



ENVIRONMENT

Vision participants discussed a wide range of topics related to the environment, including transportation, gardening, waste, water and energy, noise, air quality, recycling, and composting. They went on to identify Directions to improve environmental practices in Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shaghnessy (ARKS). 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 which would enhance the environment can also be found in the PARKS, STREETS, LANES, AND PUBLIC PLACES and the TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION sections.

Automatic Garbage Collection, Recycling & Composting

The City collects garbage and yard compost from ‘single family’ residences and 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.

The City also provides recycling services to all residential properties in Vancouver. Materials collected for recycling include paper, plastic, metal, and glass. The City also subsidizes backyard composters and apartment worm composter bins. In the last decade recycling and composting 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 implemented by late 2006. City-supplied garbage containers are emptied using a mechanical arm on the truck, instead of workers lifting and emptying cans by hand. This system has a number of advantages: no need to buy replacement garbage cans or plastic yard trimmings bags; containers are more animal resistant than conventional garbage bags and cans; and fees increase with container size thereby encouraging waste reduction and recycling.

Energy and Water Conservation

The City has adopted several policies and initiatives aimed at reducing energy use and conserving water.

CityPlan and the City's land use policies promote complete communities with jobs close to home thereby reducing fuel consumption for travelling to work. The City's Transportation Plan gives priority to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit-users over those driving an automobile. By-laws and building code regulations require buildings to be more energy and water efficient.

City initiatives also include: supporting the work of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) BC Steering Committee to establish a green building rating system directly applicable to 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.

26 Environment

At Home and at Work

Vision participants discussed many different measures to improve environmental practices by both individuals as well as businesses. These ideas included increasing personal efforts to reduce waste, increasing recycling and composting of waste products, 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.

26.1 Take Action to Reduce Waste and Increase Recycling and Composting

Approved

Individuals and businesses (with City support) should work to decrease the amount of waste going into the landfill. These efforts should include:

- purchasing or manufacturing products with minimal packaging and made from recycled materials
- recycling and reusing more products
- composting.

Percent Agree 89%/88%

People's Ideas...

- use fewer disposal items (e.g. bring your own dishes, chopsticks and mugs to restaurants for take out, use recyclable lunch boxes, use cloth shopping bags instead of plastic bags)

26.2 Take Action to Conserve Water and Energy

Approved

Individuals and businesses (with City support) should act to conserve water and energy. These efforts should include:

- upgrading energy and water fixtures
- planting drought tolerant plants
- reducing daily water and energy use.

Percent Agree 87%/87%

People's Ideas...

- obey water restrictions, reduce sprinkling and car washing, limit daily shower times
- use landscaping that doesn't need a lot of water
- divert and collect rainwater and recycle used domestic water
- install energy efficient lights, water conserving taps and ½ flush toilets
- reduce the use of electricity by using less air conditioning, electric fans or by using screen doors, hanging clothes to dry, turning off the computer when not in use
- buy small, light, and fuel efficient cars, and get rid of any second car

In the Community

Vision participants discussed a number of ways the community and the City can work together to improve the environment. These areas of collaboration include keeping the community clean, expanding recycling and composting, collecting and recycling of hard-to-dispose-of items, supporting local/organic food production, reducing storm water runoff, and improving noise control measures.

26.3 Clean Up the Community

Approved

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

- encouraging and supporting co-operative community clean-up efforts
- enforcing by-laws and penalties when people and businesses fail to comply with City maintenance standards
- adding more waste disposal/recycling/dog waste units that are more secure and visually appealing in strategic locations
- improving access to information about the services and programs offered by the City.

Percent Agree 94%/94%

Graffiti Management Program and 'Keep Vancouver Spectacular'

Graffiti and illegal posterings create visual blight and negatively impacts the value of community space and community property. The City's Engineering Department has a Graffiti Management Program which works with businesses, community members, and local artists to deal with graffiti issues. The Program makes resources available to individuals to help wipe away graffiti should it appear on their building or in their area. It also creates new avenues for graffiti writers and other artists to display their work. The City also provides poster cylinders, community poster boards, and takes 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.

People's Ideas...

- encourage the community to work together to monitor problem areas and participate in community upkeep initiatives
- enforce fines on people who pollute in public places (e.g. people who don't pick up after their pets) and penalize businesses and store owners that don't keep their sidewalks and storefronts clean and maintain their garbage bins properly
- provide additional and/or larger garbage containers at bus shelters at 49th and Arbutus, at 41st and West Boulevard, along East Boulevard, and on school grounds
- need more recycling containers at schools and in shopping areas
- provide multi-language environmental educational material, recycling, and garbage information



'Keep Vancouver Spectacular' - community clean-up

26.4 Expand Recycling and Composting

Approved

The community and the City should continue to identify ways to expand recycling and composting programs, taking care that containers are pest resistant. These efforts should include:

- initiating partnerships with other agencies and businesses to increase recycling and composting
- expanding the recycling program to include all plastics, wax boxes, electronic materials, batteries, tires, and other materials
- encouraging composting by businesses like grocery stores and restaurants.

Percent Agree 88%/84%



Recycling and yard waste collection

People's Ideas...

- pickup apartment yard waste
- use recyclable lunch boxes, less wrapping, and provide composting opportunities in school cafeterias

26.5 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 90%/90%

People's Ideas...

- have community sites that deal with compost, hazardous materials, and renovation materials
- pick up and recycle medium/large items twice a year and alert the public to the potential for reuse

26.6 Promote Good Environmental Practices

Approved

The community and the City should work together to promote good environmental practices through education and awareness. These efforts should include:

- encouraging publicity campaigns and demonstration displays
- promoting environmental awards and workshops
- establishing an education centre promoting sustainable practices.

Percent Agree 81%/79%

People's Ideas...

- have the City prepare promotional materials such as signs and newsletters, and work with the media, schools, and community centres to promote good environmental practices
- talk to, and promote awareness among, younger kids to conserve water and resources (e.g. encourage school field trips to the landfill and make environmental classes in schools mandatory)

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. The City's Engineering Services provide tips on environmental yard and garden care techniques, from building healthy soils to 'Water Wise' gardening methods.

Sustainable Development

The City of Vancouver is frequently cited as one of the most livable cities in the world. The challenge facing the City 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. In such a city, sustainability is achieved through individual and community participation and requires integrated decision making that takes into account economic, ecological, and social impacts as a whole. City initiatives include the establishment of the Office of Sustainability, the City's 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.

- have the City host a city-wide competition for the best environmentally friendly gardens and lanes

26.7 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, and water recycling.

Percent Agree 73%/77%

People's Ideas...

- promote and develop incentives, subsidies, tax cuts, or loans for individuals who use energy saving products and developers who use sustainable development practices such as integrating solar power, dual flush toilets, green roofs
- insulate houses and windows, and use building materials that retain heat in the winter and keep cool in the summer
- ban the use of herbicides and pesticides on lawns and gardens

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.

26.8 Grow More Food Locally

Approved

The community and the City should encourage more food to be grown and distributed locally, including the development of more individual and community gardens, and the planting of fruit trees.

Percent Agree 62%/61%

People's Ideas...

- support locally grown foods through school lunch programs
- organize students to participate in community gardens, establish community gardens along streets and on school property
- choose local products and encourage people to eat organic products



Farmers' Market

Improving Water Quality and Conservation

The Park Board and Engineering have cooperated to create biofiltration systems to cleanse stormwater at 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 where sanitary waste discharges into surrounding water bodies.

Air Quality

In recent years, the City of Vancouver has taken on initiatives to improve the air quality for its residents. In 1990, the Task Force on Atmospheric Change was created by City Council 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 contribution to factors causing climate change, including the burning of major fossil fuels. Council has adopted several transportation plans which set out long-term strategies to find transportation alternatives to the single occupant vehicle, including the development of Greenways and Bikeways, and partnering with regional transit and transportation authorities to improve commuting options.

Work from the recent Vancouver Cool Task Force has resulted in the establishment of 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.



Smart car - fewer emissions

26.9 Stormwater Runoff

Approved

The community and the City should work together to reduce stormwater runoff. These efforts should include:

- promoting 'green lanes' (porous pavers, gravel, or grass instead of asphalt)
- removing restrictions on gray water reuse
- limiting the amount of impervious surfaces in new development.

Percent Agree 77%/80%

People's Ideas...

- provide neighbourhood rain water reservoirs and roof catchments to cistern water for gardening
- allow less paving of front lawns
- create gardens on curbside areas to filter storm water before it goes into the sewage system
- design lanes to be both porous and allow for pick-up of broken glass

26.10 Reduce Urban Noise

Approved

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

Percent Agree 77%/78%

People's Ideas...

- require sound reduction measures for all buses and heavy equipment
- encourage the use of manual mowers
- enforce Noise By-law on people who play stereos too loud

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 enact laws that would improve the environment. The City advocates and supports regional, provincial, and international environmental policy initiatives.

26.11 Working With Other Levels of Government

Approved

The City should provide leadership and partner with the regional, provincial, and federal government to enhance the environment, including efforts such as:

- adopting additional measures to increase water and energy conservation
- adopting measures to improve air quality including tougher emissions standards
- encouraging the development and use of alternative energy sources
- working with the Airport Authority to uphold its noise control and air quality commitments.

Percent Agree 81%/78%

People's Ideas...

- tax companies that pollute the environment or create environmentally unfriendly products
- ban non-recyclable containers or impose a surcharge on all non-recyclable plastics
- have the City continue to work with other agencies such as BC Hydro and Translink to improve energy consumption and transit options
- increase funding and establish tax cuts and incentives to develop and use alternative environmental technologies such as electric vehicles
- monitor and work with government authorities to reduce airplane noise