

THE VANCOUVER CHANGE CHARTER

HOW VANCOUVER WILL BE "BUILT FOR CHANGE" BECOMING A RESILIENT CITY THROUGH ADAPTABILITY

PREAMBLE

Great Cities are built layer upon layer, weaving the ideas, principles and struggles of its citizenry into the fabric of the built environment.

The result is an enduring, supportive and by definition, sustainable urban environment. Vancouver, by contrast, has often chosen to replace rather than renew, creating a less sustainable more ethereal landscape. Adaptable environments are the antithesis of this approach and are defined by the ability of structures and spaces to provide for continued use and occupancy through time; adapting to the evolving needs of generations.

Whereas the City of Vancouver is facing unprecedented and ongoing influences owing to changes in demography, climate, technology, and the economy;

And Whereas the City of Vancouver, its public servants and those who govern her through time, share an imperative to make a city that is livable, sustainable and affordable;

And Whereas, in order to defend against potential consequences of an evolving planet, the City's institutions and its built fabric must become increasingly responsive to change;

Now Therefore The Vancouver City Planning Commission (VCPC) has established the foregoing set of principles embedded in The Vancouver Change Charter.

PRINCIPLES FOR AN ADAPTABLE CITY

Adaptability is the key tenet of sustainability. An adaptable city is one that can grow and change in response to social, environmental and economic factors, while minimizing the disruption of these systems.

All developments respond to the natural, social and economic drivers of change such as:

- Economic forces and their cyclical and non-cyclical variation over time
- Ecological changes (the evolution of global natural systems producing impacts such as climate change, rising tides, pollution)
- Non-renewable natural resource depletion
- Evolving social change (population migration and cultural evolution)
- Technological change (advances in communications and process automation)
- Demographic change

1. A Flexible Public Realm

Public spaces including streets, squares parks and pedestrian pathways are designed to accommodate a multitude of activities with the ability to transform appropriately to these and to additional needs over time to ensure use by the broadest community.

2. Adaptable Building

Buildings are designed to adapt to change and constructed so that they can be used multiple times for multiple uses over their lifespan. Adaptable buildings are an efficient and sustainable method of accommodating changing societal and economic needs through time, such as housing, cultural and commercial activities.

3. Responsive Public Policy

Civic goals, planning initiatives and by-laws should fully consider the need for adaptable buildings, public spaces and infrastructure, including regulations that allow for changing uses over time.

4. Open Public Discussion

Any public discussion of City policy, planning and development projects should embed considerations of adaptability.

5. The Economy of Adaptability

Adaptable structures and spaces are economically sustainable, focussing on the long-term value to the community. Thus in addition to immediate economic considerations, life cycle costing, and community value should be integrated into the design of the built environment.

INTENT

The Vancouver Change Charter is intended to synthesize and direct the City towards a truly adaptable future, thus lessening the burden on resources and ensuring a path towards the City's continued viability and vibrancy.

The Vancouver City Planning Commission intends to be a catalyst and monitor of the efficacy of this initiative.

APPLICATION OF THE CHARTER

A City Built for Change will evolve using minimal resources and maximum creativity. An application of the charter would involve:

1. Maintaining the VCPC as a forum for open dialogue and discussion on planning projects.
2. Creating a review process to monitor projects on their application of adaptability principles.
3. Integrating 'Built for Change' concepts into City Policy and practice.
4. Creating and disseminating 'Built for Change' criteria to the public and the development community.

This document represents the Vancouver City Planning Commission's commitment to the City Council and her citizens to support and influence best practice in city planning, making for a resilient Vancouver.

