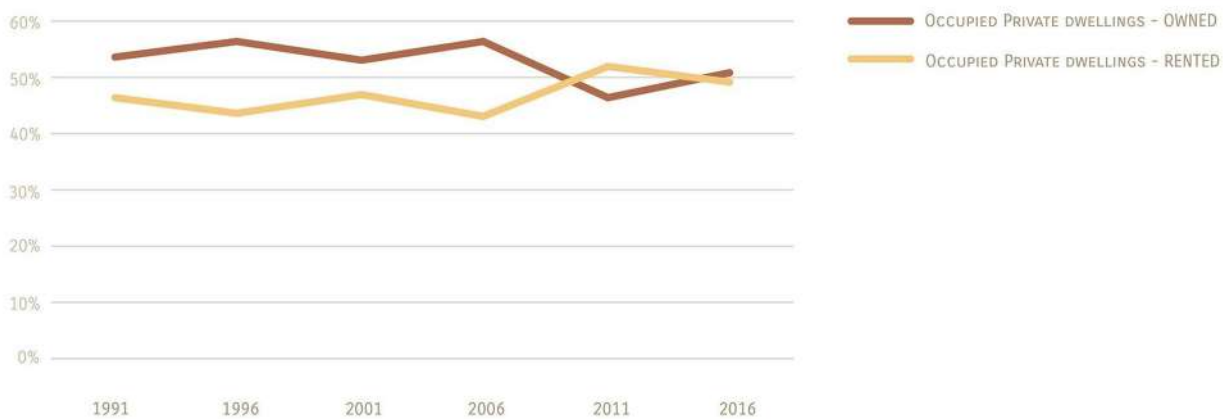
AFFORDABILITY



HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

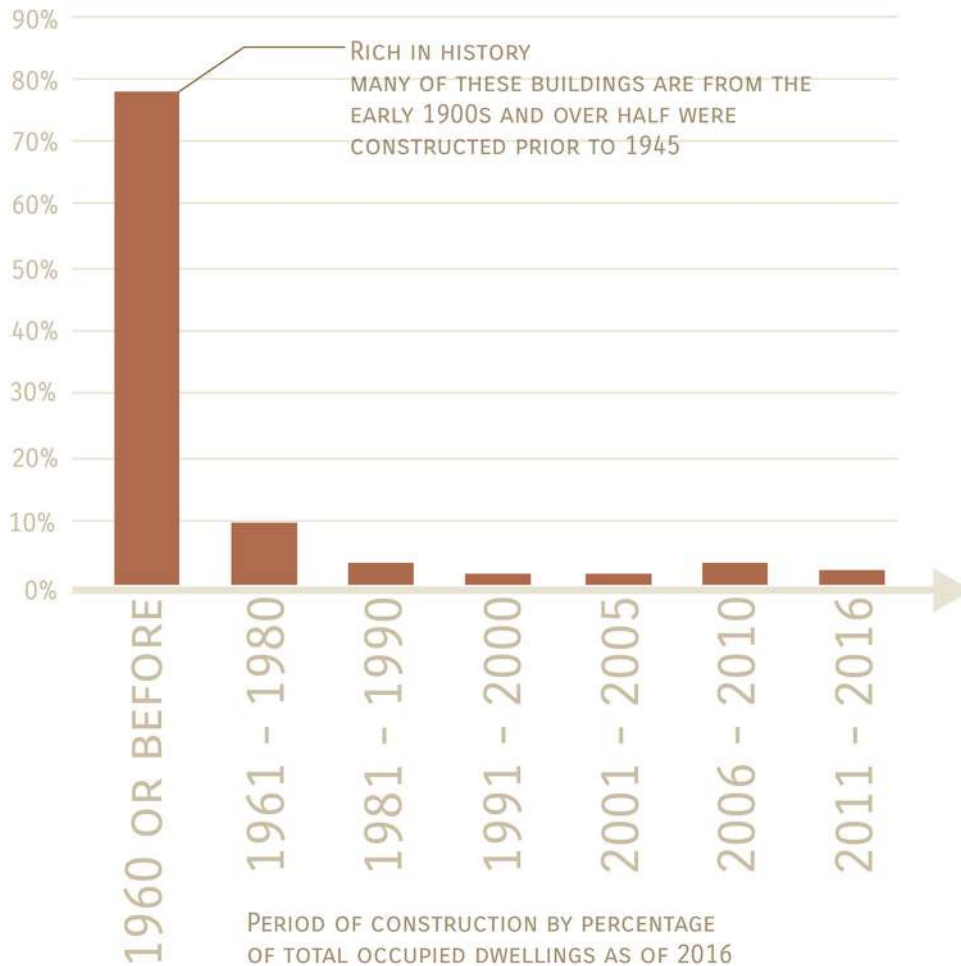


RAMSAY - HOUSING TENURE



HOUSING ERAS

RAMSAY



ARP (Quoted directly from City of Calgary's Historic East Calgary Area Redevelopment Plan Draft):

(1) Facilitate the development of the 26 Avenue Station area into higher density mixed-use and neighbourhood areas.

(2) Encourage and guide the redevelopment of 11 Street S.E. as an active, mixed-use high street, anchored on the north and south by Green Line LRT Stations.

(3) Maintain and enhance the continued viability and character of the community while providing opportunities for medium and high-density development.

(4) Encourage the conservation of the community's historic character and its potential heritage resources.

(5) Protect and enhance the quality of parks, open spaces and recreational opportunities within Ramsay.

(6) Encourage transit and active modes as preferred transportation options for the plan area.

(7) Redevelopment should respect the character of the existing neighbourhoods while revitalizing potential redevelopment sites. This policy is not to prohibit redevelopment but to highlight the role that the existing context plays in shaping the form and function of new buildings. The street context can be determined by considering the

following four elements, all of which should be respected by new infill development.

(8) New automobile service centres, drive-thru businesses and service stations (gas stations) should not be approved within the Plan Area.

(9) Opportunities for renewable energy and district energy systems should be identified, explored and implemented.

(10) Opportunities for affordable housing should be identified, explored and implemented.

(11) Art and cultural amenities are encouraged in public spaces.

(12) The conservation of heritage character homes in the Neighbourhood – Limited areas will be encouraged by allowing rowhouse development on a parcel containing a character home when a character home is retained. Rowhouse development on parcels containing Character Homes is not encouraged when the Character Home is not retained.

(13) Main Streets & Frontages: New development should incorporate a vertical mix of uses. The mix of uses should include ground-floor retail, commercial or residential development and a minimum of one of the following uses: office, commercial and/or multi-residential space located above the ground floor. Large format retail/commercial establishments should not be allowed. Uses such as grocery stores, pharmacies and other similar uses which provide various daily goods and services for residents may be allowed provided that they are located within a mixed-use development and using structured parking. Appropriate measures should be employed to maintain an active street interface, such as using liner shops.

MDP:

Calgary's Municipal Development Plan lays out the growth strategy for the whole city with a twenty year plan. Within the wealth of content of the document, three specific policies stand out that have the potential to transform Ramsay into a more sustainable, connected and vibrant community:

2.2 Shaping a more compact urban form:

Goal: Direct future growth of the city in a way that fosters a more compact efficient use of land, creates complete communities, allows for greater mobility choices and enhances vitality and character in local neighbourhoods.

2.5 Connecting the city: Goal: Develop an integrated, multi-modal transportation system that supports land use, provides increased mobility choices for citizens, promotes vibrant, connected communities, protects the natural environment and supports a prosperous, and competitive economy.

2.2.5 Strong residential neighbourhoods
Objective Reinforce the stability of Calgary's neighbourhoods and ensure housing quality and vitality of its residential areas. Residential communities are not static. They will evolve over time as demographics shift and buildings age, offering an opportunity to review and accommodate changing community needs. Understanding this community dynamic can help develop plans and strategies to stabilize local population fluctuations, support predictability for the market, guide public reinvestment and ensure long-term viability of local services and facilities.

Each one of these three policies is directly linked to the neighbourhood profile characteristics mentioned throughout this paper. The Historic East Calgary ARP proposes the conservancy of the character-defining elements of both Inglewood and Ramsay, reviving its original vision and turn-of-the-century architecture and streetscape. Through the adoption of new revitalization and planning policies, it proposes the rescue of the Inglewood and Ramsay areas through preservation, not redevelopment.

The MDP, even though overarching for the whole city, also intersects with Ramsay's potential and history. The concept of intensifying density and diversity in the inner city and promoting a sustainable land use that fosters walkable neighbourhoods can benefit the liveability and overall economic health of Ramsay, allowing for its residents to access higher income employment by providing better public transit options and neighbourhood-owned businesses.

Concluding Insights

Ramsay, as one of Calgary's oldest communities, is also one of its least transformed over the years. Its initial vision as a high-end residential neighbourhood was hindered by external local and macro-economic factors. Its unique geographical

location encompassed by very defining boundaries such as the Elbow River and CP Rail on both the north and east boundaries has given it a prime location near downtown that has also spared it from recent redevelopment, but has also hindered its ethnic and socio-economic diversity.

Ramsay has slowly but steadily had a rising low-income demographic, as well as a rising average dwelling value, leaving it vulnerable to real estate redevelopment and gentrification. These factors are also highlighted by the current proposed and approved developments in the adjacent community of Inglewood.

Ramsay is an analogy, example and evidence of Calgary's boom-bust cycles throughout the twentieth century, and in the last decades it has become a proverbial time capsule of an inner-city residential neighbourhood that has withstood real estate redevelopment and gentrification.

Ramsay poses an opportunity to create a vibrant, more diverse community while maintaining affordability and avoiding the displacement of current residents. It can become the proof-of-concept for a more diversified economy oriented towards a compact city with strong inner city neighbourhoods, or become another example of North American suburbanization that marginalizes its core communities and keeps expanding outwards.

Conclusions

Ramsay and Mississauga are two examples of northern communities that have evolved through time. Becoming part of greater metropolitan areas has defined their stories, their potentials and challenges. By understanding how other communities have grown, we can transport those insights to other regions and cities around the continent and the world, including Latin America, where the urban growth patterns have had parallel evolutions with greater population densities and different challenges moving forward. The more we understand the stories of our communities across the continent, the closer we are to designing better cities for the future.

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Martina MacFarlane

Martina MacFarlane is a Master of Planning candidate and researcher at the School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape at the University of Calgary in Alberta, Canada. She was born in Vancouver, lived in a number of different Canadian cities, and came to call Alberta home, completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Since then, she has been involved in community arts projects and instruction, as well as social innovation and research projects in inclusive and affordable housing, community safety, and teaching and learning in the design disciplines.

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Iván was born and raised in Puebla, Mexico, as well as spending part of his childhood in upstate New York. He became a full-time resident of Mexico City when he moved there to study product design at Centro de Diseño, Cine y Televisión, before completing that degree he moved to UAM Azcapotzalco where he studied Industrial Design. Since then he has been involved in a number of social innovation, design and entrepreneurship projects. He has collaborated with Trep-Camp, Design Your Action and Fuckup Nights, among other enterprises. He is currently pursuing a Master of Planning degree at the University in Calgary in Alberta, Canada.

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El año 2020 será indubitablemente recordado por la Humanidad, y registrado en los libros de Historia como un instante inusitado, en el cual, una pandemia ha desolado a la raza humana en todos los continentes y que a la fecha de este escrito lleva ya más de dos millones y medio de víctimas mortales. De igual manera, será recordado este año, como aquel en qué quedaron en suspenso de diversa manera las labores cotidianas del ser humano, para atravesar disímiles estadios de cuarentena, en los cuales las actividades del día a día tuvieron y tienen que ser resueltas de manera diferente a lo que estábamos acostumbrados, lo cual implica tanto un reposicionamiento progresivo para dar respuesta a lo inesperado, como un espíritu de innovación constante por parte de la humanidad para mantenerse a salvo dentro de la crisis sanitaria que se vive.

En este orden de ideas, la Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana ha conjugado importantes esfuerzos tecnológicos, académicos, administrativos y estudiantiles para lograr dar continuidad a sus tres ejes fundamentales: Docencia, investigación, difusión y preservación de la cultura. A partir de este horizonte de cambios y transformaciones, es que el área de Administración y Tecnología para el Diseño ha mantenido su compromiso institucional en apoyo a nuestros estudiantes, investigadores y hacia la comunidad.

Este número de la publicación internacional, contamos con autores de Canadá, México, República Dominicana y de la República de Costa Rica. Brindando a los lectores catorce artículos que versan sobre diversos tópicos, tales como: formación profesional, planeación urbana, desarrollo de la pintura, educación del diseño a distancia, igualdad de género, identidad de las profesionistas de la construcción, intervención del espacio público e inserción social entre otros.