

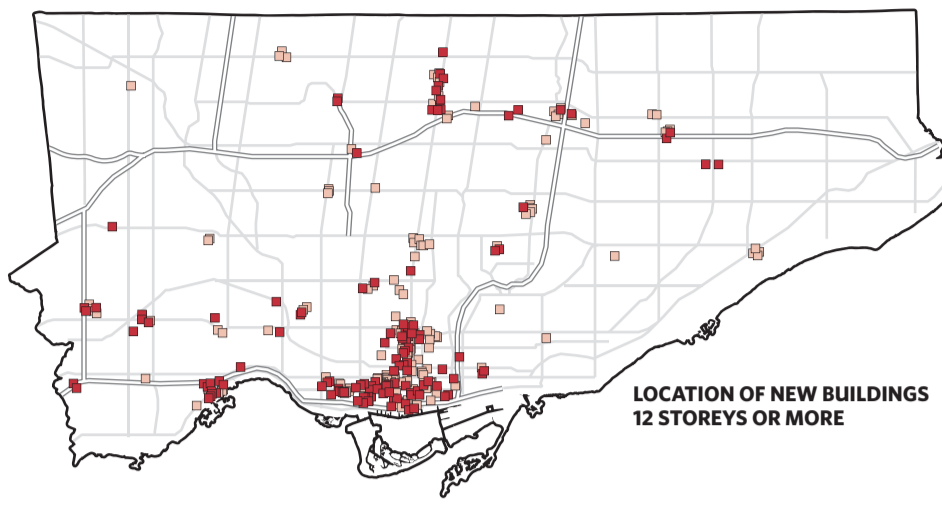
VERTICAL TORONTO
THREE-PART SERIES DAY ONE

Growing up, up, up

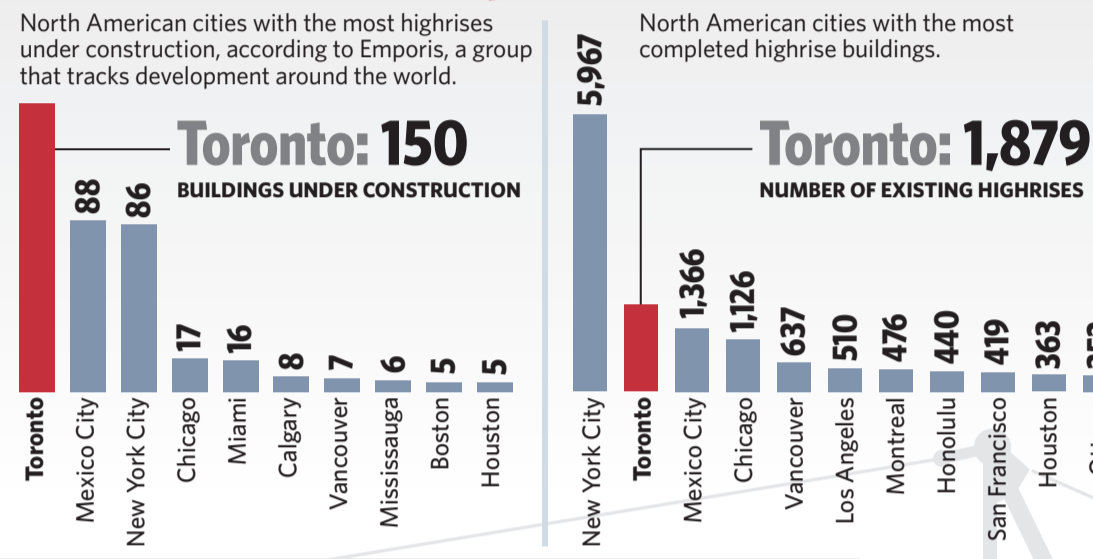
Toronto is a city with its head firmly planted in the clouds. Instead of building out, the city now aims for the sky. The rental apartment and office tower booms of the '70s and '90s have been followed by a highrise condo boom that is creating a buzz around the world. Across the city, from the shores of Lake Ontario to the suburbs of North York, condominiums have taken over the skyline. Some 140 are under construction and another 140-plus are in the works. But as the buildings continue to proliferate, so do questions about how condo life is transforming the way we live, reshaping our communities and altering our view of the world around us.

Newest towers

The majority of new residential and office developments are in the city's downtown and central waterfront area, and in North York Centre, according to the city's official plan. New development targets only about 25 per cent of city land, while the remaining 75 per cent is to be protected from significant intensification.



How Toronto compares



Homes in the sky

They are the pioneers of sky-high living — the more than 1,000 rental apartment buildings that have been a part of the city's skyline since the 1960s. Today, more than 500,000 people live in these highrise apartments — mostly families, mostly new immigrants, and now more than ever, mostly low-income. After decades of wear and tear, many are showing their age. The city is starting to talk about efforts to retrofit buildings, and revitalize neighbourhoods around them. But so far all plans are on paper only.

RENTER VS. HOMEOWNERS EARNINGS (TORONTO CMA 2005):
Homeowner average household income:

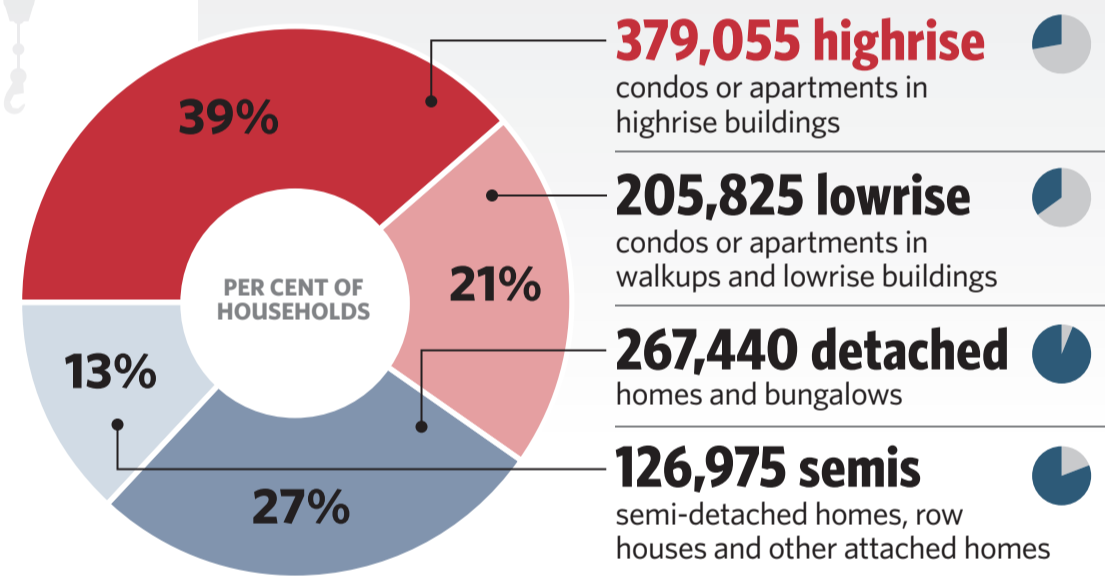
\$107,754

Renter average household income:

\$46,248

Where we live

Six out of 10 of Toronto's 1 million households live in apartments, a third of them as owners of their unit.



Towers going up

Of the 150 highrise buildings under construction, 140 of them are condo towers, the latest data from Emporis shows. As many as 180 highrises are in the planning stages. These include:

- 140+** Condo towers
- 15** Office towers
- 10** Rental buildings
- 6** Hospitals
- 4** Hotels

BUILD YOUR SERIES

Vertical Toronto is a three-part series which assembles into one seamless graphic feature.



DAY 3: Dec. 4 View from the top

How will the city look and feel once the condo boom is over? Will these highrises co-exist happily with the communities around them?

DAY 2: Next Sunday The high life

Condo living is changing the way we live and want to live. Take a look inside to see just how much.

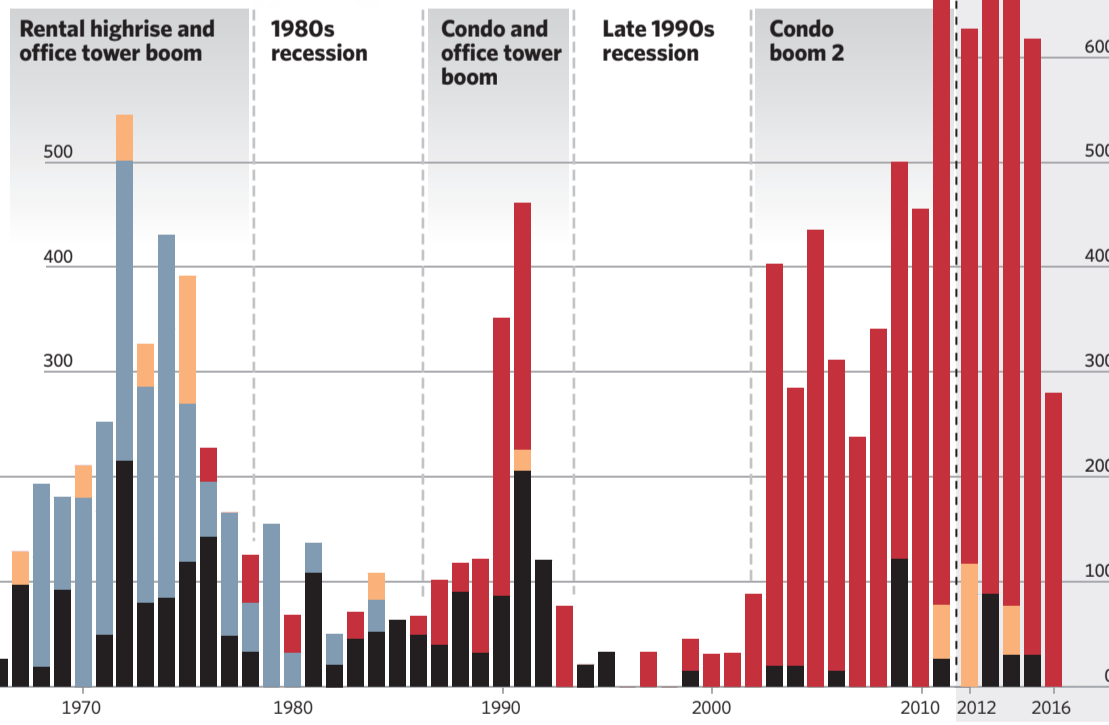
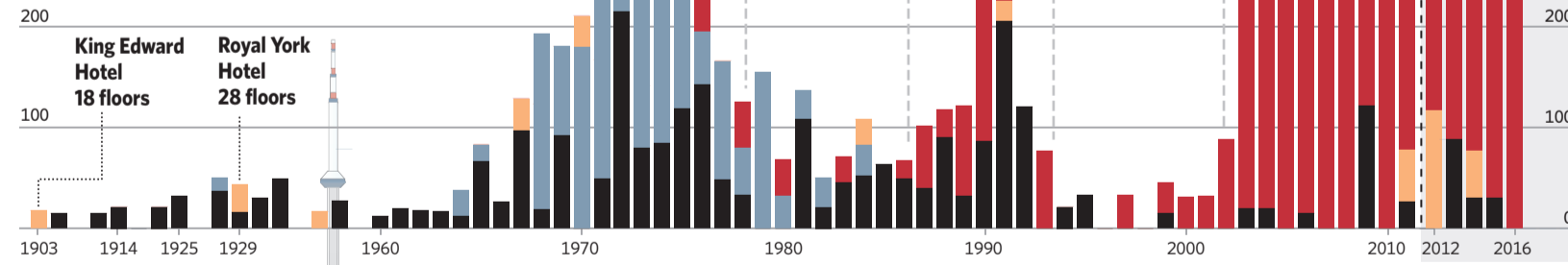
TODAY

Toronto's highrise boom (save this page to attach to next Sunday's part 2)

Building booms

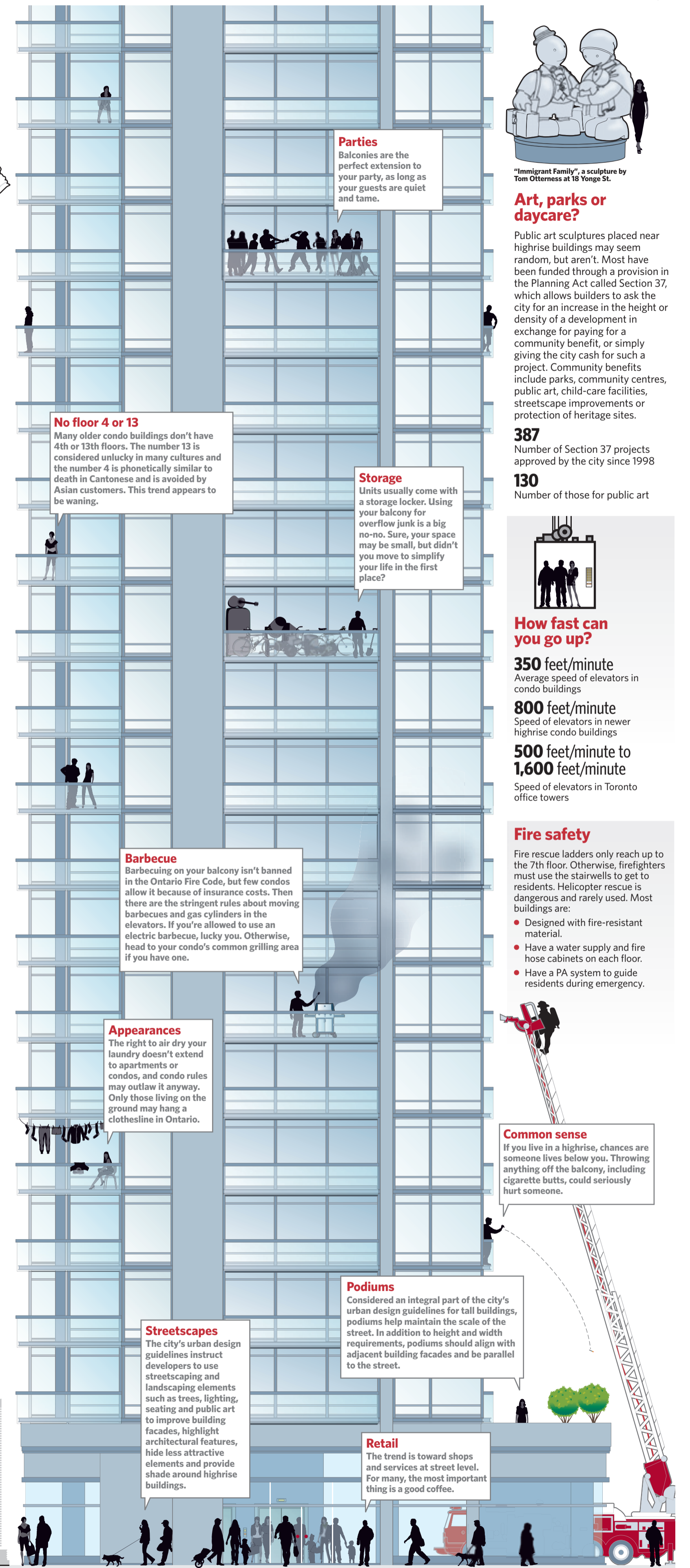
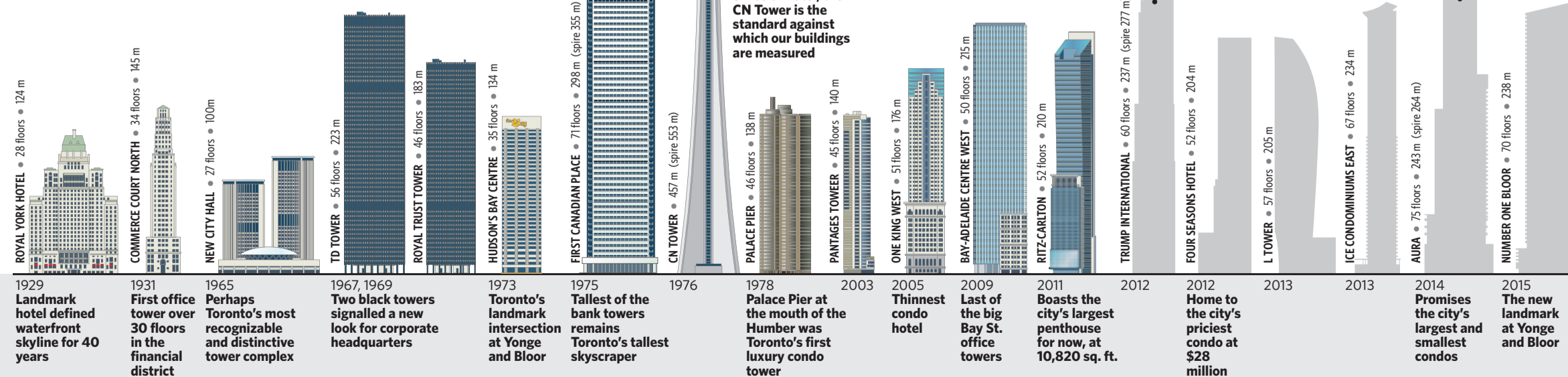
The current condo boom represents the largest residential building wave in Toronto since the '60s and '70s, when most of the city's highrise rental apartments were built.

FLOORS BUILT BY YEAR*

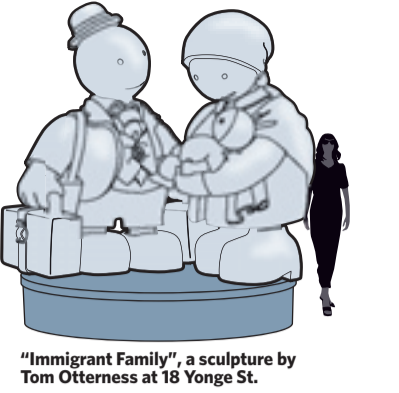


Toronto highlights

The iconic buildings that shape our skyline



Parties
Balconies are the perfect extension to your party, as long as your guests are quiet and tame.



"Immigrant Family", a sculpture by Tom Otterness at 18 Yonge St.

Art, parks or daycare?

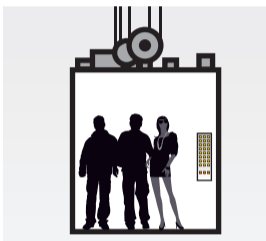
Public art sculptures placed near highrise buildings may seem random, but aren't. Most have been funded through a provision in the Planning Act called Section 37, which allows builders to ask the city for an increase in the height or density of a development in exchange for paying for a community benefit, or simply giving the city cash for such a project. Community benefits include parks, community centres, public art, child-care facilities, streetscape improvements or protection of heritage sites.

387 Number of Section 37 projects approved by the city since 1998

130 Number of those for public art

No floor 4 or 13
Many older condo buildings don't have 4th or 13th floors. The number 13 is considered unlucky in many cultures and the number 4 is phonetically similar to death in Cantonese and is avoided by Asian customers. This trend appears to be waning.

Storage
Units usually come with a storage locker. Using your balcony for overflow junk is a big no-no. Sure, your space may be small, but didn't you move to simplify your life in the first place?



How fast can you go up?

350 feet/minute
Average speed of elevators in condo buildings

800 feet/minute
Speed of elevators in newer highrise condo buildings

500 feet/minute to 1,600 feet/minute
Speed of elevators in Toronto office towers

Barbecue
Barbecuing on your balcony isn't banned in the Ontario Fire Code, but few condos allow it because of insurance costs. Then there are the stringent rules about moving barbecues and gas cylinders in the elevators. If you're allowed to use an electric barbecue, lucky you. Otherwise, head to your condo's common grilling area if you have one.

Fire safety

Fire rescue ladders only reach up to the 7th floor. Otherwise, firefighters must use the stairwells to get to residents. Helicopter rescue is dangerous and rarely used. Most buildings are:

- Designed with fire-resistant material.
- Have a water supply and fire hose cabinets on each floor.
- Have a PA system to guide residents during emergency.

Appearances
The right to air dry your laundry doesn't extend to apartments or condos, and condo rules may outlaw it anyway. Only those living on the ground may hang a clothesline in Ontario.

Common sense
If you live in a highrise, chances are someone lives below you. Throwing anything off the balcony, including cigarette butts, could seriously hurt someone.

Podiums
Considered an integral part of the city's urban design guidelines for tall buildings, podiums help maintain the scale of the street. In addition to height and width requirements, podiums should align with adjacent building facades and be parallel to the street.

Streetscapes
The city's urban design guidelines instruct developers to use streetscaping and landscaping elements such as trees, lighting, seating and public art to improve building facades, highlight architectural features, hide less attractive elements and provide shade around highrise buildings.

Retail
The trend is toward shops and services at street level. For many, the most important thing is a good coffee.

SOURCES: City of Toronto, Statistics Canada (census 2006), Emporis, SkyscraperPage.com, Tall Buildings Downtown Project, Davies Elevator Corp., Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Star Library

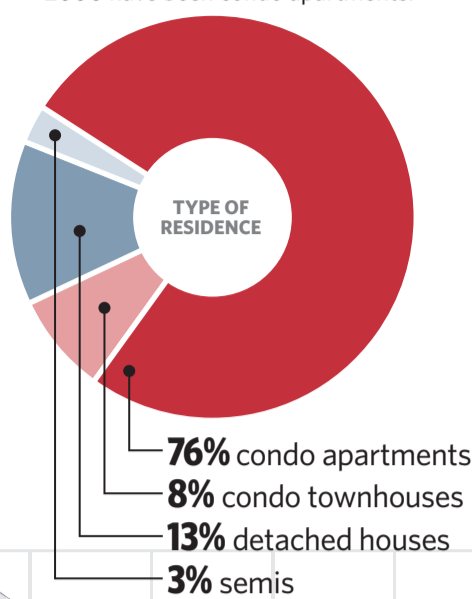
GRAPHIC DESIGN AND ILLUSTRATION BY BRIAN HUGHES/TORONTO STAR
RESEARCH AND GRAPHICS BY CATHERINE FARLEY
RESEARCH AND REPORTING BY NOOR JAVED, EDITED BY JOE RUBIN

The high life

Toronto's condominium boom is changing the way we live. In the 1960s, 99 per cent of single-family dwellings in the city were detached houses and semis. Today, 31 per cent of single-family dwellings are condominium apartments, and another 6 per cent are condo townhomes. Every year, more people are buying into the idea of a home in the sky, drawn by the prospect of hassle-free living and proximity to work. For others, condos are the only way of getting into a housing market that has yet to show signs of slowing down. And in the process, they are challenging long-held notions of privacy, community and personal space.

What sells

Three-quarters of new single-family dwellings purchased in Toronto since 2000 have been condo apartments:



AVERAGE PRICES IN DOWNTOWN CORE 3rd QUARTER, 2011

Bachelor: **\$235,370**
 One-bedroom: **\$328,085**
 One-bedroom+den: **\$367,663**
 Two-bedroom: **\$529,229**
 Three-bedroom: **\$1.17 million**

CONDO RENTALS IN DOWNTOWN CORE

19% Percentage of downtown condos that are rented
\$1,638: Average monthly rent for a one-bedroom condo



Living large ... and small

Toronto's tiniest condo sold this year is a mere 301 sq. ft. (left) — small enough to fit into a corner of the master suite of this year's largest condo, the 9,038 sq. ft. Four Seasons Penthouse (below), which is also the most expensive condo in the city. The smallest one, part of Regent Park's revitalization, was purchased for less than the posh condo will be paying in annual property taxes. Here's an inside look:

Location	Size	Sold for	Price/sq. Ft.	Property taxes*	Condo fees per month*	Rooms	Bathrooms	Showers	Balconies	Width of closet space	Interior doors	Fireplaces	Elevators opening into unit
SMALL Regent Park	301 sq. ft.	\$166,000	\$551	\$1,378	\$155	1	1	1	1	2 ft.	1	0	0
LARGE Yorkville	9,038 sq. ft.	\$28 million	\$3,098	\$232,400	\$7,000	11	6	4	4	110 ft.	40	3	4

*Estimated

Big vs. small

Welcome to the latest competition in the condo world: vying for the title of biggest, tallest or smallest. Here are the smallest and largest condos built or being planned:

STUDIOS

301 sq. ft. (shown above)
 Regent Park redevelopment (sold in 2011)

277 sq. ft.
 Karma Condo at Yonge and College Sts., scheduled for completion 2015

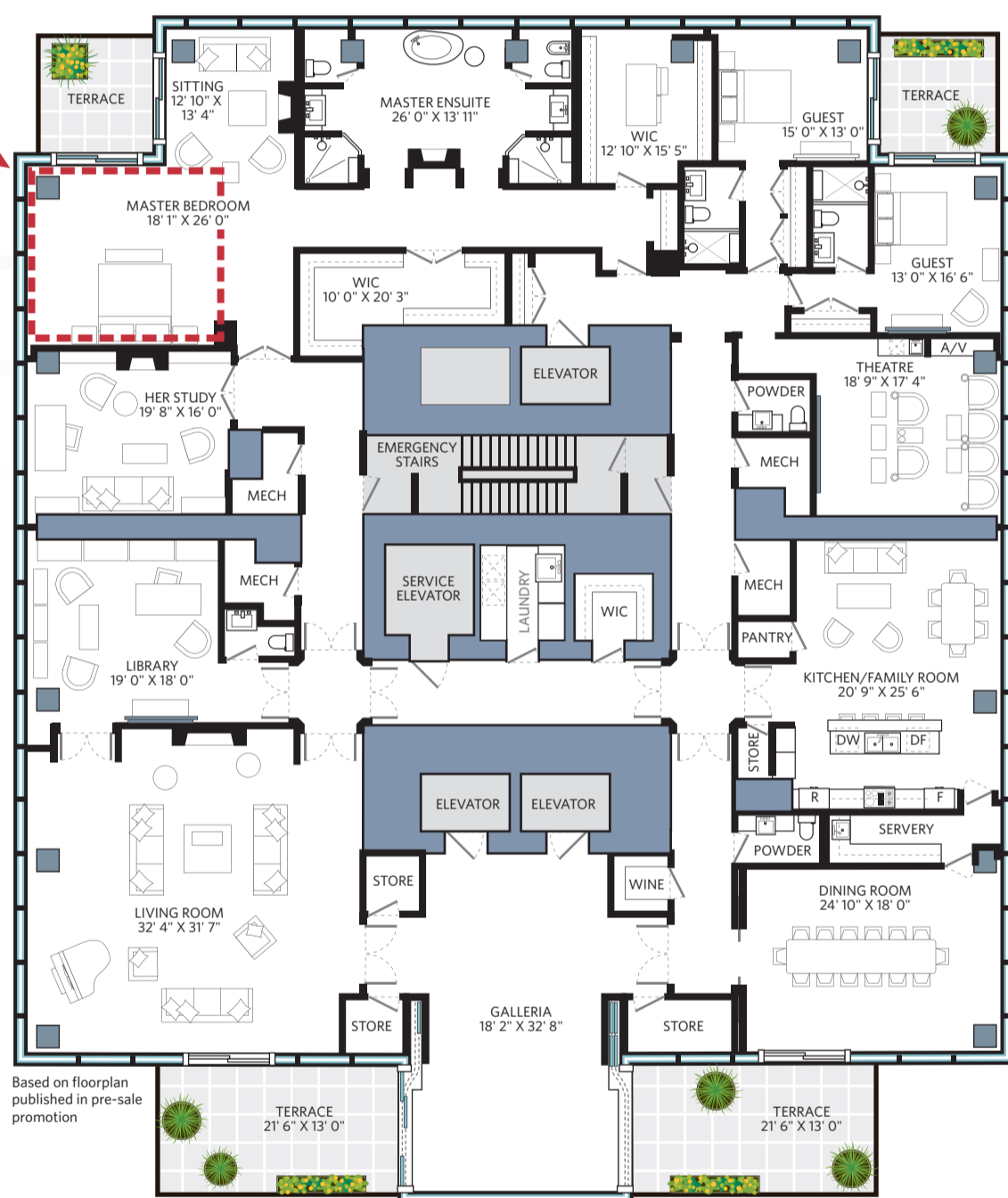
270 sq. ft.
 Canderel Residential DNA3 project on King St. W., slated to open in 2013

PENTHOUSES

11,370 sq. ft.
 Canderel's Aura project at Yonge and Gerrard Sts. (due in 2014)

10,820 sq. ft.
 Ritz-Carlton (sold in 2005)

9,038 sq. ft. (shown right)
 Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residences (sold in 2011)



Condo fees

In general, condo fees are monthly payments an owner makes to cover their share of the expenses for common elements. That usually includes:

- **Utilities:** heating, hydro, water and cable are covered in older buildings, but not in the newer ones, where each unit pays for what they use
- **Maintenance:** window cleaning, pest control, landscaping and general upkeep of the amenities
- **Professional fees:** pay for the manager/engineers/lawyers
- **Insurance**
- **Security services**
- **Reserve fund:** a fund set up to cover major expenses and repairs to the building, elevator, roof, balconies and parking garage

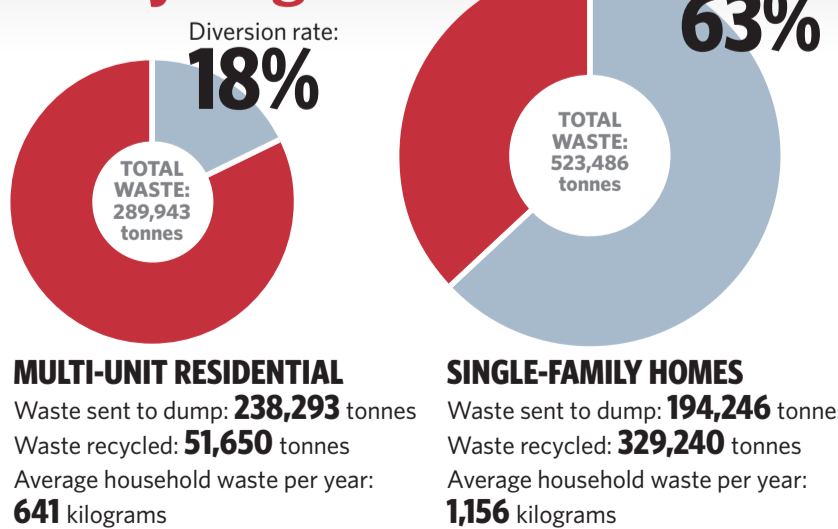
STICKER SHOCK

Condo developers must give new owners a disclosure statement with an estimate of expected common expenses for the first year, which makes up the maintenance or condo fees. Some keep the estimate under budget to reel in buyers and investors, so the fee can jump dramatically after the first year. Owners can sue if a cost wasn't disclosed upfront. Developers should disclose everything, but owners rarely read all the fine print.

Average condo fee in Toronto: \$0.40 to \$0.60 per sq. ft. or \$500 a month

Garbage and recycling

Recycling rates are lowest in highrises, where almost half the city's population lives. Three-quarters of multi-unit buildings use city garbage collection. To qualify, the building must participate in a recycling program. The average Toronto household produces 901 kg of waste per year, 47 per cent of which is recycled. Here's how household diversion rates compare:



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DAY 3: Next Sunday

View from the top

How will the city look and feel once the condo boom is over? Will these highrises co-exist happily with the communities around them?

TODAY

Condo living is changing the way we live and want to live. (Save this page to attach to next Sunday's part 3)

DAY 1: Last Sunday

Growing up, up, up

Toronto's highrise boom

Shrinking spaces

Would you rather have a three-bedroom condo in the heart of the city, or a house in the suburbs with a large backyard? The city plans to consider a policy next year that would require developers to allocate at least 10 per cent of their projects to three-bedroom condos. With almost no new family homes being built in the city, the hope is that bigger condos can fill a need for young families who want to move to Toronto. But developers say the demand isn't there from investors or families. City planners say the demand will come if the supply is there. Here's what the numbers say:

The average size of a resale condominium sold 10 years ago in the Toronto CMA:

1,052 sq. ft.

The average size of a resale condominium sold in 2011 in the Toronto CMA:

893 sq. ft.

In downtown Toronto, the average new unit:

749 sq. ft.

ONE-BEDROOMS BEING BUILT

2006: **48.1%**

2010: **58.6%**

TWO-BEDROOMS BEING BUILT

2006: **41.9%**

2010: **32.8%**

THREE-BEDROOMS VANISHING

Of the 13,000 new condominium suites launched in the first half of 2011 in the CMA, three-bedroom condos made up just:

1.2%

Of the 4,637 resale condominium units sold in the CMA in the second quarter of 2011, three-bedroom units made up just:

3.8%

These resale suites sold for the lowest percentage of list price among unit types, took the longest to sell and had an average monthly condo fee of:

\$827

Holiday decorations

Check with the condo board whether you can hang lights from the balcony or a wreath on the door. Prohibitions on what seems like a harmless attempt to be festive stem from the Ontario Fire Code.

Smells

Food odours, second-hand smoke and musty smells can be a problem. Blame the unit's ventilation system, corridor ventilation that pushes air into the apartment, or the exhaust systems in the kitchen and bathroom. Some ways to get rid of odours: ventilate the unit, seal areas joining the apartment to others and seal around doors.

Flying a kite

In Toronto, you cannot fly a kite within 25 metres of a tree, building or utility pole. So if you were allowed to fly a kite from a balcony ... get a long piece of string.

Snakes in a drain

Poisonous or dangerous pets are generally not allowed in condos for fear they may escape their cages. Residents in apartment buildings around the city have had snakes pop out of toilets, sinks and bathtubs.

Noise

This is the No. 1 complaint of living in close quarters and a guaranteed way to turn you into a condo pariah. So turn down the loud music and stop moving furniture or doing renovations at 11 p.m.

Fireworks

It may seem obvious but some condos explicitly forbid the use of fireworks and firecrackers in the unit or on the balcony. Just in case you were considering it.

Flags

In Ottawa, a private member's bill seeks to prevent condo boards from prohibiting displays of the Canadian flag. Most condos have rules restricting what can be displayed, often including flags and poles, based on aesthetics and liability issues.

Window covers

Floor-to-ceiling windows give you a fantastic view, but they may also give others a fantastic view of you. Some condos may ask for uniformity of window coverings, but most simply recommend some kind of coverage.

Balcony barnyard

Toronto bylaws forbid raising poultry for health reasons. So no chickens, ducks or geese allowed on the balcony.



Getting around

PARKING

A parking spot can add \$20,000 or more to the cost of your condo if you choose to get one. Some buyers forgo the option or rent theirs out.

TTC

In 2010, condo developers were required to give a year's supply of Metropasses to purchasers as a precursor to condo approval. The city cancelled the program earlier this year.

BIKES

For condos in the core, parking for cars is being replaced by storage space for bikes. One new condo won't offer parking at all, but has space for 300 bicycles and a car-share fleet.

Most expensive parking spot

PURCHASE PRICE FOR PARKING SPACE

Four Seasons (additional parking space)

\$100,000

Florian in Yorkville

\$75,000

36 Hazelton

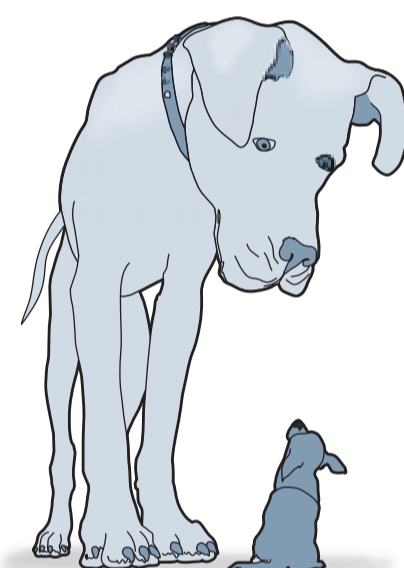
\$65,000

Yorkville Plaza

\$65,000

Chaz

\$60,000



Pets

They are like family members for most people, but depending on where you live, your beloved pet may not be welcome. The Landlord and Tenant Act prevents you or your pet from being evicted from a rental apartment, unless the landlord can prove the pet is a nuisance, presents a danger or causes other tenants a severe allergic reaction.

But if you own or rent a condo, it may be a different story. Under the Condominium Act, a condo board can make rules for the "safety, security or welfare of the owners and of the property" and for the "purpose of preventing unreasonable interference with the use and enjoyment of the common elements and of other units." Which means if puppy dearest enjoys peeing on the hallway carpet and can't refrain from barking at all times of the day, train him quickly or get ready for a notice from your condo board.

In most condo highrises, one pet is allowed — except for venomous animals that can escape and later appear in a neighbour's apartment unannounced. There is no explicit weight restriction unless set out in the condo rules. In the past, courts have capped the weight for dogs at 25 pounds, reasoning that larger animals in the close confines of a hallway, elevators and stairwells if a fire evacuation is necessary.

Furniture

Downsizing: Smaller living spaces require scaled-down furniture. Aim for a sofa 80 inches wide or less, and 31 to 34 inches deep.

Now you see it, now you don't: Dual purpose is the only way to go when you have so little space. Sofa beds, ottoman sleepers, storage ottomans and Murphy beds help squeeze the most out of precious square feet.