



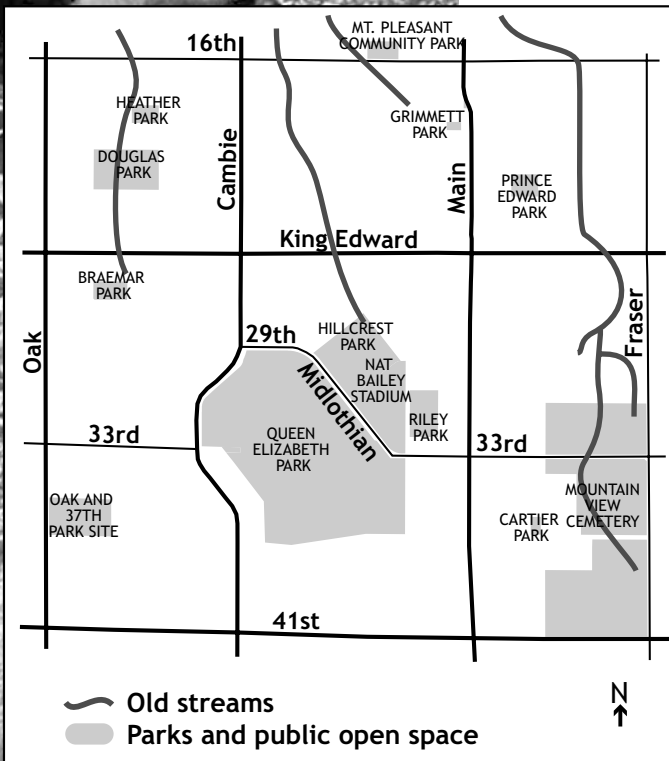
Old Streams

# ENVIRONMENT

Vision participants identified many environmental issues, including the need for residents and businesses to be more involved in actions that promote a healthier environment and cleaner community. Participants also suggested ways to encourage community awareness of, and participation in, the many City programs and services which already address environmental issues.

Vision participants discussed ways to improve environmental practices in the home and in the community. They examined the role that individuals, the community, the City, and other levels of government should play in improving the environment. The Directions are grouped into three categories: actions that can be taken by individuals and businesses (with City support); actions that require a joint community/City effort; and broad actions that require co-ordination with other levels of government.

Directions that would enhance the environment can also be found in the PARKS, STREETS, LANES, AND PUBLIC PLACES, TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION, and LARGE SITES sections.



## Automatic Garbage Collection, Recycling, and Composting

The City collects garbage and yard compost from ‘single family’ residences, including most properties with up to four units. Large items such as old fridges and hot water tanks can be recycled at the Vancouver South Transfer Station and Recycling Depot on West Kent Avenue North. Recycling services are also provided to all residential properties in Vancouver. Materials collected include paper, plastic, metal, and glass. The City also subsidizes backyard composters and apartment worm composter bins. In the last decade, these programs (combined with others in the region) have helped reduce the amount of residential garbage sent to the landfill by approximately 50%.

Automated garbage and yard trimming collection was initiated in 2006 (containers are emptied using a mechanical arm on the truck). There are a number of advantages associated with this system: no need to buy replacement garbage cans or plastic yard trimmings bags; containers are more animal resistant than conventional garbage bags or cans; and fees increase with container size thereby encouraging waste reduction and recycling.

### Graffiti Management Program and 'Keep Vancouver Spectacular' Initiative

Graffiti and illegal postering creates visual blight and has a negative impact on community space and property. The Engineering Services Graffiti Management Program works with businesses, community members, and local artists to deal with graffiti issues. Resources are made available to help remove graffiti and to explore new avenues for graffiti writers and other artists to display their work. The City also provides poster cylinders, community postering boards, and other anti-graffiti initiatives.

'Keep Vancouver Spectacular' is an annual city-wide, clean-up campaign supported by the City. It brings together individuals, businesses, and neighbourhood groups to clean-up their community.



Yard waste and recycling collection

### Energy and Water Conservation

The City has taken actions to reduce energy use and conserve water. City-Plan and the City's land use policies promote complete communities with jobs close to home, thereby reducing fuel consumption for travelling to work. The Transportation Plan gives priority to pedestrians, cyclists, and transit-users over those using the private automobile. By-laws and building code regulations require buildings to be more energy and water efficient. Other City initiatives include: supporting the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) BC Steering Committee to establish a green building rating system for the Vancouver region; retrofitting over 24,000 street lights and indoor lighting fixtures with more energy-efficient lamps; piloting the collection and use of landfill gases to generate heat and electricity; conducting trials with emerging technologies such as alternative fuels, electric cars, and hybrid-electric vehicles; and investigating alternative technologies such as fuel cells. The City also supports public and school education programs on energy and water conservation including promoting community 'water-wise' conservation measures, recycling options, and natural gardening practices.

## 33 Environment

### At Home and at Work

Vision participants discussed many different measures to improve environmental practices by both individuals and businesses. These ideas included increasing personal efforts to reduce waste, increase recycling and composting, using environmentally friendly products (i.e. products that are less damaging to the environment than competing mainstream products), as well as measures to conserve water and energy.

### 33.1 Take Action to Reduce Waste, Increase Recycling and Composting

#### *Approved*

Individuals and businesses should take the initiative (with City support) to decrease waste and increase the amount they recycle/reuse materials and compost. They should also use more environmentally friendly products.

**Percent Agree 91%/95%**

#### People's Ideas...

- choose items that have less packaging
- turn yard waste (e.g. leaves and grass clippings) into compost/mulch
- encourage business customers to properly dispose of containers (e.g. McDonalds)
- host community garage sales and swap meets
- encourage manufacturers to use plastics and packaging that can be easily recycled

### 33.2 Take Action to Conserve Water and Energy

#### *Approved*

Individuals and businesses (with City support) should act to conserve water and energy.

**Percent Agree 85%/91%**

#### People's Ideas...

- encourage the use of rain barrels vs. watering, make access to rain barrels easier (e.g. at community centres or have them delivered to residents)
- limit lawn sprinkling, obey water restrictions
- install water meters on all houses (user pay)
- install low-flush toilets and shower heads that conserve water

### Controlling City Noise

Noise from construction sites, commercial and industrial sites (fans, music, power equipment, garbage trucks, amplification equipment, parties, and dogs) are regulated by the City's Noise By-law. Hours of operation and acceptable levels of noise from a variety of sources are outlined in the By-law. Exceptions for special events (i.e. parades, festivals, races) and construction work outside the specified hours (where it is impossible or impractical to comply) can be made. Penalties for non-compliance range from \$100 to \$2,000. For information about the Noise By-law or who to contact for a particular noise problem, call the Vancouver Environmental Health Division. For 'after-hours' noise complaints call for Police assistance at 911.

### In the Community

Vision participants discussed a number of ways the community and the City can work together to improve the environment. Areas of collaboration include keeping the community clean, expanding recycling and composting, and collecting and recycling hard-to-dispose-of items. Other suggestions include encouraging sustainable development, supporting local/organic food production, controlling urban noise, restoring streams, and reducing storm water runoff.

### 33.3 Clean-up the Community

#### *Approved*

The community and the City should work together to keep RPSC clean and litter free. These efforts should include:

- encouraging co-operative efforts by the community to solve garbage, litter, and cleanliness issues
- enforcing regulations when needed, including the use of fines and penalties
- adding more waste disposal receptacles, community notice boards, and poster cylinders on utility poles in strategic locations
- improving education and access to information about the services and programs offered by the City.

**Percent Agree 93%/95%**

#### People's Ideas...

- provide 'contact info' stickers on garbage dumpsters so people can report illegal dumping
- need better enforcement and removal of graffiti
- encourage pet owners to pick-up after their dogs
- install more garbage and pet waste containers with animal proof lids in Queen Elizabeth Park, Mountain View Cemetery, bus stop locations at 37<sup>th</sup>, Fraser, Hamber Park, Cambie, and Main

- create designated places for community notices to be posted (e.g. easy peel areas); and increase enforcement against people posting on utility poles
- promote public education on the 'do's and don't's' of garbage disposal



'Keep Vancouver Spectacular' - community clean-up

### 33.4 Expand Recycling and Composting

#### *Approved*

The community and the City should continue to identify ways to expand recycling and composting programs, including developing partnerships with other agencies and businesses.

**Percent Agree 89%/91%**

#### People's Ideas...

- encourage materials from houses slated for demolition to be re-used/scavenged
- hold community 'trash/trade day' to exchange/sell clothing, furniture etc.
- increase community awareness on the existing recycling programs and depot sites
- provide community accessible composters (e.g. at community centres)
- encourage schools to organize neighbourhood recycling fund raising events
- have the Vancouver School Board initiate recycling programs in all schools
- add a fee to recycling programs to fund research and development for uses of recycled materials

### **Pesticide Use on Public and Private Land**

In 2004, City Council adopted the Pesticide Reduction Education Program, an expansion of Vancouver's Grow Natural campaign. As of January 1, 2006, the use of outdoor pesticides on lawns and in gardens was regulated by section 5.17 of the Health By-law. The application of these pesticides, including insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides is restricted.

### **Natural Yard and Garden Care**

Natural techniques for yard and garden care can save time, money, and the environment. Engineering Services provide tips on environmental yard and garden care techniques, from building healthy soils to 'water wise' gardening methods. Also, community garden and composting workshops are held at 2150 Maple Street.

## **33.5 Reduce Urban Noise**

### ***Approved***

The community and the City should explore ways to further reduce urban noise from sources like loud music, leaf blowers, late night parties, traffic, and lawnmowers. This could include a review of existing by-laws and more enforcement.

***Percent Agree 76%/76%***

#### **People's Ideas...**

- regulate the noise level for lawnmowers and leaf blowers
- restrict the number of commercial gardening machines
- review, tighten, and enforce the Noise By-law
- use manual push lawnmowers

## **33.6 Collect and Recycle Hard-to-Dispose-of Items**

### ***Approved***

The community and the City should explore opportunities for residents to safely and easily discard and/or recycle hard-to-dispose-of items such as household hazardous wastes and bulky household items.

***Percent Agree 88%/91%***

#### **People's Ideas...**

- have a hazardous waste truck (noted on the recycling schedule) visit each community throughout the year to collect materials like gyprock, paint cans, and asbestos
- provide more accessible drop-off sites for materials and furniture recycling, small appliances, etc. (e.g. maybe at Queen Elizabeth Park or Nat Bailey Stadium, community centres)
- promote information about hazardous waste disposal

## **Sustainable Development**

The City of Vancouver is frequently cited as one of the most livable cities in the world. The challenge is how to sustain that livability as Vancouver grows. In 2002, City Council adopted a set of 'principles for sustainability' to evaluate City programs, policies, and practices. Sustainability is achieved through individual and community participation, and requires integrated decision-making that takes into account economic, ecological, and social impacts. City initiatives include the establishment of the Office of Sustainability, the Cool Vancouver Task Force, Vancouver's Food Policy Council, as well as providing leadership in developing green building guidelines and piloting the development of South East False Creek and the 2010 Olympic Village as a sustainable community.

## **33.7 Encourage Sustainable Development**

### ***Approved***

The community and the City should encourage all new development, including renovations and additions, to adopt more sustainable practices and 'green strategies' such as storm water management, energy and water use reduction, alternative energy sources, green roofs, and water recycling.

***Percent Agree 84%/86%***

#### **People's Ideas...**

- introduce an environmental point system to encourage builders/developers to 'go green', and the points could be applied toward a possible tax break
- develop building codes to allow 'green roofs'
- establish a fund to pay for energy reductions in large buildings (public and private), with the owner repaying the money with energy savings, thereby sustaining the fund
- implement financial/tax incentives for homeowners who install energy reduction systems and environmental alternatives, such as solar power

### Community Gardens

Community gardens are public lands where neighbours come together to grow fruit, flowers, and vegetables. Typically, these gardens have many small plots tended by individuals or families. Plots are often supported by common facilities like compost, water, storage sheds for garden tools, and even gathering places, greenhouses, and shared garden areas (e.g. fruit orchard or berry patch). Gardens are often fenced to keep out dogs, but the public is welcome to enter and visit.

The Park Board supports community gardens by giving assistance in searching for land, formalizing user agreements, developing environmental educational programs, and gathering basic information on garden development and operation.

### Vancouver's Food Policy

In 2003, City Council directed staff to develop a just and sustainable food system for the City. This means integrating food production, processing, distribution, and consumption with the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of the City and its citizens.

In July 2004 the Vancouver Food Policy Council was elected and has begun to work in partnership with community organizations and the City to act as an advocacy, advisory, and policy development body. Projects such as the creation of local food purchasing policies, assessment of grocery store accessibility, and reviewing the potential for distribution of unconsumed food were identified. Work also began to reshape urban food policy which includes supporting local initiatives such as farmers' markets, community gardens, community and school kitchen programs, and special projects such as Southeast False Creek's Urban Agriculture Strategy.

### 33.8 Grow More Food Locally

#### *Approved*

The community and the City should encourage more food to be grown and distributed locally, which could include the development of more individual and community gardens, and the planting of fruit trees on public and private property.

**Percent Agree 74%/73%**

#### People's Ideas...

- develop a program where people without a garden can help seniors with gardens that they can't manage anymore
- provide space on each block for residents to grow their own fruits and vegetables
- plant fruit trees on school properties for kids to harvest
- encourage residents to plant their own fruits and vegetables
- create a sustainable park space (e.g. plant fruit trees, community gardens)



Nat Bailey Stadium Farmers' Market

### Improving Water Quality and Conservation

The Park Board and Engineering Services have cooperated to create biofiltration systems to cleanse storm water at the Hastings Park Pond and Lost Lagoon in Stanley Park. Both systems collect run-off water and clean it using plants and soil systems before discharging it. Both facilities offer aesthetic and environmental benefits. Also, the City's sewer system is being converted from a combined system (storm and sanitary sewer flow together in one pipe) to separate pipes for each. This reduces mixed overflows that discharge sanitary waste into surrounding water bodies.

### Daylighting Streams

Since the turn of the century, many Vancouver streams were diverted and filled in as a result of logging and the building of homes and streets. Only small fragments of the original streams remain. Many residents want to bring back parts of these streams or create new ones as a reminder of Vancouver's natural history. Daylighting streams provides an educational tool for environmental stewardship, a symbol of our natural history, an aesthetic community amenity, and an enhancement of our natural environment.

### 33.9 Restore Old Streams and Reduce Storm Water Runoff

#### *Approved*

The community and the City should support initiatives to daylight culverted streams (restore natural open water channels) and reduce stormwater runoff.

**Percent Agree 76%/76%**

People's Ideas...

- reduce water runoff by encouraging water percolation (e.g. create rain gardens, gravel areas away from houses with plants to absorb rain runoff)
- encourage the planting of drought tolerant plants
- daylight Brewery Creek along St. George and the old stream in Mountain View Cemetery as part of its redevelopment



Smart car - fewer emissions

### **Air Quality**

In recent years, the City has taken initiatives to improve the air quality for its residents. In 1990, City Council created the Task Force on Atmospheric Change to study climate change as it relates to global warming and ozone depletion. It recommended specific actions that the City could take to reduce its contributions to climate change, including the burning of major fossil fuels. City Council actions include the adoption of transportation plans which have strategies to find alternatives to the single occupant vehicle, provide Greenways and Bikeways, and partner with regional transit and transportation authorities to improve commuting options.

Work from the recent Cool Vancouver Task Force established the Corporate Climate Change Action Plan (2003). The Action Plan provides further leadership and co-ordination of corporate and community emission reduction initiatives in the City.

### **Working with other Levels of Government**

While the City can play an important role in building a healthier environment for its citizens, Vision participants recognized that other levels of governments must work together to change laws that would improve the environment. The City advocates and supports regional, provincial, and international environmental policy initiatives.

## **33.10 Working with Other Levels of Government**

### ***Approved***

The City should provide leadership and partner with the regional, provincial, and federal governments to preserve and enhance the environment, including:

- supporting the development and use of environmentally friendly products
- adopting additional measures to increase water and energy conservation
- incorporating more sustainable practices with their own operations
- adopting measures to improve air quality including tougher emissions standards
- encouraging the development and use of alternative energy sources.

***Percent Agree 82%/84%***

People's Ideas...

- convert City vehicles to use alternative fuels
- encourage alternative energy sources for homes and sell back the excess to the grid
- use environmentally friendly buses
- develop stronger air pollution standards for autos and trucks
- encourage manufacturers of commercial gardening equipment to build them quieter
- install aircraft noise monitoring devices at problem locations and work with Transport Canada to mitigate problems
- work with other levels of government to support and promote alternative energy sources (e.g. solar, wind, energy efficient homes, lighting, fuel cells, geothermal heating) in facilities such as community centres and pools