

# greenways • public ways



Final Report  
City of Vancouver  
Urban Landscape Task Force  
May 1992

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*It's time to stop thinking of our cities as one place and nature as someplace else. Our urban centres and edges host the vibrant variety of our culture. We should not have to think of them as places to escape. Bring on the green spaces, we say: the pocket gardens, the community parks, the river corridors, and the tree-lined boulevards. For those serious about saving the environment, the cities are a logical place to start.*

Trust for Public Land

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*To Vancouver City Council; thank you for establishing the Urban Landscape Task Force and supporting our work!*

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*Moura Quayle*

Moura Quayle, Chair  
Vancouver, May 5, 1992



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary .....	i
Terms We Use .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER I: URBAN LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER II: OUR URBAN LANDSCAPE VALUES .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CHAPTER III: ESSENTIAL ACTIONS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
1. Adopt Eight Urban Landscape Principles for Decision-Making .....	16
2. Establish the Vancouver Urban Greenway .....	19
3. Celebrate Our Legacies .....	23
4. Prepare a Public Realm Plan .....	24
5. Support the Draft Management Plan for Parks .....	25
6. Reclaim Local Streets for Bicycles .....	28
7. Develop a Street Strategy .....	29
8. Undertake an Urban Landscape Inventory .....	31
9. Prepare an Ecological Management Plan .....	32
10. Promote the Urban Forest .....	33
11. Adopt Ecological Performance Standards .....	35
12. Promote Urban Ecological Literacy .....	37
13. Cultivate a City of Gardens .....	39
14. Reinforce a City of Urban Villages .....	41
15. Create an Urban Landscape Communication Strategy .....	42
<b>CHAPTER IV: URBAN LANDSCAPE THEMES .....</b>	<b>45</b>
Vancouver Vision: Year 2010 .....	46
A. GREENWAY CONNECTIONS .....	49
B. TRULY PUBLIC PLACES .....	55
C. DEMOCRATIC STREETS .....	60
D. ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY .....	63
E. NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT WORK .....	67

<b>CHAPTER V:</b>	
<b>GIFTS AND TOOLS .....</b>	<b>73</b>
A. GIFTS .....	74
The Vancouver Urban Laboratory	
Vancouver--A Sustainable City?	
Civic and Sacred Places	
Linking Vancouver to the Sea and Sky	
Sensing Vancouver	
Festivals and Celebrations	
Marking Time	
City Nights	
Chalk Talk	
Urban Walks and Urban Races	
City of Gardens	
Playing on Common Ground	
Green Architecture	
B. TOOLS .....	87
Heritage Landscapes	
Urban Street Life I	
Urban Street Life II	
Responsive Incremental Development	
Neighbourhood Stories	
Places for Information, Imagination, Participation	
Ecological Literacy in the Urban Landscape	
Considering Nature in the City	
Measuring Ecological Health	
Cleaning Up Urban Runoff	
History of a Block	
Citizen Forester	
The Litigation Landscape	
Some Legal Tools for Protecting Land	
<b>CHAPTER VI:</b>	
<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>APPENDIX .....</b>	<b>105</b>

## Greenways • Public Ways Executive Summary

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Vancouver City Council appointed the Urban Landscape Task Force in August 1991 to improve the understanding of the value of the urban landscape and to recommend how to manage, protect and enhance it. This work fits into the context of past, current and future City initiatives. The focus of this Task Force is the interface of our built and natural environments; how people connect with nature and how the urban landscape works or does not work as an organizing and vital system in the City.

The urban landscape is the outside inside the City. We experience it every day in school yards, lanes, back yards, parking lots, streets, downtown plazas, beaches, marshes, ravines, woods, and community gardens. Birds, insects, fish, reptiles, plants and mammals contribute to the uniqueness of the urban landscape.

These elements shape the landscape through interconnected systems, largely in response to the way people change the City. Circulation systems and open-space systems provide significant organizing structures for the City. All of these systems need to be considered in the context of emerging ecological concerns, the social and cultural diversity of the City, and the region's rapid population growth and urban development.



### Essential Actions

Essential Actions are the Task Force's recommendations for achieving long-term economic, social and environmental benefits from the City's landscape legacy. A framework of eight principles for urban landscape decision-making is provided as a fundamental requirement. These principles are then reinforced in the remaining fourteen Essential Actions.

## Greenways • Public Ways: Executive Summary

### 1. ADOPT URBAN LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION-MAKING

The following eight principles are touchstones for decisions which affect the urban landscape, and which will, when adopted, provide a reference point for more consistent and principled decisions in these matters.

- 1.1 **Recognize legacies.** Our urban legacies are the natural and introduced landscape as modified from generation to generation. Maintain and enhance Vancouver's existing urban landscape.
- 1.2 **Recognize diversity and balance.** The diversity of Vancouver's urban landscape systems and elements, both built and natural, should be respected and promoted.
- 1.3 **Care for and respect the environment.** Clean water, clean air and biodiversity are basic requirements for a healthy urban landscape. Consider the environment equally with other factors in planning the "sustainable city".
- 1.4 **Make connections.** Access and connections to nature, parks, and special sacred and civic spaces should be available to all citizens in work, play and learning. Provide opportunities to experience the richness of detail on foot, by bicycle, by wheelchair or by public transit.
- 1.5 **Create a community.** Communities are groups of people with shared values and spirit, and a willingness to help each other. Recognize and promote communities and neighbourhoods for their unique contribution to defining the character and diversity of Vancouver's urban landscape.
- 1.6 **Encourage innovation.** The urban landscape is in a constant state of change, and people need help to understand this. Provide for flexibility and innovation in the planning and design of the urban landscape; let the unplanned happen occasionally.
- 1.7 **Be fair and equitable.** Equity is geographic, demographic and intergenerational. Provide everyone with fair opportunities to access and enjoy different types, sizes and experiences of open space.
- 1.8 **Make informed decisions.** Literacy and understanding are critical for effective decisions. Make current and balanced information on Vancouver's urban landscape accessible to all citizens, decision-makers and planners.

## Greenways • Public Ways: Executive Summary

### 2. ESTABLISH THE VANCOUVER URBAN GREENWAY

Establish as a priority the Vancouver Urban Greenway, by creating a Greenway Trust and establishing Greenway linkages throughout the city.

Greenways are corridors that link open spaces and invite city-dwellers to experience the "outside inside the city", connecting neighbourhoods, downtown, schools and other important public places. The Greenway linkages would include a completed waterfront walkway system, ecological reserves such as the Grandview Cut, transportation corridors with bicycle and pedestrian paths, as well as various street linkages. The Greenway Trust would be a private body with diverse representations from private and public interest groups and agencies.

### 3. CELEBRATE OUR LEGACIES

Authorize a program and charge staff to encourage the protection and celebration of our natural and built landscape legacies, including active legacies such as festivals, by identifying what is "uniquely Vancouver", and by providing for and encouraging citizen involvement and donations.

### 4. PREPARE A PUBLIC REALM PLAN

Recognize the importance of understanding the public realm, which is those lands and resources owned by or held on behalf of the public, and which is accessible and free to use. Provide the Greenway Trust with the responsibility to coordinate a "Public Realm Plan", identifying the relationships of public lands and facilities.

### 5. SUPPORT THE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR PARKS

Place greater emphasis on the natural landscape and on high-quality park design, and support parks and open space acquisition, especially for park-deficient neighbourhoods. The Task Force commends the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation on its Draft Management Plan for Parks.

### 6. RECLAIM LOCAL STREETS FOR BICYCLES

Examine the current street budget which is vehicle-based and use budget re-allocations to exponentially increase funds for streets designed to include cyclists. A policy is needed to provide for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles on our streets, in ways which are safe and effective.

**7. DEVELOP A STREET STRATEGY**

The Task Force recommends that Council develop a "Street Strategy" for the City of Vancouver that classifies and provides guidelines for streets designed for vehicles, utilities, and people.

**8. UNDERTAKE AN URBAN LANDSCAPE INVENTORY**

Assign to the Greenway Trust the responsibility to coordinate an inventory of the major biophysical and cultural aspects of Vancouver's urban landscape, including sacred and civic spaces, and environmentally sensitive areas, and to maintain such an inventory as a publicly accessible computer information system.

**9. PREPARE AN ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Assign to the Greenway Trust the responsibility to coordinate the development of an ecological management plan and to implement the protection of environmentally significant areas.

**10. PROMOTE THE URBAN FOREST**

Charge staff to develop a ten-year strategy to increase the amount and health of the urban forest, including master planning and public involvement.

**11. ADOPT ECOLOGICAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

Maintain the ecological health of the city by establishing a program to monitor ecological health and by adopting ecological performance standards as municipal law.

**12. PROMOTE URBAN ECOLOGICAL LITERACY**

Establish a strategy to improve general literacy about urban ecology through partnerships with the School Board, the Park Board, the private sector and community groups, and through a central information resource centre.

**13. CULTIVATE THE CITY OF GARDENS**

Adopt a policy of Vancouver as the "City of Gardens" and protect and enhance garden space through by-laws, standards, development levies and awards.

**14. REINFORCE THE CITY OF URBAN VILLAGES**

Adopt a policy of urban villages connected by the Vancouver Urban Greenway, by mapping the potential for village centres and using zoning to encourage mixed land uses.

**15. CREATE AN URBAN LANDSCAPE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

Develop a strategy to facilitate communication within and between City Hall and the public about urban landscape issues.



Urban Landscape Themes

A number of themes run through the Essential Actions and many visions of Vancouver's future urban landscape. The five themes which provide background to the principles are:

- A. Greenway Connections
- B. Truly Public Places
- C. Democratic Streets
- D. Ecological Priority
- E. Neighbourhoods that Work



## Gifts and Tools

In the course of our work the Task Force was inspired by ideas which we included in our report as gifts to share with others, and as tools for individual actions and institutional responses to add to the Essential Actions. These ideas include:

### Gifts

The Vancouver Urban Laboratory  
Vancouver--A Sustainable City?  
Civic and Sacred Places  
Linking Vancouver to the Sea and Sky  
Sensing Vancouver  
Festivals and Celebrations  
Marking Time  
City Nights  
Chalk Talk  
Urban Walks and Urban Races  
City of Gardens  
Playing on Common Ground  
Green Architecture

### Tools

Heritage Landscapes  
Urban Street Life I & II  
Responsive Incremental Development  
Neighbourhood Stories  
Places for Information, Imagination,  
Participation  
Ecological Literacy in the Urban  
Landscape  
Considering Nature in the City  
Measuring Ecological Health  
Cleaning Up Urban Runoff  
History of a Block  
Citizen Forester  
The Litigation Landscape  
Some Legal Tools For Protecting Land

## Conclusion

The work of the Task Force tended to focus on balancing competing interests. However, paying for the balancing is also critical. The Task Force recognizes that a healthy and vibrant economy is needed for qualitative improvements in the environment, and that innovative and comprehensive public and individual contributions and budget will be necessary in the years ahead. Yet in a knowledge-based, high-tech, global economy, the quality of the urban environment supported by responsible economic policies will encourage business and workers to move to Vancouver. In addition, the Task Force expects that the recommendations to follow in this report will provide real long-term cost effectiveness for public works, and a lower relative burden on the taxpayer. But this is a report of ideas and as ideas change so do economic models. Much of what is discussed here was considered "external" to urban economics not so long ago. Things are changing.

Thanks and credit to Mayor Gordon Campbell for his foresight in establishing the Task Force, to Council for supporting the idea with funding and information, to City Hall, to our staff and volunteers and to the fifty-three groups and everyone who participated.

## Terms We Use:

These key terms are used frequently in this report.

### GREENWAY

A Greenway is a linear public corridor that connects parks, nature reserves, cultural features, historic sites, neighbourhoods and retail areas, often along either natural corridors like river or ocean fronts or along rail rights-of-way or streets shared for transportation use.

### NATURAL LANDSCAPE

A natural landscape in the city is one which is "green" and "soft" but is not ornamental with mowed lawns and highly maintained edges. It comes as close as possible to being a natural ecosystem in the city with native vegetation and animal habitats.

### PRIVATE REALM

The Private Realm is land that is privately owned--residential, commercial or industrial properties that are owned by individuals or corporations.

### PROGRAMMING

Programming is the process of deciding what will happen in a place--the activities, the functions and the experiences that should be provided through the design and planning process. An urban landscape program, like a TV guide, gives you a sense of what might happen in a certain place at a certain time.

### PUBLIC REALM

The Public Realm is what the public owns in the city. It is "open twenty-four hours a day to everyone" and it doesn't cost to use (other than our taxes). The public realm is roughly one-half of the land area in the city and includes our parks, public golf courses, streets, easements, Hydro rights of way, water, sidewalks, lanes, school lands, beaches, and other public institutional lands.

### SACRED PLACES

Sacred Places are those which occupy a special meaning in the emotional and spiritual lives of citizens. Places such as Mountain View cemetery, Victory Square, Siwash Rock and Deadman's Island (in Coal Harbour) are examples of sacred places in Vancouver.

### URBAN FOREST

The urban forest is the trees and vegetation in and around the urban landscape.

### URBAN LANDSCAPE

The Urban Landscape is the "outside inside the city". It is both public and private open space, including school yards, streets, lanes, backyards, front yards, beaches, sidewalks, boulevards, left-over space, vacant lots, streams, parking lots, building plazas, parks, cemeteries and community gardens.

### WOONERF

Woonerfs are streets designed primarily for residents, though shared with cars, where traffic rules give pedestrians priority.

# CHAPTER I: URBAN LANDSCAPE CONNECTIONS

The urban landscape is a mirror of our values--our basic principles and how we act upon them. It is formed by the interaction of built and natural environments, and by the ways we move about within this setting.

Vancouver's public and private nature is facing changes and challenges at an ever-increasing rate. Citizens and City politicians share concerns about Vancouver's future, especially its natural heritage and public places. There is a sense of pride about what Vancouver is and what we love about it. But there is also a sense of concern that what we dislike is getting out of control.

In response to these concerns, Mayor Gordon Campbell and the City Council established the Urban Landscape Task Force in August of 1991. The Task Force was given a two-fold mandate: (1) to find out what people in Vancouver value about the urban landscape, and (2) to recommend how best to manage, protect and enhance the urban landscape.

The Task Force recognized critical challenges related to the region's growing population; this growth increases the need to balance competing interests and search for common ground. How we resolve these challenges will have profound affects on our urban landscape. If positive actions are not soon forthcoming, the very reasons for living in Vancouver may be lost.

The work of the Task Force tended to focus on the challenge of balancing competing interests. However, who pays for it is also critical. The Task Force recognizes that a healthy and vibrant economy is needed for qualitative improvements in the environment, and that innovative and comprehensive public and individual contributions and budget will be necessary in the years ahead. Yet in a knowledge-based, high-tech, global economy, the quality of the urban environment supported by responsible economic policies will encourage business and workers to move to Vancouver. In addition, the Task Force expects that the recommendations to follow in this report will provide real long-term cost effectiveness for public works, and a lower relative burden on the taxpayer. But this is a



*View of city from Jericho*

report of ideas and as ideas change so do economic models. Much of what is discussed here was considered "external" to urban economics not so long ago. Things are changing.

To establish the framework of values from which we developed the underlying principles of this report, the Task Force held open houses, small group meetings, the City in View Symposium and a public meeting. The public's ideas and concerns are essential to this report.

The public told the Task Force that Vancouver's urban landscape is very much a part of their lives. Moving through the city by car, bus, wheelchair, bicycle or on foot, people comment on the greenness, the variety and the beauty of this "city of gardens". In our homes we value places to grow plants--from the window-box in the West End apartment, to the intensely cultivated and productive front yard in Strathcona, to the lovingly tended flower gardens in South Vancouver.

*The city is a granite garden, composed of many smaller gardens, set in a garden world. Parts of the granite garden are cultivated intensively, but the greater part is unrecognized and neglected.*

Anne Whiston Spirn

But the people of Vancouver also live urban lives in the public realm. More and more, streets are used for socializing; multi-cultural areas with interesting aromas and tastes are tempting; and generally, we have the potential to develop a diverse public culture in what could be described as an urban landscape system.



*Alberta Wheat Pool*

## The Urban Landscape As A System

Think of the urban landscape as a combination of dynamic, overlapping systems.

These urban landscape systems include a series of elements that are interconnected and important to each other. Every day we experience elements of urban landscape systems, like school yards, streets, lanes, back yards, streams, parking lots, building plazas, parks, cemeteries and community gardens. The urban landscape is shaped by the way these parts fit together and by the way people change the environment of the city.

Three of the many systems shaping the urban landscape are social systems, ecological systems and management or institutional systems. Social systems are about people--their activities and expectations of the urban landscape, particularly as reflected in public places and neighbourhoods. Ecosystems include creatures other than people, as well as natural features and processes that support human life--even in the city, where few areas are truly "natural" as compared to pristine wilderness. And management or institutional systems are the ways we plan and govern our use of the urban landscape.

The challenge of Urban Landscape Task Force is to find ways to keep urban landscape systems in balance and reinforce connections with nature and the public realm.

### Reinforcing Our Connections With Nature

The theme of the "natural" urban landscape was important throughout our public process and also central to our mandate. People sense the importance of their personal connection to nature. Some parks bring people closer to nature through experiences of places like the water's edge—notably the Stanley Park Seawall and our beaches. Especially with increasing population pressures, people want better connections to nature to balance their lives.



*We abuse the land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.*

Aldo Leopold

Vancouverites value the natural landscape, including the legacies of those who were here before us, but urban development has often neglected this fundamental value. In developing land, it is easy to lose touch with the topography of the city, with our natural vegetation and the animals that find their homes there, and with the natural shoreline along ocean and river.

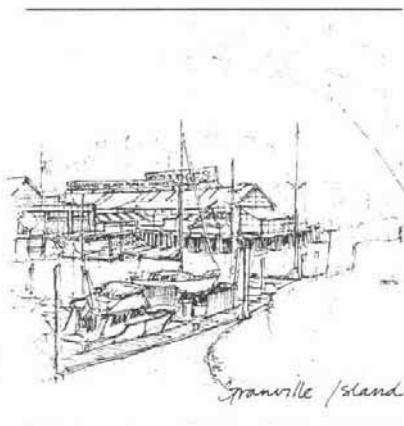
Part of living in a great city is being able to experience great contrasts and diversity. People should be able to experience the pleasures of following the ridge-line of the Vancouver peninsula-taking in the views to the north of the working harbour and mountains, and the views to the south of the Fraser River delta and port.

In addition, we should be able to follow streams like Still Creek as a "headwater" of Burnaby Lake and eventually fish them again. We should experience a diversity of connections between ourselves and nature.

### Reinforcing Public Realm Connections

Vancouver's greenness is due to contributions from both the public and private realm. Approximately one-half of Vancouver's urban landscape is publicly-owned—the "public realm", and one-half is in private ownership—the "private realm".

Recent development brings enormous pressure on the public realm. Energy, staff and resources have been focused in managing the private realm with the public realm taking the back seat. In spite of this, some improvements have occurred in the public realm. New waterfront walks, Granville Island, revitalized streets and historic districts are a positive legacy. However, on balance, the process of planning for the public realm has not been purposeful enough.



Vancouverites are thankful to the early visionary citizens of Vancouver who made some critical moves to provide a public urban landscape legacy, for example through establishing Stanley Park and Jericho Park. Yet, most of these historic gestures were not the result of any planning process. Since the Bartholomew Plan of 1927-28, people in Vancouver have not had an articulated vision for the public realm. The Bartholomew Plan included ideas for major streets and "pleasure drives", transit connections, the harbour, civic art, and building "beautiful bridges", to name a few gestures which have helped to "structure" our city.

Lewis Mumford, famed urban scholar, suggested that there are only two ways to structure a city and make connections—through a city's streets and transportation networks, and through its open spaces such as parks, plazas, waterfronts and other public places. The public realm, as expressed through circulation and open space systems, effectively represents a fundamental, organizing structure for the city.

In this report, the Task Force proposes ways to improve connections between people and nature through greater attention to the public realm.

### The Urban Landscape In Context

Our mandate is directed to landscape systems in the context of studies by other agencies and task forces.

"Clouds of Change", an important initiative of Council in 1990, dealt with atmospheric pollution. So while air quality is critical to the urban landscape, we did not make specific recommendations on this topic.

Similarly, the Safer City Task Force is currently investigating aspects of safety in the city. Again, safety is an important component of the urban landscape but we have excluded specific safety recommendations.

Other current city initiatives, like bicycle planning and the "Ready or Not?" program on aging, address issues which are very significant to the urban landscape. We have attempted to relate to their themes, but not repeat their content.

At the Greater Vancouver regional level, "Green Zone" planning, and plans for solid waste reduction, air quality improvement, and effective transportation are all on-going. While we have not comprehensively addressed regional issues, we emphasize the importance of viewing and analysing the issues in this report in the context of the region.

Looking ahead, we anticipate that Vancouver's "City Plan" initiative will complement, and we hope benefit from, the work of the Urban Landscape Task Force, just as this task force has benefited from previous

projects. This report provides an opportunity to increase public literacy of the urban landscape, and is intended as a resource for citizens, staff and councillors to inform City planning processes.

In addition to current and upcoming initiatives, previous studies provide important ideas and proposals relevant to the urban landscape. These studies include:

- ▶ Draft Management Plan (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 1991)
- ▶ Urban Reforestation (Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 1991)
- ▶ Street Tree Plan (for Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 1990)
- ▶ Creating Our Future (GVRD, 1990) and GVRD Regional Strategic Plan
- ▶ Clouds of Change (Task Force on Atmospheric Change, City of Vancouver, 1990)
- ▶ Vancouver Views Study (for City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1988)
- ▶ Urban Amenities Study (City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1987)
- ▶ Vancouver Plan: The City's Strategy for Managing Change (City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1986)
- ▶ Vancouver Coreplan (City of Vancouver Planning Department, 1983)
- ▶ Goals for Vancouver (City of Vancouver Planning Commission, 1980)
- ▶ Livable Region Strategy (GVRD, 1975)
- ▶ Bartholomew Plan (City of Vancouver, 1928)



Fraser River foreshore

#### What to Expect in this Report

Chapter I: Urban Landscape Connections, introduces the Task Force's focus and the context for its work.

Chapter II: Our Urban Landscape Values, is based on public input received by the task force.

Chapter III: Essential Actions, includes the bulk of the Task Force report and recommendations. The Essential Actions are guided by eight principles for decision-making.

Chapter IV: Urban Landscape Themes, supports the Essential Actions with further information on the themes of the five categories.

Chapter V: Gifts and Tools, offers ideas for further action and inspiration on the urban landscape.

Chapter VI: Conclusion.

## CHAPTER II: OUR URBAN LANDSCAPE VALUES

Vancouver has a strong urban landscape legacy which has been passed from generation to generation. The City's landscape today results from decades of settlement by many different cultures, tracing back to the aboriginal peoples' careful stewardship of the land.

The urban landscape reflects what we value--an ever-changing expression of what we believe is good and worthy over that which is ignored or worthless.

People's contributions to the Task Force on values and preferences for the landscape can help build a collective vision for the future of the city. We received questionnaire responses and submissions and listened to comments during our meetings and open houses. The Task Force senses that the views expressed likely reflect a good cross-section of opinions of Vancouver residents. The challenge is to build on these values and find balanced solutions to issues of growth and change.

This chapter summarizes what people told us about what they value and what they don't like about Vancouver's landscape. Where relevant, comparisons with previous studies--Goals for Vancouver, 1980; Vancouver Coreplan, 1983; The Vancouver Plan, 1986; and The Urban Amenities Study, 1987--are made. This comparison gives some idea of the consistency or change in our priorities for

the urban landscape over the past 15 years. Ideas on priorities for change have been integrated into the Essential Actions in Chapter III.



Siwash Rock

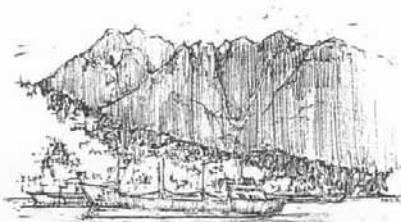
## WHAT'S SPECIAL TO US?

Overall, questionnaire responses show that much of what makes Vancouver special lies in its setting, especially the natural surroundings. Looking inwards, people pay most attention to natural features, although diversity and neighbourhood character are important. While people like the expanse of the natural surroundings, they also enjoy the small scale, "friendly" feeling of residential areas. For specific favourite places--civic, sacred and multi-cultural--identified by Vancouverites, see the map on pages 10 and 11. Following is a detailed description of what people told us they value.

### Vancouver's Setting

People treasure Vancouver's setting, which some claim is what makes us a "world class city." The waterways and North Shore mountains are appreciated as a striking backdrop to the downtown towers and for their own scenic value. Views of nature provide some people with a "sense of restfulness" that is a welcome relief from the intensity of urban life.

Previous studies show that Vancouverites have placed a high value on the aesthetics of the city's natural setting--especially the views of mountains and oceans--for some time.



Associated with this setting, people like the contrasts where urban areas meet water and mountains--the mix of built and natural components is dramatic. Access to the waterfront is very important. While beaches are obviously popular places, people also appreciate the "unaltered", like below Point Grey Road, and the working waterfront of the Fraser River and parts of False Creek.

### The Natural Environment

The city's mix of natural assets, appreciated first for its beauty, is also cherished for the way it connects the city with nature. People like the idea that the wilderness lies on the city's doorstep.

People value Vancouver's coastal climate for the moisture, the sea winds and the lighting effects it provides, as well as for the associated year-round outdoor opportunities. People consistently identify the "greenness" that results from this climate as special to Vancouver.

Vegetation is widely appreciated in all its forms: green plazas downtown, the landscape of gas stations and other businesses, flowering plants in private yards, remnant rainforests in large parks, fruit trees, wild blackberry bushes, English formal gardens, and of course the trees lining streets and boulevards. Trees, or more generally, the "urban forest," are the most valued individual component of the urban landscape.

The city's vegetation is valued in part for the habitat it provides for birds and wildlife, from herons and eagles to skunks and raccoons. Many Vancouverites especially appreciate pockets of "wild" habitat around the city such as the Grandview Cut and the Musqueam Marsh. The value of the natural environment for its ecological functions was not mentioned in previous reports.

The special greenness of the city is epitomized in parks, from the large forested areas to small green spaces in heavily urbanized areas. The smaller parks are valued because they place green space within walking distance of where people live and work.



Chinatown

Convenience of transportation is also important. People value the Skytrain and like areas where shopping and other amenities are accessible to pedestrians.

### Neighbourhood Character

People relish the distinctive character of many neighbourhoods in Vancouver, especially those associated with the city's cultural diversity and urban heritage. "Neighbourhood fabric" is supported by community centres and by commercial zones where shopkeepers recognize their regular customers. Community gardens in Strathcona play a similar focusing role.

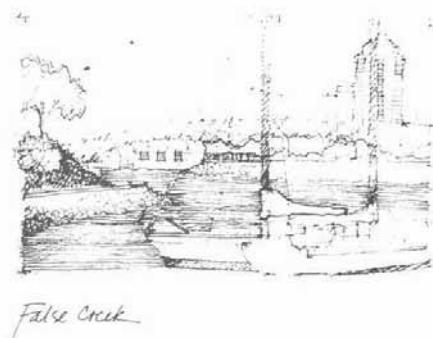
Low-density neighbourhoods with predominantly single family housing and clusters of older buildings such as Shaughnessy and areas of the East Side are special to Vancouverites. People use words like "low-profile," "human scale," "lack of high-rises," "people-oriented" and "friendly" to describe their favourite neighbourhoods.

Once again, past studies show that the unique character of Vancouver neighbourhoods has been consistently valued.

Previous studies show that general greenness, parks and open spaces, have long been important to Vancouverites. Access to green areas has also been consistently valued, and some reports reflect an appreciation for variety in types and uses of green spaces.

### Connections

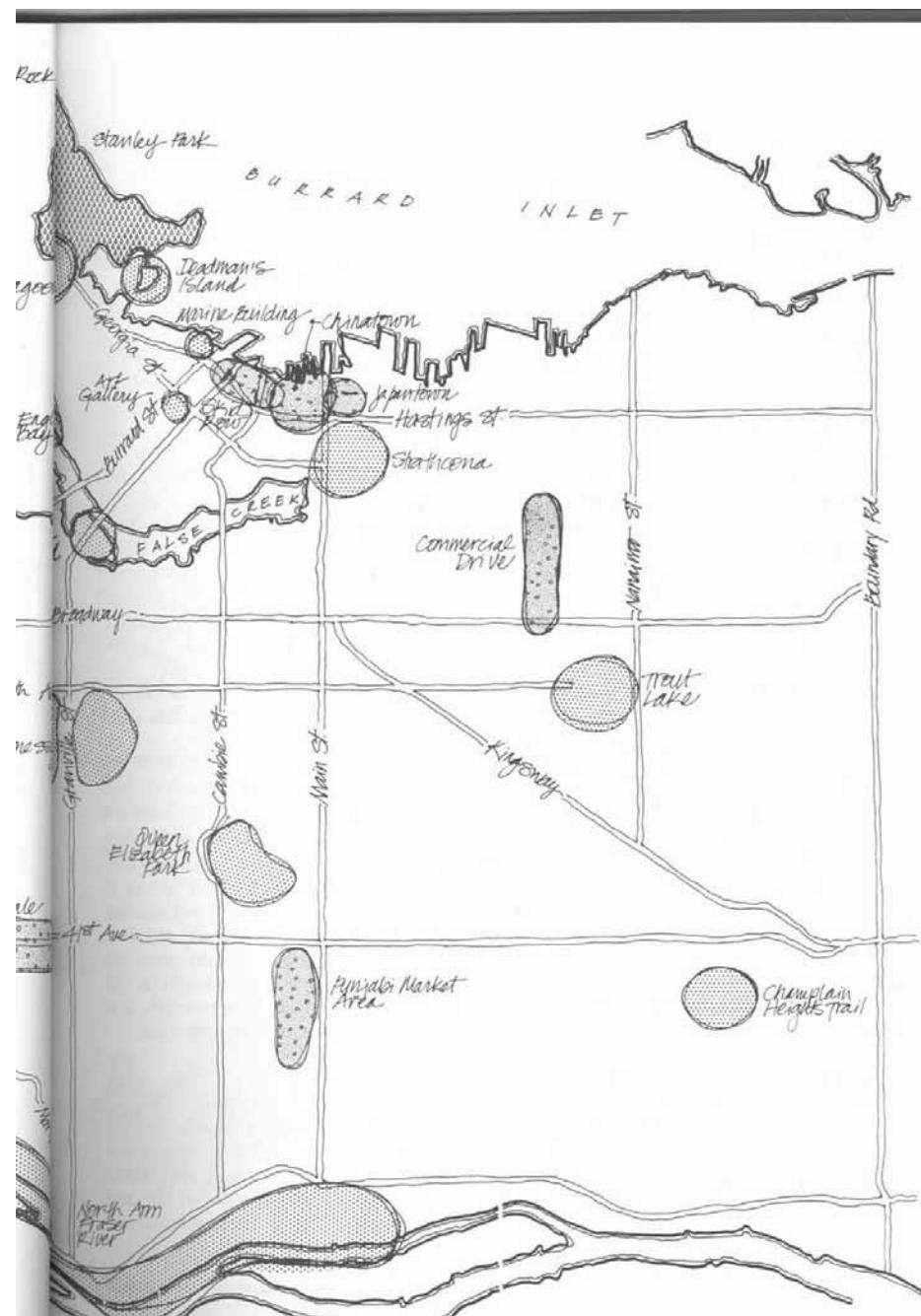
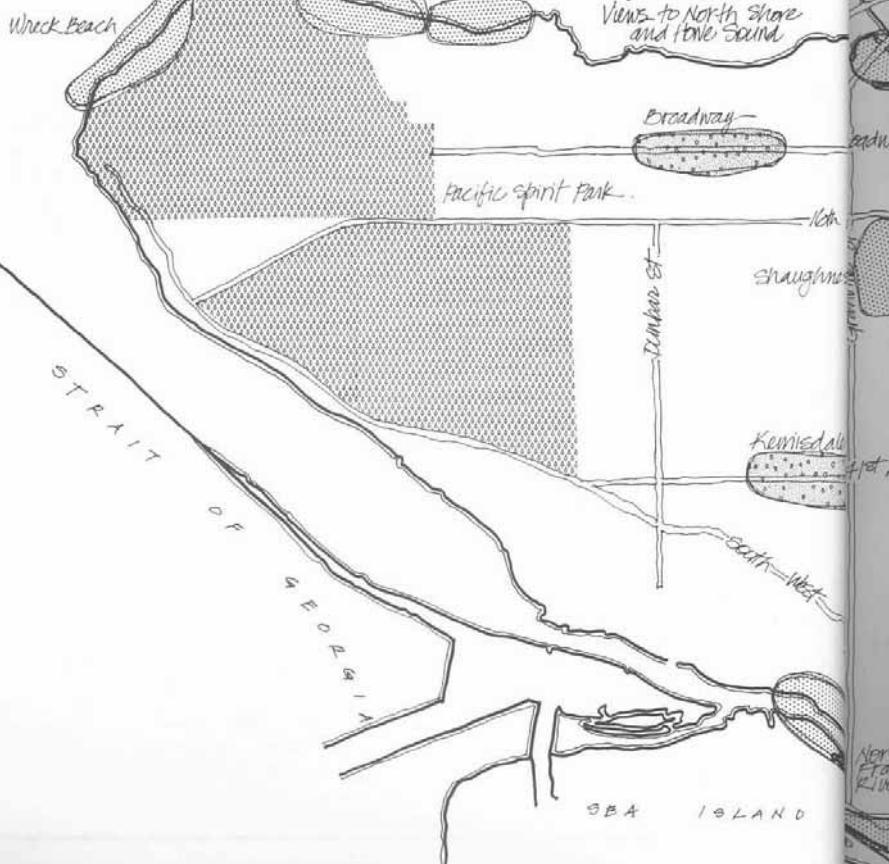
The pathways of Stanley Park and False Creek are amongst people's favourite places. Past studies show that this appreciation is not new. Walkways and bike paths stand out as treasured access routes in relation to roadways. People are pleased that the city has avoided having freeways through it.



False Creek

City of Vancouver  
URBAN LANDSCAPE TASK FORCE

SOME Favourite  
CIVIC, SACRED AND CULTURAL  
LANDSCAPES ▾



### Diversity and Vibrancy

People value the cultural diversity of the city as expressed in mixtures of "ethnic" shopping areas; housing styles and public buildings; low density and high density areas; old and new architecture; industrial structures against a "natural setting"; green space and the "built environment"; land uses such as port, recreation, and commercial functions; and topographic features. People like the city's "scale", because it is comfortable for pedestrians and even the downtown is open and livable.

The appreciation for pedestrian-oriented activities along streets was also found in the Goals for Vancouver report and resurfaced in the Urban Amenities Study. The Urban Amenities Study mentions commercial areas as a contributor to Vancouver's diversity and vibrancy; and cultural diversity was identified as important in the Goals for Vancouver.

People also like the colours of Vancouver—the mixture of natural hues with the tones of the built environment, and the public events and features that make the city vibrant. These dynamic and interesting features are found mostly downtown in association with street life and entertainment in cafes, theatre and music. Outdoor events like festivals and races add to city living on a seasonal basis. Sounds of the city are appreciated as well--the noon hour horn and the nine o'clock gun.

### THE PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES THAT FACE US

Submissions and questionnaire responses indicate that people are most concerned about the forces that threaten the cherished features of the city. Other concerns arise over what is lost, or for the retention of sufficient amenities that add to the quality of our urban landscape.



#### Loss of Green Space

People don't like the recent loss of green space and trees, and recognize that areas such as east Vancouver are relatively lacking in trees and parks. People believe we could take better care of our trees and parks and some feel that "wildness" in our open spaces has lost out to pavement and playing fields. At the same time, people recognize there is a shortage of playing fields in some areas.

#### Pressures of New Development

Many people are disappointed with trends in Vancouver architecture. There is wide-spread concern over the construction of large houses that don't blend into their streets well and reduce vegetation cover. Some people resent

a "proliferation" of high-rises, office towers and malls, to the detriment of heritage landscapes and neighbourhood character.

Much of this development is seen as homogenizing Vancouver's diversity and blocking views.

Population growth is a major concern of Vancouverites. For many, urban development seems out of control and overwhelming. Increases in both density and urban sprawl are of concern for various people.

#### Cars and Transit

The dominance of the car, in the form of traffic, roads, parking lots, and pollution is of almost universal concern to Vancouverites. People resent the brown sky, traffic noise, dirty streets, water pollution and loss of green space that can be attributed largely to the use of private vehicles.

#### Loss of Urban Life

While people appreciate the city's street life and urban culture, many feel it is not enough. People especially notice the lack of a public centre to the city and, in many areas, the lack of a pedestrian-orientation.

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## CHAPTER III: ESSENTIAL ACTIONS

Essential Actions are the Urban Landscape Task Force's recommendations for the City of Vancouver to protect and enhance Vancouver's urban landscape legacy.

A framework of eight principles for urban landscape decision-making is provided as a fundamental requirement. These principles are then reinforced in the remaining fourteen Essential Actions, which are organized by the following background themes discussed in Chapter IV: Urban Landscape Themes.

- A. Greenway Connections
- B. Truly Public Places
- C. Democratic Streets
- D. Ecological Priority
- E. Neighbourhoods That Work

Also look to Chapter V: Gifts and Tools, for gift ideas to inspire you and additional tools for promoting the principles and actions to enhance Vancouver's urban landscape.

The Urban Landscape Task Force's mandate focused on developing broad principles and essential actions for achieving long-term economic, social and environmental benefits from the City's landscape legacy. The Task Force was frequently asked whether recommendations on specific "hot spots" would be made, but such site-specific recommendations were beyond the mandate. Many of the "hot spots" brought to our attention are controversial because of conflicting values and expectations or economic and social constraints. To satisfactorily resolve these issues, sufficient information and resources are required to conduct a systematic analysis. The principles for urban landscape decision-making recommended in Essential Action 1 provide a framework for guiding decision-making about the urban landscape including "hot spots".

### ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION-MAKING

## 1. Adopt Eight Urban Landscape Principles for Decision-Making

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Adopt the following eight principles to guide decision-making in the urban landscape:

### 1.1 RECOGNIZE LEGACIES

Maintain and enhance Vancouver's existing urban landscape.

#### Rationale:

Our urban landscape legacy combines both natural and introduced landscape elements modified from generation to generation. We must ensure that this heritage is not lost, but is instead cared for and enhanced. Such legacies include Stanley Park, City Hall, the Sea Wall, the Fraser River Foreshore and Commercial Drive.

### 1.2 RECOGNIZE DIVERSITY AND BALANCE

The diversity and beauty of Vancouver's urban landscape systems should be respected and promoted. Urban experience and nature experience are both important to city life.

#### Rationale:

Diverse elements make up our urban landscape systems. Ecological diversity includes biological, geological, hydrological, zoological, horticultural and meteorological components. Socio-cultural diversity is expressed in our respect for sacred and public spaces and in the character of streets and buildings in different neighbourhoods.

## ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION-MAKING

### 1.3 CARE FOR AND RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Clean water, clean air and bio-diversity are basic requirements for a healthy urban landscape. The environment should be considered equally with other factors in planning the "sustainable" city.

#### Rationale:

The health of the urban environment requires the recognition that ecological systems need protection, enhancement and rehabilitation. Other cities have approached urban landscape issues from the viewpoint of "sustainable" cities--focusing on environmental, economic and social sustainability. Vancouver's City Plan could use a similar theme.

### 1.4 MAKE CONNECTIONS

Freedom of movement, especially access and connections to nature, parks and sacred and civic spaces, should be available to all citizens through various modes--by foot, bicycle, wheelchair or public transit.

#### Rationale:

Our public open spaces, large and small, should be linked to allow us to work, play and explore in ways that recognize our diverse natural and cultural heritage without depending on the car. Vancouver has strong edges which need to be better connected to the different "centres" of the city. Our urban landscape and sense of community have a richness of detail which is best appreciated at a walking or cycling pace.

### 1.5 CREATE A COMMUNITY

Communities and neighbourhoods should be recognized for their unique contribution to defining character and diversity of Vancouver's urban landscape. Partnerships should be formed to assist in creating a community.

#### Rationale:

Communities are groups of people with shared values and spirit, and willingness to help each other. Partnerships are important among City Hall, different neighbourhoods, the larger public, and the private realm. These partnerships can help build an accountable, creative, collaborative and continuing public process for effective decisions about the city.

## ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: PRINCIPLES FOR DECISION-MAKING

### 1.6 ENCOURAGE INNOVATION

Ensure flexibility and innovation in the planning and design of the urban landscape. Let the unplanned happen sometimes.

#### Rationale:

Recognize that the urban landscape is dynamic. The most successful approaches to "planning and designing" are those which are flexible and open to change in a manner which helps the people involved understand the options and the process.

### 1.7 BE FAIR AND EQUITABLE

People should have fair opportunities to access and enjoy different types, sizes and experiences of open space.

#### Rationale:

Equity is geographic: people in all parts of the city require fair access to the urban landscape. Equity is demographic: the disabled and all cultural groups require fair access to the urban landscape. Equity is intergenerational: all age groups should share in deciding what happens in the urban landscape.

### 1.8 MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

Current and balanced information on Vancouver's urban landscape should be accessible to all citizens. Decision-makers and planners should coordinate their urban landscape stewardship based on this information.

#### Rationale:

Information is critical to making effective decisions. We should emphasize the importance of well-informed decision-makers and citizens in every aspect of our school and life-long learning system. We can create a new sense of citizenship through improving public literacy and understanding of our urban landscape.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: GREENWAY CONNECTIONS

## 2. Establish the Vancouver Urban Greenway

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

**Establish the Vancouver Urban Greenway through the following:**

- 2.1 Create a Greenway Trust within one year to plan and develop the Vancouver Urban Greenway.
- 2.2 Expand the existing waterfront walkway system around Vancouver's ocean and river edges to improve access to our working harbour and to connect to neighbouring municipalities.
- 2.3 Establish the Grandview Cut as the first urban ecological reserve under the Vancouver Urban Greenway.
- 2.4 Establish the Hastings-Fraserview Crosscut (see map on page 53) as an important north-south connection on the east side.
- 2.5 Establish the Arbutus right-of-way, in cooperation with Canadian Pacific, as another transportation corridor in the Vancouver Urban Greenway, including bicycle and pedestrian paths.
- 2.6 Designate specific street linkages to complete the Vancouver Urban Greenway connections, including the Green Links program for downtown streets and alleys.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: GREENWAY CONNECTIONS

**Rationale:**

**THE GREENWAY TRUST**

The Greenway Trust would be created for the primary purposes of promoting and developing the Vancouver Urban Greenway and as a multi-disciplinary body to act as an urban landscape conscience for Vancouver. The terms of the Trust would include establishing partnerships with existing organizations to facilitate public realm planning including an Urban Landscape Inventory, a Greenway Strategy, an Ecological Management Plan, and a Public Realm Programming Strategy.

The Greenway Trust could be a combination of private and public resources in the form of a single-purpose trust established by City Council. The Trust should be authorized by the Vancouver Charter and the participants' involvement (both budget and participation) should be formally mandated. The trust has the benefits of a private non-profit organization with the clout of official status.

The Greenway Trust should include representatives of, or obligations to recognize, partners in the urban landscape, including:

- ▶ the City of Vancouver
- ▶ Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
- ▶ the Vancouver School Board
- ▶ Canadian Pacific
- ▶ B.C. Hydro
- ▶ the Vancouver Port Corporation
- ▶ the Greater Vancouver Regional District
- ▶ the Province of British Columbia
- ▶ the Government of Canada, and
- ▶ local business and residents' organizations.

The Greenway Trust, as a public/private group, can benefit by working closely with public agencies to reallocate funds for acquiring or constructing the Greenway or to assist in regulating land.

The Trust concept includes the following benefits: (1) clear focus; (2) legitimacy of government involvement; (3) legitimacy of community involvement (residents and businesses in partnership); (4) capacity to raise money in the private sector; and (5) teamwork among City departments, to build an urban landscape legacy.

There is precedent for this type of organization having initiated and implemented Greenways in the United States and Britain. The Chattanooga Riverpark project in Tennessee is an example. In British Columbia we have examples of land trusts and similar local government bodies. For instance, the Union Board of Health brings together school boards and municipalities.

## ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: GREENWAY CONNECTIONS

**Staffing:** Although staff could be independently hired, in order to promote better understanding of the Trust, people could be seconded from City Engineering, Planning, Social Planning, Park Board and School Board to plan and coordinate the implementation of the Greenway.

**Mandate:** The mandate of the Greenway Trust includes planning, acquisition and implementation of the Vancouver Urban Greenway in partnership with various existing agencies in the public and private sector. These partnerships will undertake:

- (a) **A Public Realm Master Plan** (Essential Action 4). This physical plan for the city should include ideas about major open spaces, connections, streets, civic spaces and sacred spaces. This plan should include but not be confined to:
  - (a) **Urban Landscape Inventory** which identifies biophysical and cultural resources (Essential Action 8);
  - (b) **A Greenway Strategy Plan** which identifies a phased approach to acquisition and implementation. The Trust would be charged with the assembly of lands for the Vancouver Urban Greenway, through transfers of title, long-term leases, easements, covenants or other creative options. The terms of a Trust would be carefully developed to provide for effective management of the lands in the public interest (Essential Action 2);
  - (c) **An Ecological Management Plan** which identifies plant/animal niches, wildlife corridors, stream enhancement programs, natural areas for protection and wetland restoration opportunities (Essential Action 9); and
  - (d) **A Public Realm Programming Strategy** which focuses on an expansion of public activities including urban agriculture, urban commons and celebratory spaces (Essential Actions 7, 10, 13).

## ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: GREENWAY CONNECTIONS

### VANCOUVER URBAN GREENWAY

The creation, use and maintenance of the Vancouver Urban Greenway will require the long-term understanding and support of many different individuals, not the least of whom include public sector and institutional land-owners who could grant limited rights of access.

The Vancouver Urban Greenway will be a progressive model of urban change which will need the involvement of many interests to reconcile other transportation and land-use options for such important public lands. Elements of the Vancouver Urban Greenway should include:

**Waterfront Walkway:** A continuous Waterfront Walkway is already a shared vision of Vancouverites, Vancouver City Council, and City Hall staff. However, it needs to be expanded east of Main Street to enhance safe public access to the working harbour and connections to the east side.

**Grandview Cut:** The Grandview Cut is important (1) as a natural landscape in the City, exhibiting high species diversity worthy of protection and (2) as a strategic link from the east side to downtown.

**Hastings-Fraserview Crosscut:** This part of the Greenway connects Hastings Park and Burrard Inlet with Everett Crowley Park and the Fraser River using a combination of streets, parks and rights-of-way.

**Arbutus Corridor:** The Arbutus Corridor is a unique north-south link across the peninsula. As part of the Vancouver Urban Greenway, bicycle and pedestrian paths could be designed with on-grade transit to form a multi-purpose transportation corridor.

**Streets:** Streets and alleys are important as an existing, inter-connected system which can be both enhanced by and provide valuable resources to the Vancouver Urban Greenway.

## 3. Celebrate Our Legacies

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Authorize a program and charge staff to encourage the celebration of our natural and built landscape legacies including:

- 3.1 Identifying and protecting natural and built landscapes which are "uniquely Vancouver" (for example, the Grandview Cut, the Fraser River Foreshore, the Burrard Street Bridge).
- 3.2 Providing opportunities throughout the City for citizens to donate towards "legacies".
- 3.3 Encouraging existing and future festivals and celebrations as important legacies for our sense of community.

**Rationale:**

Citizens' participation in legacy programs fosters long-term ownership in the ideas, use and maintenance of the urban landscape. Our celebrations and memories are also legacies to be protected (see Civic/Sacred Places Gift on page 76, Festivals and Celebrations Gift on page 79, and Heritage Landscapes Tool on page 87).

## 4. Prepare a Public Realm Plan

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Recognize the importance of understanding the public realm and provide in the terms of the Greenway Trust the following responsibilities:

- 4.1 To prepare, through an accessible public process, a Public Realm Plan which identifies the functional and spatial relationships of public lands and facilities to assist in the City Plan process.
- 4.2 To include in the Public Realm Plan a "streets for the future" strategy on the role of streets in the Vancouver Urban Greenway to assist in the City Street Strategy process.

**Rationale:**

A sense of urgency to protect the public realm of the City of Vancouver arises from the impact of our City's growth and the danger that much will be lost if we do not set out clearly what should be protected in the urban landscape. The proposed Greenway Trust is the appropriate body to study and plan the public realm because of the constituencies represented and partnerships created: the City and its various departments, the private sector and the public.

The Public Realm Plan should include a vision and direction for all publicly owned land in the city (streets, parks, civic places, natural landscapes, downtown public plazas) and for contributions of views and greenness from private lands. A Public Realm Plan is not a new idea to Vancouver: the Planning Commission, the Urban Design Panel and others have identified this need for a plan to promote and support informed decision-making. An accessible public process is an essential component to a successful Public Realm Plan.

The Street Strategy is fully explained in Essential Action 7.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: TRULY PUBLIC PLACES

## 5. Support the Draft Management Plan for Parks

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Commend the Park Board staff on its Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Draft Management Plan (hereafter referred to as the Park Management Plan). This innovative and ambitious document will require initiative and innovation from the community, the Board and its staff. The following further actions are recommended:

- 5.1 That the Park Board include the following in its Park Management Plan:
  - (a) an "Advisory Group" from the urban landscape professional community to assist planners and the Board to advance the visions and policies in the Park Management Plan; and
  - (b) a scheduled review of the Park Management Plan on a continuing basis, at least every five years.
- 5.2 That Council support the Park Board in Parks and Open Space Acquisition including:
  - (a) assistance in the development of local open-space plans and long-term acquisition strategies for the following park-deficient neighbourhoods: Grandview Woodlands, Mount Pleasant, Fairview, East Kitsilano and Downtown;

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: TRULY PUBLIC PLACES

- (b) assistance in a study to develop a new model for determining the amount of park space in the city and to support smaller park acquisitions in cooperation with the Greenway Trust;
  - (c) support for the park strategy for Hastings Park and for developing strategies and plans for the False Creek Flats rail lands and Jericho Lands;
  - (d) support for recommendations on waterfront access and linear parks as part of the Vancouver Urban Greenway; and
  - (e) support for Park Board membership on the Development Permit Board and for developing creative ways to increase park and recreation opportunities.
- 5.3 That the Park Board place greater emphasis on the natural landscape and on high quality park design in the proposed Park Management Plan including:
- (a) developing new parks and re-developing existing parks with "ecological priority" as a direction;
  - (b) applying the eight principles from the report of the Urban Landscape Task Force towards creating a more diversified park system;
  - (c) encouraging horticultural diversity as a feature of the urban landscape, grounded in the landscape traditions of Vancouver; and

#### ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: TRULY PUBLIC PLACES

- (d) developing detailed design/management plans for each park in the park system.

##### Rationale:

The Park Management Plan is an important document to the future of the Vancouver parks system. Issues, technology and society are changing so fast in Vancouver that a frequent review of this document is critical. Given the increasing need for specialized information, an advisory body of professionals could assist municipal agencies with vision building and policy planning.

Issues of natural landscapes and design quality in park systems are not unique to Vancouver. Too much of our park system is at the same level of development, offering the same kind of service. A systematic review and planning process would allow priorities to be set and economies to be made based on a diversity of programming and more clearly defined objectives for each park.

#### ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: DEMOCRATIC STREETS

## 6. Reclaim Local Streets for Bicycles

##### *THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

**Examine the current street budget which is car-related and use budget re-allocations to exponentially increase funds for streets designed to include cyclists.**

##### Rationale:

A policy of equity is needed in planning for cars and for pedestrians and cyclists. The goal of creating democratic, flexible and diverse streets would be served by de-emphasizing the importance of the car in the city through the budget and capital works. Enhanced integration of cars and bicycles and designed bicycle-commuting corridors are only a partial solution. Budget re-allocations are required to promote and develop safe dedicated bicycle commuting systems which are separated from vehicular traffic.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: DEMOCRATIC STREETS

## 7. Develop a Street Strategy

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Develop a comprehensive Street Strategy for the City of Vancouver that emphasizes streets designed for people as well as vehicles and utilities. Such a strategy should include the following:

- 7.1 A twenty-year plan to re-claim 20%-30% of the current residential streets for more multi-use public spaces such as woonerfs and neighbourhood parks.
- 7.2 Adoption of a street classification plan which identifies ceremonial streets, greenway streets, major arterials, local streets, lanes, and alleys.
- 7.3 Specific design guidelines for special streets in the city such as have been completed for Water Street.
- 7.4 Specific tree pruning guidelines for other agencies and wiring to be placed underground in new or renovated streetscape developments.
- 7.5 Continued increase of pedestrian street activity by expanding the programming possibilities and continuing to improve barrier-free accessibility through curb ramps.
- 7.6 Methods to ensure developers' contributions to street improvements such as street trees, sidewalks, street furniture and lighting as amenities in the public realm which benefit new developments.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: DEMOCRATIC STREETS

**Rationale:**

Street Strategy: Streets have so much potential to contribute to enjoyment of city life. We remember streets as places to relax, watch people, visit, wash the car, play stick hockey or catch, dance or sell stuff. We need to re-think what "street" means to the kinds of activities and experiences we want to occur in the city. An overall streetscape strategy and street classification system should recognize that diversity and flexibility are important to allow programming and design opportunities. The following components are important:

Multi-Use Space: One-third of Vancouver's area is committed to automobile-dominated streets. In an age of restraint and efficient uses of resources, a target to re-direct the use of some of the area given over to streets or intersections to multiple public uses is recommended.

Special Streets: Georgia Street developments have been informally following the 1986 "Georgia Street--Second Century" report, but the report has never been formally adopted. Action is required to further detail and adopt the report. Similar studies are required for streets such as Burrard, Cambie, Granville, Kingsway, Main, Southwest Marine and others.

People Streets: As noted in the Urban Street Life Tools on pages 88 and 89, there are many incentives possible to increase street-life. We need to bring people onto the sidewalks. This essential action is also related to increased personal safety in the City and in the urban landscape.

Street Trees: There is conflict between overhead wiring and trees. B.C. Hydro and B.C. Transit should be encouraged to use care when pruning trees close to wires. In new developments, this conflict should be avoided by requiring underground wiring wherever possible. B.C. Hydro and B.C. Transit should work closely with the Park Board, the City and the Greenway Trust.

Private Developments/Public Streets: In the past, there has been a lack of clarity about the responsibility of the private developer to the public realm. It should be made very clear that the private developer IS responsible for streetscape development adjacent to the development site.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

## 8. Undertake an Urban Landscape Inventory

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Provide in the terms of the Greenway Trust the responsibility to inventory the major biophysical and cultural features of Vancouver's urban landscape including environmentally sensitive areas and sacred and civic spaces. Such an inventory should be a computer-based information system for the use of all City departments and the interested public.

**Rationale:**

Currently, there is very little biophysical information for making decisions within an ecological framework. We are also lacking heritage landscape and socio-cultural information. This basic information is needed for the Ecological Management Plan, the Public Realm Plan and the Greenway Strategy.

Funding for the system could be a partnership venture with research institutions such as the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, environmental and urban development groups, and private corporations.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

## 9. Prepare an Ecological Management Plan

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Provide in the terms of the Greenway Trust the following responsibilities:

- 9.1 Investigate the natural heritage and the remaining natural areas in the city, and develop an ecological management plan.
- 9.2 Develop a strategy to protect our existing legacy of environmentally significant areas through a combination of urban ecological reserves and environmentally sensitive planning and development practices.

**Rationale:**

Ecological Management Plan: This plan would identify the important natural areas in the city and guide environmentally sensitive development.

Protecting Environmentally Significant Areas: Interest groups and the general public give high priority to preserving Vancouver's natural history, founded in the inherent value of legacies and diversity. The Urban Landscape Inventory will be of assistance to Council in identifying areas for protection.

Specific areas requiring protection include:

- Fraserview Forest (west coast temperate rainforest);
- Grandview Cut (mixed deciduous forest and wetland habitat);
- Point Grey Foreshore (inter-tidal area);
- Southeast False Creek (unique landscape "rough" in urban centre); under Burrard Street Bridge (cottonwood grove);
- Southeast corner of 37th Avenue and Oak Street (unique landscape "rough" in residential community); and,
- Musqueam Marsh (estuarine and brackish marsh).

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

## 10. Promote the Urban Forest

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Charge staff to develop a strategy to increase the amount and improve the health of the urban forest over the next ten years including responsibilities to:

- 10.1 Review and develop criteria for heritage tree designation, update the "Heritage Tree Inventory" (1986), and expand the inventory to include heritage landscapes (see Heritage Landscapes Tool on page 87).
- 10.2 Facilitate the designation and protection of heritage trees in the City of Vancouver on public and private property.
- 10.3 Undertake an urban reforestation design competition to promote superior planting design and construction detailing in commercial, residential and institutional development to improve current practice.
- 10.4 Encourage research and development on the topic of street infrastructure placement and tree-pit size and grate surface treatment.
- 10.5 Prepare a Master Street Tree Planting Plan for every street in the city in coordination with the overall Street Master Plan (see Essential Action 7: Street Strategy).

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

- 10.6 Encourage public involvement in caring for and planting the Urban Forest, including a campaign for promoting and assisting in the planting of trees on public and private property (see Citizen Forester Tool on page 100).

**Rationale:**

The Heritage Tree Inventory (1986): This Inventory should be revisited in view of current values ascribed to the urban forest.

Designation and Protection: This protection requires developing clear criteria for deciding what to designate and protect, and to what extent the city can become involved in compensation.

Master Street Tree Planting Plan: This document would assist developers and city staff in planning, planting and maintaining the urban forest effectively and efficiently.

Public Education: Education is key to supporting the urban forest. There will never be enough public funds to plant the trees we require. A public urban forest needs support and maintenance by programs to train and certify "Citizen Foresters" and "Citizen Pruners" possibly coordinated through community centres; Arbour Days; partnerships with VanDusen Gardens, UBC Botanical Gardens, and private sector interests; and in school curricula and public information programs (see Citizen Forester Tool on page 100).

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

## 11. Adopt Ecological Performance Standards

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Resolve to maintain the ecological health of the city by:

- 11.1 Charging staff to establish a program to monitor the ecological health of the City.
- 11.2 Developing and adopting ecological performance standards as part of a municipal by-law rather than as discretionary policy statements.

**Rationale:**

The monitoring of ecological health should measure both short and long-term trends, be related to ecological function and most importantly, contribute to our understanding of the urban ecosystem's structure, function and health.

To assist in reversing trends of declining air and water quality, we have to develop serious ecological performance standards. These standards need the same force as other health standards so that developers, planners and designers will understand and operate within them. An example of an ecological performance standard would be the requirement for stormwater management, including:

- (a) establishing a runoff policy;
- (b) employing natural drainage systems to re-charge ground water; and
- (c) establishing hydrological performance standards.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

In Vancouver some effective performance standards are already in place. However, a comprehensive set of Ecological Performance Standards covering the following environmental concerns should be developed as part of City Plan:

- habitat conservation
- reduction of car use and parking
- air quality
- water quality and conservation
- energy conservation
- waste management
- construction and demolition
- contaminated land
- soil conservation

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

## 12. Promote Urban Ecological Literacy

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

Establish a strategy to improve general literacy about urban ecology through partnerships with the School Board, the Park Board, the private sector and community groups including:

- 12.1 Promoting and supporting work of the B.C. Ministry of Education and the Vancouver School Board on integrating urban ecology and built environment information into the Year 2000 curriculum.
- 12.2 Identifying school and park sites in each quadrant of the city as places for urban ecology centres.
- 12.3 Requesting that the B.C. Ministry of Education, Training and Technology support a research-oriented urban horticulture program at a Vancouver technical or research institution.
- 12.4 Requesting that professional and business associations promote and support continuing education about the urban landscape for their professions and for allied professions.
- 12.5 Requesting that city staff from all departments be part of an ecological literacy program.

ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

**Rationale:**

**School Curriculum:** The School Board has the opportunity to help teachers integrate information about urban ecology and the built environment into existing or new courses. Encourage programs such as The Design Challenge sponsored by DESIGN VANCOUVER. The Design Challenge involves all levels of school children in learning about design and environment.

**Urban Ecology Centres:** School and park lands could be jointly considered as sites for demonstration centres for recycling, composting and urban agriculture. These centres could encourage community involvement, be clearing houses for environmental education and information, and be nodes in the Vancouver Greenway.

**Research:** Minimal research in applied urban ecology is presently available.

**Professional Education:** With the rapid rate of technical change, life-long learning is necessary in every profession. Given the complexity of the urban landscape, information should be exchanged among groups such as the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, the B.C. Society of Landscape Architects, the Association of Professional Engineers of British Columbia, the Planning Institute of British Columbia, the Society of Arborists, the Urban Development Institute, the Vancouver Board of Trade, and other professional groups and business associations.

## 13. Cultivate a City of Gardens

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

**Strengthen the image and landscape heritage of Vancouver as a green city or the City of Gardens through the following actions:**

- 13.1 Adopt a development by-law which ensures a no net loss of landscape/open space in the city through compensations such as roof gardens, public gardens and community gardens.
- 13.2 Charge staff to prepare landscape standards for different categories of landscape including, for example, (a) reviewing residential set-backs in view of solar access to adjacent gardens or potential gardens; and (b) regulating hedges which create a "wall" higher than allowable fences or which encroach on public lands through lack of maintenance.
- 13.3 Support urban agriculture, including community gardens, by working with the Greenway Trust to find mechanisms to protect such "non-traditional" open space.
- 13.4 Investigate the use of development levies and the possibility of applying them more widely to commercial and industrial, in addition to residential uses.
- 13.5 Create an award program to recognize outstanding gardens and other private landscapes, with special emphasis in food-producing and habitat-creating gardens.

**Rationale:**

**Lost Gardens:** This Task Force has found that in one sample block the site coverage changed from 35% paving in older stock to 60% paving in newer (post 1980) houses (see History of a Block Tool on page 98). This not only decreases the amount of permeable surface to accommodate run-off, it also decreases the overall greenness of our garden city.

**Standards:** Landscape standards will provide for greater certainty in application and interpretation. For example, regular set-backs make little sense for vegetation if solar access is limited by the lot orientation. More flexibility should exist in establishing setbacks to allow for maximum sun in areas where gardening activity is possible. Varied set-backs also make for a diversity of residential streetscapes.

**Urban Agriculture:** As traditional farms become less viable, the concept of urban agriculture provides one alternative for food production and for a better understanding of natural and social systems. Community gardens have proven to be effective community "back yards" to work and visit, and have a very different atmosphere than a public park. As more community gardens become part of our urban landscape, we will grow to appreciate their different aesthetic. Communities may choose to propose a community garden in place of an existing street, on church, fire hall or library sites. These initiatives should be welcomed by the Park Board and the City.

**Development levies:** Currently, development levies apply to residential projects only, yet developers and commercial workers benefit from urban landscape amenities. Development levies should also apply to commercial and industrial projects as a contribution to the overall open-space amenity of the City.

## 14. Reinforce a City of Urban Villages

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

**Adopt a policy of urban villages connected by the Vancouver Urban Greenway.**  
Such a policy should include:

- 14.1 Reviewing zoning as the primary mechanism for encouraging mixed use "villages" in the city, and researching and testing new land-use management strategies.
- 14.2 Charging staff to map the current cultural "villages" in the City and areas where the buildings seem to imply the potential of a village centre.

**Rationale:**

Daily home and work daily activities should be closer together. A mixed-use zoning policy would improve transit, minimize the use of the car and create an interesting, diverse urban landscape. Experience indicates that diversity of use and activities within denser neighbourhood centres encourages more flexible economic activity and innovation. The location and mapping of cultural villages will require extensive public input at all stages.

## 15. Create an Urban Landscape Communication Strategy

*THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDS THAT Council:*

**Create a strategy to facilitate communication between City Hall and the public about urban landscape issues including:**

- 15.1 Charging staff to:
  - (a) identify current City practices in this regard;
  - (b) ensure good communication among Engineering, Planning, Social Planning, Park Board and Permits and Licenses by having regular "urban landscape issues" meetings; and,
  - (c) institute an urban landscape hotline with a community liaison staff person to communicate with communities about urban landscape issues.
- 15.2 Charging the Vancouver City Planning Commission or another such advisory committee to a continuing custodial role for the essential actions contained in the Urban Landscape report.
- 15.3 Appointing citizens as "landscape advocates" to existing city committees, for example, the Development Permit Board, the Heritage Advisory Committee or any other appropriate committee.

## ESSENTIAL ACTIONS: NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT WORK

- 15.4 Establishing a City Store and City Room in a central location where citizens can obtain information about the urban landscape and about their city in a variety of formats including maps, videos, computer displays and written reports.

### Rationale:

Frustrated People: People respectfully indicated to the Task Force that they are frustrated when they do not know who to contact in City Hall or when they perceive the city bureaucracy to be complex and confusing. An urban landscape hotline and a staff person dedicated to communicating information to the public would improve this situation.

Keep the Faith: The urban landscape is often forgotten in all the other important factors in the City planning and development process. It would be useful to have a "keeper of the Urban Landscape Principles" as an important part of the Planning and Development Permit process.

## CHAPTER IV: URBAN LANDSCAPE THEMES

A number of themes run through the Essential Actions and provide background to the principles. These background themes are described in this chapter as follows:



A. Greenway Connections



B. Truly Public Places



C. Democratic Streets



D. Ecological Priority



E. Neighbourhoods  
That Work

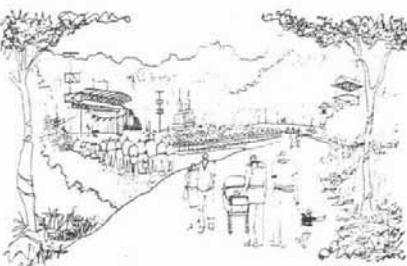
Vancouver Vision: Year 2010 introduces these themes in a short narrative.

## VANCOUVER VISION: YEAR 2010

It's another rainy morning in Vancouver in the spring of 2010. Some complain, but most of us grin and bear it or even enjoy it--at least it isn't snow. From apartments, townhouses, lane houses, thin houses, and a few single family residences, people emerge to start their daily routine. A lot of us cycle to work or school on a bicycle-only path, part of Vancouver's Urban Greenway system. Others take the Pacific Spirit Tram to UBC or rapid transit to downtown, chatting with colleagues or reading the morning newspaper. We're now well established in our urban villages within the city--each a place to live within walking distance of work.

People rarely travel by car anymore because the alternatives are more convenient and economical. With fewer cars, our streets are more people-oriented. Major streets have a transit lane, a bicycle lane, walking places and only two lanes of traffic. Other streets still allow cars but pedestrians are given priority and children can play safely.

Some residential streets are now a part of the Vancouver Urban Greenway--a city-wide network of corridors that link major public spaces--parks, neighbourhoods, schools and sacred and civic



sites. The Greenway is a result of the Public Realm Plan initiated in 1992 by creative politicians, urban designers, neighbourhood committees and key landowners. All residents are equally well-serviced by this amenity.

Schools and community centres are more numerous and smaller than in the previous century and are no further than a 15-minute walk from home or work. Community centres have become the real heart of the neighbourhood with nearby stores, health services and cultural activities. The city is now a conglomeration of smaller urban villages that connect easily and support each other.

We have brought back to daylight some streams which once again have salmonids spawning in them. The old parking garages of the last 50 years are now used for electric cars, root-cellars type storage, and energy co-generation plants.

The city looks different these days--it is even greener than in the previous century partly because we discovered the importance of maintaining the natural water cycle and soil fertility. As a result we grow more food in the city on the roof tops and on small plots of land which allow the water to permeate through. Our Ecological Management Plan has guided our decisions so less land is paved. Large trees have places to grow and wetlands and soils supplement our sewer treatment systems in absorbing and cleansing urban runoff.

But the city is still a city. The downtown is urban and lively with animated street-life. The diverse cultures of Vancouver are reflected strongly in the character of the city's neighbourhoods. We have many multi-cultural streets, markets and other gathering places which are busy most times of the day.

Along the Vancouver Urban Greenway, a rich and diverse cover of trees and shrubs provide habitat for wildlife. Some blocks use former streets as



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community gardens. The vegetation provides shade, helps keep local air fresh and absorbs some carbon dioxide to help counteract global warming.

Both our private and public landscapes are much more diverse. Some "historic" landscapes are still manicured, but we are much more accepting of a "rough", more natural type of landscape. Some people have turned their front yards into vegetable gardens, others have shade gardens with a mixture of native and cultivated plants.

Our data base for managing the urban landscape is extensive. City records are just as thorough for the natural and cultural environment as they are for engineering infrastructure. Citizens eagerly supplement their education on urban design and ecology with visits to the Park/School Board Ecology Centres and to the City Room, where detailed maps and information are accessible.

Guided by the new visionary City Plan, City Council makes proactive decisions for the urban landscape that continuously moves the City towards the shared vision of Vancouverites. Council works in close cooperation with the Fraser-Pacific Region, the Greenway Trust, the Park Board, the School Board, residents, and City employees to maintain our public and private landscapes in good health. Neighbourhood associations have proven themselves capable of

administering small budgets and now manage many urban landscape issues in their neighbourhood.

On the way home, people enjoy choosing a different route each day. Choices range from watching ship unloading activities in the port to moving through a naturalized landscape along the Fraser River to feeling on the top of the world on the Jericho-Central Park Ridgeway. Some people use one of several SeaBus routes--the newest one from UBC to Ambleside.

On weekends, people use the Vancouver Urban Greenway to visit regional landscapes--the greenway connects to systems in Richmond, Burnaby, North and West Vancouver, and beyond.

Another rainy day in Vancouver--but because of the Vancouver Urban Greenway--people have a chance to enjoy the rain and our urban landscape.





## A. GREENWAY CONNECTIONS

... [the greenway story] is the story of a remarkable citizen-led movement to get us out of our cars and into the landscape--on paths and trails through corridors of green that can link city to country and people to nature ..."

Charles Little

How will we cycle from First Avenue and Renfrew to the new downtown library by the safest and most beautiful route? How could we travel from 49th and Fraser to UBC efficiently, but in a way that energizes us? How can we make physical connections to the rest of our region's communities and landscapes?

A good city is one that people understand because they have a clear "mental map" of how to move about the city. Not only can people visualize downtown in relation to their house or the closest natural landscape, but they see connections to other parts of the city. In Chapter One we talked about Lewis Mumford's idea of structuring the city through streets, pathways and open space.

These connections are vital to moving about a city like Vancouver. We have incredible urban landscape legacies such as Stanley Park and the seawall, John Hendry Park and Hastings Park. Yet, we have not linked them to reinforce people's connections with the city, with nature and with each other.

Connections among neighbourhoods like Gastown, Chinatown, Japantown and "upper" Downtown are not marked or encouraged. The City's Green Links plan for the downtown begins to address these connections by creating a coherent circulation system, linking downtown with the new

neighbourhoods in Coal Harbour and False Creek, based on the street system.

So, what is a big idea that can solve the problem of connections for us?

### Greenways!

Greenways are corridors that link open spaces and invite city-dwellers to experience the "outside inside the city". Greenways are the theme of this section.



Greenways include all of the following:

- ▶ environmentally sensitive areas
- ▶ river edges
- ▶ topography
- ▶ escarpments
- ▶ neighbourhoods
- ▶ schools/shopping areas
- ▶ work places
- ▶ allotment or community gardens
- ▶ urban historic trails
- ▶ park and boulevard systems
- ▶ ferry links
- ▶ industrial waterfront
- ▶ railway corridors
- ▶ scenic drives
- ▶ wildlife corridors
- ▶ streets

... to name a few.



### What would the Greenway do for Vancouver?

We have made the point that Vancouver has many strong landscape legacies, but that they are not well-connected. The objectives of the proposed Greenway for Vancouver are to:

- ▶ Make the city "whole" by connecting our existing parks and neighbourhoods to each other;
  - e.g. connecting New Brighton Park, Hastings Park, Rupert Park, Renfrew Park, Everett Crowley Park and the Fraser River (see Hastings-Fraserview Crosscut on the Greenway Map, page 53).

- ▶ Reinforce people's connections with nature by retaining natural ecological functions in the urban environment;
  - e.g. areas like the Musqueam Marsh and the Grandview Cut.

- ▶ Increase the amount of permeable surfaces in the city, to daylight as many streams as possible and as a result improve our water quality;
  - e.g. we want to be able to swim in the waters around Vancouver safely.

- ▶ Improve our general environment-vegetated greenways can reduce noise, smog, dust and heat;
  - e.g. the urban forest will be increased by the Greenway.

- ▶ Complement the existing and future public open space system through introducing connections that accommodate more diverse public recreation;
  - e.g. the Greenway will complement our existing park system.

- ▶ Provide alternatives to the automobile for commuter and recreational trips by developing safe passageways for bicycles, wheelchairs and pedestrians;
  - e.g. cycling from Champlain Heights to UBC along the Fraser River or walking from your house on Rupert Street to Rupert Park along the Greenway to your school.

- Stimulate a more cost effective expenditure of public funds through the multiple use of public property; e.g. some public lands serve as drainage ways, wildlife habitat, recreation sites, bicycle paths—all in the Greenway.

- Encourage private realm development to respond to urban landscape opportunities by planning the Greenway as a network of city connectors; e.g. private developments can contribute to the city by connecting to the Greenway.

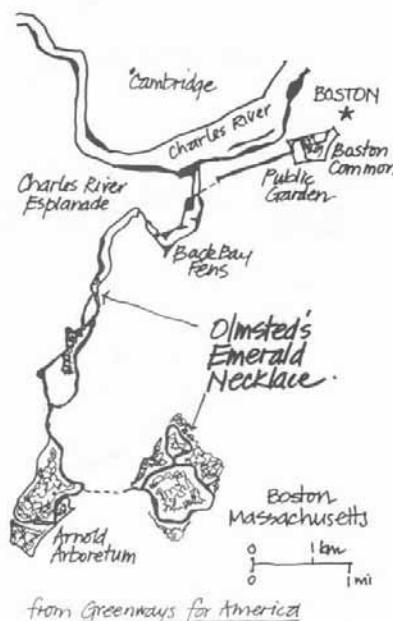
- Make connections to the region's Green Zones and encourage greenways to be planned and implemented through the region; e.g. there are many opportunities to link to Burnaby, Richmond and the North Shore via greenways.

**greenway (gren'-wa) n.** 1. A linear open space established along either a natural corridor, such as a riverfront, stream valley, or ridgeline, or overland along a railroad right-of-way converted to recreational use, a canal, a scenic road, or other route. 2. Any natural or landscaped course for pedestrian or bicycle passage. 3. An open-space connector linking parks, nature reserves, cultural features, or historic sites with each other and with populated areas. 4. Locally, certain strip or linear parks designated as parkway or greenbelt. [American neologism: green + way; origin obscure.]

Greenways for America

greenways in the 1880s. Boston's Emerald Necklace and Portland's 40 Mile Loop are two good examples.

In Canada, Toronto is promoting greenways in its valleys like the Don River and most cities are looking carefully at similar urban landscape connections.



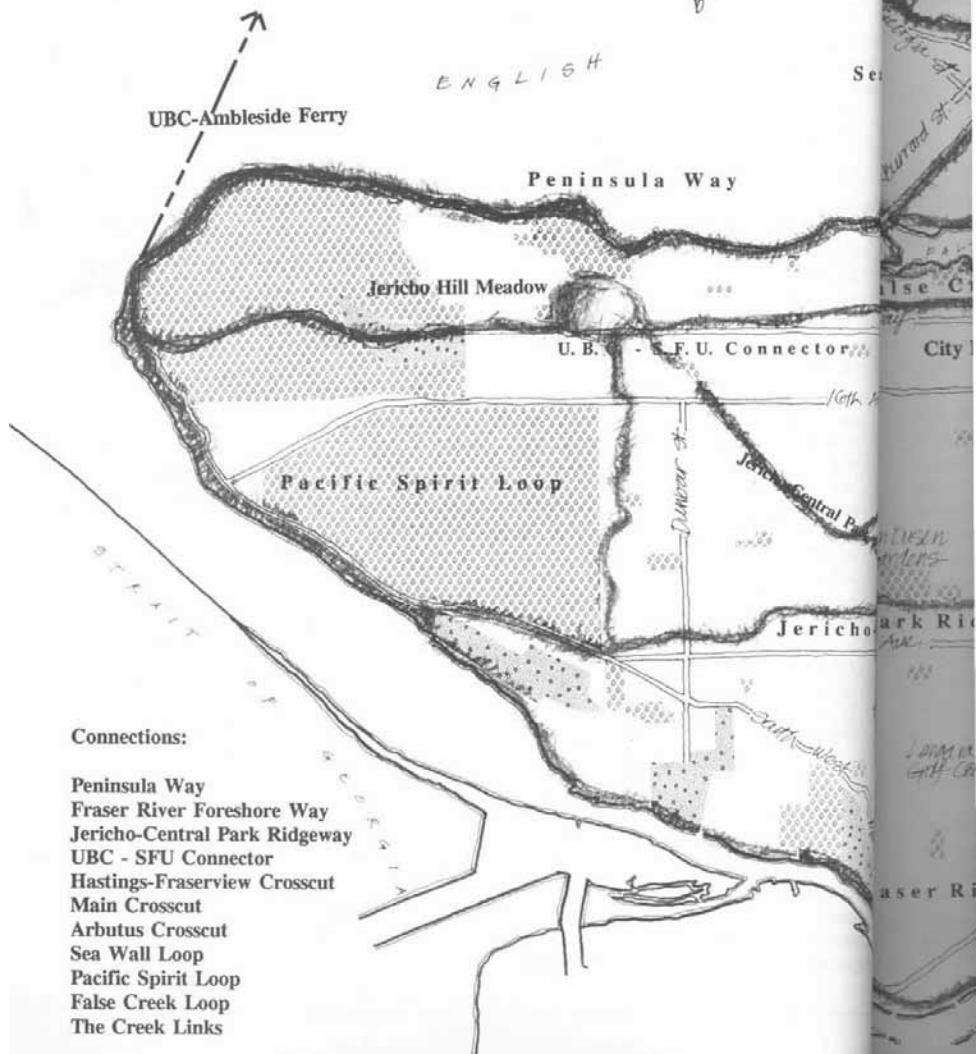
#### Which Other Cities Have Greenways?

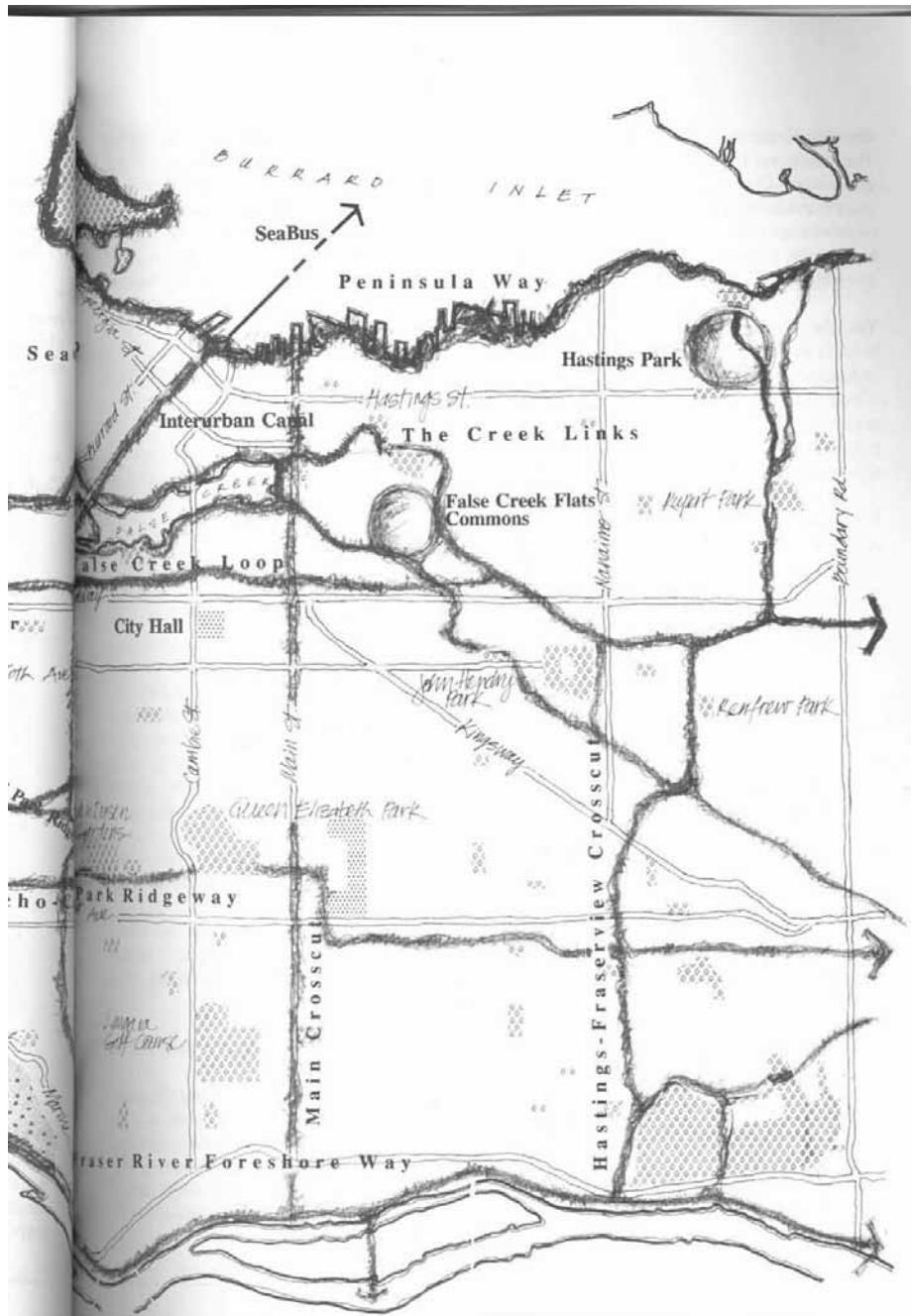
Greenways are spreading across North America. Frederick Law Olmsted, the creator of Central Park in New York, was responsible for planting the seed for several

- Note: The proposed Vancouver Urban Greenway Map on the following pages is intended to spark our imaginations and initiate a vision for the Greenway based on existing public places and connections.

#### City of Vancouver URBAN LANDSCAPE TASK FORCE

### PROPOSED VANCOUVER URBAN GREENWAY ▾





## How are Greenways Paid For?

The Vancouver Urban Greenway, like other greenways, will evolve incrementally as funds become available. The Greenway Trust, built on private and public sector partnerships, will have to be creative in financing the land assembly and implementation process.

Yet the Greenway will have economic benefits as well as costs: As Charles Little, author of *Greenways for America*, points out: "Open space produces municipal income negatively--by costing less to service. It produces it positively by adding value to adjacent properties."

It is difficult to place monetary value on an investment like a Greenway. As green economics take hold, the Greenway, with all the urban landscape, will benefit; at the same time, the economic contributions of the Greenway will become increasingly apparent.

*The importance of powerful landscape edges as economic edges (the edge of Stanley Park or the edge of any waterfront park), the importance of landscape improvements as a major generator of spirit in poor neighbourhoods, and the importance of a well-structured urban landscape to the continued health and viability of many business and commercial areas in a city points to the important economic role that the urban landscape plays in the economy of a city. Stanley Park has paid for itself many times over.*

Douglas Paterson, Landscape Architect  
and Chair of Vancouver Planning Commission



## B. TRULY PUBLIC PLACES

*The forms and activities of the city no longer fit. To create richer, more civilized urban environments in our future cities we need to rethink the whole manner in which we imagine, design and manage our public realm. This public realm is, in large measure, what we term the "urban landscape".*

Douglas Paterson, 1992

In "Greenway Connections" we talked about the importance of linkages in the city. What are we linking? Truly public places!

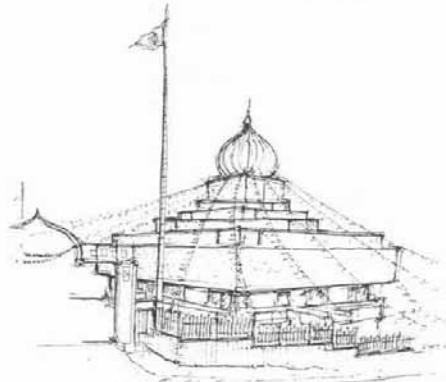
Truly public places are places that are publicly owned and provide free and unlimited access to everyone in the city twenty-four hours a day. There are many types of public places—all are important to our sense of the city. Some are civic, like our City Hall grounds. Some are sacred, like the water reservoir in Queen Elizabeth Park. And some are quite ordinary but important, like many of our street corners. Public places include parks, public gathering places, courtyards, forecourts to buildings (Georgia Square), promenade spaces (streets, boulevards and lanes), cemeteries, water reservoirs, hydro easements and school yards.

Under the Truly Public Places theme, we discuss civic and sacred places, the public realm and parks and open space systems.

### CIVIC AND SACRED PLACES

Our landscape legacy is abundant—but how do we care for this legacy? Civic and sacred landscapes in Vancouver represent opportunities to strengthen the public realm. Their neglect shows disrespect for our ancestors and lack of forethought for our grandchildren.

What are civic places in the city? They are places "belonging to" the citizens, not in an ownership sense, as much as in an experiential or cultural sense. City Hall grounds, Georgia Square (north side of the Art Gallery) and the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Plaza are examples of civic places (see Civic/Sacred Places Gift on page 76).



Similarly, we cherish certain sacred places in the city. These places have spiritual meaning to us as legacies of past historic events (the founding of Vancouver) or as natural legacies for the future (the Fraser River Foreshore). We have some places in the city which should be sacred, but are not. The Queen Elizabeth Park reservoir and Deadman's Island in Coal Harbour are good examples.



Deadman's Island

Civic and sacred places should not only be considered as past legacies. We should continue enhancing the urban landscape through "legacy projects" which are built each year. The City Legacies program from the mid-80s should be revived to give citizens opportunities to donate to and shape the public realm.

Legacies are not always in the form of physical places. City festivals and celebrations build our sense of community and leave a legacy of memories of the past and experiences to look forward to at next year's festival.

*We must make Plans; who looks not before, finds himself behind.*

Publius Syrus, 44 B.C.

### PLANNING THE PUBLIC REALM

The public realm has been defined as "what the public owns in the city", meaning everything from streets to school yards to beaches to parks. In Chapter One, planning for the public realm was emphasized as a way to preserve our landscape legacies and build upon them.

The time seems opportune to gather all the "players" who control these lands and the "public" who use these lands along with the many ideas for the public realm--and commit ourselves to a vision and a plan.

**CITY OF VANCOUVER LANDS**  
(public & private)  
11,615 hectares (28,700 acres)

*The Public Realm: 5,192 hectares (12,829 acres), approximately 45%*

*Parkland: approximately 9%*

*Public Golf Courses/VanDusen Gardens: approximately 2%*

*Mountain View Cemetery and other: approximately 2%*

*School Board Lands: approximately 2%*

*Public Streets: approximately 30%*

*The Private Realm: 6,423 hectares (15,871 acres) approximately 55%*

Future strategies are often difficult to imagine. After all, how can we predict the future in such a fast-paced society? We are proposing a focused effort to develop a plan that protects our public realm legacy and sets out a strategy for the future.

The PUBLIC urban landscape is planned and managed by a host of players and interests:

**Engineering:** looks after public streets and all the required infrastructure

**Planning:** looks after appropriate use, density, zoning and the form or look of development

**Permits and Licences:** issues permits to build and licenses to conduct business

**Park Board:** looks after developing and maintaining the public open space and installing the street trees

**School Board:** plans and administers school land

**Port:** CN/CP, the Vancouver Port Corporation, Harbour Commissions and others plan and administer our industrial waterfront

The PRIVATE urban landscape is planned and managed by individual citizens and private corporations.

These strategic plans need to be flexible, but specific. For instance, streets are a critical part of the public realm. A street strategy might include goals for reducing the numbers of cars and increasing numbers of bicycles. A street strategy would also include programming ideas that suggest what activities could happen on sidewalks that were widened for the purpose or what activities could happen on blocks that might be closed every second Saturday?

We need visions for how the Jericho Lands, the False Creek Flat railway lands, Hastings

Park and particularly the 200 hectares of School Board lands can be vital components in the public realm. We refer earlier in this report to the many opportunities for partnerships among the School Board, the Vancouver Board for Parks and Recreation, the proposed Greenway Trust and others.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

The system managed by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (hereafter referred to as the Park Board) is undoubtedly one of our most valued urban landscape legacies. The recent Draft Management Plan of the Park Board is a comprehensive document that recognizes our urban landscape legacy. It sets out laudable policies and programs for park acquisition, development, recreation facilities and services, and the urban landscape.

To ensure that our park system will meet the needs of a growing and diverse population several issues within the park system require careful consideration. For instance, how can we provide equitable distribution of parks across the city? How much park space should we acquire? How big should these parks be? What types of parks and activities should we be planning for? These questions require more research and consideration to ensure the health of our future park system.

### Fair Park Distribution

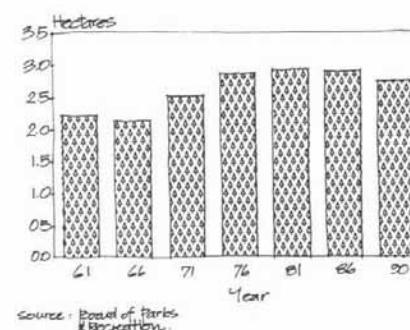
In all of the small group community meetings held by the Task Force, major concerns were heard about inequities in the distribution, quantity and quality of park space in the city.

The city is presently divided into the urban landscape "haves" and "have-nots". Some people live minutes away from a natural beach or a regional park, while others, more often on the east-side, have much less access

to our public realm. The Draft Management Plan acknowledges the deficit of park space in areas such as Grandview-Woodlands, Mount Pleasant, East Kitsilano, Fairview and the downtown.

Whether child or adult, we need connections to nature. Newly acquired Everett Crowley Park offers an opportunity to develop a high quality "natural" park in a park deficient area of the city. It is also an opportunity to provide a link to the Fraser River park system as part of the Vancouver Urban Greenway.

Park Area per 1000 Population



### Park Quantity and Size

Not only are there inequities in distribution of park space in the city, but the amount of park space is in question. There are a variety of opinions as to how much park space is adequate for urban areas. The current "standard" of 2.75 acres per 1000 population does not always produce a fair or reasonable result. For example, if this standard is applied to a population base of 500,000 against the

land base of Vancouver, the amount of open space required is only 600 hectares or 5% open space.

Meeting the traditional park space standards is a particular challenge in areas of high density development or redevelopment where land is scarce. The historical emphasis on recreational programming for sports has given us a legacy of parks which are more or less the same size. We could create many more small "vest-pocket" parks, especially in higher density areas, which are accessible to more people by walking and bicycling.

More thought and research is required to determine quantitative park needs for existing, redeveloping and new neighbourhoods. Changing recreational patterns and needs are important in determining future open space requirements. We probably need to acquire more open space through re-allocation of land uses such as streets and by adjusting the traditional sizes and uses of parks.



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### Diversity of Park Types and Activities

Programming is a way to respond to different activities, functions and needs to include in a park design. What are the functions needed in this park? Washrooms. Garbage collection. What kinds of experiences do people want to have in this park? Listening to birds chirping. Feeling the freedom of a big open space. What activities will there be? Frisbee throwing. Baseball. How many people will use this park and what will they do there? Sometimes ten thousand, sometimes three. Too often, detailed programming is not adequately considered in planning and designing the urban landscape.

Programming more activities to be shared between parks and schools is an exciting possibility. Schools tend to be the informal heart of many community activities and more use of school yards should be encouraged. In the public realm, they provide opportunities to diversify our landscape both from an activity and ecological viewpoint.

Church yards also have untapped potential. Recently an environmental group proposed to naturalize church yards in the city to attract birds and provide more natural areas. Public buildings such as City Hall or libraries are obvious places to try experiments in diversifying our public realm landscapes.

### A Park? An Open Space?

The classic image of park is clipped lawns and majestic trees--part of our European heritage. The term open space, more recently used, doesn't conjure up much of an image, other than the opposite of "closed space". The question of what is park and what is open space is less important than considering both as a system.

We wish to propose a broader definition of what constitutes a park and open space system

for Vancouver. As our population diversifies, so our definition should broaden to include everything from school grounds to natural areas to beaches to urban commons. We should take more advantage of the full spectrum of open spaces as shown in the diagram below, modified from Michael Hough's book, *Out of Place: Restoring Identity to the Region*.

Perhaps more critical is a concern that many open spaces such as urban streetscapes, waterfronts or parks are limited in the range of activities and experiences offered. For instance, in some parks the recreation functions are predominant. There are many opportunities to create natural areas, edible landscapes, ceremonial places, humorous places--experiences should be endless in our parks and open space system.



### C. DEMOCRATIC STREETS

... the concept of democratic streets is grounded in the notion of public use. A democratic street is one that reflects the history as well as the social and economic diversity of the larger neighbourhood and city. Friendly to pedestrians and livable for residents, it also reflects social justice, economic health and ecological vitality.

Mark Francis

Streets are the soul of our city. They represent the city's various personalities--the hustling, bustling Georgia Street; the see and be seen Robson Street; the oh-so-funky Commercial Drive; the dramatic Cambie Street; and the avenues, east and west--they are critical to our appreciation of the urban landscape.

Under the theme Democratic Streets, the importance and types of streets are discussed along with a street strategy for taking advantage of public opportunities for important city linkages.

#### Importance of streets

Vancouver's street network is an important structuring and unifying element of the urban landscape. Streets contribute to city image and to sense of place. They influence how we experience, understand and develop the city. We move, live, work and play on or near streets. We value streets for their social, transportation, open space, and recreational functions.

Streets perform important transportation functions but they are also the utility corridors of the city. Hidden under our streets is a maze of pipes and conduits that bring us water, electricity and other "essentials". Overhead wires are the visible evidence of these utilities.

#### Types of streets

The Vancouver street network, occupying one-third of the city's total land area, consists of a hierarchy of streets and functions, each with a distinctive character. Highways, boulevards, main arterials, retail streets, secondary thoroughfares, residential streets and lanes form the network. These distinct street types should look and feel different from each other.

Lanes and back alleys are especially important to diversity in Vancouver's urban landscape. Besides their functional attributes, lanes are a unique and valuable resource which give a distinctive character to each neighbourhood and to the city in general. In residential neighbourhoods, lanes provide alternate transportation routes, safe places to play and socialize, and also provide habitat for a variety of plants and animals. In the downtown, back alleys are the service corridors of the city.



### Street opportunities

Streets are a valuable public resource which is often overlooked. Streets can:

- ▶ provide the setting for lively artistic and commercial activities;
- ▶ connect neighbours and neighbourhoods;
- ▶ provide special open space opportunities;
- ▶ provide economic benefits like tourism;
- ▶ make a system of trails to connect major parks, plazas and other public spaces;
- ▶ house needed utilities;
- ▶ be important links in the Vancouver Urban Greenway; and
- ▶ reinforce a sense of community.

Opportunities to change streets are currently constrained by our need to accommodate the car. With changes in attitudes of urban dwellers, we trust that the car will become less important and therefore be a lower priority in making decisions about streets.

There are practical hurdles to be overcome in realizing the full potential of streets for people. However . . .

... Imagine a street converted to a community garden with a lane of one-way traffic, a bike path and a combination grass and paving brick right-of-way wide enough for a fire-truck but also usable for other activities.

... Imagine a street modestly changed to house a safe bike lane which would encourage the most fearful cyclists to abandon their cars.

... Imagine a street at the heart of each neighbourhood that closes each Saturday for a big community garage sale.

The Dutch woonerf is an excellent example of the redesign of streets to enhance their social role in neighbourhoods. No distinction is made between sidewalk and road, pedestrians are given priority over the car, speed limits are reduced to walking pace, parking is consolidated, and trees, benches and gardens enhance the street.



Woonerf

*... to bring the pedestrian back into the picture, one must treat him with the respect and honor we now accord only to the automobile: we should provide him with pleasant walks, insulated from traffic, to take him to his destination, once he enters a business precinct or residential quarter.*

Lewis Mumford

### Street Strategy

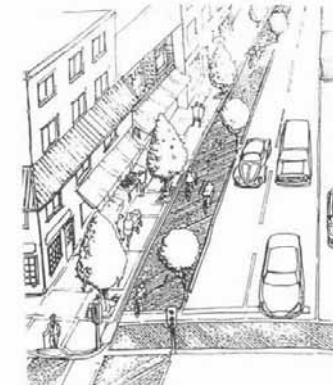
Our streets are a major public realm resource. The City engineers plan and manage streets and are efficient at delivering a good service under their current mandate. A street strategy should be based not only on current priorities, but on the future possibilities. It would look at diverse options for the 90s, such as:

#### *Making streets into places and spaces*

We currently understand and use streets more as conduits of movement than we do as places. For a street to have a comfortable feeling for people, not cars, some important spatial attributes must be met. For example, for a comfortable sense of enclosure in a street (to use it for a street dance, for instance) the ratio of the distance across the street to the height of the buildings should be in a range from .5 to 2.

#### *Bringing more people onto the sidewalks*

People are important components of the street. Usually a neighbourhood population of at least 30,000 is required to make commercial, urban streets viable and lively. People need reasons to use the street at different times of day and night. The street also needs rituals, traditions and events to keep it alive. Our fun runs and peace marches are one way we keep our streets alive (see Urban Street Life Tools on pages 88 and 89).



#### *Making cycling a safe and viable transportation option*

We require more than a shared street experience to significantly shift the balance of cyclists versus automobiles. A street strategy might explore the feasibility of turning over some residential blocks to dedicated cycle paths.

#### *Making streets important greenway connectors*

Current land uses and new opportunities will largely dictate the linkages in the Vancouver Urban Greenway concept. Linkages can take various forms and provide diverse opportunities for walking, cycling and other non-motorized movement like skate-boards or roller-blades. Cycling linkages include bike paths for recreational use, special thoroughfares adjacent to main arterials where bikes are given priority and, for commuters, special commuter bike lanes.

The street strategy looks to the future and proposes a vision for Vancouver streets (see Essential Action 7).

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## D. ECOLOGICAL PRIORITY

*The connections between regional identity and the sustainability of the land are essential and fundamental. A valid design philosophy, therefore, is tied to ecological values and principles; to the notions of environmental and social health; to the essential bond of people to nature, and to the biological sustainability to life itself.*

Michael Hough

People's first impression of Vancouver is its greenness. Many citizens mentioned the green quality of the city, the lushness of the private and public gardens, the smell of the vegetation and the sense of plants as being critical to the character of the city. Vancouver has the reputation of being a city in nature because of its setting. But surprisingly, nature is absent from much of the urban landscape.

Within the last 100 years we have covered over the streams, marshes and small forest bogs which were a part of our natural landscape before development. Our escarpments have recently been targeted for development and even our shoreline is rarely "natural". Our parks system tend to be manicured and maintained--our aesthetic has been trained to expect this type and quality of open space. Even in our private gardens we rarely acknowledge our natural landscape heritage--the western coastal temperate forest ecosystem.

Vancouver is an urban centre; we are not proposing to return it to wilderness. Yet we need to pay attention to urban ecology in order to understand the environmental side of the urban landscape and to honour the "recognize legacies" principle.

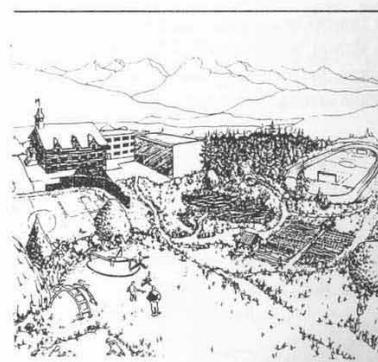
The Ecological Priority theme covers ecological issues like air quality, urban run-

off, habitat diversity, the urban forest, and ecological health.

### ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

#### Air Quality

Air quality is an important issue in managing the urban landscape because air pollution has well-known negative effects on human health as well as on vegetation and built structures. We should be planning and designing cities with reduced reliance on automobiles and greater attention to energy conservation. Increasing the number of trees in the "urban forest" also helps reduce the effects of global warming.



#### Urban Run-off

In Vancouver, most run-off from rain, snow, lawn watering, car washing and other urban activities flows across the ground and enters the nearest storm drain. Storm drains are directly connected to pipes which exit in Burrard Inlet and the Fraser River. This run-off usually contains elements that are "unfriendly" to the plants and animals that live in the water bodies which surround Vancouver as well as being detrimental to general water quality.

Before the automobile and paved roads, people understood more about the water cycle. Children played in low-lying, wet areas; water didn't disappear down a deep dark hole. With the advent of curbs, gutters and paved sidewalks, we have "progressed" to tidily eliminating water. Impermeable surfaces interrupt the water cycle by not allowing the run-off to percolate through soil. This percolation not only cleans the water but also recharges the ground water that is an important reserve.

Principles of urban ecology and economics indicate that with an attitudinal change which accepts a softer road edge, we could improve our water quality and the health of our urban ecosystem.

Urban run-off and storm water management issues should be addressed through specific ecological performance standards and an ecological management plan.



#### Habitat Diversity

A habitat provides an animal with its food, water and shelter. Historically, the Vancouver area had many natural habitats that supported a diversity of plants and wildlife species--fish, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals. Today, wildlife diversity is quite low and continually diminished by development activities.

*Habitat fragmentation both on the large and the small scale is now being identified as a root cause of species loss. To dedicate 15% or more of land area as park is a target that will more nearly approach the need to preserve and enhance natural areas of the city.*

Vancouver Natural History Society

What are the benefits of conserving and creating wildlife habitats in an urban area?

- ▶ Quality of life for citizens improves.
- ▶ Native plants and animals as indicators of ecological health are preserved.
- ▶ Local, urban opportunities for bird-watching, natural history study and outdoor education are provided.

In the early 1900's Vancouver had 120 kilometres (75 miles) of streams which supported runs of coho salmon, rainbow trout, steelhead and other species. Today, very few streams see the light of day. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is interested in daylighting streams for the potential of bringing fish back, but urban run-off water quality and temperature may compromise the ability of streams to support fish. Even if the reappearance of fish stocks is far in the future,

daylighting streams now can support other wildlife and remind us of our natural heritage. During the Task Force public process, people expressed a great deal of interest in the existence and revival of old streams.



## ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

Access to up-to-date information about the city is critical to making good decisions. As a dynamic and complex system, the urban landscape needs to be mapped, analyzed and documented; we need information on biophysical factors including hydrology, vegetation, geology, wildlife and other ecological systems. Even if the information exists, it is not currently mapped in a way which makes it accessible to either the public, city staff or politicians.

*Existing habitat needs to be systematically mapped, and an assessment made of its contribution to the overall environmental integrity of the city.*

Nora Layard  
Federation of B.C. Naturalists

It is important to understand what we want to achieve through inventory and monitoring of the urban landscape. While it makes sense to isolate specific issues and monitor them (for example, species in a particular sample area) our research unearthed very little information on ecological health indicators for urban environments. This topic requires more investigation, although we have proposed a "community bird count" to start a monitoring ecological health (see Measuring Ecological Health Tool on page 96).

Ecological performance standards are mechanisms designed to improve and maintain environmental quality. If we are serious about building and living in an ecologically healthy city, these standards must be formally adopted by Council and enforced by departments in City Hall.

A checklist of ecological standards relating to storm water management, the urban forest and surface permeability will serve as a guide in considering various development plans (see Essential Action 11). Developers will be required to demonstrate how these standards are being met prior to project approval. Mechanisms to review and regulate standards, are required to ensure compliance with the agreed mitigation measures.

*Our urban tree resources need constant inventory, aided by aerial surveys to determine health, nutrient deficiencies and quantity. As a prime objective, increase the number of healthy, potentially large, appropriate, ornamental and ecologically adaptive trees on both public and private land in Vancouver. Large trees, versus an equivalent biomass of many small trees, have a greater effect on modifying urban air pollution, modifying temperature extremes and create a more dramatic aesthetic statement in the landscape.*

Peter Wharton, Curator  
David C. Lam Asian Garden

street trees, parks, natural areas and our gardens is critical.

## ECOLOGICAL LITERACY

The Task Force process has been an opportunity to create public literacy about the urban landscape, the public realm and especially ecological issues.

While we still lack good information about urban ecology, we feel it is important to pioneer ways to balance our ecological concerns with city building. As we move into the next century, our urban landscape will change. If we treat ourselves as a part of nature, not apart from nature, we will seek to improve our access to nature in cities. It is important to our physical and mental health and our spiritual well-being.

## THE URBAN FOREST

The urban forest is commonly considered as the trees and vegetation in the city--on streets, in parks and on private property. The proposed Vancouver Urban Greenway will make a significant contribution to the urban forest.

As we implement Vancouver's relatively new Street Tree Plan, we will notice more diversity of trees in the city and more appropriately chosen species. But some experts expressed concerns to the Task Force that street trees are being "stressed" in the street environment due to air pollution, lack of water and air and poor soil. Each component of the urban forest,

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## E. NEIGHBOURHOODS THAT WORK

*...[Let's] become actively involved in the physical design of our built environment . . . City-building has become simply another expression of domination of humans by other humans, which is exactly the relationship we adopt with respect to the "natural" environment. . . Healing our relationship to the city becomes another part of healing our relationship to the planet.*

E. P. Fowler

Neighbourhoods are the foundation of Vancouver's spirit. They are places we can experience on foot or bicycle. They provide us with services that we need and enjoy. The special bakeshop that sells gooey cinnamon buns, the talkative shoe-maker, the hodge-podge hardware store and the colourful corner grocery store that displays flowers on the sidewalk year-round are what makes our neighbourhoods unique.

Many people spoke to us about the special qualities of their neighbourhoods. Vancouver has many distinctive neighbourhoods--old, new, multi-cultural, single family, and mixed-use. Long-standing neighbourhoods such as Strathcona or Dunbar have strong landscape legacies. Neighbourhoods like Mount Pleasant and Kitsilano are undergoing dramatic transitions.

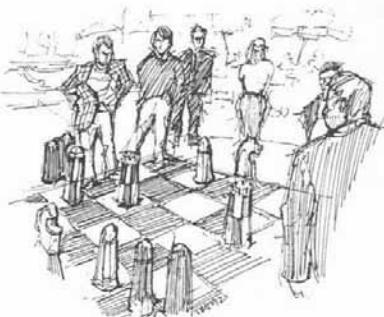
Neighbourhoods are a combination of the private and public realm. The private realm, notwithstanding substantial municipal involvement, is essentially formed and managed by individual citizens and private corporations. Our neighbourhoods are where interests in the public realm and the private realm intermingle.

The theme "Neighbourhoods that Work" covers topics such as adapting to change, the neighbourhood landscape, and the "city of

urban villages" including discussion about what makes neighbourhoods work, individual rights and zoning.

### ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Currently, many Vancouver residents are dissatisfied with the changes that come with growth because they feel the features and the atmosphere that characterize their neighbourhoods are being lost. But perhaps we forget that the features and character of our neighbourhoods today are the result of yesterday's growth and social development.



Newcomers, whether children, colleagues, or new Canadians should be welcomed as part of the community. As a city, we will soon be welcoming more new neighbourhoods in the Coal Harbour and Pacific Places developments.

Changes in cultural diversity bring new architecture, different kinds of commercial areas and a great variety of foods and traditions. Our multi-cultural communities should have opportunities to acceptably shift the way we use the urban landscape. For instance, some cultures don't use green parks; instead, sidewalks and street-corners are their public open space. We should encourage these different types of landscapes and celebrate our cultural mix, our commonalities and our differences.

Seniors, children, teens, the physically challenged, families, the poor and the homeless—all have different needs in the urban landscape. Changes in family structure also have powerful effects on the "model" family and on the kinds of public spaces we need.

Adapting to change is easier if we have a clear framework in place. The public realm should provide the comfort of knowing that the basic structure of the city—its streets and open spaces—are preserved and working for people.

*Through its durable buildings and institutional structures and even more durable symbolic forms of literature and art, the city unites times past, times present and times to come. Within the historic precincts of the city time clashes with time: time challenges time.*

Lewis Mumford



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**What makes neighbourhoods that work?**  
People make neighbourhoods that work. As Jane Jacobs, eminent city watcher says, the more "eyes on the street", the less vulnerable we are to crime. The more opportunities for people to interact and be outside together, the safer the neighbourhood will be. Painting houses, planting gardens or sweeping sidewalks indicate pride in the neighbourhood and create safer places.

Often, our reactions to crime or vandalism are to "fence-out" the problem, or to "sterilize" the landscape. But in reality, the urban landscape is not to blame for societal ills; instead it can be an important part of the solution. For instance, instead of fencing out "bad influences" from a school yard, we might invite in numerous and diverse community activities and programs to increase the number of people using and enjoying the school yard.

## THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LANDSCAPE

Vancouver is a city of gardens. Private and public landscapes all contribute to the green city. People have expressed concerns about losing garden space as new houses are built in neighbourhoods. People also expressed confusion about what is public and what is private. What are the rights of individuals in the urban landscape?

The neighbourhood landscape is one place where people of different backgrounds and interests can express themselves. But individual rights to express themselves on their property must be balanced with the effect on the whole neighbourhood. Individual activities in the private realm can jeopardize the health of the urban landscape. For example, property owners who choose to clear their land of trees reduce animal habitat and carbon dioxide recycling, change the visual character of their neighbourhood, and increase risks of blown down trees or soil erosion on adjacent property.



Other individuals appropriate the public realm for their own use by building fences or hedges outside of their property line. Since we have so little public space this seems unfortunate. In neighbourhoods like Kitsilano, back-to-back townhouses are creating private, walled yards that take away from the traditional visible gardens so particular to the neighbourhood. Other people present "gifts" to the public realm by having their yards open to visual appreciation from streets and sidewalks.

Such "gifts" are also given from the corporate world to the public realm. Many "public" places in the city are in fact privately owned and operated under a narrow set of guidelines as to when, how and by whom they can be used. This was mentioned in several public submissions and in discussions with city staff. Shopping centre malls and interior corporate atria should be encouraged to maximize hours of operation and types of use as a contribution to community life in their particular neighbourhoods.

### Community Gardens

There are other ways to green the city than residential gardens or public plazas. We can increase the city's greenness and focus community activities through initiatives like community gardens, especially linked to schools. Vancouver already has several community gardens, notably in Mount Pleasant and Strathcona, but we could use more!

For instance, there are now between 700 and 800 community gardens in New York City with some two million gardeners. There are many success stories of places where community gardens have helped to heal problems in neighbourhoods. For example, in Peoria, Illinois the community gardens began to contribute to the regional food bank. The idea caught on and soon the people who used

to receive free food were cultivating vegetables for the program.

Community gardens should be permanent land uses in the city and can become a primary public use in the Vancouver Urban Greenway.

## THE CITY OF URBAN VILLAGES

It is possible to look at a map of Vancouver and see the neighbourhoods as a series of centres which, with some slight adjustments, could function like urban villages. Each urban village would offer all the "necessities" of everyday life--places to work, shop, play, learn and socialize. Sounds good--but how do we achieve it?

### Zoning

The basis of zoning that we have inherited flows directly from the Bartholomew Plan; zoning was seen to be the key tool to achieve visual coherence in the urban landscape. Generally this was a single use zoning, which assumed that we lived in one place and worked in another, while manufacturing occurred in still another.

The nature of how we work and live together, and the way we move about has become more complex and brings single use zoning and its assumptions into question.

Mixed-use zoning should be applied throughout Vancouver. Greater proximity of residents to places of work, shops and public amenities would reduce car dependence. In turn, this would lessen both financial and environmental burdens. A wider range of permitted work uses in newly planned or existing neighbourhoods could foster alternative and new small business opportunities, reducing dependence on

downtown employment and related travel. All of these relationships indicate that we need to make the city more compact and diversify the use of the landscape.

Another flaw in current zoning is that it does not prescribe street space or public open space. The latter is normally negotiated on a project-by-project basis. While there are exceptions (e.g. Georgia Street), the responsibility for site-specific physical planning and design falls primarily upon the shoulders of urban designers, architects and landscape architects. On a project-by-project basis, these professional groups respond to the requests of individual developers. They often design open spaces and building structures in a vacuum unrelated to adjacent developments.

This lack of context and concern for the overall urban form tends to leave a checkerboard effect on the urban fabric. For example, the extensive condominium projects along Vancouver's Fairview slopes create a smorgasbord of housing types. Most are inward-looking, neglecting the public realm in general and particularly the pedestrian who does not live in the development.

This problem could be solved by the comprehensive public realm plan (see Essential Action 4). In the context of this plan, developers could respond to the city's "wish list" for the kinds of spaces that would be relevant to neighbourhood needs, instead of each project creating its own out-of-context contribution.

### A More Responsive Development Process

In the last 15 years the city has seen major redevelopments in various areas and the use of Comprehensive Zoning has become more prevalent. Participants in developing this zoning have included the City, developers and the public. As seen in the recent Arbutus

Lands Rezoning, the process has become problematic and contentious.

We should be rethinking zoning away from a prescriptive approach towards a descriptive one. We need a more creative process of comprehensive zoning with greater reliance on a vision and broad understanding of each place--prior to quantifying development into economic models and zoning controls (see Responsive Incremental Development Tool on page 90).

The result of a change in attitude toward zoning would doubtless be a more interesting and diverse city.

An overall Public Realm Plan, collectively arrived at and agreed to by citizens would establish a physical framework into which individual developments would clearly and logically fit.

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*VCPC strongly supports the preparation of a public space master plan "as a matter of the utmost urgency" . . ."A sense of urgency arises from the pace of growth and the danger that so much will be lost and irretrievable if we do not set out now to signify what must be protected and to open up the opportunities for things to be achieved incrementally through plans and visions. This should be the touchstone of our urban landscape policies and the major legacy of this Task Force."*

The Vancouver City Planning Commission

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## CHAPTER V: GIFTS AND TOOLS

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In the course of our work the Task Force was inspired by ideas which we now pass on to you as gifts to share with others, and as tools for individual actions and institutional responses.

We hope these ideas inspire you to promote the urban landscape and give you the tools for further work on behalf of the City of Vancouver.



Gifts



Tools



## THE VANCOUVER URBAN LABORATORY

The Task Force is aware that much remains to be done in the urban landscape beyond the 15 Essential Actions. There are "softer" measures that could be taken in the form of experiments--projects that we could learn from, and that are adaptable as we get results. While the scope for experimentation is endless, the Task Force recommends that Council initiate the following priority experiments from the "Vancouver Urban Laboratory".

### The Georgia Square Experiment

- ▶ Initiate a national "up-and-coming designer" open competition for the public open space planning for the Georgia/Granville precinct and for Georgia Square (front porch of Art Gallery) itself. Accept Georgia Street Second Century formally as context.

### The No-Car Day Experiment

- ▶ Sponsor a "no-car" day where only emergency vehicles, transit and bicycles are allowed on city streets. Perhaps buses could be free.

### The Curb Lane Experiment

- ▶ Dedicate some curb lanes on arterials to transit use only as way to encourage public transit and discourage private automobile traffic.

### The Picnic Without a Trace Experiment

- ▶ Picnic without a trace. We could remove all garbage cans from some parks while sponsoring a campaign to bring the "wilderness camping" ethic to the city.

### The Urban Farming Experiment

- ▶ Establish a pilot program for urban agriculture in a community that is interested in supporting a community garden.

### The Children's Garden Experiment

- ▶ Dedicate one children's garden in each quadrant of the city--to be built with and for children. This garden could be a renovation of a segment of an existing park.

### The Permeability Experiment

- ▶ Pilot a permeability monitoring program to test the ratio of paving to unpaved surfaces and the resulting stress on the infrastructure. This could be a partnering project with the Environmental Youth Alliance.

### The Greenway Charrette

- ▶ Organize an intensive design/planning session (a charrette) with students, community people and professionals to generate ideas for the Vancouver Urban Greenway.

### The Public Caring Experiment

- ▶ Develop programs which help citizens take care of the public realm, such as guidelines on tree care, to test the viability of public involvement in maintaining the urban landscape.

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## VANCOUVER--A SUSTAINABLE CITY?

Cities have been viewed as bazaars, as economic engines, as infernal machines, and as electronic circuits. More optimistic metaphors envisioned the celestial city, the city as a garden and the city as an ecosystem or community. Our image of our City is a powerful force. The image both shapes and constrains how we plan and build the City of Vancouver.

*Regional identity is connected with the peculiar characteristics of a location that tell us something about its physical and social environment. It is what a place has when it somehow belongs to its location and nowhere else. It has to do, therefore, with two fundamental criteria: first, with the natural processes of the region or locality--what nature has put there; second, with social processes--what people have put there. It has to do with the way people adapt to their living environment; how they change it to suit their needs in the process of living; how they make it their own. In effect, regional identity is the collective reaction of people to their environment.*

M. Hough, *Out of Place: Restoring Identity to our Regional Landscape*

Sustainability represents a shift in social goals from a belief in the primacy of economic development towards a recognition of the interconnectedness of the environment, economy, and community.

Two priorities are emerging from attempts to translate "sustainability" into institutional responses. One is the need to deal with global issues of changing climate and unequal global development. The second is the regional and local needs to analyze and address critical issues--waste disposal, air quality, land use, transportation systems and social equity.

There is a flurry of activity to define and work towards "sustainable communities". In the Greater Vancouver area, several municipalities have created new positions for environmental specialists, residential recycling programs are under way, and automobile emissions testing is about to start. Only a handful of communities across Canada, however (notably Ottawa, Peterborough, and Regina), have formally adopted the theme of sustainability as an organizing principle for the city's approach to development. The City of Vancouver is poised to become a leader in this area.





## CIVIC AND SACRED PLACES

There are many sacred and civic landscapes in Vancouver. These special landscapes are public landscapes—they represent our connections to the past and our hopes for the future.

### SACRED PLACES

#### Deadman's Island

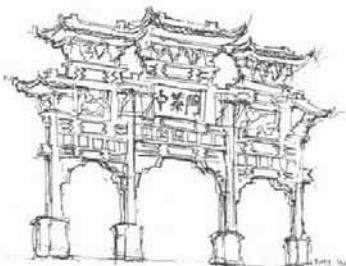
Deadman's Island in Coal Harbour is a unique place of legend and burial, although now a military establishment. How could we change our experience of Deadman's Island? Perhaps it could be a sacred grove and burial place?

#### City Well

The water reservoir on the top of Little Mountain, in Queen Elizabeth Park, could be thought of as a city well. Paved over, the reservoir is currently used as a parking lot. Is this an appropriate way to celebrate a water source?

#### Seaforth Park: the Peace Park

Every year, tens of thousands of Vancouverites walk in the annual Peace March. We should celebrate peace through (1) completing Seaforth Park and (2) creating a permanent speaker's podium at Sunset beach for the presentation of lectures related to the importance of peace in our world.



### GATES AND ENTRANCES

The way we enter the city or different parts of the city is important to our understanding of our urban landscape and sense of civic pride.

#### What if we . . .

##### City Gates

Create major city entrances at Hastings Street and the Trans Canada Highway, at the Vancouver Airport, and at the Oak Street Bridge, as three of the more symbolic and historic entrances to the city. Construct a ceremonial entrance to the False Creek Harbour—an entrance that recognizes little boats, the Sea Festival, bathtub races and other events.

##### City Bridges

Use the design of our city bridges to create a sense of entry into the downtown, much in the manner that the Lion's Gate Bridge and the Burrard Bridge create a sense of entry into the city. Reconsider the "expressway bridges", such as the Cambie Street Bridge and the Viaducts—how could they be modified to give a greater sense of place?

##### Neighbourhood Gates

Create smaller, symbolic neighbourhood gates that help give identity to the different areas of the city.

##### Temporary Gates

Define appropriate locations and encourage the creation of temporary gates for special celebrations and events that take place in the city every five to ten years. Remember the old gates that were created for royal visits at the turn of the century?



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## LINKING VANCOUVER TO THE SEA AND SKY



Surrounded by bays, rivers, and inlets, water is an essential aspect of Vancouver—a part of our everyday experience and a powerful symbol of our connection with nature. Fundamentally, the sea and mountains influence our climate and the mountains provide us with drinking water.

Rain is part of our psyche—we have a special affinity for it—soft spring rain, fine mist and the occasional downpour. We walk, work and play in the rain, go to sleep, dream and wake to the sound of rain drumming on the roofs, pouring down the gutters and window panes.

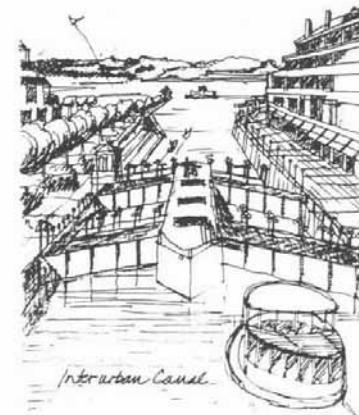
We visit the sea to experience its many moods and patterns. We play in, on and near the sea, we travel across it, our industries and economy relies on it. We view the sea from our ridges and escarpments.

We should celebrate this powerful aspect of our city by developing a variety of unique water experiences.

For example, the Vancouver Interurban Canal is an exciting proposal to create a water link between False Creek and Burrard Inlet, reclaiming the historic connection of water over the downtown isthmus. The canal would provide a significant and much needed amenity to Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, make connections with the seawall around the entire peninsula and improve water quality in False Creek with tidal flushings.

#### What if we . . .

- ▶ begin planning for the Interurban Canal
- ▶ develop tidal garden pools that work with the underwater landscape
- ▶ design kinetic sculptures that open and close in response to tidal fluctuations
- ▶ construct an ocean-front pool for East Vancouver that captures the energy of Kitsilano Pool
- ▶ create a great plaza descending to Burrard Inlet at the north end of Burrard Street, as the most significant point at which Vancouver meets to celebrate the sea
- ▶ give each beach groin around English Bay a special place for viewing and sensing the power and changing nature of the ocean and harbour
- ▶ create more opportunities to travel by ferry across the Fraser River, English Bay and Burrard Inlet
- ▶ uncover Still Creek and create a wildlife habitat corridor along its edges
- ▶ build a fabulous water garden that celebrates Vancouver's connection to the sea and sky.





## SENSING VANCOUVER

Vancouver provides a medley of sensory stimuli: some natural, some built, some familiar, some unfamiliar, some common, some exotic, some waiting to be discovered, rediscovered and elaborated upon.

### Wonderful Sounds

. . . falling rain, wind in the trees, wind in the halyards, fluttering kites, laughter of children, chatter of merchants putting out their wares, people speaking different languages, footsteps, church bells, songbirds, seagulls, crows, eagles, cooing pigeons, frogs croaking, train whistles, different languages, drone of traffic . . .

### Sounds Unique to Vancouver

. . . the nine o'clock gun, B.C. Hydro noon hour whistle, foghorns, Christmas carol boats, steam clock in Gastown . . .

### Not So Wonderful Sounds

. . . weed eaters, traffic horns, people yelling, sirens . . .

### Wonderful Aromas

. . . early spring morning, summer evening, autumn leaves, Molson's Brewery, mock orange on a warm summer eve, moist soil, freshly mown grass, roasting coffee, sea breeze, seaweed at low tide, flower markets . . .

### Aromatic Places

. . . Chinatown, Punjabi Market, seashore, Granville Market . . .

### Not So Wonderful Odours

. . . gasoline, pollution, engine exhaust . . .

Each of us perceives our environment differently. Some are more aware of visual stimuli; others possess a keen sense of smell or hearing. We need to remember that what we like, others may be less enthusiastic about. For some, the smell of diesel fuel conjures up good memories of ship engines, heavy equipment and good people--for others, it reminds them of feeling sea-sick, being cold, or just a bad smell. Grass and blossoms and broom are a delight--unless you have hayfever.



## FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS

Vancouver likes festivals. The Folk Festival, Children's Festival, Fringe Festival, First Night, Dragon Boat Races, Chinese New Year, Sea Festival, Jazz Festival, Powell Street Festival, Writer's Festival, Design Vancouver Week, Vancouver Film Festival, and the Peace Walk are only a few of the many celebrations and festivals Vancouverites anticipate and participate in annually.

In celebrating, city dwellers make their city more meaningful. Children grow up with certain celebrations as part of their lives, and adults, who remember when these events began, use them to add meaning and richness to their daily routines. They attend them with nostalgia, remembering earlier events when they were younger, or when the music was better. Even empty buildings, streets, and parks evoke these events. Public celebrations are one way that people attach themselves to their history, and their sense of what is beautiful; their involvement fosters their belonging to a place.

These qualities of celebrations also make them play a key role in tourism. As with many good ideas, festivals can have many layers of meaning. Festivals can be used strategically and politically, for example, to define and reclaim city neighbourhoods and to contribute to our public culture.

What if we expand on our existing rich legacy of festivals and celebrate other unique aspects of our city and its people? We could have a blossom festival, a celebratory mud dance at Spanish Banks at low tide, a festival of water, a festival of lights, a city-wide ceremonial bonfire to celebrate seasonal events, and even allow a downtown plaza to flood during heavy rains for a Dancing in the Rain festival.

Why not?

*Come what will, our open square will remain forever imperishable. Buildings, towers, palaces, may moulder and crumble beneath the touch of time; but space-free, glorious open space--will remain to bless the City forever.*

Samuel D. Ruggles



## MARKING TIME

Cities change over time. The hours, days, months, seasons and years slip by--often unnoticed. The urban landscape offers great opportunities for "marking time".

### What if we . . . ?

#### Lights

Program the lights on the Lion's Gate Bridge to reflect the volume and speed of traffic crossing the bridge at various times during each evening.

#### Urban Barometers

Establish a variety of urban "barometers" that measure the amounts and changes in the uses and patterns of use in the city, such as downtown traffic flow, late night pedestrian traffic on Robson Street, or the numbers of people attending an event at B.C. Place.

Use "time boards" to define the length of time it takes people walking at different paces to complete different urban walks in and around the downtown. Give them a sense of how big and how far various parts of the city are from one another.

#### Counting Sheep

Provide one downtown interior space that is open 24 hours a day as a place of gathering for the restless and insomniacs, and as a place of refuge for those in need.

#### Autumn Bonfire

Organize one great, city-wide, ceremonial bonfire--the "Burning of the Autumn Leaves" to celebrate this season and provide a once-a-year opportunity to remember the potent aroma of burning leaves.

#### Swimming Under the Stars

Provide for late evening "swimming under the stars" at Kitsilano Pool. Allow people the opportunity to remember what it's like to soak in warm water on a cold night, float on their backs, and gaze at the night sky and mountains in the distance.

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## CITY NIGHTS

Nightime in the city is special. Vancouver should be a place where nights are safe because there are so many events happening and people enjoying their landscape.

#### Sky Fields

Create two or three "sky fields" throughout the city: places that are dark enough, and free from the distraction of surrounding lights, for people to star gaze.

#### City Lanterns

Design several special flood lights, "City Lanterns", for the illumination of major night time activities and events that occur throughout the city.

#### Sound and Light Show

Develop a special sound and light show that describes the history of Vancouver and its myths and legends; present such a sound and light show at special times throughout the year.

#### Lit Streets

Give various important Vancouver streets different light energies, ideas and themes; emphasize the old neon street signs that remain on Hastings Street and make Granville Street our own "great white way".

#### Moon Madness

Develop a special place in the city for the capturing of moon beams; use small mirrors, white and black tiles, and white flowers to accent the moonlight as it reaches the surfaces of our city; create one large field of clover for summer moons.

#### Night Hikes

Build on the night hikes that already happen in Pacific Spirit Park. Offer supervised night journeys through the city that provide people with a special opportunity to sense the sounds and activities of the night--for people who might otherwise be afraid to go out into the night alone.

*We feel that one's inability to connect with the urban environment...inhibits our ability to connect with one another as individuals or as communities within that environment because the social, cultural, psychological and physical landscapes are one and the same.*

Public Dreams Society





## CHALK TALK

An excerpt from a letter from Public Dreams Society:

### Public Dreams Society



One "what if" idea was for an annual Chalk Talk. For those who may not know about it, Public Dreams collaborated with the Urban Landscape Task Force and Seattle-based environmental artist Buster Simpson on Chalk Talk as part of the City in View symposium held in February.

The public was invited to express their ideas about the urban landscape in blue railway chalk on the public sidewalk, which they did in considerable numbers. We attempted to record as many of these ephemeral expressions as possible but for the most part, they provided insights, complaints or aspirations as "found notions/notations" that one just happened upon moving through the city. Some were frivolous, some were politically thought-provoking, other quite sobering.

One particular resulting concern to Public Dreams was the ensuing discussion of a very basic democratic right to express oneself in the public realm. We may not like what everyone has to say but we should defend their right to express themselves and to do so on the publicly-owned sidewalks in such a basic yet impermanent technology--chalk. And every child knows how to use it.

We hope that the idea of an annual, monthly or even daily Chalk Talk is promoted by this Task Force to maintain this very public dialogue throughout Vancouver's urban landscape.

Never forget, the chalk also serves a positive environmental role of neutralizing the acidic runoff of air pollutants removed by the rain.

Any public exercise requires certain constraints for it to be acceptable in the dominant codes of the day. Controls are needed where safety, maintenance costs, or public morals are concerned. The Chalk Talk seemed to meet these concerns... and added something ephemeral and cathartic? to our city.



## URBAN WALKS AND URBAN RACES

### What if we . . . ?

#### The Tour de Ville

Establish a "Tour de Ville"--a large walking route encircling the entire downtown and linked to the Stanley Park Sea Wall--all part of the Vancouver Urban Greenway.

#### Burrard Inlet Promenade

Establish a grand promenade along Burrard Inlet that is in keeping with the scale of the working harbour and city at this location.

#### Different Walks for Different Folks

Define different streets in the city as offering different kinds of walking experiences; make them look different; give them special names that suggest the nature of the place that has been created.

#### Boat Races

Define the widest possible variety of boat races for False Creek and English Bay and assure that such races are incorporated into the planning and management of these water bodies.

#### Beginnings and Endings

Establish permanent starts and finishes for all bicycle races and marathon races in Vancouver and mark such places with permanent structures that celebrate, on a year-round basis, the excitement of those races and the achievements of the race participants (just to remember the time when you actually finished a marathon!).

### A Place to Cheer From

Establish a permanent viewing stand, as a functional work of art, for all False Creek races and water festival activities.

### Special Urban Walks

Locate and design a variety of special urban walks such as a lover's lane, a philosopher's walk, a moonlight stroll, or a "pet parade".





## CITY OF GARDENS

Vancouver has become known as a City of Gardens. This can be attributed not only to its climatic location, but also to city planning influenced by the nineteenth century City Beautiful movement reflected in our Bartholomew Plan. The love of gardens and diligence of many citizens to bring their garden traditions to Vancouver also makes a contribution.

We see this legacy of planning in well-defined neighbourhoods, boulevards and treed median streets. These places celebrate Vancouver's people, place and climate. They reflect a strong emphasis on caring for nature and a desire to maintain connections to our natural surroundings.

As Vancouver evolves, so do our gardens. Private contributions of residential gardens and corporate plazas should be expected, respected and encouraged. Although our private gardens are personal expressions, they are also public elements which contribute to the quality of our experience of the street and the city as a whole. Every space--cracks in the sidewalk, garden walls, balconies and rooftops should be considered as a gift to the city, a contribution to the image of Vancouver as a City of Gardens.

As Vancouver continues to develop, we should encourage a diversity of gardens: hanging gardens, roof-top gardens, butterfly gardens, hospice gardens, wildlife feeding gardens, scent gardens, healing gardens, water gardens, orchards, multi-cultural gardens, childrens' gardens, food gardens, community gardens, wild gardens, gardens for reflection, hidden gardens, miniature gardens, tidal gardens, balcony gardens, and gardens for a rainy day.



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## PLAYING ON COMMON GROUND: A Place for Children

Vancouver is fortunate for its legacy of community schools and playgrounds for children: like the Granville Island water park and play area in the midst of traces from our industrial past or the food garden at Lord Roberts Elementary School. But we have the opportunity to create some children's gardens in Vancouver that do more to celebrate our natural and cultural history.

Barbara Flanagan, an architect, provides inspiration in a recent issue of the magazine "Metropolis" where she addresses our most energetic, open-minded citizens: children.

Flanagan writes: "Kids not only tolerate social diversity, they welcome it. Young children are seldom saints, but they're mercifully blind to differences adults cannot or will not overlook. Kids will not, or cannot, perceive class, ethnic origin, race or religion as criteria for choosing playmates. And they naturally gravitate to agoras: playgrounds, school yards, parades, parks, streets, alleys."

Flanagan relates the story of moving from urban Brooklyn and the playgrounds of Prospect Park to a suburban neighbourhood in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Her family finally had their own back yard, but no one to share it with. "My husband and I furnished the lawn with swings and sandbox to little avail. The kids wanted more kids; we parents missed the company of neighbours and strangers."

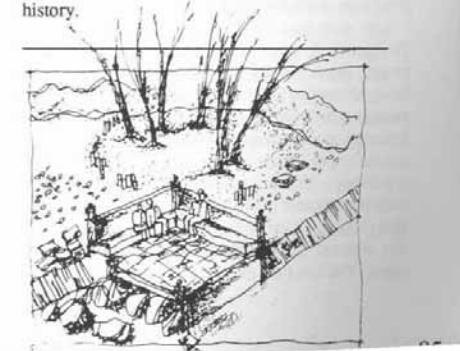
Now Flanagan and the Parks Department of Bethlehem are working together on a special community project. She has proposed a Geo-Garden for Sand Island, a strip of scenic but overgrown parkland which is a slice of transportation history, bordered by two railways and three waterways. The Geo-Garden is, "a geological playground designed to show how local natural history became local industrial history. The premise was simple: without rocks

there would be no canals, no railroads, no industry. Why not use rocks and minerals--everything from climbing boulders to tiny stones embedded in mortar--to tell stories?"

The Geo-Garden takes playgrounds to the next level. It has six play settings:

- ▶ **Rock Room:** protected park-and-chat zone;
- ▶ **Stage-on-a-Cave:** a permanent stage for local groups;
- ▶ **Rock Piazza and Spiral Jetty:** a plaza for monumental specimen rocks and a curving maze of rocks designed in homage to Robert Smithson's earth sculpture Spiral Jetty;
- ▶ **Sandy Grove:** a stand of mature trees as a hide-and-seek grove;
- ▶ **River:** old fashioned pumps for kids to unleash a stream of water over a bed of rocks; and
- ▶ **Bridges:** a structure of play towers and slides.

Let's create some children's gardens in Vancouver that celebrate our natural and cultural history.





GREEN ARCHITECTURE

Architects and builders are being forced to rethink design and construction with a view to the environment. No longer can structures be solely the product of visual expression and aesthetic conceit.

Green architecture demonstrates ecological sensitivity, conserves energy and minimizes pollution. But it also recognizes and gently engages all of the extraordinarily rich relationships that exist among architecture, its occupants and its surroundings—both local and regional. It adds concerns of micro-climate and local ecology to contextual concerns with the form of neighbouring buildings and with history. To function and flexibility, it adds a concern with the quality of interface and relationship between humans and artifacts, a concern that goes beyond ergonomic and thermal comforts.

The British Research Establishment, which assesses new buildings for their environmental performances, notes that the highest concentration of most airborne pollutants and thus the greatest potential damage to human health is inside buildings--where many people spend most of their day. These buildings are the source of carbon dioxide, as well as ozone-destroying CFC's in air-conditioning systems and a host of potentially toxic vapours from insulation, furnishings and photocopy machines.

To economic concerns with initial costs and profits, green thinking adds the notion of "total life-cycle costing", as is being pioneered by some manufacturer's in Norway and Sweden. For instance, environmental and social as well as economic projections can be made at all stages of a building's life: the extraction of the materials, their manufacture into components, the construction process, a lifetime's use and maintenance and the eventual demolition, decay or recycling of parts. The latter are particularly important when

we realize that a large percentage of landfill sites are filled with demolition materials.

In this analysis, energy consumption and polluting side effects are assessed at all stages. Viewed in this way, cheap buildings and components can prove a very costly investment. Over twenty years, cleaning and maintenance on some items can escalate to more than ten times the cost of the original components. Superior materials and components often need far less frequent and laborious cleaning and maintenance--with savings too in the use of polluting cleaners and lubricants. (The cleaning of buildings, a subject seldom considered by architects, is a huge industry--in Sweden, for instance, it is its fourth largest.)

The challenge of green architecture is to make buildings and places that are emotionally satisfying to the users. The implication for design is that it may require "disciplinary humility" of designers: people other than architects may have answers. It may also mean that building design may be driven more by "ecological functionalism", where the sun, wind, the rain and the soil become determinants.



HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Our heritage landscapes need to be identified, documented and protected.

In *Heritage Landscapes in British Columbia: A Guide to their Identification, Documentation and Preservation*, Douglas Paterson has identified sixteen types of heritage landscapes for communities to identify and document. Each neighbourhood in Vancouver should undertake this program as the beginning of a major city heritage landscape inventory.

The sixteen heritage landscape types (with an example of each following in parentheses) are:

- ▶ major natural landscapes (Musqueam Marsh)
  - ▶ important native sites (Village of Khatsahlano)
  - ▶ historic routes (Carroll Street portage)
  - ▶ sites of historic events (where city council first met)
  - ▶ landscapes related to famous citizens (Gassy Jack)
  - ▶ agricultural/horticultural landscapes (Southlands)
  - ▶ industrial landscapes (our working harbour)
  - ▶ civic landscapes (City Hall)
  - ▶ major parks, recreation areas and gardens (Stanley Park)
  - ▶ everyday gardens and small landscapes (neighbourhood scale)
  - ▶ unique spaces and places (under Granville St. Bridge)
  - ▶ sacred places (Mountain View Cemetery)
  - ▶ heritage precincts (China Town)
  - ▶ heritage trees (Red Cedar in Stanley Park)
  - ▶ significant views (the Lions)

## Ways to Remember Vancouver's Heritage:

## 1. Heritage Theatre

11. **Heritage Theatre**: Establish a great "Heritage Theatre"--a place where the stories, tales, legends, and myths of the city are enacted on an annual basis; some special enactments occur only once every five to ten years. Use the theatre to help celebrate our many fine poets and authors.

## 2. Preserve Trace:

Preserve a large number of diverse traces of our urban heritage. Take inspiration from the old railway tracks that remain on Granville Island. Remember the barrel factory on False Creek, the brick paved streets in Kitsilano, the wooden pavers on many of our back lanes and the entry porch to an old school house.

### 3. Urban Traumas

Record the sites and identify the nature of various urban disasters, tragedies, and traumas. Remember the plane crash at 755 Bute Street during the inaugural flight of the Forest Ministry's first aircraft in 1918 or the Vancouver fire, the Fraser River floods, the internment of Japanese Canadian citizens in Hastings Park.

#### 4. Cultural Events

Identify, locate and mark important social and cultural events: the UBC Great Trek, the Vancouver General Strike, the first major union meeting, or the return of the first soldiers from World War I and World War II, as well as significant events for our communities of different cultural origins.



## URBAN STREET LIFE I

One of the unique features of Vancouver as a Canadian city is the temperate climate which permits year-round street life. While Vancouver has become livelier in the last few years, there is still a sense that opportunities for creating a more vibrant street culture deserve action.

### Street Life Ingredients

Street life potentially includes: outdoor cafes, artists, buskers, food vendors, fruit and flower displays, building uses which relate to the street, show windows, stores spilling wares onto the sidewalk, chalk talks, markets, parades, and special events.

Accommodating these activities requires wide sidewalks, commercial areas along non arterials streets, plazas and mini-parks.

### Street Activities Program

The City of Vancouver has several "Street Activities Programs" administered by the Projects Department within Engineering. The main programs are planning and permitting for sidewalk cafes, street vending, special events and produce/flower displays. These programs have to harmonize sometimes conflicting pressures such as the desire for more street animation versus concerns regarding noise and pedestrian safety.

Interest in street vending is growing--there are over 300 applicants for the 30 available spaces of the 100 or so existing vending spaces. This interest is met with resistance from some retailers on the grounds of unfair competition, aesthetic and nuisance problems and lack of street vendor commitment to a neighbourhood. Food vending also continues to be limited by Health Department requirements which are more stringent here than in some Canadian cities.

The street cafes program works well, growing from 32 restaurants to over 100 in the last six years. However, while we acknowledge City

Engineering concerns over retail encroachments onto public sidewalks, we see the need to revise some cafe regulations (and other sidewalk retail restrictions) which seem unnecessarily restrictive.

Liquor licensing is another factor influencing street cafes. While we recognize that this is a sensitive subject, it is evident in other urban centres (Montreal, Toronto, European cities) that "cafe life" often revolves around a style of small cafe that offers food, coffee and drinks. These are usually related to the street or courtyard, through plate glass or open windows and/or patio seating.

Provincial laws are already somewhat restrictive as to food and liquor serving. The City of Vancouver should encourage a diversity of cafes through its interpretations of provincial laws and should not further restrict these possibilities. The introduction of the neighbourhood pub and the licensing changes after EXPO '86 show that most neighbourhoods can successfully absorb licensing changes over time.



## URBAN STREET LIFE II

The City of Vancouver should encourage measures which create a vibrant urban street life, balanced with the need for public safety and comfort. To this end, Council should direct those who administer the Street Activities Programs to prepare general street life goals and objectives with suggestions for encouraging an appropriate mix of street activities. They should then suggest ways to tailor administrative procedures to achieve these objectives. Interested retail and community people should be involved in this process.

The Task Force suggests that the City experiment with innovations and carefully monitor the results for further planning. Specific areas for investigation and experimentation include:

- Review and revise health regulations in comparison with other cities, to allow for new possibilities for more diverse food vending, while keeping public health in mind.
- Consider removing the seasonal (May 1 - October 31) restrictions on sidewalk cafes and exempt take-out and tiny restaurants from the railing and deck requirements.
- In consultation with buskers and retailers, consider a permitting system for street musicians and other performers.
- Reconsider the definition of "encroachment" onto the sidewalk and remove unnecessary restrictions on merchants' use for occasional racks of clothes or product displays.
- Avoid the further restriction of liquor licensing options in the downtown area. Instead, encourage a diversity of cafe/restaurant styles with emphasis on the street cafe in selected areas, e.g. Downtown South.
- Encourage more vending in neighbourhoods outside the downtown, as appropriate, by designating clustered spaces in selected areas, e.g. Commercial Drive or 4th Avenue.
- Explore the potential for greater use of downtown and neighbourhood alleys and narrow streets for cafes, markets and vendors.



## RESPONSIVE INCREMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Another development approach, which is different than the traditional master planning and zoning model, is responsive incremental development. This approach tries to go beyond the typical master planning process for large development proposals.

In the incremental development approach, the design/planning team works together interactively on a site model which has the existing context but no preconceived ideas about physical framework such as roads or zoning.

In the context of a "city plan", the whole team develops a vision and attitudes to guide the incremental process on a particular site. The following is an example of one set of attitudes which a team might adopt as guiding principles:

**Best public good:** striving to design a community which contributes positively to the public realm;

**Mix of Uses:** providing a fine grain mix of use with the opportunity to live and work and play within a diverse, interesting community;

**Movement systems:** mixing uses to reduce reliance on commuting and therefore the car; emphasize other paths and movement systems;

**Self-Sustaining:** balancing the site ecologically, including soil rehabilitation, storm drainage, edible landscape and recycling;

**Devolution of Scale:** aiming for a maximum height of 5-7 stories with a maximum development proposal of 100,000 square feet; each development must have a street address and 'address' the street; and

**Positive, Public Open Space:** emphasizing public control of open space where every building is shaped and located to create 'positive', usable, enjoyable open space.

The incremental design process creates a "whole" which results from a series of discreet and cumulative designs for buildings and open space in response to actual situations.

The team studies the existing building and open spaces on a particular site and looks for the best place to start creating a community. Each designer makes a proposal in simple model form and the group picks the proposal or 'move' that seems most promising. This design then becomes part of the context for the next 'move'. The process is open to involvement of different people throughout such as representatives from user groups and all levels of government, as well as business and marketing experts and development and construction business people.

In summary, the responsive incremental development process is collaborative rather than competitive. It brings together people who should be involved in the creation of communities in a flexible and innovative way. The results of the process are places which are mixed-use, varied in their programming, human scale, ecologically responsible, and flexible for cumulative design and future modification.



## NEIGHBOURHOOD STORIES

Every person has a story. These stories are the fabric of society and the history of our city. Stories provide the ties between what was and what may be; stories are the link between generations.

Neighbourhood stories—the collective stories of community residents—embody people's values. These values impart a "feel" to each neighbourhood. Many of these values are expressed in the urban landscape.

Each Vancouver neighbourhood has a unique story. In these stories we may find links from past to present to future, but also links across boundaries and cultures. The narratives would span four dimensions: the physical borders, the mind, language and culture, and time.

Everyone's story, read together, will make up the Story of Vancouver.

### How should we do this? Here are some ideas:

- ▶ Collect people's memories of their communities. Seniors would be most valuable in this part, but everyone has a story. Assemble the stories and organize them into neighbourhoods.
- ▶ Take the most interesting stories and print them for distribution within neighbourhoods. Make them available, with taped oral histories, at community centres, libraries and at the City Room.
- ▶ Organize community groups to write a history of their neighbourhoods which might include archival photos, architectural history, pioneers, developmental or land-use changes, interesting people, landmarks, environmental changes, maps, natural features of past and present and anything else people feel is important about their community.

- The most perhaps, that we can hope to do is to endow our city with ideas, and qualities, and reference points, which will continue to reverberate down the years, and open up, for future generations, opportunities which would not otherwise exist, further to enhance their surroundings.*
- Michael Middleton  
*Man Made The Town, 1987*



## PLACES FOR INFORMATION, IMAGINATION, PARTICIPATION

### City Room

The City needs a central place where citizens can go to obtain information and things related to their city.

The City Room could be a city information centre for community access with a large model of the city and lots of maps on the walls to record visions and heritage. Citizens could access city information through computers. There could also be a "service" area for groups to use photocopying and computer facilities. At the City Room, people could obtain information such as: maps, zoning information, public notices, books, neighbourhood stories, environmental information, census data, Local Area Plans, by-laws, brochures and tourist information.

The City Room could be staffed with a community liaison person able to communicate with the community about landscape or other civic issues. If location and size are convenient both the Urban Landscape Hotline and public meetings might be a part of the City Room.

### City Store

The City Store could be a place where people can buy used manhole covers, composting units, recycled civic equipment, goods normally sold at civic auctions and gardening equipment. The City Works Yard could compost plant material collected from park and street maintenance programs, then bag it to sell at the City Store. Plants rescued from development sites could be recycled and sold. People could deposit goods for recycling as well as be able to buy recycled goods. Badges, City of Vancouver buttons, flags, books about Vancouver, maps and other "gift shop" items could be sold here as well.

### Urban Commons

Establish a system of Urban Commons throughout the city that provide the urban resident with an opportunity to manipulate the landscape, for the

simple pleasure of planting a garden or merely digging a hole in the ground. As part of this system of urban commons, construct two or three different types of public maintenance yards which are places where people can go to repair things or build things when they don't have either the tools or the space at home to realize their creative objectives.

### The Public Stage

Build several versions of the public stage, such as the Kitsilano Show Boat, where both children and adults can perform in public; let our childhood memories of such public performances be permanently recorded and reminded.

### Landscape Excursions

To raise public awareness about the urban landscape, we should expand on the Community Art's Council's program of heritage walks and provide a comprehensive, year-round program of urban explorations. These could be modelled on the Landscape Excursions which took place at The City In View Symposium such as the "Back Alley Prowl", "Nature Downtown" and "From Queen Victoria to Madonna".



## ECOLOGICAL LITERACY IN THE URBAN LANDSCAPE

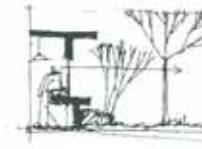
Historically, the Lower Mainland had a diversity of ecosystems including wetlands, west coast temperate forest, bogs, freshwater lakes, and marine intertidal mudflats. Urbanization has significantly altered or completely destroyed many of these ecosystems. Only relatively small, often highly stressed, remnants of these ecosystems remain as part of Vancouver's natural heritage legacy.

Stanley Park, Trout Lake, Renfrew Ravine and Musqueam Marsh are important parts of this legacy. Other areas such as Everett Crowley Park, the Grandview Cut and the False Creek Flats (railway lands), that were disturbed by human activities earlier in the century now have new "natural" urban ecosystems establishing themselves.

### What is Ecological Literacy?

Ecological literacy means understanding the basics of how ecosystems work and the kinds of impacts that human activities can have on ecosystems. It means having the knowledge of the following principles:

- Everything in the environment is linked to everything else in some way. Something that happens in one place can have an affect on something in another place.
- Ecosystems are made up of all the interrelated living and non-living things in a particular place. Energy, water, nutrients and minerals are continually recycled by the plants and animals within an ecosystem.
- Certain parts of an ecosystem provide a plant or animal with its basic survival needs--food, water, and shelter.





## CONSIDERING NATURE IN THE CITY

Vancouver's spectacular natural setting gives the illusion of a city in nature. Although nature is present in the city in many forms, there are few remaining natural habitats. The presence of a diversity of plants and animals in the city is a sign of a healthy environment.

Vancouverites are concerned about protecting and making responsible decisions about the remaining natural ecosystems. They are also interested in restoring and creating natural areas and encouraging wildlife in the city.

Encouraging nature in the city requires an ecological view--one that considers natural processes as the underlying framework in planning, designing and maintaining the urban landscape.

To maximize the ecological value of the city's open spaces, it is important to view every component as contributing to the larger system. Existing open space must be seen as fulfilling environmental and ecological functions. Trees, shrubs, flowers, streams, ponds, parks, and gardens collectively form an ecological web of life in the city. To function effectively, each needs to be protected as a part of the larger system.

### WHAT CAN WE DO TO PROMOTE WILDLIFE IN THE CITY?

Rights-of-way, boulevards, parks and gardens, institutional and industrial land and transportation corridors all represent opportunities for re-establishing ecosystems and promoting wildlife in the city. Currently many of these public places are vast expanses of finely manicured lawns and sterile tarmac which contribute little to habitat diversity. The following actions will result in increasing the diversity of plants and animals in the city.

#### Naturalization

Develop a naturalization strategy for parks and open space in the city allowing some areas in our parks and gardens to remain rough. Introduce natural landscape elements that create self-perpetuating landscapes such as woodlands, meadows and wetland habitats (see Essential Action 5).

#### Wildlife Corridors

Establish wildlife corridors linking significant areas of wildlife habitat, e.g. Burrard Inlet to Burnaby Mountain, Burnaby Lake, Fraser River Greenway, Endowment Lands (see Essential Action 2).

#### Back Yards and Back Alleys

Plan wildlife corridors in neighbourhoods using back alleys and gardens as a system. In Vancouver, back yards and back alleys have potential to function as wildlife corridors. In the older more established areas of the city, gardens and back alleys already provide diverse habitats for city wildlife. Planning and designing with an understanding of wildlife requirements--food, shelter, a place to breed and live--can maximize the potential of places to attract wildlife and function as wildlife corridors (see Essential Action 7).

#### School Yards

Explore ways that school yards can become a part of nature. School yards offer excellent opportunities for promoting wildlife and at the same time, help children to develop environmental awareness and appreciation. Involving children in habitat restoration and creation projects provides hands-on opportunities to discover the wonders and intricacies of plants and animals. Direct involvement and contact with nature leads to a greater appreciation and respect for the natural environment (see Essential Action 12).

#### Education

Establish a public education program, in conjunction with groups like the Vancouver Natural History Society, to inform people on how individuals, neighbourhoods and institutions can contribute to encouraging wild spaces in the city. Support community habitat restoration projects, e.g. Environmental Youth Alliance initiatives (see Essential Action 12).

*With money and work, streams can be turned into valuable habitat . . . streams going through communities provide reminders of nature.*

Dr. Valentin Schaeffer  
Douglas College

*Ponds surrounded by natural vegetation are a critical and scarce resource in Vancouver. Pond creation and enhancement could improve the amount and variety of wildlife. For example, the rather ugly ponds on the north slope of Queen Elizabeth Park could have their value to wildlife greatly enhanced by provision of natural vegetation at their borders.*

Dr. James Smith  
Conservation Biologist



*What do we mean by experiencing nature in the city?*

- . . . seeing butterflies
- . . . tasting rain and sunshine
- . . . discovering four-leaf clovers
- . . . digging for worms
- . . . sighting birds
- . . . feeling the rainforest
- . . . visiting a natural beach
- . . . smelling the sea



## MEASURING ECOLOGICAL HEALTH

When we posed the question: What could we use as measures of ecological health, we were looking for measurements which can:

1. measure and record both short and long term trends;
2. be related to ecological function;
3. be expressed in non-technical terms that can be understood by most urban dwellers; and
4. contribute to increased understanding and awareness of ecosystem structure, function and health.

Two ideas with good potential came to light. Both the diversity of plants and animals and the numerical abundance of wildlife could help measure ecological health in the urban landscape in a way that is non-technical and interesting.

We propose that the City consider measuring the diversity of birds in the urban landscape as an indication of ecological health. A program for measuring birds in the urban landscape would involve the following steps:

- Conduct a biophysical inventory and mapping of birds in the urban landscape.
- Develop a classification of urban landscape sites according to habitat type.
- Select "representative" sites from the range of sites and habitat types in the urban landscape as bird "biodiversity" monitoring areas.
- Conduct bird surveys at each site on a regular basis using standard techniques--a bird survey program would create an opportunity to involve naturalist groups, students in fish and wildlife programs, "Christmas-count" groups and others in a city-wide program.
- Report survey results on an annual basis, including analysis and interpretation of trends.

- Use the survey results to identify opportunities for habitat enhancement (for example, bird houses), and for "public relations" through natural history interpretation and education, formal and informal (see Essential Action 11).

### *What else could we use as measures of ecological health?*

- ? number of trees per person
- ? number of open water courses
- ? % of streams with fish
- ? % of streams with high-level dissolved O<sub>2</sub>
- ? % of streams with no pollutants
- ? ratio of CO<sub>2</sub> produced to CO<sub>2</sub> absorbed
- ? % of city which is permeable
- ? diversity of plants and animals
- ? numerical abundance of wildlife
- ? amount of natural habitat on marine coast
- ? coliform count in local waters



## CLEANING UP URBAN RUNOFF

Urbanization has dramatically altered the natural hydrological cycle. In urban areas development and impervious surfaces such as streets, parking lots, buildings and construction sites, intercept rainwater and reduce natural infiltration into the groundwater. The resulting runoff carries toxins, dangerous metals and other pollutants like hydrocarbons from car exhaust. The more traffic and impervious surfaces there are in the city, the worse the runoff pollution problems get. In contrast, areas of ground that are not paved or covered by buildings, absorb precipitation and runoff from uphill areas, cleaning the water as it percolates through the soil, and making it available to plants and trees.

In Vancouver most runoff is carried to the surrounding waterways by storm sewers. Some goes through combined sewer systems to the sewage treatment plants. At times of heavy rainfall the capacities of these sewers are often exceeded, leading to overflows of urban runoff and raw sewage. These overflows result in significant bacterial contamination in the North Arm of the Fraser River.

To address runoff and sewage pollution problems in Burrard Inlet, five senior government agencies have agreed to an environmental action program developed by the Burrard Inlet Task Force, as suggested by the federal Green Plan.

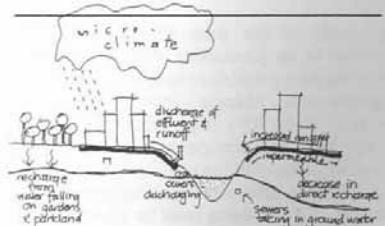
Through storm water management, the City of Vancouver can also assume an important role in improving water quality in the surrounding waters. The primary objectives of storm water management are to:

- improve water quality by decreasing the amount of runoff entering storm sewers and increasing filtering capacity of soils;
- minimize infrastructure costs by considering alternative approaches to drainage;

- protect natural hydrological, biological and soil processes; and
- raise public awareness of ecological processes.

In Seattle, "Landscaping Standards for Compliance with the Land Use Code and Environmental Review Requirements" recognize the importance of increasing permeable surfaces at building sites to reduce pollution. For example, the standards require that "For ground-related dwelling units, patios, walkways and similar impervious surfaces may occupy a maximum of 50% of the required open space area." Seattle also has a "Grading and Drainage Control Ordinance" that aims to protect waterways from the effects of urban runoff. Such regulations oblige landowners and developers to take responsibility for dealing with drainage and reducing runoff.

At the extreme, a "zero net runoff" policy could be adopted, requiring that all the water at a site drain naturally. Other ways of decreasing the accumulation of runoff in storm sewers and increasing the filtering of pollutants include the construction of grassy swales as surface drainage routes, the establishment of detention ponds, "daylighting" of streams, channelling rain water off roofs into gravel sumps, and the elimination of curbs and gutters. These measures, like the increase in vegetated surfaces, have positive aesthetic effects as well, and help educate people about the water system in the city.





## HISTORY OF A BLOCK: A Study of Permeability

This study explores the change in ground permeability due to the amount of built and paved area on single family lots in a Vancouver neighbourhood.

The case study block is the 1300 block of West 50th and 51st Avenue, between Cartier and Hudson Street. It provides a good cross-section of older stock from the late 1940s and early 1950s and newer homes from the early 1980s to the present. The mixture of stock illustrates the contrasts in the coverage of lots and treatment of landscape elements.

Diagram One represents the historical progress of built and significant natural features for the years 1930, 1954, 1979 and 1992. Although these diagrams are not exact in measurement, they do show a trend towards increasing impermeable coverage and the loss of significant vegetation. Essentially we are replacing our "green space" with driveways and patios.

Diagram Two represents a lot-specific permeability analysis. Separating the housing stock into two groups, the first built pre-1980 and the second built after 1980, produces some dramatic results. House coverage is increased by almost 10%. Garage sizes more than doubled between the two groups, and the amount of other impermeable surfaces rose by over 10 percent. The result is that total coverage for the newer lots is on the average 60% impermeable, compared to the figure for older stock of 35%.

The results of this study demonstrate that reductions in the permeability of single family lots is becoming a significant issue in Vancouver neighbourhoods. Although amendments and alterations to the RS-1 single family schedule since the 1980s have been somewhat successful in addressing issues of building size and form, they have been not adequately regulated landscape treatment. Present zoning could be amended to

further limit coverage, especially concerning the size of parking structures, and action towards minimum permeability regulation could be initiated. Concerns for the "over-regulation" of private property owners must be balanced by a recognition of an ecological ethic which extends beyond the public realm.

The study block, although not representative of all neighbourhoods in Vancouver, does provide an example of a trend that is extensive. The results of the analysis demonstrate the magnitude of change in the urban landscape, which should be a source of concern and a motivation towards action.

Diagram One: Chronology of Site Coverage

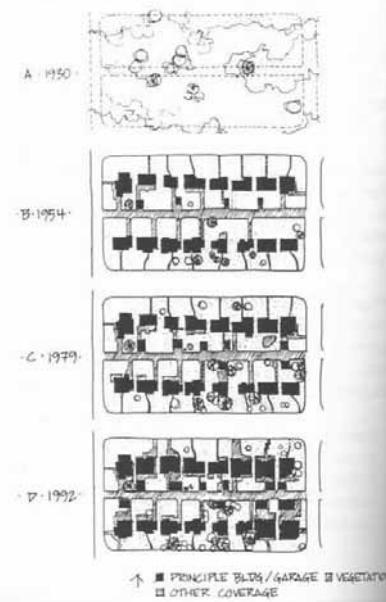
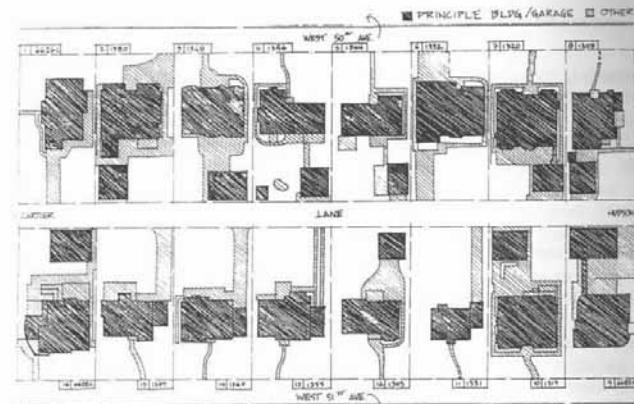


Diagram Two: Lot Specific Permeability Analysis





## CITIZEN FORESTER

Trees are an especially valued component of Vancouver's urban landscape. They provide a range of ecological, aesthetic, social and economic benefits, adding greatly to the quality of life in the city.

### Trees . . .

- ▲ provide a link with nature
- ▲ create a sense of place and time
- ▲ contribute to neighbourhood character and beauty
- ▲ define and enclose space
- ▲ buffer noise and screen views
- ▲ retain soil and water
- ▲ provide food and shelter for birds and wildlife
- ▲ improve climate and air quality
- ▲ provide shade and conserve heat
- ▲ bring neighbours together
- ▲ foster neighbourhood pride
- ▲ create neighbourhood identity
- ▲ increase property values

The urban forest is currently maintained by residents in the private realm and by the Park Board in the public realm. In order to effectively manage the urban forest, the number of Citizen Foresters must increase dramatically. Citizen Foresters are trained to manage the urban forest. They learn practical skills necessary to care for trees. Often, people don't know how to care for the trees on their own property or how to steward those in the public realm. A Citizen Forester Program may be one solution to maintaining healthy trees.

Growing a healthy urban forest is a giant undertaking--it requires planning, planting, protecting and caring for trees. It requires consideration for biological requirements of water and fertile soil as well as air and space--conditions that are often a challenge to provide in urban environments. It requires the participation of professionals and citizens alike in partnership.

Education helps generate awareness of trees, their value and growth requirements. This appreciation prepares people to protect and care for trees. For example, in New York City, Citizen Foresters are trained and certified to assist in the care and maintenance of the City's trees.

Community involvement is an essential element of a successful urban forestry program. Many cities have developed policies, guidelines and programs that encourage public participation in urban reforestation programs. Personal involvement in planning, planting and caring for trees fosters neighbourhood spirit and civic pride.

*There is something very special and humanizing which we instinctively recognize in a small patch of trees or a bit of dense bush which is large enough to hide a sense of mystery at its core.*

Ed Varney  
Specific Research Institute



## THE LITIGATION LANDSCAPE

"Council rejects skateboard bowl in city park". "Council refuses developer's park dedication of natural open space in ravine". "Park Board removes recreation facilities, long present in local playgrounds".

These scenarios are real and recent. Each decision reflects a concern for legal liability for personal injuries to persons using these public amenities.

In the aftermath of the liability explosion of the 70s and 80s, risk management considerations are driving many decisions affecting the development and use of public open space. Liability concerns should play a role in decisions affecting the public realm, however, not to the extent of overshadowing other public interest considerations. Prudence requires that liability concerns be taken into account, but these concerns should not dictate policies affecting development and use of the public realm. The attitude that City Hall has "deep pockets" to compensate personal injury claims that are remotely linked to the maintenance of public facilities must be changed.

Local government must encourage a sense of personal responsibility in the use and enjoyment of the public realm. It should likewise encourage provincial law-makers and indeed, the civil justice system, to require higher standards of individual responsibility for personal security.

The litigation explosion may be damped through the courts and the legislature and by educating decision-makers and the public. There are encouraging signs. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada recently refused to consider an appeal of a Brampton Ontario case where the lower court had held that the municipality was not liable for a dirt biker who was injured during an unauthorized use of a publicly owned natural ravine. Legislative amendments to the *Vancouver*

*Charter* and the *British Columbia Municipal Act* are also helpful.

On the other hand, court decisions remind us that we are legally responsible for environmental impacts which arise directly and unreasonably from our actions. Positive examples involve imposing liability for local government actions which permit private development which alters traditional downstream drainage and causes flooding and other damage to downstream projects.

What should we do in response to the litigation landscape?

- ▶ Bring home a sense of environmental responsibility to all players in the urban development scene: planners, developers, users and judges.
- ▶ Encourage creative design and use of public space along with reasonable standards of personal responsibility.
- ▶ Focus on the larger picture--for example, how automobile use might be regulated if Vancouver was liable for its share of environmental degradation from excessive ozone levels in the Fraser Valley. That kind of risk management *should* drive our urban landscape policy decisions.



## SOME LEGAL TOOLS FOR PROTECTING LAND

### Community Land Trusts

The community land trust model became popular in the U.S. in the 1960s to hold land for the benefit of a community. Urban land trusts usually seek to counteract the inflationary pressures that lead to expensive, high-density development and may exclude open space preservation and nature conservation.

Charitable trusts set up as non-profit societies or corporations may hold title to lands in trust in perpetuity. Land is acquired by the trust through purchase or donation, with the donor receiving tax credit for their contribution. The board of a community land trust often includes land or legal experts, residents of the trust lands, other community residents and public-interest representatives. Community representatives would be the controlling majority.

Long-term leases may be granted over trust lands through a planning process guided by ecological principles. Often housing and conservation purposes are combined, for example, by providing for affordable housing and community gardens.

In Vancouver, the Greenway Trust could operate a community land trust. The Trust could assemble lands or the right of access to lands, for example, utility corridors and railway rights-of-way. Specialized uses could be encouraged, for example, children's gardens or habitat protection. Various types of open space could be put in trust and added to the Greenway Lands that are already publicly owned, such as bike paths, pocket parks and waterfronts.

### Easements and Covenants

Other tools for protecting lands from market forces are easements and covenants. They are restrictions on the use of land protected by the land title system in British Columbia. These are more flexible than deeding land in trust, as the land owner retains title to the property. However,

future uses are restricted in accordance with terms of the covenant. The easement or terms attached to any title would ideally take away the landowner's and all future owners' rights to develop the protected land and would provide for control by a public agency or non-profit organization, for example, the Greenway Trust.

The reward to the landowner, besides personal satisfaction, is a tax deduction for the value of the easement or covenant. Such mechanisms could be used for conservation or access purposes, such as securing a trail or a wildlife corridor that passes through private properties. The public "Bruce Trail" along the Niagara Escarpment in Ontario was established this way.

### Registry

A third option, which has less legal authority, is a formal list of significant areas. Known as a registry, this is a good first step to applying other legal tools as the registry provides an inventory of lands with desirable characteristics. Lands are usually included in a registry on a voluntary basis, and the owner of the land is rewarded through formal recognition of the significance of their property.

## CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

How do we attain what is now just a vision of Vancouver's urban landscape?

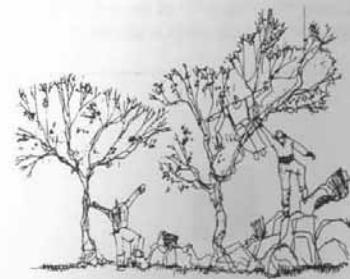
Members of the Urban Landscape Task Force were thoroughly impressed, and at times even overwhelmed, with the scope, quantity and quality of information that came our way. Facts, ideas and visions were contributed by the public, by experts, and by urban commentators outside Vancouver. It was a tremendous challenge to synthesize and winnow these ideas into this report. We hope the report is not too intimidating, but as that anonymous philosopher said, we are faced now with "no easy solutions, only intelligent choices".

Our work yielded four basic conclusions:

- ▶ The people of Vancouver are passionate and clear about what they value in the urban landscape: setting, greenness, human scale, natural landscape legacies, neighbourhoods, beaches, smiles, colour in the landscape, walking...and all things Vancouver.
- ▶ The biggest challenge in the urban landscape is recognizing the importance of and planning for the public realm, including making connections between important places in that realm (neighbourhoods, parks, schools, the water's edge, the urban centre).

▶ A Vancouver Urban Greenway, effected through a Greenway Trust, is a positive, exciting solution and is our priority action. The proposed Greenway would connect our existing legacies and help create new ones. The Greenway Trust would become a "meeting place" for all groups, public and private, who have stakes in the public realm.

▶ More than just a paper report should result. We offer ideas as gifts to inspire and tools to implement. One gift in particular is recommended: The Vancouver Urban Laboratory. This series of "experiments" is given in trust to Council to endorse and try out.



Please also remember the fifteen Essential Actions:

1. Adopt Eight Urban Landscape Principles for Decision-Making
2. Establish the Vancouver Urban Greenway
3. Celebrate our Legacies
4. Prepare a Public Realm Plan
5. Support the Draft Management Plan for Parks
6. Reclaim Local Streets for Bicycles
7. Develop a Street Strategy
8. Undertake an Urban Inventory
9. Prepare an Ecological Management Plan
10. Promote the Urban Forest
11. Adopt Ecological Performance Standards
12. Promote Urban Ecological Literacy
13. Cultivate a City of Gardens
14. Reinforce the City of Urban Villages
15. Create an Urban Landscape Communication Strategy

The Task Force recognizes that money doesn't grow on trees. Some of these Essential Actions will require a significant commitment of funds; others can be done very inexpensively.

Some Essential Actions, like the creation of the Greenway Trust, have high priority and should be completed within a year. Other actions are long-term and require incremental steps.

Vancouver is positioned to take a leadership role among the great cities of the world that are renowned for their urban landscape.



## APPENDIX

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- APPENDIX 1: Urban Landscape Task Force Terms of Reference  
APPENDIX 2: Urban Landscape Task Force Schedule of Meetings  
APPENDIX 3: Summary of the Urban Landscape Task Force Public Process and Consultation Activities

## APPENDIX 1: Urban Landscape Task Force Terms of Reference

The Urban Landscape Task Force will seek not only to understand the natural elements that compose Vancouver but also to appreciate the impact that our interventions have on our natural environment. Through research and citizen involvement, the Task Force will:

1. Identify the dominant elements and systems which result in our urban landscape. The inventory will include: streams, escarpments, beaches, mountains, ridges, alleys, streets, plazas, sidewalks, sea edges, walkways (both natural and human-made), parks, natural areas, urban forests, back yards, front yards, and school yards, gardens, wildlife corridors, and public places.
  2. Seek advice from professional advisors in terms of the "physical health" of these various landscape systems in the City. This "medical record", which may involve trends as well as the status quo, will provide a basis for development of an issues inventory, for creation of alternate policy directions which the Council may wish to adopt and recommendations that Council may consider.
  3. Involve the public in the preparation of its report.
- ♦ The Task Force will issue invitations to Vancouverites. Small Groups (20 people) will be invited to make presentations to the Task Force on their specific views of the urban landscape. The Task Force will especially seek out neighbourhood organizations and other groups with a broad interest in the urban landscape. The Task Force will visit groups, attend meetings, make brief presentations and listen to concerns and opinions as part of the preparation of their report. At least thirty groups will be contacted. All of these groups will be requested to provide input and to review an interim report to allow them the opportunity to offer comments and revisions prior to Council consideration.
  - ♦ To help us see our landscape with "fresh eyes" an Urban Landscape Symposium will be held. Special guests who do not call Vancouver home will be asked to the City for a two day look at Vancouver and its Landscape. It is hoped that the Symposium will generate new thoughts and perceptions and will provide the public with some ideas about how other urban areas are dealing with similar issues. It is proposed that the Symposium be organized to coincide with Design Vancouver Week '92 (February 27-March 2) to help increase public participation and awareness of the work of the Task Force.

- ♦ Consultation will be undertaken with professional advisors who will offer opinions based on their research and expertise on landscape health issues and on the consequences of various strategies. They will be asked to share their experiences, to participate in the Symposium and to respond to questions throughout the process. All advisors, like the Task Force members, will participate on a voluntary basis.

### 4. Prepare the Final Report:

The final report, similar to the report prepared by the Clouds of Change Task Force, will summarize key issues and proposed strategies the City can undertake and will contain a series of recommendations for Council's consideration. It will be publicly distributed for both staff and public consideration prior to its final consideration by Council.

## **APPENDIX 2:** Urban Landscape Task Force Schedule of Meetings

The Task Force met eighteen times,

**1991**  
Sept. 23  
Oct. 9  
Oct. 30  
Nov. 7  
Nov. 20  
Dec. 11

**1992**  
Jan. 15  
Jan. 20  
Jan. 29  
Jan. 30  
Feb. 9  
Feb. 19  
Mar. 4  
Mar. 18  
Apr. 8  
Apr. 17  
Apr. 22  
Apr. 29

Meetings were held in the Task Force office and the City Manager's office.

## **APPENDIX 3:** Summary of the Urban Landscape Task Force Public Process and Consultation Activities

From November 1991 to April 1992 the Task Force provided a variety of opportunities for public input, and consulted with a variety of expert advisors and representatives of public agencies. These activities are summarized below, with notes as to where supplementary information can be found in this appendix.

Several small meetings were held with 38 professional advisors in total, including architects, planners, foresters, biologists, professors, researchers and professionals involved in the management of the public realm. These people were interviewed on the basis of their specialized knowledge of the urban landscape. A list of the expert advisors follows on page 111.

Two thousand brochures on the Task Force were distributed to inform the public about the Task Force and opportunities to contribute to its activities. A copy of the brochure can be found on pages 112 and 113.

Open houses were held in community centres and shopping centres in four locations. A display illustrated the challenges facing the Urban Landscape Task Force and task force members heard the opinions of citizens who dropped by. The dates and locations of the open houses are listed on page 114.

Fifty-one neighbourhood and community organizations were contacted with invitations to meet with the Task Force.

Six meetings were held with representatives of organizations in different parts of the city. The work of the Task Force was introduced and participants contributed ideas on issues of importance to their organizations. Community meeting dates, locations and participants are included on page 114.

Over 400 questionnaires were distributed from libraries, community centres, open houses, etc. 112 questionnaires were returned and analyzed. The contents of the questionnaire follows on page 115.

Invitations for submissions were sent to 68 organizations. Seventeen written statements were returned for consideration by the Task Force in response to this invitation. A list of the organizations that received invitations, and those that responded, is included on page 116.

Several individuals and organizations also submitted written statements at their own initiative. Their names are listed on page 117.

Five hundred copies of the Ideas Paper (the Task Force's preliminary report) were distributed. Thirty-one written responses to this document were returned to assist with the drafting of the final report.

A public meeting held on April 6th at Heritage Hall. It was attended by 60 individuals and representatives of organizations. A presentation was made on the work of the Task Force, including the Ideas Paper; 16 people made presentations; and there was a question and answer period. A list of those who made presentations is provided on page 117.

A public symposium, The City in View, was organized by the Task Force. It attracted 350 people to enjoy and learn from a wide variety of presentations on the urban landscape, from slide shows by well-known landscape architects, to stories from local authors and "ordinary citizens." The program of the symposium is reproduced on pages 118 and 119.

Twelve liaison meetings were held with various public agencies concerned with the urban landscape. These were supplemented with meetings between the Task Force chair and individuals representing various agencies. A list of liaison meetings is included on page 120.

#### URBAN LANDSCAPE TASK FORCE EXPERT ADVISORS

Dr. Alan Artibise, Planner  
Dr. David Bates, Air Quality specialist  
Mr. Lance Berelowitz, Designer & Writer  
Ms. Sarah Bonnemaison, Festival Designer  
Dr. Bert Brink, Professor Emeritus  
Dr. Julian Dunster, Urban Forester  
Dr. Kathy Dunster, Geographer & Landscape Architect  
Ms. Jane Durante, Landscape Architect  
Mr. Rainer Fassler, Architect  
Dr. Ken Hall, Hydrologist  
Professor Margarita Hill, Landscape Architect  
Dr. Brian Holl, Agrologist  
Professor Peter Jacobs, Landscape Architect  
Ms. Paula Jardine, Performance Artist  
Ms. Sherry Kafka Wagner, Planner  
Mr. Michael Kluckner, Historian & Artist  
Dr. Les Lavkulich, Soil Scientist  
Mr. Michael Levinston, City Farmer  
Professor Shelagh Lindsey, Environmental Psychologist  
Ms. Chris Macy, Festival Designer  
Dr. Jeff Marliave, Marine Biologist  
Dr. Judy Myers, Entomologist  
Dr. Margaret North, Geographer  
Ms. Cornelia Oberlander, Landscape Architect  
Dr. Peter Oberlander, Planner  
Dr. Tim Oke, Urban Climatologist  
Professor Douglas Paterson, Landscape Architect  
Mr. John Perkins, Architect  
Mr. Kim Perry, Landscape Architect  
Dr. Valentin Schaeffer, Biologist  
Mr. Buster Simpson, Public Artist  
Dr. James N.M. Smith, Conservation Biologist  
Mr. Ray Spaxman, Planner  
Mr. Don Vaughan, Landscape Architect and Artist  
Mr. Al Waisman, Architect  
Mr. Peter Wharton, Curator, David C. Lam Asian Garden  
Dr. Robert Woppard, UBC Family Practice Unit  
Dr. John Worrall, UBC Faculty of Forestry



## URBAN LANDSCAPE TASK FORCE

### OPEN HOUSES

Date	Location
February 15	Oakridge Mall
February 16	Hastings Community Centre
February 20	Strathcona Community Centre
February 22	Champlain Mall

### COMMUNITY GROUP MEETINGS

Date	Participants	Location
March 16, 1992	Community Association Presidents	West End Community Centre
March 16, 1992	Representatives from: West Point Grey Residents Association West Southlands Ratepayers Association Brewery Creek Historical Society OASIS Dunbar Residents Association Jericho Residents Association Broadway Station Area Planning Advisory Committee Riley Park Community Association Marpole-Oakridge Area Council Society Kitsilano Residents Association Kerrisdale/Granville Homeowners' Association West-Side Coalition	Riley Park Community Centre
March 17, 1992	Representatives from: South Van Community Council West Point Grey Community Association Kitsilano Community Association Concerned Citizens for Affordable Housing: Kerrisdale	Task Force Office
March 23, 1992	Thunderbird Community Association	Thunderbird Community Centre
April 9, 1992	Community Meeting: Several Westside Community organizations were represented.	Bayview Community School
April 16, 1992	Grandview Community Council	Trout Lake Community Centre

## urban landscape task force

### HELP SHAPE YOUR URBAN LANDSCAPE

601-1587 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6J 1T5, Tel: 732-8175, Fax: 873-7641

The following questions are intended to help Vancouver's Urban Landscape Task Force describe and define what is unique about our urban landscape. The Task Force wants to find out what we value, what threats we are concerned about, what challenges we face and what our vision is for the future.

Please feel free to jot down your ideas and mail or fax them to the Task Force's address/fax number noted above. Your comments will be most useful if they arrive before March 1, 1992. The Task Force will prepare an interim report which will be discussed at a Public Meeting on Monday April 6, 7:30 pm at Heritage Hall, 3102 Main Street, Vancouver. Thank you for your help!

■ What is special to you about Vancouver's urban landscape?

■ What don't you like about Vancouver's urban landscape?

■ What do you think are the three biggest challenges or threats to Vancouver's urban landscape?

■ What can we do to maintain and improve Vancouver's urban landscape?

■ As Vancouver enters the next century, what would your ideal urban landscape be like?

■ What are your five favourite Vancouver places?

## ORGANIZATIONS INVITED TO MAKE WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS TO THE URBAN LANDSCAPE TASK FORCE

\* Indicates submission received by the Task Force

Aboriginal Peoples Business Association  
Architectural Institute of B.C.\*  
Association of B.C. Foresters  
Bicycling Association of B.C.\*  
B.C. Automobile Association  
B.C. Chamber of Commerce  
B.C. Institute of Agrologists  
B.C. Lung Association  
B.C. Ministry of Tourism\*  
B.C. Nursery Trades Association\*  
B.C. Society of Landscape Architects\*  
Canadian Bar Association  
Canadian Homebuilders Association  
Canadian Institute for the Blind  
Canadian Mental Health Association  
Canadian Pacific Rail  
Citizens for Public Justice  
Community Arts Council  
Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Chinese Garden  
Downtown Vancouver Association  
Environmental Youth Alliance  
Federation of B.C. Naturalists\*  
Fraser River Coalition  
Friends of the Botanical Gardens  
Gastown Business Improvement Society  
Granville Island Ferries  
Granville Island Trust  
Greenpeace Foundation of Canada  
Heritage Forests Society  
Heritage Society of B.C.  
Jericho School for the Deaf  
Musqueam Golf Centre  
Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society  
Planning Institute of B.C.  
Point Grey Golf and Country Club  
Public Dreams Society\*  
Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver  
Robson Street Business Association  
Save Our Parklands Association\*  
School of Community and Regional Planning  
Students\*  
Sierra Club of Western Canada\*  
Social Planning and Research Council  
Society Promoting Environmental Conservation

Strathcona Community Gardeners Society\*  
Transport Canada  
Union of B.C. Municipalities  
University Golf Club  
UBC School of Architecture  
UBC Landscape Architecture Program\*  
UBC School of Community and Regional  
Planning\*  
Urban Design Panel\*  
Urban Development Institute  
Urbanarium Development Society  
Vancouver Board of Trade  
Vancouver City Planning Commission\*  
Vancouver City Fire Department  
Vancouver International Airport \*  
Vancouver Museum  
Vancouver Natural History Society\*  
Vancouver Port Authority  
Vancouver Resource Society for the Physically  
Disabled  
Vancouver-Richmond Association for Mentally  
Handicapped  
West Coast Environmental Law Association\*  
Western Canada Wilderness Committee  
Wildlife Rescue Association of B.C.  
Women's Futures CED Society  
Women Against Violence Against Women  
Worldwide Home Environmentalists' Network

## OTHER ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS TO THE URBAN LANDSCAPE TASK FORCE

### Organizations

Dunbar Residents Association  
Kitsilano Residents Association  
West Southlands Ratepayers Association

### Individuals

Rick Baker	Richard Hobson
June Binkert	Mrs. Fern Parr
Alec C. Caruth	Marino Piompini
Joyce Catlift	Peter J. Reese
Charles Christopherson	Robert C. and Mary L. Scott
Ron Davies and Jennifer Nelson	John Tabak
John, Pat and Geoff Davis	Christine Tam
R.B. Gevaert	Ed Vamey
John Givins	

## INDIVIDUALS WHO MADE PRESENTATIONS AT THE PUBLIC MEETING OF THE URBAN LANDSCAPE TASK FORCE

John Whistler, Bicycle Committee  
Chandra Chapman, Sona Pandher, Dan Tisseur, Environmental Youth Alliance  
Larry Diamond, B.C. Society of Landscape Architects  
Ian Wasson, Landscape Architecture Students Association  
Patrick Condon, UBC Landscape Architecture Program  
Doug Paterson, Vancouver Planning Commission  
Andrew Saxton, Vancouver Planning Commission  
David Hornblow  
Anthony Norfolk, Community Arts Council  
Joyce Chow, Architectural Institute of B.C.  
June Binkert  
Alan Duncan, Public Dreams Society  
Michael Kluckner  
Charles Christopherson, President of Brewery Creek Historical Society

# The City in View: a public symposium on Vancouver's urban landscape

Saturday, February 29

9:00–10:30 a.m.

## URBAN SPIRITS SPEAK

*Moderator: Cindy Chan Piper*

Vancouver writers from a diversity of cultures will read stories and poems reflecting the spirit of our city. This session will appeal to both children and adults.

Vancouver writers include **Lee Maracle**, **Jim Wong Chu** and **Sadhu Binning**.

10:45–11:00 a.m. coffee talk

11:00–12:30 p.m.

## WHAT IF?

*Moderator: Bob Bauman*

*What's happening folks?* features **Doug Paterson**, Professor of Landscape Architecture at U.B.C., capturing our imagination with images of mud dances and sky fields. He will expand our ideas about what an "afternoon in Vancouver's landscape" could be. **Chris Macy** and **Sarah Bonnemaison** in *Monument and Festival* discuss the relationship between public festivals and significant city buildings—both make collective memory and ideals visible.

12:30–1:30 p.m. lunch

1:30–2:30 p.m.

## URBAN LABORATORY

*Moderator: Susan Abs*

To Seattle public artist **Buster Simpson**, the urban landscape is a place to experiment and explore ideas. In the *Urban Laboratory* Buster shares his current experiments in the urban landscape which express ecological concerns while avoiding "strident cliche or mush-headed sentiment".

2:30–2:45 p.m. break



sponsored by:  
The City of Vancouver  
Urban Landscape Task Force



# The City in View: a public symposium on Vancouver's urban landscape

Friday, February 28

8:30 a.m.

Welcome from **Mayor Gordon Campbell**

8:45 a.m.

Urban Landscape Task Force  
context: **Moura Quayle**

9:00–10:30 a.m.

## THE CITY ON THE EDGE

*Moderator: Joost Bakker*

The symposium kicks off with *Vancouver: City on the Edge or City at the Edge?* **H. Peter Oberlander**, partner, Downs-Archambault: architects and planners, presents Vancouver in the global context while **Peter Jacobs**, Montreal professor of landscape architecture, addresses city edges at a smaller scale in *Edges, Seams and Fragments*.

10:30–11:00 a.m. coffee talk over coffee

11:00–12:30 p.m.

## CITY STORIES

*Moderator: Claire Bennett*

In *Defining Vancouver* artist, writer and historian **Michael Kluckner** critiques Vancouver's urban scene. This appraisal sets the scene for **Sherry Wagner**, an "urban spark plug" from Boston who in *Telling a City's Life* emphasizes the importance of a shared "story" to making great cities.

12:30–1:30 p.m. lunch

1:30–3:00 p.m.

## SYSTEMS SEEN AND UNSEEN

*Moderator: Sarah Groves*

In *The Changing Biophysical Landscape* **Tim Oke**, Vancouver geographer and urban climatologist, discusses the alteration of the ecosystems of the Vancouver region produced by urban development. What does this have to do with planning and designing the urban landscape? In *Making Sustainable Communities*, **Margarita Hill**, Professor of Landscape Architecture from the University of Washington brings us her experiences in building communities.

3:30–5:00 p.m.

## LANDSCAPE EXCURSIONS

The CITY IN VIEW encourages viewing the city with fresh eyes. Some of the excursions planned include:

- \* Nature Downtown (Val Schaefer)
- \* The Coffee Shop Tour (John Atkin)
- \* From Queen Victoria to Madonna (Rod Fowler)
- \* Back Alley Prowl (Camille Steeman)
- \* Art in the Urban Landscape (Buster Simpson & Don Vaughan)
- \* Parks and Gardens (Nancy Mc Lean)
- \* The Cluttered Streetscapes of Old Vancouver (Michael Kluckner)

7:30 p.m.

## CREATING TOGETHER: COLLABORATION AND CELEBRATION

*Moderator: Alan Duncan*

At the Robson Square Conference Centre, **Sherry Wagner** will again "tell stories" about people creating together. Cities are shaped by citizens. We need to collaborate to make exciting places to live. After Sherry's talk, the well-known Vancouver performance group, **Public Dreams**, will parade us down Robson Street to experience the city at night. COME IN PARADE ATTIRE!

For the hardy, intrepid urbanite, the day will end with a walk around the Stanley Park seawall—one of the greatest edges of our city.



## VANCOUVER URBAN LANDSCAPE TASK FORCE LIAISON MEETINGS

Meetings between Task Force representatives and other public agencies:

Date	Participants	Location
December 16, 1991	Planning Department	Committee Room #2, City Hall
January 14, 1992	Park Board (Planning) and Engineering (Streets): Trees	Park Board Office
January 16, 1992	School Board staff	School Board Office
January 17, 1992	Park Board (Planning)	Park Board Office
February 10, 1992	Public Art Committee	Committee Room #2, City Hall
February 11, 1992	Social Planning Department	Committee Room #3, City Hall
February 12, 1992	Park Board (Maintenance)	Park Board Office
February 12, 1992	Park Board (Recreation)	Park Board Office
February 14, 1992	Technical Advisory Committee, GVRD	GVRD Board Room
February 24, 1992	Representatives: Planning Dept.	Task Force Office

Meetings between the Task Force Chair and individuals representing other public agencies:

The Chair met with the following individuals: Mr. Dave Rudberg, City Engineer; Ms. Joyce Preston, Head, Social Planning; Mr. Alan Duncan, Planning Department; Ms. Vickie Morris, Planning Department; Mr. Michael Von Hausen, Planning Department; Ms. Trish French, Planning Department; Mr. Bob Ross, Engineering Department; Ms. Debra Fane, Planning Department; and Mr. Arthur Allen, Planning Department.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY

Another source of information for the Task Force came from a study completed by the University of British Columbia Schools of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Community and Regional Planning. The students conducted an interview survey to determine some of the public's values and priorities towards the urban landscape.

Thank you to all students for their contributions. Information about this study can be obtained from Professor Shelagh Lindsey, UBC School of Architecture.