

1. OVERALL ROLE IN THE DOWNTOWN

ISSUES

Coal Harbour is of great strategic importance to the future of the downtown peninsula. It is a waterfront location, is adjacent to the downtown core and is the second largest potential development site in the downtown after Pacific Place. How does the Coal Harbour area fit within the broader context of the existing downtown?

Different approaches to this major issue are addressed in detail in the broadsheets that follow, but an overall vision for what role the area should play is an important starting point.

Key questions in this regard follow:

- To what extent is the existing mix of water uses in Coal Harbour vital to downtown? Is this a unique situation or are there alternatives for such water uses?
- Is Coal Harbour a one-of-a-kind small boat harbour within the inner-city or can this use be traded off to other locations for an alternative use more vital to balanced downtown growth?
- What should be the predominant use, if any, that determines the overall character of development -- the existing water uses, new housing, or new offices and commerce?
- Should the uses in Coal Harbour reflect those surrounding the area -- office/commercial to the south-east, port and marina functions at the waterfront and a mix of offices and high density residential to the south-west?

The relative mix of residential and commercial uses needs to be considered in light of overall planning objectives. The Vancouver Plan suggests limiting commercial office growth and encouraging housing in the downtown peninsula. This area could accommodate a significant residential component. Instead of reflecting adjacent land uses, would a more important role be to provide downtown housing? On the other hand the growth potential for triple A offices in the adjacent "Golden Triangle" office district is limited and Coal Harbour would be ideal for office commercial development. Extending the office core to the waterfront would enhance the existing commercial precinct. To what extent should new office development be encouraged or limited?

Is there a special role for Coal Harbour in the provision for visitors and tourists to the downtown? The waterfront aspect is unique and will inevitably draw outsiders to it as much as local users. There are ample opportunities to provide public facilities. Should we have a major civic open space or park, one or several major public institutions, or cultural facilities?

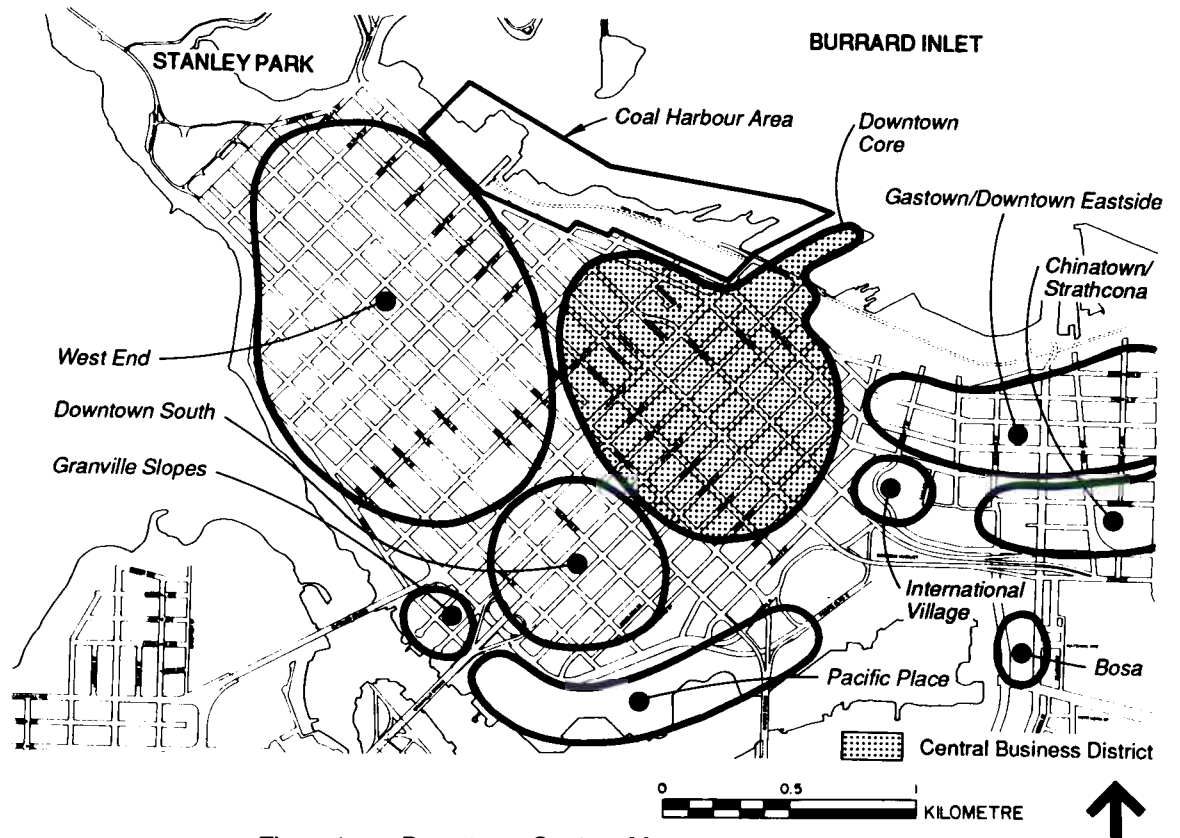


Figure 1. Downtown Context Map

FACTS

Coal Harbour is the closest small boat moorage area to the downtown and, together with False Creek, is one of only two boat harbours in the inner city.

Storage and shipment by rail of dangerous goods from the Coal Harbour area was discontinued in 1986. Until 1983, with the commitment to build the Canada Place project, little development activity had occurred on the Central Waterfront and in the Coal Harbour area. All existing land uses within the Marathon site can be considered temporary.

The only significant public waterfront park located within the Central Waterfront District is Portside Park (completed in 1987), although Devonian and Stanley Parks are close to the west end of the Coal Harbour area.

Residential development in Coal Harbour can accommodate people close to downtown jobs, reducing commuting costs.

Considerable residential potential exists on sites close to the westerly part of the Coal Harbour area (e.g. Georgia Alberni Corridor). Several high-density residential projects have been recently approved in the downtown area west of Bute, north of Robson (e.g. Triangle West).

PAST POLICY

1966 BAYSHORE CD-1 BY-LAW:

- CD-1 zoning for a four-phased mixed-use development was approved by Council that included the now existing hotel, additional hotel space, convention space, retail space, and office space, but excluded residential space. A subsequent (1979) revision allowed the development of the existing 200 berth marina.

1976 CWD PLANNING POLICIES:

- New development should be encouraged to provide a variety of new urban uses such as housing, retail and office commercial, recreational, cultural and public open spaces. These should be integrated compatibly with port and rail uses.
- There should be allowance for diversity of activity on the waterfront with limits to overall growth and a balance between residential population and working population, but oriented toward residential.

1979 CWD ODP:

- The basic objectives of the City in planning the Central Waterfront are to make the area more accessible and enjoyable to the people of Vancouver while maintaining a viable port operation and to ensure future development of the area is compatible with the adjacent Downtown and Gastown.
- Residential use was deleted from the allowable uses due to concern about hazardous goods movement and resultant residential safety concerns.

POLICY

Ensure that the diversity and broad mix of water uses that have evolved in Coal Harbour are conserved and play a major role in shaping the character and identity of the new mixed-use waterfront neighbourhood in a way that reinforces the image of the Coal Harbour inlet.

Encourage the provision of a variety of new urban uses including housing, retail, office, hotel, recreational, cultural and public open spaces as an extension of existing patterns nearby.

Allow for diversity of activity on the waterfront with the objective of making the area more accessible and enjoyable to the people of Vancouver. Reflect the use of the area by outsiders and visitors as a major feature.

Ensure that the gateway experience to Stanley Park is respected and a sense of the park-like setting at the western end of Coal Harbour is continued into the Coal Harbour development areas.

(Note: Specific policies concerning the mix of water, residential and commercial uses are affected by a range of sub-issues which can be reviewed in Broadsheet #3: Port and Water Uses, Broadsheet #6: Residential - Location and Density, Broadsheet #15: Retail/Service Development, and Broadsheet #16: Community Facilities and Services.)