



A PLACE TO CALL HOME



COMMUNITY CONNECTORS



Create a vibrant and inclusive community centered around supportive housing.

What if we had a dynamic range of tenants, in a mixed use building, who would provide socio-financial and health value, as well as job opportunities to people with disabilities living in a building? Examples of tenants could be a wellness centre, commercial outlets and not-for-profit organizations. A Community Concierge would intentionally facilitate social connections that would support people with disabilities, and bring value to commercial tenants in the building, and to surrounding local communities.

WHAT DOES THE CURRENT STATE LOOK LIKE?

PROBLEMS WE ARE TRYING TO SOLVE

Most supportive housing units are single use buildings that do not offer many opportunities for residents to connect. Oftentimes common spaces are dark, empty and people avoid opportunities to build connections when going through the building to their units. This can make people with disabilities and other community members feel unsafe and lonely, leaving them with the sense that the current supportive housing they are living in is just a dorm-room to stay and not a home.



THE PROCESS INCLUDES:



A developer works with a housing agency to build a mixed income supportive housing development in an accessible, dense and vibrant part of the city. This building is designed with open gathering spaces and fully integrated commercial, wellness and not-for-profit tenants.





"Welcome to the building Joe! Let me take you on a tour and introduce you to some of the people in the building, you will see them around here a lot. Is there anything else you need to feel at home?"

"Wow, everyone is so friendly and welcoming here. I'm not really used to that. It's also nice and bright in the building, I'm really excited to be living here!!"

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A Community Concierge will act as a point of contact/connector between the residents and commercial tenants, to facilitate a variety of connections throughout the building.

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The Community Concierge facilitates the planning of community events, skills development and job opportunities as well as leveraging natural connections occurring among residents and businesses.



"Hi Barbara, this is Joe and he's a new resident here. He was talking about how much he loved your donuts and was hoping you could give him a little baking lesson?"

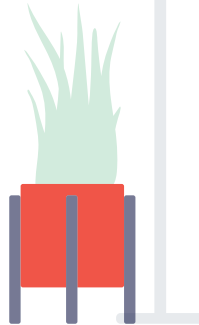
"Great to meet you Joe! And—of course! I'd love to show how we make our donuts. If you like maybe you could give us a hand in the cafe. We're so busy I need to hire more staff. Would you be interested in working here?"





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One of the goals is for the greater community to blend in with the building and for people with disabilities to feel like they have a place that is safe, inclusive, accessible and supportive that they can call home.



THE BUILDING AT A GLANCE:





Sample layout of an accessible 1-bedroom unit.



KEY PHYSICAL FEATURES:

A developer and /or coordinating agency, builds or retrofits mixed income supportive housing where people with disabilities live with other residents in the facility. The building has 10 floors, the ground floor is commercial and public spaces, and the 9 upper floors are mainly residential, with some commercial and activity spaces on some of the floors.

The building has bright spacious residential units that host a variety of residents, including single people, couples and small families. The units have flex space that allows families and friends to visit. Overall the building accommodates about 80 residents; of which 15% to 20% of residents are people with disabilities. This means approximately 15 people with developmental disabilities could be supported.

This is an open building with indoor and outdoor access, it is outward facing and connected to the local communities. Connections are deepened by the diverse

tenants in the building, that provide services to residents of the building, as well as local community members.

Some of the diverse tenants and services that attract people to the building include; commercial services such as a kitchen, cafe, or bakery.

Wellness services that support residents and will also be accessible to the local community (e.g. fitness studio that offers yoga, pilates, physio etc.) The building also hosts not-for-profit organizations that provide a range of services for people with disabilities and community members.

Open common spaces in the lobby and public areas of the building that offer flexible recreational space where people meet and have structured activities, programs and can host events.

The building maintains a ratio of 70% residential space and 30% commercial space.

KEY SUPPORT FEATURES:

There are a range of support features that have been included in this model. A new feature in the current system of supports is the **COMMUNITY CONCIERGE**.

The Community Concierge is responsible for facilitating social connections between residents, businesses and the local community. This creates social value for residents, business opportunities for commercial tenants and allows for broader community inclusion.

There is also **ON-SITE 24/7 SUPPORT SERVICES** for people with disabilities residing in the building. One of the benefits of having many people living in one building, is the ability to pool together their support budget to ensure 24/7 coverage.

It is anticipated that **NATURAL SUPPORTS** will occur as people with disabilities connect with roommates and friends that also reside in this building. While these relationships may develop naturally through the Community

Concierge, there is built-in intentionality to ensure these connections happen.

The role of the Community Concierge, also extends to **FACILITATING EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES** for people with disabilities, through the commercial and not-for-profit organizations in the building, or with community members.

The overall building design, including open internal and outdoor hangout spots, **PROVIDES SPACES FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS TO VISIT**.

Finally, it is anticipated that having open public spaces and many people passing through the building, will provide a level of **NATURAL SECURITY THAT WILL REDUCE THE NUMBER OF SECURITY PERSONNEL** typically required for a building of this size. In the event that there is a security incident, onsite security will respond.

WHO BENEFITS & HOW?

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES have an open, safe and welcoming place to call home that has an inclusive community where they can engage in learning opportunities and find employment. They would also have access to support services in the building 24/7.

SUPPORT WORKERS will have more freedom over ways to diversify their roles, through leveraging different community services blended into the building. The building offers more on-site services and the opportunity to work in tandem with the concierge.

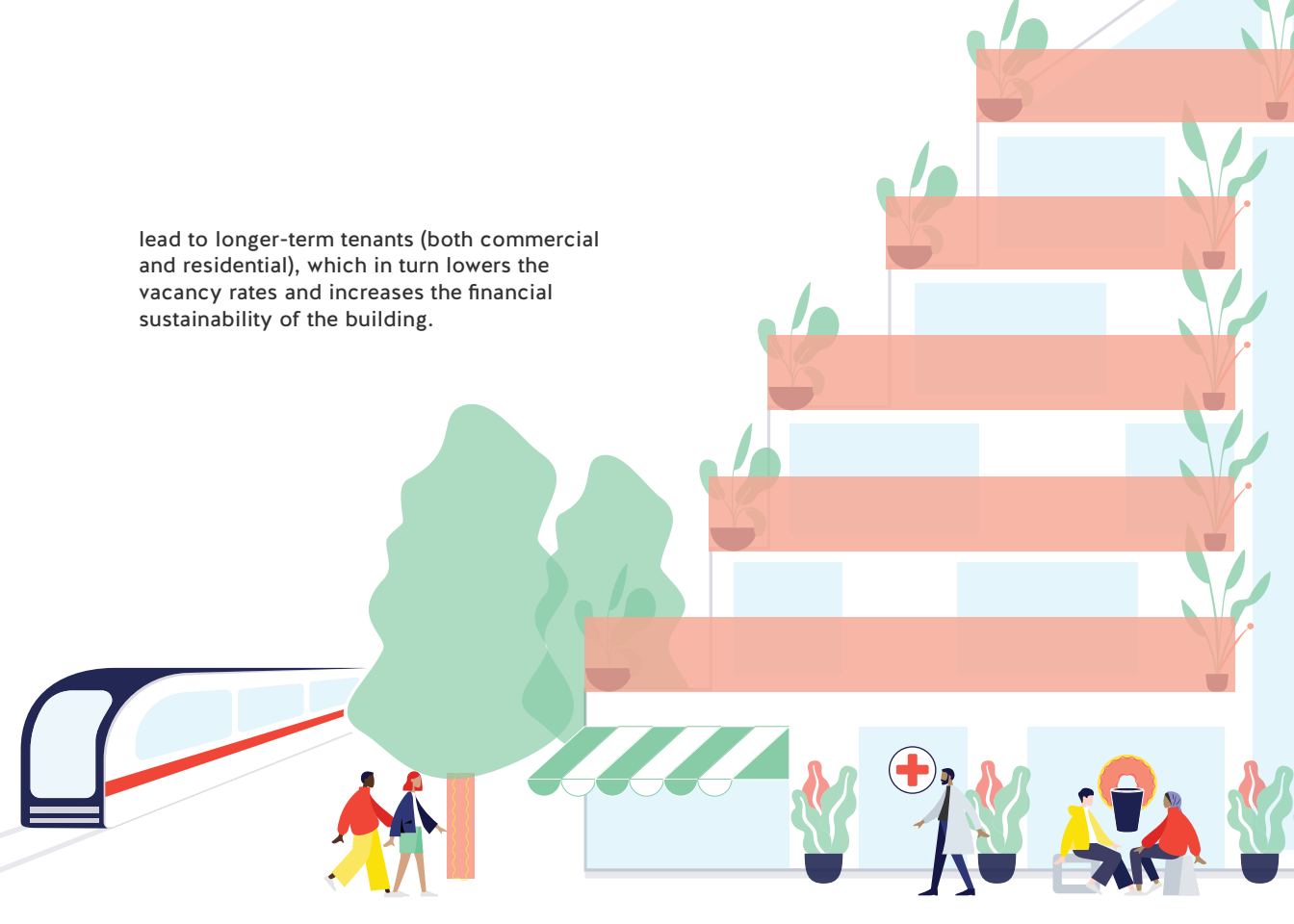
NATURAL SUPPORTS (*allies, roommates, neighbours*) the Community Concierge's role and the overall building design facilitates opportunities for encounter and connecting, which should encourage deeper and meaningful connections among friends, roommates and colleagues.

COMMERCIAL TENANTS are expected to have higher revenue streams due to a large customer base from residents, people visiting to access services or volunteers in the building. The communal vibe in the building would help form a loyal customer base. Businesses also have access to reliable staff, through residence, who have a sense of ownership and pride in the building.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT TENANTS that support people with disabilities will have greater access to those that they serve and to volunteers who can support their work. There is also an opportunity to negotiate lease rates in exchange for providing certain services for the building.

DEVELOPERS The increased diversity of residents, amenities and tenants lowers the investment risk for developers. The social support model within the building is likely to

lead to longer-term tenants (both commercial and residential), which in turn lowers the vacancy rates and increases the financial sustainability of the building.



RESOURCES NEEDED

- ▶ Land and a developer to build and possibly operate the building which would ideally be located in an accessible, vibrant and dense area of the city.
- ▶ Develop policies for commercial tenancy agreements and contracts that support this model.
- ▶ A partnership with a local disability service provider to provide in house, 24/7, support.
- ▶ Funding such as grants for the Community Concierge position.
- ▶ Commercial, wellness service and not-for- profit tenants.
- ▶ Community buy-in.

HOW WE'RE TESTING

- ▶ We will approach various stakeholders using a video and this booklet and have one on one discussions, as well as running a few focus groups.
- ▶ We will sit down with people with disabilities and their families to get their thoughts and survey them regarding the prototype.
- ▶ We will also speak with developers one on one, with the potential of having a facilitated panel discussion.

Through these discussions we are hoping to learn if we have overlooked anything and to get a better sense of the operating model and logistics, and to see how much buy-in and support we get from stakeholders while establishing realistic expectations in respect to this prototype.

**WANT TO
KNOW MORE?
LET'S TALK.**

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