

# Canadian youth choosing transit-rich urban cores over suburbs, new study finds

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Young adults want to live close to transit, high-density housing, and urban amenities, says research out of the University of Waterloo appearing in an upcoming issue of the *Canadian Geographer*.

Contrary to traditional ideas of neighbourhood gentrification defined along class lines, this research examines a new division of space, in urban core areas increasingly populated by young adults who have delayed child-bearing and increased educational attainment with a decline in economic prospects and the extension of a youthful phase.

Professor Markus Moos of the Faculty of Environment at Waterloo authored the paper entitled, "Generationed" space: Societal restructuring and young adults' changing residential location patterns. The paper uses Statistics Canada census data from 1981 and 2006, and focuses primarily on young adults between the ages of 25 and 34 in Montreal and Vancouver.

"The research shows that young adults are living in urban neighbourhoods that are in line with planners' sustainability goals, such as walkability and higher density," said Moos, a professor in the School of Planning at Waterloo. "Even after accounting for demographic changes, young adults in Vancouver today are more likely to live in higher-density housing than in the past, which indicates a shift toward more sustainable location patterns. These trends are influenced by [housing costs](#)."

This research complements Professor Moos' findings that young adults today are earning less for doing the same jobs than previous generations. Sharp earnings declines are sometimes dismissed as resulting from longer periods in post-secondary education delaying entry to the workforce. However, even adjusting for this fact and inflation, Professor Moos still concludes that young adults are earning less than they did 25 years ago.

"Part of the reason [young adults](#) are residing in higher-density locations is the lower incomes in a context of rising housing costs," said Professor Moos. "They are residing in higher-density neighbourhoods that cost less because of the small size of apartments. The data still shows households moving away from central areas when they have children. The young-adult stage of life is now the defining characteristic of many downtowns."

The study is part of a larger effort by Professor Moos to provide a more nuanced appreciation of the geography of our metropolitan areas, and joins his well-known, resource-rich online project called Atlas of Suburbanisms, mapping the characteristics of Canada's most populated areas.

Provided by University of Waterloo

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