

An overview of gating in Canada

In 2002, we began a national study to try to identify and catalogue gated developments in Canada. Gated developments are almost exclusively on private roads, since Canadian municipalities rarely agree to close public roads to traffic. As new development increasingly employs private roads, we can expect the opportunities for gating to grow.

We first conducted an email survey of planners in towns and cities across Canada to determine whether they knew of local gated projects, and to collect policies dealing with gating. From 128 planners contacted between January and fall of 2003, 78 replied (response rate = 63%). Only nine municipalities reported that they had explicit planning or other policies to address gating. Concurrently, we launched a web search to find properties and developments marketed as gated, secure, enclosed, or restricted entry. This enabled us to find new developments, but proved less successful in tracking down older gated projects.

Based on the first phase of the inventory and responses to the email survey, we conducted field studies in British Columbia, Ontario, and Nova Scotia: the first two provinces had the highest number of gated projects, while the third was readily accessible to the research team. In 2003 and early 2004, we conducted personal semi-structured interviews with approximately 30 planners, developers, council members, and residents' association officers in study communities in those provinces. Field visits in several cities allowed us to document the way enclaves fit within the landscape. Finally, we did a follow-up study of fire and emergency service providers in British Columbia, Alberta and Nova Scotia.

As of March 2004, we identified 314 approved or built gated developments in Canada (Table 1). British Columbia had 228, or 73% of the total. We found 49 in Ontario, 21 in Alberta, 8 in Saskatchewan, 7 in Nova Scotia, and one in Manitoba. We did not locate projects in the other provinces (although subsequent anecdotal evidence collected points to enclaves in Quebec and Newfoundland as well). Because we did not have the resources to conduct a comprehensive inventory, we estimated that the projects we found may represent about one-third of the total gated projects in Canada. With the proliferation of communities of town-house condominium projects on private streets (or "shared access driveways") in many fast growing parts of Canada, the potential for creating additional gated enclaves remains significant.

An overview of gating in Canada

Table 1: Documented gated community projects in Canada (2004)

Province	Total projects	500 units +	With guards	Video surveillance	“Adult” projects	“Senior” projects
British Columbia	228	3	5	5	44	36
Alberta	21	3	1	2	2	2
Saskatchewan	8	-	-	-	-	-
Manitoba	1	-	-	1	-	1
Ontario	49	8	9	5	10	7
Nova Scotia	7	-	-	2	1	1
Canada	314	14	15	15	57	47

Note: “Adult” communities discourage children: some suggest 19+ years, others may say 25+. We have classified those that use the word “Seniors” or have age limits over 40 as “Seniors” projects.