

Environment

Vision participants identified many environmental issues, including a concern that many residents and businesses are unaware of City programs which promote a healthier environment. This Vision contains a number of Directions to improve the environment. Some are in this section; others are in GREENING PARKS, STREETS, AND PUBLIC PLACES (garbage and trees), and in TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION (encouraging non-auto modes of travel). Many Directions include changes to individual behaviour which combine to improve the environment. Others are additions to current City programs, which have expanded as environmental issues have assumed more importance to the public.

Recycling, Composting, and Garbage

The City collects garbage from residential properties with less than four units. The weekly garbage can limit for single family properties was lowered from three to two cans to encourage residents to reduce waste and use recycling and composting programs. The City collects paper, plastic, and metal for recycling from houses and apartments if the residents separate and set out the materials. Large items can be recycled at the Vancouver South Transfer Station on West Kent Avenue North. The City also provides regular yard waste collection from single family properties and subsidizes backyard composters and indoor worm compost bins. These programs have reduced the amount of residential garbage sent to the landfill by about 35%.

Water Conservation

Vancouver has higher per capita water consumption than most North American cities with similar climates. The City supports public and school education programs on water conservation, restricts summer lawn watering, sells barrels to store rain water for yard irrigation, and requires water saving fixtures and devices in new buildings. These initiatives have reduced water consumption by 20% since the summer water shortages in 1990 and 1992.

Air Quality

The (1990) City of Vancouver 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 some specific actions that the City could undertake to reduce its contribution to factors causing climate change. Among the actions taken was the development of the City's Transportation Plan, which sets out a long-term strategy to find transportation alternatives to the single-passenger automobile. City initiatives like Greenways and Bikeways which encourage walking and cycling combine with better public transit (through TransLink) to support the plan.



32 Environment

32.1 Recycling and Composting

Approved

Measures should be taken to increase recycling and composting. They should include:

- the City and community further encouraging residents and businesses to recycle
- the City encouraging other levels of government to promote recycling and composting.

Percent agree 89%/89%

People's Ideas...

- make people or businesses who do not recycle pay more for garbage collection
- provide a list of depots which accept recycling materials which City collection will not take (e.g. household batteries)
- increase disposal fees for building materials to encourage recycling of demolition materials
- encourage residents to purchase stickers from the City for extra cans of garbage if regular garbage service is inadequate
- provide community workshops and information pamphlets published in multiple languages (e.g. English and Chinese)
- discourage use of non-recyclable materials (like some plastics) in manufacturing or retailing



Recycling and yard waste collection

32.2 Water Conservation and Waste Water

Approved

Reduced consumption of water and proper disposal of waste water should be encouraged through:

- more public education and promotion of individual actions which improve water conservation
- developing City regulations, programs, and practices which encourage water conservation
- the City encouraging other levels of government to promote water conservation.

Percent agree 85%/86%

People's Ideas...

- install water meters and charge people for actual water use rather than a flat rate
- set out proper water-saving practices in public signage, public service announcements, school and community centre programs, and an Internet website (all in multiple languages)
- encourage use of low-flow toilets and shower-heads, and rain barrels to reduce water consumption
- control the area of impermeable surfaces to reduce water run-off; encourage creative reuse of water (retention ponds in golf courses, etc.); and daylight streams (also restoring fish habitat)
- monitor water quality and impose severe penalties for polluting with hazardous materials (e.g. pesticides)
- educate people to use less water when watering their gardens and lawns or cleaning their cars



Problem dumping in lane

32.3 Air Quality

Approved

Measures should be taken at the community and city level to improve air quality in VFK, addressing issues of air pollution, including:

- encouraging non-auto transportation alternatives like walking, cycling, and public transit
- developing City regulations, programs, and practices which promote better air quality
- the City encouraging other levels of government to promote better air quality.

Percent agree 87%/86%

People's Ideas...

- encourage people to reduce the number of trips they take by car, and use alternative ways to get to where they're going, like walking, biking, carpooling, or taking the bus (including 'clean-air' buses)
- continue to test older vehicles for excessive pollution and require adequate vehicle maintenance
- encourage businesses to employ transportation demand measures like flexible work hours and telecommuting
- plant more trees, bushes, flowers in traffic circles, medians, and along streets to improve the local climate; preserve existing park and other green spaces
- pay closer attention to noise generators like noisy car mufflers, airplanes, leaf blowers, and gas-powered lawn mowers