

File No. 04-1000-20-2016-135

May 9, 2016

s.22(1)

Dear s.22(1) :

Re: **Request for Access to Records under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the "Act")**

I am responding to your request of April 21, 2016 for:

**For April 18-20, 2016, the Today's Headlines media monitoring report, including, but not limited to: subjects, headlines, publications, links and abstracts/summaries/full stories.**

All responsive records are attached.

Under section 52 of the Act you may ask the Information & Privacy Commissioner to review any matter related to the City's response to your request. The Act allows you 30 business days from the date you receive this notice to request a review by writing to: Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner, [info@oipc.bc.ca](mailto:info@oipc.bc.ca) or by phoning 250-387-5629.

If you request a review, please provide the Commissioner's office with: 1) the request number assigned to your request (#04-1000-20-2016-135); 2) a copy of this letter; 3) a copy of your original request for information sent to the City of Vancouver; and 4) detailed reasons or grounds on which you are seeking the review.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Office at [foi@vancouver.ca](mailto:foi@vancouver.ca) if you have any questions.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B. Van Fraassen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Barbara J. Van Fraassen, BA  
Director, Access to Information  
*City Clerk's Department, City of Vancouver*  
Email: [Barbara.vanfraassen@vancouver.ca](mailto:Barbara.vanfraassen@vancouver.ca)

Encl.  
:jb

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**Vancouver Public Library looks to public for future direction**

[Simon Little](#) CKNW | Last Updated: April 17, 2016 02:04 pm

What do you want from your library?

That's the question the Vancouver Public Library is asking, as it sketches out its next strategic plan, VPL 2020.

The library is asking for public input through an [online survey](#), and hosting a series of [public consultations](#) starting tonight (April 17, 18, and 19).

Participants are being invited to weigh in on both the library now, and plans for the future.

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## **Vancouver hopes to eventually recapture, clean 90% of all rainwater**

by [Simon Druker](#) Posted Apr 18, 2016 6:33 am PDT

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – Vancouver could take a big step forward tomorrow in its goal of becoming the greenest city by 2020.

Council will vote on whether to adopt an ambitious plan that will eventually lead to recapturing most of the rainwater.

The plan calls for the city to recapture and clean 90 per cent of that water that falls on both public and private land using different green technology, says Brian Crowe with the city's engineering department.

“Tools like rain gardens, permeable pavements, green roofs, constructed wetlands in parks like we have now in Hinge Park in False Creek — all these different tools that apply to different parts of the city,” says Crowe.

He says most of those tools are already being used in small-scale pilot projects and have shown a lot of promise, like the permeable pavement stones.

“They don't look much different to people but they have a little gap between each paver and they have an absorbent gravel bedding under them so the rain doesn't just flow off them in a sheet, it actually absorbs (back into the water table) through the gaps. We use that in a few places throughout the city. It's shown to be very effective,” says Crowe.

If approved tomorrow, the plan itself would take decades to fully implement, replacing infrastructure once it's worn out over time.

“It will basically allow you to absorb and or basically naturally filter the rainwater as it lands on the urban environment,” says Crowe.

The plan calls for using green infrastructure to treat urban runoff before it enters the traditional sewer system.

It will also help reduce combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer backups in areas where the sanitary and storm sewers haven't been separated.

That will help with everything from keeping contaminants from leeching into groundwater to conserving water during hot weather.

Crowe points to Philadelphia and Chicago as leaders when it comes to green infrastructure.

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## **Small diesel spill has coloured Vancouver's harbour: Coast guard**

### **The coast guard crew couldn't find the origin of the spill.**

**By:** The Canadian Press Published on April 18, 2016

VANCOUVER - A small diesel slick spotted in Vancouver's False Creek and nearby English Bay isn't large enough to attempt a cleanup, according to a Canadian Coast Guard spokesman.

Dan Bate said in an interview that the colourful slick was reported Friday morning but crew members investigated and determined they wouldn't be able to recover the thin sheen of fuel from the water.

"There was a Western Canada Marine vessel that was nearby, they took a look at the spill, which they determined to be a non-recoverable sheen."

Western Canada Marine was the official clean-up crew that spent days skimming English Bay last year when a grain carrier spilled 2,700 litres of bunker fuel into the water.

Bate said the latest sheen spotted on the water is expected to evaporate quickly and will be broken up by wind and sun.

He said a small amount of fuel can spread over a large area.

"Some of these photos, it's like almost a rainbow sheen," he said. "If you were to drop a teaspoon of oil, that could be what it would look like."

He agreed that the photos made the spill look dramatic, but said it was already breaking up by Friday afternoon.

Because the spill was determined to be diesel, Bate said it's unlikely to be related to large ships in the harbour.

The coast guard crew couldn't find the origin of the spill, but Bate said it could have been caused in several ways, including someone refuelling a vessel.

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## **Real estate bubble is going to pop**

By [Petr Pospisil](#) 24Hours April 18, 2016

*This week's topic: Is delusion driving the Metro Vancouver real estate market?*

In 2004, residents giggled as the mayor declared the small town of Wallace, Idaho the center of the universe. It was adorable to outsiders — much the same way it must be when Vancouver declares itself a “world-class city” or “the greatest place on earth.”

Within these hyperbolic slogans hides a sales pitch enticing us to chance another spin at the highly profitable, volatile game of real estate Russian roulette. With the price of a detached home rising by over 500% since 2002, we need to create some grand myths for residents to pull the trigger.

Vancouver is lovely, especially on my bike along the seawall, but house prices didn't rise because of Vancouver's landscape — they inflated because of illicit foreign cash, record-low interest rates, and lax mortgage rules.

The now-defunct Immigrant Investor Program saw 37,000 millionaires enter Vancouver between 2005 and 2012. Money continues to pour in especially from businessmen trying to escape the anti-corruption crackdown in China. The New York Times recently profiled Vancouver's influx of illicit cash revealing that despite our illusions, we have more in common with Panama, or the Cayman Islands, than we do with New York, Hong Kong, or Tokyo. We are a place the world goes to launder money, not to do business.

The price chart for detached homes has gone vertical, rising by as much as 11% in one month. Some homes sell for \$1 million over asking price in what can only be described as a mania. Stunned homeowners hear about bidding wars and fantasize their homes might someday be worth tens of millions, while those renting fear if they don't buy now they'll be priced out forever. Neither will happen. Prices will continue their vertical ascent until sound judgment returns — then comes the carnage.

Australia and the U.S. West Coast are also “benefitting” from internationally driven booms. However, signs of trouble now stall the million-dollar market in California, as buyers step back, and panicked sellers slash prices.

International investors can easily cash out when better opportunities come along, or when they are forced to liquidate — and they can also panic. That is why responsible governments aim for stable capital flows rather than pursue huge influxes of questionable cash. They fear the economic devastation when the tides shift. As Stein's Law famously states, “If something cannot go on forever. It will stop.”

**Petr Pospisil is an educator, musician, union and social organizer. He studied genetics at UBC and co-created [crackshackormansion.com](http://crackshackormansion.com).**

## **Supply and demand is no illusion**

By [Brent Stafford](#), The Duel 24Hours April 18, 2016

*This week's topic: Is delusion driving the Metro Vancouver real estate market?*

It's not often I play the moderate, but this week Petr has afforded me the opportunity. He's brave to be sure, as he certainly risks being run out of town after arguing Metro Vancouverites' love of this city is the root cause of the hyper-inflated market. He lays blame on those residents who spin “grand myths” by declaring that Vancouver is a “world-class city.” He characterizes this belief as hyperbole and nothing more than a sales pitch that outsiders find adorable — how patronizing.



It's not what Metro Vancouverites say that matters, it's what the world thinks, and time and again Vancouver comes out on top. In 2015, the Economist ranked Vancouver as the third best city in the world. The Mercer Survey, which looks at climate and housing conditions as indicators ranked Vancouver as the fifth best city in the world. And, according to millions of tourist reviews submitted to TripAdvisor, Stanley Park is the number one park in the world — beating out New York's Central Park.

Delusion does not drive the appeal so many have for this city. The lure is real and growing. B.C.'s economy is the strongest in the country and more people are moving to the province each year. Influx of new residents nearly doubled last year and is expected to hit 51,000 in 2016 — adding 52,200 annually for several more years. In the last 25-years, 1.4 million people moved to B.C., with another 1.2-million expected by 2040. There is nothing delusional about the pressures population growth puts on real estate prices.

Perhaps critics are delusional about the laws of supply and demand. The same folks raising a hue and cry over a lack of affordable housing are often the same that protest removal of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve for new residential developments or re-densification of Vancouver's West End or clamour for height restrictions on condo towers. These anti-development positions contribute to the tight housing market and ever-inflating prices.

Yes, record-low interest rates and low down payments make it more affordable to buy a home — in turn putting upward pressure on housing prices. What's wrong with that? It's breathtaking hypocrisy to argue for more affordable housing and then attack policies that make it more affordable to buy a home.

The only delusion lies with those who believe Metro Vancouver is still a small town.

**Brent Stafford is a veteran television producer and marketing specialist. His company ShakyEgg.com works in the brand, entertainment and resource space.**

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## **Public disciplinary decisions possible in Vancouver real estate**

MIKE HAGER The Globe and Mail April 18, 2016

Greater Vancouver's real estate board is studying whether to make its confidential disciplinary decisions public, a move toward more transparency that could eventually apply to the entire province.

However, the results of its ongoing investigation into New Coast Realty — perhaps its most high-profile — will likely remain private, Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver president Dan Morrison said during a lengthy round table with The Globe and Mail and representatives from the British Columbia Real Estate Association.

The board's professional conduct committee is now investigating allegations of misconduct among New Coast employees after a Globe [investigation revealed an audiotape recording](#) of the firm's owner, Ze Yu Wu, instructing his real estate

sales teams on how to make a quick commission by talking clients into selling their houses for less money than they want.

Mr. Morrison said that investigation will likely conclude long before his trade association is able to vote on whether to publicize the results of its disciplinary proceedings.

“We’re a private members’ association and our obligation is to our members, and the systems are set up to keep the standards of membership – that’s what we do,” he said Friday. “We have a committee that’s looking into all this now and we’re talking about [releasing decisions to the public].

“We actually have lawyers telling us if we can do that. If we do that, we have to go to our 12,500 members and get their permission to do that.”

A Globe investigation last month found that real estate agents in Metro Vancouver who are disciplined for wrongdoing face fines and suspensions that are dwarfed by the hefty commissions they earn in B.C.’s superheated housing market.

Records from more than 100 recent disciplinary proceedings from the board and the Real Estate Council of B.C., the industry’s self-regulating body, showed only a fraction of agents disciplined ever lost their licences over misconduct, and that fines averaged \$4,850 or less.

Last month, when The Globe informed the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver [it was leaked 22 of its disciplinary decisions from the past five years](#), a law firm representing the board sent a letter to the paper threatening a lawsuit claiming the Multiple Listing Service had been illegally breached.

Ninety-five per cent of B.C.’s licensed agents belong to regional real estate boards that guard access to MLS. The 11 boards can discipline members but have always maintained that, as private members’ groups, they must maintain confidentiality when an agent gets caught breaking the professional code of conduct. (The Real Estate Council of B.C. publishes all of its decisions on its website for at least a year.)

That confidentiality may change if the regional boards join together this summer to form a unified organization that could streamline the discipline process for realtors across B.C. who violate an established professional code of conduct and rules of co-operation, B.C. Real Estate Association president Deanna Horn said on Friday. Such an organization would still have to decide whether to publicly post any disciplinary decisions.

“The major advantage for the consumer would be to establish consistent expectations for what to expect,” she said, noting that different boards have different maximum penalties across the province.

Carolyn Rogers, CEO of the Financial Institutions Commission of B.C., singled out the boards earlier last week as “large, well-resourced and powerful trade organizations” whose unique role in meting out private discipline is a concern.

“The roles need to be cleared up. What we have observed is the real estate boards have assumed a quasi-regulatory role. Often they position themselves as the place for consumers to launch complaints,” Ms. Rogers told reporters last week.

“The boards’ disciplinary practices are not transparent; there is no requirement to report publicly on whether a realtor is disciplined.”

Ms. Rogers was more forceful in private, at the real estate association’s annual general meeting on March 31.

“Self-regulation puts on each of you a positive obligation to report any and all bad behaviour – anything that has the potential to harm the public – there are no exceptions,” she told a room full of real estate agents. “And the reporting is to your regulator and your regulator is the council. It is not your board, it is not your broker, it is the council.

“That is the responsibility you have in exchange for the privilege of self-regulation.”

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## **A \$1-million home is not the luxury it used to be in Toronto, Vancouver**

BRENT JANG The Globe and Mail April 18, 2016

A major real estate firm plans to reclassify what constitutes luxury, saying that the current standard – \$1-million or above – no longer makes sense in markets like Toronto and Vancouver, where detached homes routinely sell for more.

Brad Henderson, president of Sotheby’s International Realty Canada, said a revamped definition for elite status might be a detached house that sells for \$1.8-million in Toronto and \$4-million in Vancouver.

“In both Vancouver and Toronto, \$1-million is not what it used to be,” Mr. Henderson said in an interview. “As prices in both of those cities have risen over

the last number of years, there are many more instances of \$1-million-plus homes.”

One of his ideas is to double the so-called benchmark number to determine a minimum price for the cream of the housing crop. The benchmark is a representation of the typical house in an area, excluding the most expensive transactions.

Mr. Henderson cautioned that there are wide variations in the value of high-end houses, depending on the neighbourhood. In Vancouver, detached homes sold last month for an average price of \$3.48-million in the Kerrisdale neighbourhood, \$3.49-million in Dunbar and \$9.02-million in Shaughnessy. In Toronto, the average detached price was \$2.61-million in Rosedale-Moore Park, \$2.62-million in Forest Hill and \$5.72-million for an area that covers the Bridle Path, Sunnybrook and York Mills.

“We’ve had the psyche that \$1-million is a lot of money – and make no mistake, that it is – but this is not the \$1-million home from 30 years ago,” Mr. Henderson said. Adjusted for inflation, \$1-million in 1986 is worth \$2-million today.

Sotheby’s, which targets high-end sales, will continue to report on transactions of at least \$1-million. But the real estate brokerage is in the preliminary stages of setting a new statistical bar for houses to be categorized as bona fide members of the luxury club in Vancouver and Toronto.

In Greater Toronto, there were 11,112 properties that sold last year for at least \$1-million, including 9,912 detached houses, according to a Sotheby’s analysis. Sotheby’s didn’t provide statistics for Greater Vancouver, but it said that in the city of Vancouver, 4,578 properties sold last year for at least \$1-million, including 3,454 detached homes. Data compiled by real estate boards show that Greater Vancouver’s detached housing market is considerably more expensive than Greater Toronto’s. Last month, the average price for detached houses sold was \$1.78-million in Greater Vancouver, compared with \$910,375 in Greater Toronto.

In the city of Toronto, there are still many options for buyers seeking detached homes for less than \$1-million. About 34 per cent of detached properties that sold within Toronto’s city limits last year fetched \$1-million or higher, compared with a whopping 91 per cent in Vancouver, according to Royal LePage.

Industry observers say strong local economies, low mortgage rates, fewer listings and increased demand have helped fuel the housing boom in Canada’s two largest markets. Some experts say buyers from China have had a large impact on sales of posh detached homes in Vancouver, creating a ripple effect that has also driven up prices for condos and townhouses.

Last year, the price for detached houses averaged \$2.29-million (up 21 per cent from 2014) in Vancouver, compared with \$1.04-million (up 12 per cent from 2014) in Toronto, data compiled by Royal LePage show.

The market within Vancouver's city limits has been on a tear in recent months, with the average detached price surpassing \$2.87-million in January.

"You have a whole series of positive underlying factors that are driving both the Toronto and Vancouver markets," Mr. Henderson said. "You're also seeing immigration from provinces such as Alberta, along with some additional investment from foreign buyers. The incidence of foreign investors is higher at the higher end of the market than it is on the balance of the market. When supply is more limited than demand, you're going to get upward pressure on prices."

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## **Health officials caution pot rally not to sell cannabis to minors**

### **Organizers told to police vendors to cut numbers ending up in hospital**

Matt Robinson Vancouver Sun April 18, 2016

Health officials are warning organizers of Vancouver's annual 4/20 pot protest to prohibit marijuana sales to minors and self-regulate sales of infused edibles.

Vendors should card anyone under the age of 25 and limit sales of cannabis products that can be eaten or inhaled to buyers aged 19 and older, a medical health officer at Vancouver Coastal Health told protest organizer Jeremiah Vandermeer last week in an email obtained by The Vancouver Sun.

Sellers should also clearly indicate the serving size of edibles, caution buyers not to combine marijuana with alcohol, and inform them that effects can take several hours to kick in, wrote the official, who indicated it was the second attempt to reach organizers.

"We are trying to reduce the number of people who will need medical attention that day. Last year there were over 100 visits to St. Paul's alone because of cannabis intoxication. Seventy-five per cent of them had consumed edibles, but clearly were not ready for the effects," the official stated.

"While I do have the power, under B.C.'s Public Health Act, to order each vendor to comply with these requests, I am sure you agree it would be much better for them to take these sensible health precautions of their own accord."

Vancouver Coastal Health's chief medical officer Dr. Patricia Daly confirmed Saturday that officials have been trying to reach organizers. She said they don't want a repeat of last year, when more than 100 patients showed up at St. Paul's Hospital on April 20.

“We had patients as young as 15 years old,” she said. “We are concerned about adolescents and youth being sold marijuana and so we are asking them to ID people who look like they are under 25.”

The city is drafting legislation that will include not allowing minors to enter dispensaries, and Daly wants vendors at the 4/20 protest to do the same.

Organizer Jodie Emery said asking vendors to card anyone under the age of 25 is “unreasonable and unjustifiable,” considering the protest event has had a safe record for more than two decades.

“We have done and will do everything within reason to make the entire event safe in every way, as it always has been, after 21 years of being a successful, problem-free massive gathering of civil disobedience,” she said.

She added that 4/20 is safer than many city-sanctioned events that have alcohol available and noted there’s never been violence or any serious harm caused to anyone.

As for the number of people who required medical attention last year, Emery said that was unusual because of the weather.

“People went to the hospital for dehydration because it was so unexpectedly hot that day,” she said, adding that none were admitted to the hospital. “They were given water, juice and Gravol and sent home.”

Daly said Emery’s take on what happened last year is “absolutely false.”

She added that the majority of patients were suffering from illness associated with ingesting too much marijuana from edibles they bought at the event.

She said cases ranged from gastro-intestinal illness, to anxiety and hallucinations.

“It is hard to know the dose with edibles. You may not know how much you are taking and often it can take several hours before you feel the effect, so people don’t think it’s working and they take more.”

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## **Annual 4/20 pot protest set to proceed at Sunset Beach**

Matt Robinson Vancouver Sun April 16, 2016

The Vancouver park board does not endorse this event. They don’t sanction the event, it’s un-permitted.

Vancouver’s Sunset Beach is set to get a whole lot greener Wednesday with marijuana activists planning a smoke out at the park for the annual 4/20 pot protest.

City staff told activists to find a new venue after last year’s protest at the Vancouver Art Gallery drew tens of thousands of smokers, but the park board

rankled at their suggestion of a beach venue, where city bylaws prohibit smoking. While the Non-Partisan Association-led park board made political hay of the move and continues to worry about its financial impact, head 4/20 organizer Jeremiah Vandermeer said park staff have been meeting with him regularly to make sure the protest goes smoothly.

“Because of the grey area that marijuana is currently in, it’s politically difficult for anybody to accept full responsibility for what happens down there,” Vandermeer said in an interview Friday.

“They can’t come out and say they support us 100 per cent and that we’re permitted, but we do everything we can in working with them — just like every permitted event would — and the reason is because we want to make it as safe as possible for everyone.”

Vandermeer said he and others on his team have been meeting weekly and monthly with “every single person that you can possibly imagine with the park board,” from rangers to groundskeepers. They’ve also been working with the city manager’s office, police and other emergency responders, he said.

Some of that diligence comes from a desire to avoid any repeat of the conflict that broke out between police and activists during last year’s July 1 Cannabis Day protest, Vandermeer said. “It was something that we don’t want to ever have happen again,” he said.

Vandermeer said it has been more difficult to plan for the Sunset Beach site because it’s so much larger, but added that the extra space will make it safer.

In recent years the 4/20 event has come to resemble a marijuana farmer’s market and craft fair, and this one is no different.

“This is a protest and we’re there protesting bad laws that we want changed,” Vandermeer said. “The farmer’s market and all the stuff that happens down there is part of our protest and it provides an example of the way things could be in a different world.”

The protest site will sprawl along 250 metres of seawall at the mouth of False Creek and will include around 400 vendor booths, Vandermeer said. About a quarter of the booths will be positioned on the beach’s sandy outcroppings, with the remainder lined up on the parking lot and a nearby field. A single stage will dominate the protest site’s northwest end.

About 200 tables have already been booked at a cost to vendors of \$300 apiece. That cash goes toward the roughly \$100,000 organizers are spending on the protest. About half of that cash goes to the stage and the remainder goes to things “mostly put on us by the city,” Vandermeer said. That includes two-way

radios to communicate with first responders, a rental ambulance, a medical team and security team.

But organizers and the park board are clashing over costs. While Vandermeer claimed protesters are paying for everything any other event would — with the exception of a permit — Sarah Kirby-Yung, the head of the park board, disagrees.

“There’s a lot of city costs and resources that need to be put into this ... you’ve got Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services costs, you’ve got Vancouver Police Department costs, you’ve got street and sanitation and traffic management, and that doesn’t account for the additional park board staff and resources that we’re dedicating. We’re putting lifeguards on, we’re going to have park rangers near the seawall. There’s a significant number of impacts,” she said, noting that the city incurred nearly \$100,000 in direct costs for last year’s protest. “I think it’s fair to say that we don’t see eye-to-eye.”

An unexpected impact of the move to Sunset Beach has come with a decision by the park board to shut down the Vancouver Aquatic Centre Wednesday over concerns it would fill with smoke.

“We would be operating air intake fans to bring in fresh air and outside, 25,000 to 30,000 people will be lighting up and smoking marijuana,” Kirby-Yung said. “I don’t think it would be pleasant or healthy.”

About 1,000 people a day use the aquatic centre, including children and seniors with breathing difficulties. With tens of thousands of people rallying outside the facility, getting in and out would be a challenge.

“The Vancouver park board does not endorse this event. They don’t sanction the event, it’s un-permitted, and we don’t think Sunset Beach is an appropriate location,” Kirby-Yung said.

“Having said that, the event is happening and so the focus right now has been on working very constructively with our colleagues ... to try to ensure a safe event on the day.”

When asked if park staff would be ticketing for smoking violations, Kirby-Yung said the park board would look to VPD and follow their lead. Const. Brian Montague, a VPD spokesman, would not disclose plans for policing for Wednesday’s event. VPD have monitored 4/20 protests for 20 years, he said, adding that last year’s event cost police about \$50,000.

During last year’s protest at the art gallery, dozens of people were sent to hospital for medical treatment.



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## **Residents still unclear about compost rules**

### **Waste paper and some food scraps still going to landfill, study finds**

Kelly Sinoski Vancouver Sun April 16, 2016

We're hoping this campaign really strikes a chord in getting people moving paper into the recycling bin.

Metro Vancouver residents are adding more leftover meats and fish bones to their kitchen compost pails, but many are still tossing their soiled napkins and paper towels into the trash.

A waste monitoring study conducted by the regional district suggests the proportion of organics in the waste stream in 2015 was 28 per cent, which amounts to about 257,000 tonnes of compost. But while 68 per cent of residents reportedly dump fruits, vegetables and leftover plate scraps into green bins, only between 30 and 40 per cent are composting soiled paper products.

As a result, these products make up 40 per cent of the 157,000 tonnes of paper products that are still being tossed into the garbage each year, said Marcel Pitre, senior project engineer at Metro's waste division. This amounts to about 27.9 kilograms of waste per person "that could just be going in the green bin," he said.

The situation has prompted Metro Vancouver to highlight soiled papers and napkins in its ongoing composting campaigns in a bid to boost its recycling rates across the region.

The move comes as Metro considers whether to increase the threshold for the amount of kitchen scraps allowed in a load of garbage taken to a transfer station.

At the moment, garbage haulers — usually those collecting trash from large restaurants or grocery stores — will be penalized if a garbage load is more than 25-per-cent compost, but Metro has said it will gradually reduce that threshold to 10 or five per cent as the kitchen scraps program becomes more efficient.

Since the kitchen scraps program came into full effect last year, Metro said there has been a noticeable drop in the amount of organics being dumped in the landfill, with an estimated reduction of 66,000 tonnes since 2014. More than half of Metro Vancouver residents are also putting shellfish, dairy products and coffee filters into the green bin, the study noted, compared with about 33 per cent of residents who are throwing paper plates into the compost.

"They don't think it's food waste typical to what's in the green bin," Pitre said.

"We're hoping this campaign really strikes a chord in getting people moving paper into the recycling bin."

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## **Metro bylaw aims to regulate waste water from health facilities**

Kelly Sinoski Vancouver Sun April 16, 2016

It's just a way for us to get them to look at their waste water. When we have a mercury spill, how do we deal with that?

Metro Vancouver wants to regulate hospitals and acute care facilities to prevent them from dumping harmful contaminants into the local sewer system — even though it's not a major problem across the region.

The proposed bylaw, which still must go to Metro's sewage and drainage board for approval, suggests regulation is needed to ensure that hospital waste, which may contain mercury, silver and other heavy metals, as well as acids and pharmaceuticals, is properly treated or eliminated at the source so it doesn't go down the drain.

The move would see hospitals and acute care facilities submit pollution-prevention plans for their waste water discharges. It comes despite the fact that hospitals already get rid of most of their waste through incineration, while all excess pharmaceuticals are dealt with through pharmacies, according to Vancouver Coastal Health Authority spokeswoman Anna Marie D'Angelo.

The bylaw also suggests charging major hospitals a registration and annual regulatory fee of \$2,500 each, and smaller hospitals and health care facilities \$1,000 each, which will fund staff reviews of the new policy as well as audits, inspections, sampling and analysis.

The proposal will be presented to local health authorities for consultation next month.

"As the hospital and acute care facilities sector is considered a high-volume discharger, some form of regulation is appropriate to ensure they are properly handling their waste water prior to discharge to sewer," a Metro report stated.

Jeff Gogol, an environmental regulatory planner with Metro, acknowledged this isn't a big problem, but said the potential is there in the future. The staff report noted studies have suggested hospitals and health care facilities are one of the largest "single point sources" of pharmaceuticals (by concentration) discharged into sewers.

"Right now, part of the consultation is to find out how they're dealing with it," Gogol said. "It's not really a problem, but there's potential issues in the long-run. It's a process for them to develop a plan and work toward improving it."

Metro, which is authorized to manage its liquid waste through the Integrated Liquid Waste and Resource Management Plan approved by the province, requires waste discharge permits from industrial sources to monitor the quantity

and quality of their waste water to ensure they aren't exceeding permit limits. But the staff report suggests hospitals are large, complex sites, which makes it difficult to monitor the discharge of potential contaminants.

The pollution plan, which will affect Vancouver Coastal, Fraser Health, Providence Health Care and the Provincial Health Services Authority as well as private-sector facilities, is expected to help identify ways to reduce or eliminate contaminants at the source. For instance, hospitals may choose to use less-toxic floor cleaners, or outline how they deal with excess pharmaceuticals, Gogol said.

Such measures are already being used in cities like Toronto and Hamilton, Ont., while King County in Seattle and the Capital Regional District in Victoria issue site specific discharge permits that contain requirements that each operation must meet.

Gogol noted Metro Vancouver will also be looking at similar bylaws for university labs.

"It's just a way for us to get them to look at their waste water," he said. "When we have a mercury spill, how do we deal with that? It's developing something they can implement that helps us."

Darrell Mussatto, mayor of North Vancouver and chairman of Metro's utilities committee, said the move is needed as Metro upgrades its Lions Gate and Iona sewage treatment plants to secondary treatment. Some substances may not be able to be fully treated, which could affect the biosolids that are used for such things as agricultural fertilizer.

"We want to make sure it doesn't become a big problem ... that there are no deleterious substances being discharged," he said. "It's just making sure we manage all of our waste in a proper way."

About 40 facilities, as well as the health authorities, are expected to be consulted.

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## **Solar enjoys moment in sun**

### **ENERGY: Increasing number of Vancouver-area residents installing panels**

Cassidy Olivier Province April 18, 2016

From a rooftop on West Broadway, Rob Baxter stands between two rows of solar panels and tries to explain the scientific process fuelling the small boom he says his solar-energy-systems firm is enjoying.

Albert Einstein, in a paper published in 1905, first defined the photoelectric effect. Baxter, whose background is in IT, makes it clear with a modest smile that his explanation won't be nearly as good.

"Basically, you have a semi-conducting material, which is silicone cells, and they have two layers in them," he explains. "When a photon of light strikes those two layers, it causes an electron to jump between them. You attach electrodes to the two layers, which catch the jumping electron, connect wires, and you have electricity."

Long considered a niche market for the deep-pocketed, the installation of solar panels in residential properties is slowly becoming more affordable for the average consumer, says Baxter, due, in large part, to a sharp drop in manufacturing costs as well as technological advances that have made the panels far less expensive.

Baxter, the principal of Vancouver Renewable Energy Co-operative, says business has grown about 30 per cent annually since the company entered the market in 2004, with 2015 the most successful year to date. He says VREC installs about one or two systems a month in homes throughout the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

That's not to say it doesn't remain expensive. Baxter says the systems he installs range from \$7,000 to \$30,000, with the average cost hovering in the \$20,000-\$25,000 range. It's a price tag many will still find prohibitive, especially given the systems provide, on average, annual energy savings of about \$400-\$500.

"The biggest challenge right now is we are competing with relatively inexpensive power here in B.C., even though it is going up," says Baxter. "Over the lifetime of the system, it will pay for itself. But it is not going to do that in the first few years, so that is a challenge."

But Baxter says there are other reasons, beyond trying to save on the hydro bill, that people are turning toward solar power. Residents who generate their own power also have the option of selling it back to B.C. Hydro via the Crown corporation's Net Metering program.

The desires to be more self-sufficient and environmentally responsible are motivating factors, he said. A report published last week by Clean Energy B.C. found clean-energy companies, including solar, have attracted billions of dollars in investment and thousands of jobs. South of the border, the Solar Foundation recently reported the U.S. solar industry employed 208,859 workers in 2015, a 20-per-cent increase from the previous year.

"It's a way to support renewable energy, it is a way to support a transition away from fossil fuels and it's also a way to support local jobs in the local economy," said Baxter.

Patrick Bateman, director of market intelligence and research for the Canadian Solar Industries Association (CanSIA), said the growth of solar in B.C. is in line with national and global trends. As of last year, Bateman said, Canada has about 2.5 gigawatts worth of installed solar energy systems, which represents about a million homes.

While the majority of that is in Ontario, he said, B.C. is about to surpass about five megawatts of solar, which is roughly 2,000 residential installations.

"To us, that represents great potential," Bateman said. "At this point in time, solar is less expensive than it ever has been before, and that cost decline is going to continue year on year."

Another key driver has to do with a general trend toward what Bateman described as the “Internet of things.” Like online shopping and on-demand TV, people have become accustomed, via the Net, to having greater control of how they consume products. Bateman suggests solar offers that same freedom.

“Homeowners are getting used to being able to control many parts of their day-to-day lives from the palm of their hands,” he said. “And increasingly, the home is becoming more smart as well. Now that the cost (of solar technology) has decreased so significantly, homeowners have the option ... to not only consume energy, but to produce it as well.”

Yet there remain additional costs that undoubtedly make installing solar panels unattractive to many potential customers. Meeting municipal requirements, such as electrical permits and engineering certificates, can add thousands of dollars to the overall cost. A recent study by the Society Promoting Environmental Conservation ranked Vancouver as the most expensive city in terms of added municipal fees and costs.

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## **Vancouver school board ponders mall land sale**

### **VALUED AT \$79 MILLION: Proceeds could be used for capital projects**

Tracy Sherlock Province April 18, 2016

The Vancouver school board is set to begin a process that could end with the sale of the land beneath Kingsgate Mall.

The board is wrestling with a \$24-million shortfall for its 2016-17 budget and has a long-range facilities plan that calls for the closure of up to 21 schools over the next decade.

It owns the mall property, a large plot of land appraised at \$79 million, on Broadway near Main Street in Mount Pleasant. Proceeds from its sale could be used for capital projects — such as building new schools or upgrading old ones — but not to reduce the operating shortfall.

Last year, when the board said it might not be able to balance its budget, the provincial government appointed an adviser from Ernst and Young to examine its books.

The adviser said the board should “engage a real estate professional to conduct a market study and prepare a valuation of its priority non-core lands,” including Kingsgate Mall.

The mall is leased to the Beedie Development Group under a 99-year lease, which brings in about \$750,000 for the school board, the adviser’s report says. The lease, which expires in 2071, may decrease that value, although its conditions are due to be reviewed in 2017.

“The Kingsgate Mall is well situated in an inner city growth corridor and Beedie may be willing to acquire the land outright,” the adviser said in his report.

The property was once home to Mount Pleasant elementary school, which was demolished in the 1970s.

Last year, the board agreed to consult with the public before making any decisions or negotiations around non-school properties, Lombardi said. That consultation over Kingsgate will begin Monday, when the board will start distributing flyers advertising a “pop up discussion” on Sunday, May 1.

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## **Metro Vancouver’s road map to affordable housing has gone missing**

Peter Ladner / Business in Vancouver April 15, 2016 03:15 PM

I remember the first time I read Stephen Covey and learned the power of Habit No. 2 of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: begin with the end in mind. “If your ladder is not leaning against the right wall, every step you take gets you to the wrong place faster.”

I’ve been thinking a lot about that as the local real estate market [continues boiling at a fever pitch](#). The massive infusion of capital into B.C. driving the real estate market out of reach of local buyers is a wonderful thing if you’re the finance minister or a developer, homeowner, landlord, house painter, luxury car salesperson, mortgage broker, banker or someone yearning to live in Langley.

But looking at the health of our kids’ futures, retirement equity for renters, urban neighbourhoods, schools, communities, hospitals, universities and businesses, it’s a killer force for everyone not already in the market.

To get back to Stephen Covey, what exactly is the end in mind? What would true housing affordability look like if we achieved it?

It’s complicated. Affordability has to start with the goal of ending homelessness and providing subsidized housing for the most needy. It has to include an adequate supply of rental units to keep rents reasonable. There’s also a widespread dream of affordable ownership for households [with moderate incomes](#) (\$21,500 to \$86,500) — people who work here and keep the economy buzzing.

Definitions of “affordable housing” goals range from loopy platitudes (“a home for everyone”) to ambiguous incrementalism (“more affordable housing choices for all Vancouverites”) to accountant-friendly standards (housing costs that don’t exceed 30 per cent of household income).

Based on outcomes, our goal seems to be to provide affordable housing for global investors who can pay here a quarter of what they pay for the same space in London, switch out tech jobs for resort jobs and keep real estate the biggest industry in the province.

Based on making this region truly livable, our goal is to make housing ownership affordable to local income earners.

Given the stagnation in median incomes, the only way for that to happen is if prices come down in Vancouver and the nearby suburbs — or at least stop rising. Yes, young families could suck up the commute and move out to Metro's outer suburbs, where 40 per cent of people can still afford a single-family home. Or they could fight for one of the 9 per cent of condos in Metro Vancouver that have more than two bedrooms.

No one will talk about a goal of prices levelling off or declining.

The prevailing mantra in public discussions is that we just need more, better supply: homes on warehouse roofs, small homes in laneways, more towers, more density, six-plexes, stacked townhouses. All that is certainly needed, and it will certainly make housing more affordable than otherwise, but increasing supply is not an affordability goal. It's a means to an unspoken goal of lower prices more aligned to stagnant local incomes.

We're scared to talk about lower prices because we are persistently told that any price drop will result in every homeowner losing his or her retirement equity. Who wants that?! In reality, a 10 per cent price drop represents six months of windfall retirement equity. Granted, to truly align average housing with average local incomes would need a 60 per cent drop in prices.

The only alternative to a goal of bringing down prices by adding more supply (not working so far) or stemming foreign investment (the elephant in the mansion) is to create large pockets of protected housing the way Hong Kong, Singapore, Whistler, London and New York do to ensure their working families can buy in somewhere. Those numbers, too, are never spelled out as a goal.

Until we have an honest, measurable goal in mind for affordable housing and put our ladders up against it, every step we take risks taking us to the wrong place faster.

*Peter Ladner (pladner@biv.com) is a co-founder of Business in Vancouver. He is a former Vancouver city councillor and former fellow at the SFU Centre for Dialogue. He is the author of The Urban Food Revolution.*

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## **City of Vancouver trying for discounted home ownership program**

***Affordable Home Ownership pilot program to offer 300 homes at 80 per cent of cost***

By Chad Pawson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 18, 2016 7:29 AM PT Last Updated: Apr 18, 2016 7:29 AM PT

The City of Vancouver wants to help moderate income earners buy 300 homes in the city.

It's called the Affordable Housing Ownership pilot program and it will go before the city's finance committee on Wednesday.

"We're going to create an opportunity for people to enter into the housing market who have previously been able to rent but not been able to buy," said [councillor Raymond Louie](#).

Under the program, the city would strike a deal with developers to acquire 20 per cent ownership of 300 new units. It would then turn around and sell those units to buyers for a discounted price — a price that would take into consideration the city's share in ownership.

"The city will have a stake in it and the city's stake will be held by the city, will continue to be held by the city in order to maintain that level of affordability," said Louie.

Louie says he hopes the pilot program will help the city learn how to make shared-ownership housing work in Vancouver.

Still the city will need help from the province to amend the [Vancouver Charter](#) — the city's provincial statute — in order to allow for the program.

## Provincial support?

"What I'm hoping is that they'll understand what we're trying to accomplish here," he said.

"That we do need the province to make an amendment to the Vancouver Charter, which will authorize council to implement this new program and if their thinking is that this isn't necessary then I'd like hear what the province is proposing, because obviously there's a growing challenge for people in our city to live in it and own any property."

B.C. Minister Responsible for Housing, Rich Coleman, has not responded to the CBC's requests for a response to the city's initiative.

According to the report an amendment to the Vancouver Charter would take at least eight months.

These are some preliminary criteria for prospective buyers:

- Be a resident of Vancouver for the past five years.
- At least one buyer must be employed.
- Maximum household income for studio and 1-bedroom units for singles and couples with no dependent children living at home, \$67,540/year.
- Maximum household income for two and three or more bedroom units for single/dual parent families with dependent children living at home, \$96,170/year.
- Buyer must be the sole occupant, no renting allowed.

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## **'Knight in Vancouver' opens up about 100-day odyssey to rid city streets of garbage**

By Jennifer Palma Global News Updated: April 16, 2016 8:04 pm

Cliff Relph is enjoying a stroll through his Knight Street neighbourhood. But he's not empty handed – he's armed with gloves and shopping bags, tools that have become his trademark.

Relph says he was on a walk six months ago and had a thought that went something like this:

“Someone should clean this up. Wait, I'm someone, I can take care of this.”

So he did.

What did he take care of? Ridding his area of unsightly garbage.

For 100 days, Relph would take a 15-minute break from work and collect garbage, easily filling two to three shopping bags.

So what did he find on his 2.5-kilometre walk? All sorts of things including:

“Banana peels...cigarette butts. One night I counted 500. Also shoes. Dentures; but I'm not willing to do the Cinderella story on that one!”

He also found loads of the usual suspects: coffee cups and food wrappers.

Neighbours in the area say they're impressed with what he's done. They're hopeful others will take up the cause.

Relph said he took on his 'Knight in Vancouver' 100-day challenge to honour the memory of his beloved late grandmother and her love of volunteering.

He also decided to clean up his neighbourhood because “it's a great way to keep Vancouver as awesome as it is.”

He is “gobsmacked”, though, by how many people have been following him on social media.

So will he continue to do his dirty cleanup work? Yes, but on a smaller scale. He's hoping others will help and take up the cause.

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## **Most Vancouver pot shops will soon be forced to close**

by [Shannon Brennan](#) Last Updated Apr 17, 2016 at 3:07 pm PDT

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – Pot shops have popped up all over Vancouver in the last few months but that is about to drastically change. Most of them will have to close their doors by the end of the month.

“Now with our new rules, we not only have the police to help us out, but we also have inspection staff, backed up by fines and court injunctions that no other jurisdiction has. And on April 29th, we’ll start to apply those. Hopefully, we’ll bring the pot shops under control,” says City Councillor Kerry Jang.

“I expect to see of the over 100 dispensaries around Vancouver that all but around a dozen or so will be shut around April 29th,” he adds.

He says so far, the response from owners has been mixed. Some have promised to stop selling pot as they wait for approval, while others will be defying the order and taking their chances.

Jang adds despite the decline in dispensaries, people who are in medical need of marijuana will still have ample access to it across the city.

### ***Marijuana activist calls city’s handling of dispensary regulation ‘appalling’***

Pot activist Jodi Emery says shops who got into the business just for profit alone might be more inclined to just shut down because they just aren’t interested in the risk, but that isn’t what the movement is about.

“The original dispensaries in the city have always operated — without approval, peacefully, civilly disobeyingly breaking the law — demonstrating that patients and citizens need marijuana access. And the courts have repeatedly sided with dispensaries.”

“The city is going way beyond the limits by trying to aggressively shut down businesses that are operating without any problems and contributing to the community,” she argues.

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## **Public art at Vancouver’s Empire Fields ‘on track’**

**The Vancouver park board’s once-controversial public art project for Empire Fields at Hastings Park is underway and on track to be complete in 2016.**

By: [Emily Jackson](#) Metro Published on April 18, 2016

A massive piece of public art is on track to take its place at the newly renovated Empire Fields, but the scale of the project – and possible safety hazards – will have engineers working through the summer to get it installed by fall.

The Seattle artists who came up with Home and Away, a scoreboard-inspired installation that sparked controversy when it was first proposed one year ago, are finalizing the engineering drawings for the 14.6-metre tall, interactive structure, Vancouver park board chair Sarah Kirby-Yung said.

"It's obviously a large installation," Kirby-Yung said of the primary-coloured, \$400,000 piece that will feature two bleachers and perhaps even a slide.

"I know people are excited and want to get it done. It's on track for this year."

Safety is the park board's main concern when it comes to the project, which will spend the summer going through a series of permits and approvals, Kirby-Yung said. The park board wants to make sure due diligence is done so visitors can walk up the bleachers to enjoy the view without any worries.

The project was delayed last spring so the park board could [consult](#) with the public. The vast majority (more than 90 per cent) of the approximately 400 people who gave feedback supported the project or had no comment.

The handful that didn't like it worried that the sculpture was too expensive or would block their views.

Kirby-Yung said she's excited to see what the final project looks like when, if all goes to plan, it is complete by late October.

"They're meant to evoke a spirit of fun," she said.

The art is part of a multi-million dollar, decades-long revitalization of Hastings Park. Last summer the park board completed the \$10-million phase that included the activity-loaded Plateau Park and the new track at Empire Fields.

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## **Tyee Poll: Does Vancouver Need A City-Wide Plan?**

TheTyee.ca April 17, 2016

To plan or not to plan, asked the headline of a recent Tyee [story](#). Vancouver is the only municipality in the Metro Vancouver region that's allowed to march to the beat of its own drum when it comes to what to do with a city-wide plan (thank you, Vancouver Charter!). All other municipalities have a city-wide plan, known as an official community plan (OCP), reviewed once every five years.

For all of you out there who aren't urban nerds, OCPs dictate city priorities for growth and where money should go -- all the good stuff like transportation, utilities, land use, recreation and housing.

Vancouver's lack of an OCP doesn't mean it doesn't get that good stuff. It goes about it through local area plans, growth strategies and community amenity contributions from developers. These contributions are often controversial, and even prohibited in many parts of North America because the trades often lack transparency and make cities appear open to influence.

On the other hand, Vancouver is often touted as a city of neighbourhoods and villages with healthy diversity because of how it plans.

At the Urbanarium [debate](#) on the topic, an audience vote revealed that most of the crowd wanted Vancouver to have a city-wide OCP. Whether you're an urban nerd or not, we'd like to hear your word.

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## **Easier to hire CEOs than entry-level workers with Vancouver real estate costs**

### **City's liveability attracts those that have salaries sufficient for their lifestyles**

By Glen Korstrom Business in Vancouver April 17, 2016, 10 a.m.

With Vancouver property values soaring and reasonably priced rental accommodation scarce, Vancouver employers are being forced to get creative – and to loosen their wallets – to recruit staff.

Companies resistant to sweetening the recruitment pot got a dressing down from Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson, who on April 11 urged them to raise wages, arguing that technology companies in Silicon Valley pay much more than those in Vancouver.

Many firms, after struggling to attract workers with offers of less than \$20 per hour, are getting the message, said Miles Employment Group CEO Sandra Miles.

Finding a new CEO or other C-suite executives, in contrast, remains comparatively easy because those workers are more likely to be wowed by Vancouver's beauty and livability and are paid enough to live comfortably, she said.

A main focus of Miles' firm is helping office clients hire administrative staff and various levels of management, but she has recently been courted by manufacturers who are unable to find entry-level staff for warehouses.

"It's hard for them to dial up their rate of pay because it's buried into their margins," she said.

"Young families are moving out of Vancouver because once they have a couple of children, they want a bigger place to live and that's just not doable in Vancouver."

For decades, Vancouver couples with children have fled the city for suburbs such as Coquitlam in search of bigger homes with backyards.

What's newer, Miles said, is that high costs are driving families out of Metro Vancouver altogether.

She has acquaintances who have moved to Victoria, Nanaimo and Kelowna to start new lives because of the lower cost of housing in those cities, she said.

In February, Hootsuite CEO Ryan Holmes sounded a similar alarm when he wrote an open letter to say that housing costs have reached a "crisis point" that have made it "exceptionally hard to grow a business in Vancouver."

Qualified job candidates are deterred from moving to the city, he said, and "great" employees are leaving because they cannot afford to live in the city.

This has not, however, stopped new retail ventures from launching in the city.

RYU Apparel Inc. (TSX-V:RYU) opened its first store in Kitsilano in November, and it plans to open a second on Thurlow Street near Robson Street this summer.

RYU's director of retail, Brett Pawson, told Business in Vancouver that his company is "definitely paying a healthy premium to the minimum wage" and has been able to recruit nearly 40 corporate office staff as well as 12 employees at its Kitsilano store – a feat he attributes largely to the company's "culture."

That culture includes encouraging employees to lead active lifestyles and organizing "sweat club" workouts, Pawson said.

"Stock options may be a consideration at some point down the road."

Pawson expects to hire an additional 20 employees by summer to work at the new Thurlow store and in Kitsilano.

On the other end of the employment spectrum, companies are having little trouble finding CEOs and other professional staff. Kit and Ace spokeswoman Andrea Mestrovic said her company has had a "plethora of qualified people" apply for the several top jobs at her company, such as CEO and COO. She expects those jobs to be finalized by June.

Vancouver-based money manager Connor, Clark & Lunn Investment Management Ltd. (CCL) has similarly found it easy to recruit wealth managers.

"We've found that being in Vancouver is attractive and recruiting is not an issue," CCL co-founder Larry Lunn told BIV.

“We’ve hired people out of London, England and New York. They come here because the lifestyle is attractive for them.”•

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## **Fuel spill reported in English Bay near Vancouver's False Creek**

Jeff Lee Vancouver Sun Published on: April 15, 2016 | Last Updated: April 15, 2016 4:19 PM PDT

The Canadian Coast Guard says a small amount of diesel fuel was spilled into English Bay near False Creek Friday but has caused no environmental damage.

Investigators were not able to trace where the diesel originated from, but it was first observed near the boat launch docks in front of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station, according to Coast Guard information officer Michelle Imbeau.

“The pictures are dramatic but the spill is not serious,” she said. “The spill was determined to be diesel and was deemed to be not recoverable. It will evaporate.”

The company that cleans up oil spills on Canada’s west coast says it has not been activated and doesn’t expect it will be called in.

Michael Lowry, the communications manager for Western Canada Marine Response Corp., said that the Coast Guard had advised the company of the spill and the company, which has 12 response vessels, including skimmers and boom boats in Vancouver’s port area, sent one vessel to the site.

“We’re standing by but the spill was deemed by the Coast Guard as non-recoverable. We have not been activated and we do not expect to be activated,” Lowry said.

A non-recoverable spill often involves light fuels or agents that evaporate and are not easy to skim up, he said.

The spill was first reported by a local helicopter company that observed a large sheen on the water near the mouth of False Creek.

Imbeau didn’t know how large the spill was but characterized it as a minor spill likely related to refuelling.

The incident comes a year after 2,700 litres of bunker C fuel, a heavy oil, escaped from the freighter [MV Marathassa](#). That incident led to calls for better

notification after the Coast Guard failed to inform the City of Vancouver for a number of hours. Some globules of oil eventually washed ashore on local beaches.

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## **Pete McMartin: Running on empty — The Westside loses its garages**

Pete McMartin Vancouver Sun Published on: April 15, 2016 | Last Updated: April 15, 2016 8:21 PM PDT

Living in the epicentre of the runaway real estate market, people in Vancouver Westside have complained loudly about what they've lost lately — heritage homes, trees, neighbours, a sense of community. They can add one more thing to that list:

Independent auto repair shops.

Soon, the Westside will see the closure of three of its oldest independent repair shops — Blenheim Imports at 2075 West 12th Ave., The Garage at 4066 MacDonald Street, and Varsity Automotive at 2880 Arbutus Street. Varsity Automotive has been listed with a commercial real estate company, and Blenheim Imports has already been sold to a developer.

The exact status of The Garage is unclear because messages left for the owner were not returned, but a rezoning application board with an illustration of a residential development has been erected in front of the property. The Garage is owned by the local Tremblay family, which has been in the business of auto repair on the Westside since 1934. Four generations of Tremblays have worked in the business, and they've owned and operated three full-service garages along MacDonald. A member of the Tremblay family confirmed that while The Garage will be relocating, its location was as yet unknown. The business itself had not been sold and remains in the family.

For the other two owners of the auto shops, however, it was a confluence of factors that led them to sell: a hot real estate market, exorbitant property taxes, and age. For their customers, it will surely be a sign that Vancouver isn't only becoming a prohibitively expensive city in which to live, but one, also, in which it's difficult for small independent businesses to survive.

The closures won't leave the Westside completely bereft of auto repair. There are a couple of independents left, and a couple of franchise operations that, while they specialize in transmissions or tires, can do general auto repair.

But the three shops that are closing leave behind a large and loyal clientele. In 1991, I did a column on the Tremblays, and their computer records then showed

11,000 repeat customers. Business for all three is still good. Despite this, the cost of doing that business in Vancouver has proven increasingly burdensome.

“For me,” said Garth Burnside, owner of Varsity Automotive, “it wasn’t a matter of being forced to sell. My business has never been stronger.

“But I’m afraid with property taxes and everything else, the cost of doing business on the Westside is very, very expensive. This year, my property taxes will be over \$100,000. When I bought here in 1985, my property taxes were \$7,600 a year.”

Burnside, who is 66, has listed his property with Colliers International. He’s been at his present location for 30 years, and in that time has grown his customer base, he said, to “a couple thousand”. His seven service bays are booked two weeks in advance.

But the time to sell seemed right, he said, given his age, the rising tax costs and the handsome profit he could realize in the overheated real estate market.

Ron Knechtel, co-owner of Blenheim Imports, has already sold to a developer and will be shutting down May 31. At 56 years old, he said he wasn’t ready to retire, but, like Burnside, his rising property taxes, strict city environmental regulations and the real estate market made the time right to sell. Knechtel and his partner sold the property to a Vancouver developer six months ago.

“The property tax, ” Knechtel said, “got to the point where it was close to \$90,000 this year, and it’s not practical to stay in business anymore.”

Knechtel said the city’s ever-stringent environmental policies were problematic for a business like his, too. He said a city inspector had prohibited him from even washing his customers’ cars on the property.

Knechtel, who grew up in Dunbar, has been at his West 12th address for 24 years. For 15 years before that, he worked at two other shops, both on the Westside. The shop employs seven people, operates five bays and services about 25 cars a day. Some of his customers, he said, are from families who have been coming to his shop for two or three generations.

“When we tell people we’re shutting down, they just can’t believe it. When you serve people for so long, they grow to become friends.

The changes to the Westside, he said, dismayed him.

“It just seems like everything’s going. There’s going to be no services for the public here. When you get all the trades people coming in to build houses here and the like, they don’t live in Vancouver. They’re coming from Surrey and beyond. It just seems like the city’s being gutted. And I grew up in Vancouver. I



grew up in Dunbar. Do I think I'm going to stick around here? I don't know if I could."

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### **3 new Vancouver dispensaries advance to next licensing stage**

#### **More Vancouver dispensaries make their way through the city's business licensing process.**

By [David Brown](#) Lift Cannabis News Magazine April 16, 2016

Three new Vancouver dispensaries have advanced to the [second](#) of three stages in city's medical marijuana related use business licensing [process](#). Stage one is a preliminary application, stage two involves applying for a development permit, with the third and final stage being issuance of a business license.

Eggs Canna at [210 E 16th Ave.](#), the Green Cross Society at [4296 Main St.](#) and MMJ Canada at 205 SE Marine Dr (specifics: [225 SE Marine Dr](#)) join 10 other Vancouver dispensaries given 'conditional approval' while awaiting the issuance of a development permit from the city. Neighbours of the three newest business were issued a letter giving them until April 29th to submit written comment on the application to the city's Planning and Development Services.

Of the initial 176 applications submitted to the city, 6 have made it to the beginning of [stage 3](#), while another 13 wait approval of stage 2. Another 20-30 await a de-clustering process of ensuring no dispensaries are within 300 m of various schools, community centres, or other dispensaries. Another 62 were given a chance to [appeal](#) application rejections based on these zoning restrictions. So far nine [appeals](#) have been rejected, two stayed until a further date, and two accepted.

A business who successfully appeals a rejection based on the 300 m zoning regulations will then eventually be re-entered into the city's application queue at the beginning of stage two. The two successful appeals, [Greatful Med](#), is located at 211 E 16th Ave (Formerly Weeds Glass and Gifts) and Point Grey Cannabis, located at 3557 W 4th have not yet been added to the city's stage 2 waiting list.

Vancouver has given a soft close date for all unlicensed dispensaries as [April 29](#), but Vancouver's Director of Licensing and Inspections has emphasized that the city will be working with each dispensary on a case-by-case basis.

"It depends on the situation and it depends on the collaboration of the business," Toma told Lift in an interview earlier this year. "We've done this before, we can either go through injunctions, where we get council sign-off and we don't actually

have to go through prosecution, we go right to the BC Supreme Court and then they make the decision, or we can file full prosecution with a prosecutor. Either way, we have done this on a number of bylaw infractions and other businesses, so it's not new to the city.”

Those Vancouver dispensaries who do not shut their doors on April 29th could face closure by the city, daily bylaw fines, a court-ordered fine of up to \$10,000, and/or a court injunction ordering them all closed. A [recent court injunction](#) in neighbouring Abbotsford, BC could be one potential approach to closing unlicensed business. This process could allow a city like Vancouver to close the majority of dispensaries without the potential backlash against the visuals of police making arrests that are later challenged in court.

In the past, Vancouver City councillor Kerry Jang has [estimated](#) that about 15-20 dispensaries will get final approval. The first business licenses are expected in the coming week.

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## **Broadcaster hands out copies of Georgia Straight at Vaisakhi parade**

by [Charlie Smith](#) Georgia Straight on April 17th, 2016 at 7:58 AM

Vancouver's Vaisakhi parade went off without a hitch yesterday, just as it has every other year.

But this time, there was a controversy bubbling under the radar screen of many politicians in attendance.

For the first time at Vaisakhi, the City of Vancouver [ordered the removal](#) of all newspaper boxes along the parade route, even sending trucks out to scoop up some belonging to the *Georgia Straight*.

This was a topic of conversation among some Sikhs when I visited the Meewa Singh Room inside the Ross Street gurdwara shortly before the parade began.

One of the newspaper's supporters and contributors, Spice Radio broadcaster Gurpreet Singh, even brought copies of the *Georgia Straight* on his station's truck, which participated in the procession.

He said he was going to hand out copies to make a point that the city's actions were a threat to freedom of expression.

Singh is also a cofounder of *Radical Desi*, which is a progressive magazine focusing on issues of interest in Canada and South Asia.

Vaisakhi being Vaisakhi, there was no shortage of politicians, most dressed in Indian attire or wearing head scarves, to celebrate the founding of the Khalsa in 1699.

It was a Sikh military order created by Guru Gobind Singh to prevent ruling Moguls from forcibly converting people in Punjab to Islam.

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## **To Plan or Not to Plan? That's Vancouver's Question**

And the fourth in the Urbanarium series of civic debates suggests the answer is...

By [Christopher Cheung](#), 14 Apr 2016, [TheTyee.ca](#)

It may come as a surprise that the only municipality in Metro Vancouver without a city-wide plan is the City of Vancouver itself. The city enjoys the exemption through its charter from the province, which gives it greater leeway than other municipalities to side-step making such a plan.

But maybe it should anyway.

That was the topic at the fourth in the series of City Debates hosted by Urbanarium, a non-profit group of academics, city planners and citizens, in partnership with the University of British Columbia's School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. Each debate pits two teams of urban experts against each another to change the minds of audience members on some hot idea in Metro's civic conversation.

Debate moderator David Beers, co-founder and founding editor of The Tyee, cautioned the audience that this debate might be "a little more nerdy" than earlier ones -- tackling subjects like zoning and community amendments -- but that the reward would be "a quick seminar in how power flows, how decisions get made, and how deals get done which affect the look, the feel, and the nature of Vancouver."

On the "pro" side of the debate, *for* a city-wide plan, were Councillor Adrienne Carr of the Green Party of Vancouver and Patrick Condon, chair of the masters of urban design program at UBC SALA. *Against* a city-wide plan on the con side of the debate, were Vision Vancouver Councillor Geoff Meggs and Gordon Price, director of the City Program at Simon Fraser University and a former city councillor.

At the start of the evening the audience voted more than two-to-one -- 121 to 57 -- in support of a city-wide plan for Vancouver. Following the Oxford debating style, the side that was able to sway the most audience members in a second vote at the end of the night would be deemed the winners.

### **Case for a city-wide plan**

UBC's Condon opened with strong support for a city-wide plan, also known as an official community plan, and strong words for those against one. "I think anyone who is opposed to the idea of a city-wide plan is taking complete leave of their senses," he said.

Condon argued that the lack of a city-wide plan makes it hard to allocate density. Most residents don't have a problem with swathes of downtown being zoned as dense "comprehensive development districts" (CDD), he said. The problem arises when CDDs appear outside the downtown core in neighbourhoods of mostly single-family houses.

This is what many call "spot zoning," applied on an as-you-go basis. City-wide plans, by contrast, usually dictate where cities consider their priorities for growth -- and where their money should go. Vancouver's lack of a plan has largely left that up to developers to decide. They choose where to build, then have it rezoned by offering the city revenue and amenities in exchange. The rezoning often permits higher density that many feel is out of place in its area.

Condon cited isolated parcels near single-family areas receiving the same zoning as the former Expo lands. "To the logical mind," he said, "it's not a 'district.'"

And letting developers trade amenities for rezoning in private agreements with the city is a problem in itself, Condon said. Such "spot" zoning is prohibited in many parts of North America, precisely because it lacks transparency and appears open to influence.

But while Vancouver doesn't have a *city* plan, about one-third of it does have local area plans -- in neighborhoods like the West End, Mount Pleasant, Marpole, and the Downtown Eastside.

Condon's teammate, Coun. Carr, said these create a "hodge-podge" alongside other urban growth plans, and confuse what should take priority.

## **NEXT IN URBANARIUM CITY DEBATES?**

Topic number five in the debate series: let experts plan.

Should citizens be more empowered to decide what gets built and where in Vancouver? Or is the process already too prone to public pressures, stifling the creativity, knowhow and vision that professional planners are hired to provide?

**When:** Wed., May 11, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.

**Where:** UBC Robson Square - 800 Robson St.

[Get your tickets here](#) -- they sell out within days.

"Is it your local area plan?" Carr posed the question. "Or does the Transportation 2040 Plan trump your local area plan? Or is it developers putting in rezoning applications that hold the ace? Or is it the whim of the council of the day?"

### **'The way it works'**

Setting up the case against a plan, Coun. Meggs began by emphasizing that his position didn't mean he was against considering the city's goals as a whole.

"No one in their right mind is against city-wide thinking, and no one can seriously oppose planning," he said, "but the idea of a city-wide plan, particularly at this time in our city's life, is not right. It's wrong. It's not serious, it's a dangerous fantasy."

Meggs argued that adopting a city-wide plan now would waste the work invested to develop those existing neighbourhood and regional plans, such as the city's Transportation 2040 Plan, the Metro 2040 regional growth strategy with other municipalities, and risk losing federal money for rapid transit based on current ridership.

Meggs' debating partner, former councillor Price, asserted that the character of a city-wide plan can lie in separate local plans. Rather than negotiating the needs of residents on a city-level, he thinks it's better to do that area by area.

"That's how it works. That's a living, organic city," said Price. "That's change accommodated in the neighbourhood, at the level where people understand it. And yes, it can be tough, but it's the way it works for us. That's what we've all been in this city. We don't go for the big overall views.

"If you're going to change that to pursue the ideal of some city-wide plan, you're in some 'all or none' game. All communities must be rezoned. All must accommodate growth and change, or none, because how else could it be fair?"

### **A citizen's role**

As the debate opened up into exchanges between the sides, the topic turned to the citizen's role in planning.

"If we can engage in a city-wide planning process, I think we could do it in a collaborative way," said Carr, challenging Price. "It's not top-down. Let's engage, let's get the plan done, and see how we can have continued engagement so that citizens don't feel disconnected from city hall."

But her opponents saw limits to citizen input.

"Consultation is essential, but it is not the right to veto," Price said. "You [ordinary citizens] don't get to make the decision. Why? Because you didn't get elected."

Price argued that it is the responsibility of politicians to be accountable not only to those who make their voices heard, but also to residents who didn't speak up, and to those of the future. "Responsibility to the future: isn't that what planning is for?" he asked.

It was an apt setup for the next Urbanarium debate, which will debate whether city planning is too important to leave to the experts.

That idea might take support from the outcome of this latest installment. When the audience voted again at the end of the evening, backing for a city-wide Vancouver plan had held at 122 votes. But now 80 votes supported leaving the "hodge-podge" as it is.

In the words of Price, whose team swayed the most votes: "The tools we've developed over 30 years still work well for us." An assertion at least a few Vancouverites in and outside the hall might still find worth debating.

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## Today's Headiness Update Monday, April 18, 2016

### Development:

[School board considers selling Kingsgate Mall property](#) - Vancouver Courier

[Facing \\$24M shortfall, VSB mulls sale of East Vancouver mall](#) - CTV

[Vancouver industrial real estate hit 15-year high in 2015: Cushman & Wakefield](#) - Business in Vancouver

### Housing:

[Support for shared housing vital to Vancouver's future](#) - Vancouver Courier

### NEB:

[Gregor Robertson rips Kinder Morgan pipeline over emissions](#) - Vancouver Sun

[City of Vancouver submits Letter of Comment on Kinder Morgan proposal](#) - Vancouver Observer

[Trans Mountain climate assessment excludes many emissions: City of Vancouver](#) - News1130

### Parks & Recreation:

[VSB reminds students 4/20 is not a day off](#) - CBC

### School board considers selling Kingsgate Mall property

[Mike Howell](#) / Vancouver Courier April 18, 2016 01:09 PM

So, what the heck is going on with the Kingsgate Mall?

You may have heard: The Vancouver School Board owns the property on which the [quirky](#), timeworn shopping centre at Kingsway and Broadway sits and is considering selling it.

So many questions here.

Will it be turned into condos? How about a nice park? Or, maybe a museum dedicated to the annual battles between the school board and the provincial government?

Mike Lombardi, the school board's chairperson, correctly surmised there would be questions. So he emailed me his own question-and-answer document and I've done my best here to give it an edit for your reading pleasure.

Right off the top, I should mention any sale of the property (I'm still not sure what it's worth, or how big it is) will not help the school board's \$27 million shortfall.

Why not?

"To be clear, VSB has not begun any negotiations or made any decisions about selling the Kingsgate Mall property," Lombardi said. "If that decision were made after consultation with the public, the proceeds of the sale of capital would need to be applied to capital projects such as building new schools or dealing with deferred maintenance upgrades."

Also, it should be made clear the school board doesn't own the actual mall. Nope, the Beedie Group owns and operates it. The school board has a long-term lease on the building and retail operations. That lease comes up for review in late 2017.

In the meantime, Lombardi said, the school board wants to be "transparent with the public about our ownership and solicit feedback from area residents about what they value at that location – now, and into the future."

That feedback can be sent via email or Twitter. Or, if that doesn't work for you, the board is hosting a show-and-tell May 1 at the mall, from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

But hang on a sec here...didn't the school board commit to not sell its properties?

"The board passed a motion not to sell school properties in their entirety, as an investment in the future for Vancouver students," Lombardi said. "That does not preclude the board from considering partial sales or lease of school properties, or entering into discussions about non-school properties."

The school board owns three other properties without schools on them. All are used by the district. They are the nursery grounds and facility at 5905 Wales St., the school board's works yard at 1549 Clark Dr. and the school board offices at 1580 West Broadway.

The history of the school board's connection to the property goes back to the 1800s, when the board and the city acquired parcels of land at the mall site. Mount Pleasant school was built on the land in 1892. Then in 1962, as the area became a traffic and commercial hub, a new school was built nearby on Guelph Street. The mall was built in the early 1970s.

The site is currently zoned for commercial use. Any zoning change would have to be approved by city council. I did a quick Google search to look into the crystal ball of what might happen on the property.

I came across a report by Acton Ostry Architects Inc. on the Rize mixed-use development currently being built across the street from the mall. Here's a quote to keep in mind as you watch what happens to the mall.

"As Vancouver and the Greater Vancouver Region expands, concentrated urban nodes will continue to grow and develop at significant points along busy arterial routes, such as Broadway and Kingsway. The Broadway and Kingsway node offers conditions that support high-density, transit-oriented developments."

Here's a better quote.

"Additional significant developments in the immediate vicinity include the Biltmore Hotel, Best Western Hotel and Kingsgate Mall, which has been identified in the [Mount Pleasant Community Plan] as a future large-scale mixed-use residential development site."

So, no museum?

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## **Support for shared housing vital to Vancouver's future**

Jessica Barrett / Vancouver Courier April 18, 2016 12:09 PM

I woke up on a recent Sunday morning to an unusual invitation.

"Lol. My friend wants to know if we want to go to a mansion party in Shaughnessy," read the text. "He says there's a bar, and a pool, and workshops, and a bar!"

I already had plans and thus had to turn down the invite, but, curiosity piqued, I met up with my friend later for the low-down. Mansion parties in Shaughnessy are a thing now, apparently. But they're not being hosted by nouveau riche boogeymen buoyed by foreign capital. Rather a different kind of resident is populating these sprawling abodes and breathing new life into the near ghost town of a neighbourhood.



This particular house was shared among 20 people who found, in one of city's ritziest neighbourhoods, a rather ingenious affordable housing opportunity. Together, they could easily afford the \$10,000 monthly rent while enjoying much more living space than they could ever hope to afford individually. (Then there's the added perk of mansion living in that you're so far away from your neighbours that throwing an all-day rager barely registers.)

Of course, young people embracing communal living to cut down on costs is an old story. In Vancouver, anyone under 40 is by necessity an expert at figuring out alternative housing arrangements. Compared to some of the other home-spun solutions I've come across — such as repurposing “extra” space like bathrooms into bedrooms, or [living in one's van](#) — getting comfy with a double-digit number of roommates is definitely one of the better options.

The trouble is, our culture and our systems aren't set up to support this style of shared housing in any official capacity. In fact, they're often hostile to it.

A friend who shares a rental house in Strathcona with his partner and three other roommates, all professionals in their late 20s and 30s, reports that the relationship challenges of living in a high-volume household pale in comparison to navigating bureaucracies built for a culture clinging by its fingernails to a self-contained mode living.

An example: when the fridge began bursting at the seams, he and his housemates were able to settle on a system of buying bulk, farm fresh eggs in order to conserve both money and kitchen space. But when they went shopping for tenants' insurance they couldn't find any financial institution willing to insure a home with so many unrelated adults. The verdict was that the home was too insecure with so many people coming and going.

When Vancouver's [first co-housing development opened in March](#), it provided a great example of citizens taking matters into their own hands and investing in a long-term community rather than simple equity. Unfortunately, by the time the owners completed four years of negotiation and planning, the price tag for larger, family-friendly units came in at nearly \$800,000, putting them squarely out of reach of most young families.

That's really a shame, since this is a group that is all too happy to swap square-footage for the chance to put down roots in Vancouver, as long as they [have access to the amenities](#) that are often neglected in multi-unit dwellings: gardens, outdoor children's play spaces, storage, and workshops — not to mention a ground-oriented layout that's conducive to actual interaction with neighbours. People are desperate for this, it's why waitlists for the city's aging housing co-ops are years long and landing a spot in one is akin to winning the

lottery. For a population increasingly fine-tuning their exit strategies, a degree of communal living and common space can mean the difference between a viable future in Vancouver or not.

But this is a detail not high on the lists for developers, nor the city, which has just released a [new plan for an affordable home ownership](#) program that seems heavily slanted toward segmented, condominium-style living. Nor are community-oriented designs, such as townhouses, welcome in many of Vancouver's single-family neighbourhoods, where any form of density is automatically [met with vehement protest](#).

As the affordability crisis tightens its grip on Vancouver, a glaring hypocrisy has emerged. We are told the era of single-family housing is over and gone, yet it is only my generation that is constantly, and condescendingly, counselled to abandon our dreams of owning a house. At the same time, we're faced with the pervasive expectation that we will one day grow up, grow out of the "roommate phase," and move heaven and earth to secure a postage-stamp piece of real estate that doesn't meet our needs. Those who envision a form of communal living not as a sacrifice, but as a desirable long-term strategy still meet hurdles at almost every turn.

Pity, since if Vancouver is to have any hope of retaining its young people, and maintaining its heart and soul, we are all going have to learn to share. And as my friend who attended the mansion party can attest, we might even find there's fun to be had along the way.

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## **VSB reminds students 4/20 is not a day off**

### **VSB issues information sheet advising students school is still in session April 20**

By Tina Lovgreen, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 18, 2016 1:09 PM PT Last Updated: Apr 18, 2016 1:21 PM PT

The Vancouver School Board is reminding parents and students that April 20 is still a school day regardless of [planned 4/20 events](#).

"We just want to make sure parents and students are as well-informed as possible," said Nancy Brennan, associate superintendent of learning services with the school board.

The VSB has been clear that it does not condone students taking part in 4/20 events.

[The notices](#) — sent directly to schools — outline how schools have reported students skipping school to attend 4/20 gatherings or have used it as an excuse not to show up.

Brennan says the protocol for taking attendance will be no different this Wednesday.

"We follow the same attendance procedures," she said. "Which usually involves a call home and follow-up."

The material also includes a [tip sheet from Vancouver Coastal Health](#) designed to get students to think twice before smoking pot or indulging in cannabis edibles.

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## **Facing \$24M shortfall, VSB mulls sale of East Vancouver mall**

[Darcy Matheson](#), Senior Digital Producer, CTV Vancouver Last Updated Monday, April 18, 2016 1:23PM PDT

The Vancouver School Board is mulling selling an East Vancouver mall as it struggles to find ways to make up a \$24-million budget shortfall.

Although not many residents know it, the VSB has owned the Kingsgate Mall property on East Broadway since the late 1800s, and it holds a long-term lease on the property and retail operations. It's now looking at possible options for the land, which has risen significantly in value in recent years.

The mall lease comes up for review in 2017.

The board says it won't commit to selling the property until it undergoes public consultations about the value of the mall, and its future.

Area residents are encouraged to drop by the mall to participate in a "pop up discussion" on May 1.

If the land was sold, the proceeds could not actually be used to offset the current budget debt under its current rules. Instead, the money could only be used for new capital projects, like building new schools or upgrading older facilities.

The property is currently zoned for commercial use, and the VSB says that any future development on the site would only happen after "extensive consultation" between the city and residents.

This isn't the only property being examined as part of the board's long-range facilities plan. The board also owns the VSB works yard at 1549 Clark Drive, the Education Centre at 1580 West Broadway and the nursery at 5905 Wales Street.

A motion was passed by the VSB last year not to sell school properties, but that didn't preclude the board from entering into discussions about non-school properties, a spokesperson told CTV Vancouver.

Anyone who can't attend the VSB's discussion at Kingsgate Mall the afternoon of May 1 can instead tweet ideas anytime to @vsbengagement #vsbengagement #kingsgate.

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## **Gregor Robertson rips Kinder Morgan pipeline over emissions**

Peter O'Neil Vancouver Sun Published on: April 18, 2016 | Last Updated: April 18, 2016 1:37 PM PDT

OTTAWA — The Trudeau government's method of assessing the climate impact of Kinder Morgan's \$6.8 billion Alberta-to-Burnaby pipeline expansion is inadequate, the City of Vancouver asserted in a letter Monday.

The letter from a city official was released along with a much more political statement from Mayor Gregor Robertson.

"Kinder Morgan's pipeline proposal is a bad deal for Vancouver's environment and economy," he said in a news release.

"The seven-fold increase in tanker traffic in our local waters is simply not worth the risks in the event of an oil spill."

The letter calls on the federal government to consider the "downstream" impact of the expansion as diluted bitumen crude is transported to other countries to be refined, and then shipped to consumers.

The letter estimates that these emissions would be vastly more intensive than so-called "upstream" emissions caused by digging up the bitumen and getting it by pipeline to Burnaby.

The federal government said in January it would assess the climate impact of major projects like Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain expansion, though it said only that it would consider the "upstream" impact.

"Environment and Climate Change Canada must consider both upstream and downstream climate impacts of Trans Mountain's expansion to fully assess the significant safety, environmental and public health hazards the project carries," Robertson said.

The National Energy Board has completed hearings and is scheduled to make its recommendation to the federal cabinet by May 20.

The company is seeking permission to expand its existing Trans Mountain pipeline system by adding 987 kilometres of new pipeline, reactivating 193

kilometres of existing pipeline, adding additional pump stations and tanks, and expand the Westridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby.

The government has extended the timeline to make a final decision from October to December, in order to take into account both the climate issue as well as conduct more intensive consultations with First Nations.

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## **City of Vancouver submits Letter of Comment on Kinder Morgan proposal**

The Kinder Morgan Pipeline expansion would mean a 7-fold increase in oil tanker traffic through our local waters.

[Vancouver Observer](#) Apr 18th, 2016

Vancouver, BC (April 18, 2016) – ‘Downstream’ greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) from processing, refining, transporting and consuming oil from an expanded Kinder Morgan pipeline will be ten times higher (71.1 million tonnes) than those from upstream extraction (7.7 million), and should be included in the project’s climate assessment, says the City of Vancouver in [today’s submission to Environment and Climate Change Canada](#) (ECCC).

“Kinder Morgan’s pipeline proposal is a bad deal for Vancouver’s environment and economy.

The sevenfold increase in tanker traffic in our local waters is simply not worth the risks in the event of an oil spill,” said Mayor Gregor Robertson.

“Environment and Climate Change Canada must consider both upstream and downstream climate impacts of Trans Mountain’s expansion to fully assess the significant safety, environmental and public health hazards the project carries.

Vancouver will continue to advocate against Kinder Morgan’s expansion proposal, and champion clean, 100% renewable energy infrastructure.”

Currently, ECCC is only planning to consider ‘upstream’ GHGs (from drilling and exploration in the Alberta Oil Sands) in their climate assessment of oil and gas pipelines.

The City concludes that excluding downstream GHGs in assessing the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion will have major ramifications for climate change on top of the significant risk of an oil spill and doesn’t reveal the pipeline’s true and significant environmental costs.

The Burrard Inlet and Fraser River estuary are some of the world's most important ecosystems and are among the defining factors identified in a study that [valued Vancouver's brand at \\$31 billion](#) due to our reputation as a "green, clean and sustainable" city; an oil spill in local waters would disproportionately and negatively affect our brand value versus comparable cities and could cost the City \$3 billion - requiring significant investment to rebuild.

The City is encouraged by the federal government's commitment to reduce GHG emissions and applauds the addition of climate methodology to assess oil and gas pipelines against this commitment.

The City of Vancouver has pledged to be the greenest in the world by 2020, and 100% renewable by 2050 or sooner, and supports infrastructure investments that work toward these goals.

The City of Vancouver presented its final oral summary arguments as an Intervenor to the National Energy Board (NEB) on February 5, 2016, and concluded that Kinder Morgan's pipeline expansion's adverse effects did not outweigh the possible economic interests and was therefore not in the public's interest.

After today's submission from the City, the NEB will submit recommendations to the federal government's Governor in Council on May 20, 2016, who will make the final decision on the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion.

For a summary of the City's evidence to the NEB on the environmental and safety risks of the proposed Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion, visit [Vancouver.ca/NEBEvidence](http://Vancouver.ca/NEBEvidence)

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## **Trans Mountain climate assessment excludes many emissions: City of Vancouver**

by [Martin MacMahon](#) Last Updated Apr 18, 2016 at 2:10 pm PDT

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – The feds must factor in the full environmental impact of the proposed expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline argues the City of Vancouver in a new letter written to [Environment and Climate Change Canada](#).

Of the nearly 80 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions the expansion is projected to bring, City Councillor [Andrea Reimer](#) says only 7.7 million are actually considered as part of this assessment.

“You cannot reconcile a position that [the federal government] has taken internationally with the concept of a seven-fold expansion of tar-sands oil,” argues Reimer, referencing Canada’s decision to sign the Paris Accord, a climate deal involving 195 countries. “It’s some of the dirtiest oil on the planet.”

That’s why the city has written to the feds asking for a more encompassing evaluation — an assessment that would also include downstream emissions from processing, refining, transporting and consuming oil — which is estimated to be in the range of 71.1 million tonnes.

“It creates huge amounts of emissions increase, and there’s no way that we’re going to get to the climate change agreement commitments that the prime minister has made if we’re also having a discussion about how to increase seven-fold the shipment of tar-sands oil,” states Reimer.

In the letter, the city is also highlighting its concerns about what a seven-fold increase in tanker traffic will mean for our region’s environment.

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## **Vancouver industrial real estate hit 15-year high in 2015: Cushman & Wakefield**

### **Growth is being driven in part by a rise in e-commerce**

By Emma Crawford Hampel Business in Vancouver April 18, 2016, 10:01 a.m.

Industrial real estate in Vancouver expanded at the fastest rate in the country in 2015, according to a Cushman & Wakefield report released April 18.

A total of 4.5 million square feet of industrial space was absorbed in the city last year, which was the biggest increase in 15 years.

One of the biggest factors in this growth was the increase of e-commerce transactions, according to the report.

“Growth in Vancouver and Toronto has been stimulated by a rapidly evolving e-commerce sector and related warehouse and distribution demand, along with strengthening export and manufacturing sales,” the real estate company said in its report.

“E-commerce is driving demand for larger warehouse and distribution facilities—especially in Canadian markets adjacent to populated U.S. centres—that are well located and automated to support streamlined logistics, including just-in-time delivery to store locations and individual customers.”

Vancouver and Toronto in particular will see industrial real estate growing even more in the near term, Cushman forecasts.

“Vancouver and Toronto have seen a significant drop in vacancy over the past two years, and this will exert upward pressure on rental rates for top-grade product in key markets,” the report said.

Growth has by no means been restricted to those two cities.

“Industrial real estate has hit a new high,” said Cushman & Wakefield national director of research Stuart Barron.

“You have to look before the financial crisis to see the kind of robust growth happening now across major Canadian markets.”

A low Canadian dollar, low interest rates, increasing demand from the United States and the low energy prices have all contributed to increases in the sector.

Barron said one surprising finding in the report was that Calgary did not see a drop in industrial real estate absorption in 2014 or 2015.

“That’s remarkable considering the magnitude of the energy bust on the downtown office market [in Calgary] and speaks to the dynamics and resilience of industrial real estate.”

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## Today's Headlines Tuesday, April 19, 2016

### City Services:

[Metro Vancouver studying possibility of water meters](#) – CBC

### Community Services:

[Is there a patio shortage when it comes to Vancouver's booming craft beer industry?](#) – News1130

### Housing:

[Vancouver's affordable housing 'pilot' limited but worthwhile, experts say](#) – Globe & Mail

[Tenant turnover most likely in transit-oriented rental markets](#) – Business in Vancouver

### NEB:

['Bad deal': Vancouver mayor decries Kinder Morgan pipeline emissions to feds](#) – Metro

[Robertson rips Ottawa over climate policy](#) – Vancouver Sun

### Parks & Recreation:

[4/20 protest lacks spark of success](#) – Vancouver Sun

### Transportation:

[Vision should rethink plan to close 800-block Robson](#) – Province (letters)

## Yesterday's Headlines April 18, 2016

### Community Services:

[Vancouver pot shop sues over rejected permit application](#) – CKNW

[Pot shop owners vow to flout Vancouver's closure deadline](#) – CTV

### **Development:**

[Could Kingsgate Mall go up for sale?](#) – CKNW

### **DTES:**

[Snoop Dogg takes a drive down a Downtown Eastside alley and has words on clean needles for drug users](#) – Georgia Straight

### **Housing:**

[Vancouver aims to help middle-income home buyers](#) – BCBusiness.ca

### **Parks & Recreation:**

[Vancouver's 4/20 organizers say the event remains an act of civil disobedience aimed at marijuana reform](#) – Georgia Straight

[Vancouver 4/20: Stop selling edibles to minors say health officials](#) – CBC

[Opinion: Consume cannabis responsibly](#) – Vancouver Sun

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### **4/20 protest lacks spark of success**

### **Pot activists face not-so-highlights, including continued enforcement**

Matt Robinson Vancouver Sun April 19, 2016

I don't know what this government's goal is, but for us activists ... we are concerned.

Last year's annual 4/20 protest came during a year of major milestones for pro-pot lobbyists.

The City of Vancouver had just announced plans to regulate dispensaries in defiance of opposition from Ottawa, the Supreme Court said medical marijuana

users could take the drug any way they choose, and the Liberal Party of Canada took office with a pledge to legalize weed.

While those recent highs are still fresh in the minds of pot activists like Jodie Emery, this year's protest could be a (relatively) more sober affair with pot shops across the city facing closure, no change in the federal pot regime in sight and police continuing to enforce marijuana laws.

"The last few years were so successful. Things were moving along really well," Emery said in a recent interview. "When the Liberals got elected, a lot of us felt (a sense of accomplishment). We did sign up (party) members, we did help get them in, and clearly legalization was a hot topic that didn't hurt them in any way."

But Emery claims that in the months since the election, it has seemed the government is more interested in meeting with pot prohibitionists than activists and industry leaders.

Meanwhile, public money continues to be spent on enforcing laws in relation to the production, trafficking and possession of marijuana, she noted.

"Every day, police are still going after Canadians for pot, and those same Canadians are expected to buy it legally a year or two from now. It's hypocritical and it's wasteful, and I don't know if it's just ignorance or if it's malicious. I don't know what this government's goal is, but for us activists, watching the last few months, we are concerned."

Marijuana is still a controlled drug and until parliament has enacted new legislation, pot laws remain in force and should be obeyed, said Ian McLeod, a spokesman for the federal justice ministry.

The government plans to design a system of strict regulation with strong sanctions for those who sell outside that system to keep pot "out of the hands of children, and the profits out of the hands of criminals," McLeod said.

"We will take the time that is necessary to get this right," he said, adding that the next step for the ministry is to launch a task force seeking advice from health, law enforcement and public safety experts on how legalization should take place.

Changing Canada's pot laws will demand municipal, provincial and federal co-operation and international manoeuvring, said Neil Boyd, director of Simon Fraser University's School of Criminology. "I think they're recognizing that if they want to change the law, it's very complex," Boyd said. In the meantime, the country is in a period of transition and a "situation not unlike the prohibition of alcohol."

Boyd said there are appropriate ways in which police might want to act against marijuana before a new pot regime is in place, but criminally charging people is not one of them. Rather, a reasonable form of regulation such as confiscation or a ticket in the case of someone caught smoking in a public place would be more fitting, he said.

But calls to stop all forms of prosecution of marijuana were unreasonable, Boyd added, noting that offences like trafficking are a different matter. “The whole point is to take it out of the hands of the black market. You don’t want to sort of give a green light to the black market.”

Last year, 132 of Vancouver’s pot dispensaries were ordered to shut down because they did not meet the city’s zoning requirements. Of the 62 shops that appealed the order, 13 have been heard by the city’s board of variance and two were successful. The city inspects dispensaries regularly and can use fines and legal action to enforce its regulations, said Jag Sandhu, a city spokesman.

Emery said many issues remain for pro-marijuana advocates and “we need to make sure we don’t sit back and let our former opponents — or I guess they’re still our opponents — dictate policy.

“While we celebrate all the good things, we have to remember that it’s still illegal and for the most part, nothing has changed.”

<http://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/420-protest-may-lack-spark-in-vancouver>

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## **Robertson rips Ottawa over climate policy**

### **Liberals should consider full impact of Kinder Morgan project: mayor**

Peter O’Neil Vancouver Sun April 19, 2016

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson, only weeks after embracing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s infrastructure and social housing plan for big cities, is slamming the new government’s climate policy.

The city sent a letter to the federal government Monday critical of Ottawa’s new method of assessing the climate impact of Kinder Morgan’s \$6.8-billion Alberta-to-Burnaby pipeline expansion.

The letter from a city official calls on the federal government to consider the “downstream” impact on global emissions of the expansion as diluted bitumen crude is transported from the West Coast to other countries, where it would be refined and then shipped to consumers.

The federal government said in January it would assess the climate impact of major projects like Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain expansion, though it said only that it would consider the “upstream” impact by digging up the bitumen in Alberta and shipping it to the West Coast.

The National Energy Board has completed hearings and is scheduled to make its recommendation by May 20 to the federal cabinet, which, in turn, will have until December to make its final decision.

“We appreciate modest improvements made to the NEB process by the federal government,” Robertson said in an interview. “But not including the impacts of downstream climate pollution is a huge oversight and glaring omission.”

The letter, citing data from a 2014 report to the city from Simon Fraser University climate economist Mark Jaccard, argued that the combined upstream and downstream emissions from the Kinder Morgan project would be 79 million tonnes a year — or almost 10 times higher than the emissions just from upstream use.

“Environment and Climate Change Canada must consider both upstream and downstream climate impacts of Trans Mountain’s expansion to fully assess the significant safety, environmental and public health hazards the project carries,” Robertson said.

The company is seeking permission to expand its existing Trans Mountain pipeline system by adding 987 kilometres of new pipeline, reactivating 193 kilometres of existing pipeline, adding additional pump stations and tanks, and expanding the Westridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby.

The government has extended the timeline to make a final decision to December, in order to take into account both the climate issue as well as conduct more intensive consultations with First Nations.

The city’s letter and Robertson’s comments could amount to a political headache for Trudeau, who has attempted to build his political base around an alliance of interests with big cities.

He won lavish praise from Robertson and other mayors for promising in the government’s first budget major infrastructure investments.

But Trudeau is also under considerable pressure, especially from the B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan governments, to encourage natural resource development.

Conservative MP Todd Doherty, for instance, continued Monday an ongoing assault by western Canadian MPs on the government over alleged foot-dragging on projects such as the \$12-billion Pacific North-West LNG project near Prince Rupert.

If approved, the project would become one of Canada's top carbon emitters, according to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

"When will the Liberals stop using environmental buzzwords to kill Canadian jobs and instead become a beacon of light in rough waters and start approving job creating projects?" asked the MP for Cariboo-Prince George.

Liberal MP Jonathan Wilkinson, the MP for North Vancouver, replied that Ottawa is still awaiting information from the company.

Canadians "expect rigorous environmental assessments of projects so that people can have comfort that when projects proceed they are done in an environmentally sustainable manner."

<http://vancouversun.com/news/national/robertson-rips-pipeline-over-emissions>

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### **Vision should rethink plan to close 800-block Robson**

Province (letters) April 19, 2016

I sure hope the plan to permanently close the 800-block Robson Street isn't yet another "done deal" by Vancouver's Vision-controlled city council.

Closing off Robson is short-sighted and will greatly impact seniors and the disabled. What will the cost of maintaining this "sitting area" be year-round, including vandalism? What about the cost to taxpayers of rerouting buses? Then there is the added difficulty to those who have to drive downtown, including delivery drivers.

Really, who will want to take a trip downtown in the grey and pouring rain of our winter months to enjoy sitting on Robson?

*Teri Elder, Vancouver*

## **Street closure is ‘insane’**

I agree with letter-writer Ward Wilson; permanently closing Robson is insane.

The area is already choked with traffic. Maybe the Visionaries have an alternative motive. Perhaps their development buddies plan to put a building there — for the sake of density, of course.

*Debbie Moreau, Vancouver*

## **Closure hurts business**

As a courier company we, like the taxis and other delivery vehicles, already suffer through the yearly summer shutdown of the 800-block Robson Street.

The gridlock it causes on Robson, Howe, Smithe and Hornby has to be experienced to be believed. Most decision-makers on this closure don't work near it. They are not seeing what is taking place.

We do and it affects so many businesses during this duration with incredible delays and congestion. Try to imagine the damage from idling exhaust fumes.

I realize the city wants to enhance its outdoor meeting space, but that could be better accomplished through development of the north side of the art gallery.

Also, tourists will drive into Vancouver or ride tour buses this summer along trendy Robson and will arrive at the traffic nightmare at the 800-block. They will not come back; it happens every summer. Do we really want this on a permanent basis?

Rethink this closure, please.

*Terry Preist, manager, PDX Courier, Vancouver*

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**‘Bad deal’: Vancouver mayor decries Kinder Morgan pipeline emissions to feds**

**Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson demands the federal government consider all greenhouse gas emissions should Kinder Morgan expands its pipeline.**

By: [Emily Jackson](#) Metro Published on Mon Apr 18 2016

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson is demanding the federal government consider all greenhouse gas emissions from Kinder Morgan's potential pipeline expansion, whether the pollution stems from extracting the oil or eventually burning it overseas.

The City of Vancouver, a staunch opponent of Kinder Morgan's plan to twin its pipeline from Alberta to Burnaby so it can ship oil from Vancouver's harbour, outlined this demand in a submission to Environment and Climate Change Canada on Monday.

"Environment and Climate Change Canada must consider both upstream and downstream climate impacts of Trans Mountain's expansion to fully assess the significant safety, environmental and public health hazards the project carries," Robertson said in a statement.

As it stands, the federal government only looks at extraction, or upstream, emissions when it conducts climate assessments of oil and gas pipelines. But according to the city's math, burning, refining, processing and transporting oil from a twinned Kinder Morgan pipeline would release ten times more greenhouse gases than extracting the substance in the first place.

"Kinder Morgan's pipeline proposal is a bad deal for Vancouver's environment and economy," Robertson said, adding the city will continue to fight the project.

"The sevenfold increase in tanker traffic in our local waters is simply not worth the risks in the event of an oil spill."

The mayor's comments mark the first potential split from his harmonious relationship with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau after reports last week suggested the prime minister wants the Kinder Morgan project to go forward.

The city acted as an intervenor in the National Energy Board hearing on the pipeline expansion, where it advocated that the pipeline could hurt Vancouver's green reputation, harm the environment and is not in the public interest. The NEB is expected to submit its final recommendation to the government on May 20.

<http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2016/04/18/vancouver-decries-kinder-morgan-pipeline-emissions-to-feds.html>

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**Vancouver's affordable housing 'pilot' limited but worthwhile, experts say**

FRANCES BULA Globe & Mail April 19, 2016



The city's proposed plan to create an affordable home-ownership program will likely serve only a tiny minority of people in this expensive city, but anything is worth testing out at this point, housing and development-industry experts say.

The city's housing planners have proposed that Vancouver do a pilot home-ownership program to create 300 condo units in three years that could be sold at below the market rate.

A draft proposal being debated at council on Wednesday would require buyers to have at least one member of the household working in the city, to have been residents for five years and to have a household income under a certain limit.

"We may need to even add additional screens," said Councillor Raymond Louie, suggesting people who work in key city jobs such as nursing, policing or firefighting could be given priority, as other cities have done. "It is a pilot. This is an attempt by Vancouver to see whether it will work."

He acknowledged it will not solve affordability problems, but the city felt it had to act, given the increasing concern over who will be able to stay in Vancouver as housing prices have skyrocketed and rental vacancies are near zero.

"What we're seeing now is a great anxiety and need," he said.

In Vancouver's proposed plan, the units would be part of projects built by private developers, who would hand them over to the city as their required contribution in a rezoning.

Although the exact mechanisms still have to be worked out, along with a change in provincial legislation to enable the idea, the basic concept is the city would retain some of the equity in the units or put a limit on re-sales to keep the units at below-market rates for future generations.

The region's two major universities have forms of this kind of ownership. Faculty or staff at Simon Fraser University can buy townhouses or condos for 80 per cent of the normal market value. When they sell, they get the profit on that 80 per cent. The university holds on to the remaining equity and profit.

But experts say the program will likely attract only a niche group of buyers.

Many people will likely prefer to stretch as much as possible to buy a unit without a limit on their future profits, said Anne McMullin, the CEO of the local Urban Development Institute, which represents builders.

As well, given the way the city's program is being set up, units will be available only in buildings where the city has negotiated with a developer to provide them.

That is different from affordable-housing programs in some other cities, Ms. McMullin said, where the buyer can choose from any project and work out the subsidy with the city or other partners.

“We’re supportive of anything that allows people to get into home ownership, but this can get complicated.”

Penny Gurstein, the director of the University of British Columbia’s planning school, said the program will likely mainly serve a small group of better-off buyers.

The maximum household income level the city is setting for the program is \$96,000. With that income, a family could commit only \$33,600 a year for housing under typical bank-financing rules.

After taxes and strata fees, that family could likely afford only about \$2,300 for mortgage payments, which would limit them to a condo worth around \$500,000. Although people making less than that could theoretically qualify for the program, it is increasingly difficult to find new condos for less than \$400,000 in the city.

“It’s going to be a narrow range of people, but it will still be attractive to some,” Ms. Gurstein said. “I think it’s worth trying and assessing. I think we have to try as many things as possible.”

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancouvers-affordable-housing-pilot-limited-but-worthwhile-experts-say/article29672150/>

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## **Vancouver pot shop sues over rejected permit application**

[Simon Little](#) CKNW Posted: April 18, 2016 09:37 pm

One of the first Vancouver pot shops to have its [permit appeal rejected](#) by the city’s Board of Variance is taking that body to court, claiming the city interfered with its hearing.

Adam Blender’s dispensary, the SWED society, is among the dozens of pot shops to have their development permit applications rejected for being within 300 meters of a school.

SWED appealed the decision in February, but failed there too when the Board of Variance upheld the city’s decision.

It was the first in a string of similar hearings in which the Board has made clear it is unwilling to bend on the 300 meter rule.

### ***Unfair pressure?***

But Blender claims the Board threw his appeal out after unfair pressure from the city.

He claims under the *Vancouver Charter*, relaxing bylaw restrictions is specifically within the Board's power when someone can prove a hardship specific to their property.

But he claims at his hearing, Vancouver's Assistant Director of Planning John Greer improperly instructed the board that it had no flexibility or jurisdiction when it comes to the distance regulation.

"Mr. Greer specifically informed the Board that it had no flexibility or jurisdiction under the by-law with respect to relaxing provisions regarding a dispensary being 300 meters from a school."

### ***Why are we here right now?***

Blender claims the board followed Greer's instructions, and "in turn declined to exercise, and in turn, fettered" its legal power to relax bylaws.

The suit claims Board member Gilbert Tan then expressed confusion as to the purpose of the hearings.

"If we have no ability to actually change these decisions, why are we here right now?"

He claims the city had no right to instruct the Board, and points to language on the Board of Variance website indicating "City committees or Council may give information to the Boards on particular appeals, but they cannot influence Board decisions."

Blender is calling for the decision to be scrapped, and a declaration the board acted outside its jurisdiction and denied him a fair hearing.

The City of Vancouver referred requests for comment to the Board of Variance. The board did not return a request for comment from CKNW.

None of the claims have been proven in court.

### ***Dispensary regulations***

The city of Vancouver voted to allow and regulate dispensaries in the city last June, but set strict rules to apply and just 14 of the initial 176 applications met the requirements to apply for a development application.

64 dispensaries put their names on the list to appeal their rejection, while dozens of others which are too close to neighbouring pot shops are going through a process called “declustering,” in which one will be allowed to apply for a permit, while the others must close or move.

The city has set April 29th as a deadline for those dispensaries either without a permit or within the application process to close their doors.

<http://www.cknw.com/2016/04/18/vancouver-pot-shop-sues-over-rejected-application/>

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## **Could Kingsgate Mall go up for sale?**

[Simon Little](#) CKNW Posted: April 18, 2016 06:13 pm | Last Updated: April 18, 2016 10:30 pm

Could East Vancouver’s iconic Kingsgate Mall go up for sale?

An institution to some, and an eyesore to others, the eclectic shopping centre has served Mount Pleasant for more than four decades.

But what few of its customers likely know is that the land is owned by the Vancouver School Board.

The mall’s lease is up for renewal next year, and that’s raising all sorts of questions about what will happen to the property.

### ***Option to sell?***

A [controversial audit](#) ordered by the provincial government last year called on the board to look at selling off non-core properties, including the Kingsgate land.

The mall that currently sits there is owned by the Beedie Development Group, and held on a 99 year lease.

But with the property valued at nearly \$80 million, that’s raising questions about its future.

VSB chair Mike Lombardi is quick to point out that if a sale did happen, the money couldn't be used to plug the district's \$24 million budget shortfall.

"A lot of people are under the impression that if we sell that we can use it for our operating budget. We can't. There's two kinds of budgets school boards have, operating budgets – ours is \$500 million to run our schools, pay for our teachers, our band and strings – [and] we have capital funds, which are \$10 million a year. You cannot co-mingle those accounts, they are both separate and distinct by law."

He adds that Beedie would be the only potential buyer, since it holds the long-term lease, which could reduce any selling price.

Money from the sale would be used to create a capital account the board could use to top up construction projects or school renovations.

### ***Revenue goldmine***

While selling the land would pad the board's capital accounts, it could come at the cost of the district's already struggling operating budget.

The board currently pulls in about \$750,000 a year from the property, which would vanish in the case of a sale leaving the district deeper in the hole.

"Well yeah, it'd mean we'd have another three-quarters of a million dollar shortfall next year. We would have probably some good capital, but we would have almost a million dollars less in our operating budget."

**READ MORE: [Parents and students pack VSB meeting to speak on cuts](#)**

He adds that if the district does renegotiate the lease, it could end up doubling the rent.

"Our understanding from our real estate advisors is that we could probably increase our three quarters of a million to potentially one and a half million to two million. So that's the easiest solution."

### ***Third option?***

If the mall isn't sold, that doesn't mean it won't face the wrecking ball.

Lombardi says the VSB has absolutely no interest in developing the site itself, wary of a repeat of the Olympic Village fiasco.

But he wouldn't rule out a new Beedie development with new lease terms.

“A variation of that idea might be that he re does the mall, and he pays us lease for that and then he gets the air rights to build on top of that. We have a real interest in maintaining annual revenues because you can see how that helps our operating budget.”

### ***Open house***

The [public is being invited to weigh in](#) on what happens to the property over the next two weeks, with the question “what you value for Kingsgate Mall, now and in the future?”

The Board is accepting tweets and emails, and is also holding an open house at the mall on May 1st.

Lombardi says he hopes to have a report from the consultations ready by the fall.

### ***Historic East Vancouver***

The property was acquired by the City of Vancouver and the School Board in the late 1800s, with Mount Pleasant School built there in 1892.

Nearly a century later, Kingsway and Broadway had become a thriving area, and the board built a new school in a nearby residential area, vacating the property in 1972. Two years later the land was leased and a mall built.

The mall has at points gone through hard times, but owing to its eclectic shops and clientele, has also developed something of a cult following – including a parody Twitter account and earnestly awkward tribute video.

<http://www.cknw.com/2016/04/18/could-kingsgate-mall-go-up-for-sale/>

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### **Snoop Dogg takes a drive down a Downtown Eastside alley and has words on clean needles for drug users**

by [Travis Lupick](#) Georgia Straight on April 18th, 2016 at 8:15 PM

Snoop Dogg is apparently not a fan of Vancouver’s needle-distribution programs for drug users. (Or maybe he’s simply frustrated with Canadian border security. It’s not exactly clear.) The rap superstar was in Vancouver last night (April 17) and took a moment while cruising through a Downtown Eastside alley to weigh in on the health-care program with a nuanced critique.

"I can't believe these motherfuckers be sweating us at the fucking border and they got an alley, they got an alley where they pass out needles for people to do heroin at," Snoop says in a video posted on [Instagram](#). "You motherfuckers at customs, y'all ain't shit. And y'all be sweating me? And y'all got this shit going on in your fucking alleys? Y'all need to raise up off me Canada. Ya'll need to just walk me through and stop taking me back into that fucking customs office. Clean this shit up out here. Look at this shit, man. And y'all sweating niggers at the border. Y'all got an alley for the motherfuckers y'all let do drugs. This is terrible, cuz. This is terrible."

Snoop was in Vancouver playing a DJ set at Fortune Sound Club, which is located on Pender Street near the intersection of Pender and Main.

Vancouver has made needle-distribution services available for many years now. They officially began in 1989 as one of the first such initiatives in North America.

Coauthors Larry Campbell, Neil Boyd, and Lori Culbert, recount the program's origins in their 2009 book, *A Thousand Dreams*. There, it's founding is traced back to the Downtown Eastside alleys that Snoop was driving through on Sunday.

"By late 1988, injection drug use had so increased in prevalence that John Turvey, the founder of DEYAS (Downtown Eastside Youth Activities Society), started single-handedly giving out three thousand clean syringes a month to try to reduce the spread of infectious diseases among addicts," they write. "Alongside him was Jerry Adams, who was hired by Turvey as a DEYAS outreach worker in 1986. He says Turvey, a former heroin addict who got clean in the 1970s, used donated money to buy clean needles because he was worried about the abscesses and scarring some users were developing. Turvey would walk the streets for hours, plucking clean rigs from his green army bag to give to surprised users."

The book goes on to note that those early effort to distribute needles led the government to give DEYAS \$100,000 in 1989 to open the first sanctioned needle exchange in Canada.

Former Vancouver mayor Philip Owen is quoted there recalling that at the time, needle exchange was a new and unknown concept. He credits former Vancouver chief medical health officer Dr. John Blatherwick with bringing government on board.

Since then, Vancouver's needle-exchange programs have been credited with reducing infection rates of HIV, hepatitis C, and other diseases transmitted through the sharing of used needles. Today, needle distribution is managed by Vancouver Coastal Health. In 2009, the health authority and partner agencies

distributed 1.85 million clean needles for the illicit use of intravenous drugs, according to the [Globe and Mail](#).

<http://www.straight.com/blogra/680536/snoop-dogg-takes-drive-down-downtown-eastside-alley-and-has-words-clean-needles-drug>

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## **Vancouver's 4/20 organizers say the event remains an act of civil disobedience aimed at marijuana reform**

After nearly two decades at the Vancouver Art Gallery, the city's annual celebration of marijuana is moving to Sunset Beach.

by [Travis Lupick](#) Georgia Straight on April 18th, 2016 at 4:20 PM

Organizers of Vancouver's annual 4/20 marijuana festival want people to know the event is still a protest.

"This year, more than ever, we need to rally," **Jodie Emery** told the *Straight*. "The city is threatening to shut down dispensaries and the federal government is allowing arrests to continue."

In a telephone interview, the activist and owner of Cannabis Culture said that despite Prime Minister Justin Trudeau [pledging to legalize](#) and regulate recreational marijuana, the event remains focused on pushing for reforms.

"The primary message is to stop marijuana arrests now, to legalize marijuana now," Emery emphasized. "We need to allow everyone to participate safely and openly in this industry. And right now, millions of Canadians are still being criminalized."

Last February, the *Straight* [broke the news](#) that Vancouver's annual 4/20 protest and celebration of marijuana was leaving its long-time home on the north side of the Vancouver Art Gallery. On Wednesday, April 20, the event will take place at Sunset Beach, just east of English Bay on the south edge of the city's West End.

"The size of our event has grown, and with such big numbers, it will be more exciting and inclusive to go to the beach," Emery said in an interview for that article.

Speaking today (April 18), Emery acknowledged that the move has become a bit of a controversy, mostly because, she argued, the park board has vocally opposed the festival moving to Sunset Beach, which is a public park.



“It’s the same old anti-marijuana fear-mongering and bigotry that we’ve been dealing with for decades,” she said.

Asked about the latest development in that dispute—reports that event organizers won’t be requesting vendors to ID people buying marijuana—Emery maintained that this is a misunderstanding.

She said organizers are “of course” asking vendors to ID people who purchase marijuana on Wednesday and to deny sales to anybody under the age of 19.

“This is not about selling pot to youths,” she insisted. “This is a legalization rally, and we always encourage responsible safety.”

**Jeremiah Vandermeer** is the event’s lead organizer and editor in chief of *Cannabis Culture* magazine. He argued that despite the federal Liberals initiating a process to legalize cannabis, there are still reasons to protest government policies on cannabis.

“We have the federal government ordering police to continue to arrest people for marijuana,” Vandermeer said. “Even here in the City of Vancouver, we have the laws getting worse when it comes to marijuana and medical marijuana. We have city council threatening to close the vast majority of dispensaries in the city.”

On February 26, the *Straight* reported that Ottawa had instructed police across Canada to [continue arresting people](#) for the possession of marijuana. And on March 29, the *Straight* reported the City of Vancouver had [given unsanctioned dispensaries until the end of April](#) to shut their doors or face fines and other enforcement measures.

From 2003 to 2012, the B.C. Ministry of Justice recorded [charging 44,522 people](#) under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for crimes related to cannabis.

An even larger number of people were recorded for a marijuana "offence", an interaction with police that falls short of authorities pressing charges but that still can carry heavy consequences. According to another set of Justice Ministry numbers, from 2003 to 2012 B.C. police recorded 173,157 such offences related to cannabis. Today, those interactions with police remain alongside individuals’ names in police databases.

The 4/20 event’s move from the Art Gallery to Sunset Beach was welcomed by city hall, which is dominated by councillors belonging to the Vision Vancouver party. Since the relocation was made public in February, the NPA-dominated park board has positioned itself as a vocal opponent to the change.

“It’s been a challenge, working with the parks board,” Vandermeer said. “They continue to come up with added costs and sanctions or requirements they are putting on us at the last minute, which is very problematic.”

He maintained that despite the event’s festive nature, it remains an act of civil disobedience.

“Until the laws have been changed on a federal level or on a municipal level, 4/20 will continue to be a protest,” Vandermeer said. “And once those laws have been changed, 4/20 will be able to become a celebration of cannabis.”

<http://www.straight.com/news/680466/vancouvers-420-organizers-say-event-remains-act-civil-disobedience-aimed-marijuana>

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## **Tenant turnover most likely in transit-oriented rental markets**

By Peter Mitham Business in Vancouver April 19, 2016, midnight

To everything there is a season, and according to a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. (CMHC) study of the Vancouver market, the top three reasons why tenants move are when they buy a home, change jobs or find new lodgings where the rents are lower and the digs or the management’s better.

But being able to track those seasons in a tenant’s life is key for landlords, and the CMHC study aims to give landlords some clues as to what’s likely in their area.

Outside of the University Endowment Lands, where tenant turnover is a whopping 48.3%, the areas with the most footloose tenants include Surrey (27.4%), Richmond (24.9%), downtown Vancouver (22.9%) and North Burnaby (22.8%).

Combined with the proximity of these areas to post-secondary institutions such as Simon Fraser University, the British Columbia Institute of Technology and Kwantlen Polytechnic University, the presence of rapid transit connections suggests why these sub-markets have a more transitory tenant base.

The three most stable areas are southeast Vancouver (8.2%) and North Vancouver district and West Vancouver (tied at 12.1%). The only other areas with turnover rates of less than 15% are East Hastings (13.8%) and Vancouver’s west side (14.8%), neither of which has rapid transit services. Common to these

areas is a lack of rapid transit connections, even considering the west side's proximity to the University of British Columbia.

### ***Rate growth***

Corporate housing, that hybrid of hospitality and rental businesses, reflected conditions of both sectors in its performance last year, according to a review of 2015 numbers by the Corporate Housing Providers Association (CHPA) of Indianapolis.

Strong growth in rates and steady occupancies combined to boost the supply of units surveyed to 508 – that's up from a sample of 296 units last year, when the total inventory in the Vancouver market was pegged at 1,759 units.

This doesn't necessarily mean trouble, however; the market fundamentals presented in the report indicate healthy conditions. Those seeking trouble should look to Calgary, which CHPA singled out as a market facing difficulties thanks to oil and gas sector challenges.

### ***Buy side***

The strength of purpose-built rental properties and demand for corporate housing is paralleled in investors' appetite for multi-family properties.

Developers are showing increased interest in building and holding on to units for the cash flow they provide, while investors bought multi-family properties in record numbers last year.

The forecasts of David and Mark Goodman for 2015 came true as Greater Vancouver sales bust through the \$1.5 billion mark to approach a total of \$1.6 billion – a 99% increase over 2014 volumes.

Just last week, Avison Young's analysis logged 80 transactions provincewide worth more than \$5 million. The total of those deals topped \$1.4 billion.

Defining elements of the transactions, as noted by both the Goodmans and Avison Young, include a large number of private owners "realizing spectacular gains" (the Goodmans' words) through sales to buyers backed by foreign – most commonly Chinese – capital.

"The number of larger deals completed by foreign buyers (greater than \$10 million) is on the rise and, as a result, the profile of such purchasers has also grown despite their presence in the market for some time," Avison Young said in its report. "More foreign investors are expected to arrive in Metro Vancouver in 2016 and 2017."

<https://www.biv.com/article/2016/4/tenant-turnover-most-likely-transit-oriented-rental/>

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## **Pot shop owners vow to flout Vancouver's closure deadline**

CTV Vancouver Published Monday, April 18, 2016 7:37PM PDT Last Updated Monday, April 18, 2016 7:38PM PDT

Time is ticking for the majority of Vancouver's medical marijuana dispensaries, but some owners say they're battenning down the hatches for a battle with City Hall.

Vancouver has set a deadline of April 29 for unlicensed pot shops to close, and a whopping 162 of the 176 that applied for a business licence failed.

Coun. Kerry Jang said any that refuse city orders to shut down will face escalating enforcement action.

Vancouver has become the first city in Canada to regulate illegal marijuana dispensaries.

"Enforcement can range from anything from letters and orders all the way through to fines that can range from a few hundred dollars to several thousand dollars," Jang said.

"And we have no problem with obtaining court injunctions to close them forcibly."

Some dispensary operators told CTV News they intend to comply with the deadline, but others said they're digging in their heels for a fight.

Dana Larsen, owner of the Medical Cannabis Dispensary, said he supports the idea of regulating marijuana shops, but the city's rule barring them from operating within 300 metres of schools and community centres is unfair.

The majority of unsuccessful licensing applications failed because of that requirement.

"The city's going to have a very hard time shutting down 100 locations that've been operating illegally so far. We're not afraid to go to the wall to fight for our right to serve the patients that need this medicine," Larsen said.

"We'll do everything we can both legally – going for a judicial review and fighting in court – as well as engaging in civil disobedience."

Sixty-two failed licensing applicants have appealed the city's decision with the Board of Variance. So far, 13 cases have been heard, and just one business has been granted an exemption to continue selling pot past the deadline.

Jang said Vancouver had to do something to manage all the dispensaries that were popping up, which reportedly came to outnumber Starbucks locations.

He also promised the city won't be interfering with the ability of patients to access pot for medical reasons.

But Jodie Emery of Cannabis Culture said Vancouver's hardline stance on dispensaries is "absolutely unjustified and appalling."

"Dispensaries are protected by the courts and they're all operating with peaceful civil disobedience, breaking an unjust law to demonstrate that there's no harm being caused," she said.

"The reason there are so many dispensaries is because of supply and demand. There wouldn't be this much supply if there wasn't so much demand."

<http://bc.ctvnews.ca/pot-shop-owners-vow-to-flout-vancouver-s-closure-deadline-1.2864675>

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## **Vancouver 4/20: Stop selling edibles to minors say health officials**

***Dr. Patricia Daly says more than 100 people ended up in hospital last year, some as young as 15***

By Liam Britten, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 18, 2016 7:43 PM PT Last Updated: Apr 18, 2016 7:43 PM PT

Vancouver Coastal Health's chief medical health officer is asking organizers of this year's 4/20 event not to sell edible cannabis products to minors.

Dr. Patricia Daly says more than 100 people ended up in hospital last year, some as young as 15, and edibles were to blame in about 75 per cent of those cases.

"I don't know if we have any other gatherings in the City of Vancouver that would result in those types of numbers of people coming to local hospitals. So that's reason enough for concern," Daly told [On The Coast](#) host Stephen Quinn.

Daly says her request is "very reasonable," and matches the upcoming framework the city is instituting for storefront marijuana sales.

Daly wants organizers to card anyone who looks under 25, the same as a liquor store would do or someone selling tobacco products.

"This is because marijuana is particularly harmful to developing brains," she said.

She says edibles are a particular concern because they take time to become fully effective and a user can consume too much while waiting for the effects to kick in.

She says those who came into hospital were mostly suffering from gastrointestinal distress, but also had "acute anxiety, psychosis and loss of consciousness."

"The effects can be pretty dramatic, particularly for people who've never consumed marijuana before," she said.

Daly says her staff has tried to make contact with 4/20 organizers and vendors via email, but none of them have written back.

She says VCH staff will be at the event, although they will only be there to inform vendors about the dangers of selling to those underage.

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## **Global real estate investment debated at UBC forum in Vancouver**

### ***Four panelists shared their thoughts on what's driving the cost of real estate***

By Maryse Zeidler, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 14, 2016 9:36 PM PT Last Updated: Apr 14, 2016 10:12 PM PT

Residential real estate is turning into a global commodity market with specific hot spots like Vancouver, says Richard Koss, the director of the [International Monetary Fund's Global Housing Watch](#) initiative.

"The increase in home prices is modest in most countries," said Koss. "What's difficult is why are some markets picked more than others?"

Koss spoke as part of a panel on global real estate investment on Thursday evening organized by the University of British Columbia's [Centre for Urban Economics and Real Estate](#) and the [Centre for Chinese Research](#).

Moderator Christopher Rea, the director of the Centre for Chinese Research, said the goal of the event was to "share perspectives" on Vancouver's booming real estate market. The event attracted about 200 people.

Other panelists included UBC professors Tsur Somerville and David Ley and real estate developer Shao Long Li.

Kosh said his research shows that high-stress real estate markets often show in cities and regions like Edmonton and Calgary with high commodity production.

### **The push away from China**

Geography professor David Ley focused his part of the discussion on how immigration has impacted countries like Canada and the U.S., which have often had a shortage of capital and labour.

He said Canada first brought in immigrants from Europe, then Asia, and most recently has concentrated on China with the advent of the immigrant investor program.

Of all these groups, he pointed to Chinese immigrants — 85 to 90 per cent of whom became homeowners in their first years in Canada.

Ley cited their desire to evade anti-corruption campaigns, escape health risks stemming from pollution, and concerns about food security as factors contributing towards moving to markets like Australia, Canada and the U.S.

A Chinese website linking investors with global markets recently estimated \$220 billion will be spent in overseas real estate by 2020, Ley said, adding that data from the U.S. shows a propensity towards the luxury market — the average price of a home purchased by a Chinese national in the U.S. was three times the price of homes bought by their American counterparts.

Ley also pointed out that 73 per cent of homes bought by Chinese buyers in the U.S. were paid in cash.

But Ley also reminded the audience that Chinese capital was not the only factor leading to sky-high real estate prices in Vancouver. He said the low Canadian dollar and a lack of overall supply was also at play.

### **Vancouver an attractive option**

Real estate developer Shao Long Li spoke with the crowd about the many aspects that make Vancouver an attractive city for Chinese investors.

He began by explaining that real estate often takes a much larger portion of Chinese investment portfolios than in Western countries — 50 per cent as opposed to five to 10 per cent.

Li said Vancouver's quality of life, education standards, and multiculturalism are just some of the factors that make it one of the key global cities to invest in. He also noted the stability of the housing market, the low crime rate and the accessibility of Chinese-oriented businesses as a plus.

And Li said banks have made it easy for Chinese nationals to get a mortgage in Canada, with low and stable interest rates an added bonus. He also pointed out that buyers can afford a larger, nicer home in Vancouver than they could for the same price in a city like Shanghai.

### **Global move to cities**

But it's not just capital from China that's causing a housing crunch in Vancouver, according to UBC business professor Tsur Somerville.

He said many people around the world are moving into cities, especially places like Vancouver that offer attractive amenities.

He also reminded the audience that, over time, immigrant groups have become well-integrated in Vancouver, especially second-generation immigrants.

Somerville said the price of single-family housing south of the Fraser rose at about the same rate as in Vancouver until 2000, at which point the cost of detached houses began to increase exponentially — a pattern repeated in similar cities around the world.

Somerville said it's difficult to point to a single factor leading to the most recent craze in real estate investment in Vancouver, adding that in 2015, "there was a dramatic change in Chinese capital flows."

As for the future of real estate in Vancouver, he said the plight of the Canadian dollar, the end of the immigrant investor program, and currency restrictions are all likely to be factors.

But, he added, owning property in a city with a growing population will continue to be a strong investment option.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/global-real-estate-forum-vancouver-1.3536769>



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## **Vancouver aims to help middle-income home buyers**

**Marcie Good BCBusiness.ca Apr 18, 2016**

A program aimed at helping middle-income earners buy a condo in Vancouver will be considered by city council on Wednesday.

Modelled on similar programs in Calgary, San Francisco and New York, the program would be restricted to families with an annual household income of less than \$96,000. Under the terms outlined in the staff report, one member of the household must be employed in Vancouver, and one member must be a permanent resident or a citizen of Canada. The program also focuses on first-time buyers who have lived in the city for at least five years.

“We’ve been hearing from many, many voices now about how Vancouver’s becoming less and less affordable,” said Coun. Raymond Louie, “so this is an attempt to build some model where people have a chance to buy into a place where they’ve lived most of their lives.”

According to Louie, the plan would use the typical community amenity contributions that a developer makes to the city during a rezoning process. The city would invest these funds into purchasing a 20 per cent stake in several units of a new development. A qualified buyer could purchase the home at 20 per cent less than market value. If the unit’s value appreciates, the city’s share would also appreciate.

The program would require the province to amend the Vancouver Charter to allow the city to use the shared ownership model. The staff report proposes that the city would begin with an investment in 300 homes.

<http://www.bcbusiness.ca/real-estate/vancouver-aims-to-help-middle-income-home-buyers>

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## **Is there a patio shortage when it comes to Vancouver's booming craft beer industry?**

by [Simon Druker](#) Posted Apr 19, 2016 6:53 am PDT

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – Patio season may have arrived, but good luck trying to find one attached to your favourite craft brewery in Vancouver.

It should come as no surprise that it's so hard to find a craft beer and a sunny place to sip it, says Jeff Guignard with the [Alliance of Beverage Licensees of BC \(ABLE BC\)](#).

It all comes down to licenses and to a lesser extent, zoning.

"Craft breweries, they're licensed as a manufacturer's lounge and the little bar that they have is designed to be a lounge just so people can taste their products," explains Guignard.

"Whereas if you own an actual pub or what's called a 'liquor primary,' it's a different kind of establishment. So you're licensed to have a big lounge, to serve all kinds of products, and to have a patio. And then you have to get municipal approval for the number of seats on your patio."

And that comes with a much more expensive license.

"It's just that craft brewery licenses operate differently. They don't have a patio automatically included. They don't have to go through that same process exactly when they get that lounge. It's kind of an extension of having a manufacturer's license," says Guignard.

He adds some craft breweries are in areas that aren't zoned to allow those patios, but some are exploiting a bit of a municipal loophole.

"Actually, municipalities are kind of grappling with this a little bit because they're seeing more and more manufacturing lounges, like craft breweries start to have little picnic areas in the back or something like that which kind of becomes an outdoor patio area, which is not really what they're licensed to do."

That doesn't sit well with some long-standing pub owners.

"The problem for people who operate pubs is they have to pay a lot more money for those licenses, they have to go through different bylaws and public hearings. So they don't want a brewery to suddenly be able to have a patio at the same time when they didn't have to go through the same process," says Guignard.

<http://www.news1130.com/2016/04/19/patio-vancouver-craft-beer/>

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**Opinion: Consume cannabis responsibly**

Ian Dawkins Vancouver Sun Published on: April 18, 2016 | Last Updated: April 18, 2016 5:06 PM PDT

The Cannabis Growers of Canada are as excited as ever by the approach of another April 20th, or 4/20. Many of our member dispensaries and cannabis farmers across Canada will be participating in their local 4/20 celebrations, and we look forward to seeing the community come out to support cannabis legalization.

As we move into a new era of openness for cannabis consumers and businesses, it is fitting that 4/20 Vancouver has moved to its new location at Sunset Beach. While we continue to fight for patients' rights and a better future for small cannabis businesses, we are pleased to see the industry transitioning to a normalized and legal future that celebrates local craft producers.

Cannabis itself is changing, too — creative cannabis entrepreneurs have developed a variety of new cannabis products, many of which are smoke-free. Many people are consuming these new forms of cannabis edibles or using cannabis resin extracts, ensuring that people can personalize the experience that is best for them personally.

Given the dizzying array of cannabis products available today, CGC like to share some helpful tips for a safe and enjoyable cannabis consumption experience. With so many individuals trying cannabis for the first time on 4/20, and so many delicious cannabis-infused snacks being shared, we felt it important to offer some tips:

- Always make sure you know what the dosage of THC is in the edible being offered. Professional edible producers will generally label their products with accurate THC content information, but some aspiring home chefs may not necessarily know the exact dosage they are serving you. If you're not sure about the content, be careful and make informed decisions.
- The right amount of THC to consume in edible form is different for every individual. That said, newcomers and those with low tolerances should stay below 5mg of THC initially. If you want to increase the amount you have had, be sure to wait two hours to make sure you're comfortable before having more.
- If you get uncomfortable or feel unwell, stay calm! Drink some water or some juice, find a comfortable spot to rest in, and just relax. It is effectively impossible to overdose on THC, after all! You'll feel better faster than you can say "Daredevil marathon on Netflix".

Remember, cannabis is best enjoyed responsibly. While it is perfectly safe to consume large amounts, you probably want to remember all of the fun you had with your friends on 4/20! Be informed about what you consume, and know what dosage you are personally comfortable with before consuming cannabis edibles.

Have fun, stay safe, and support your local craft producers!

<http://vancouver.sun.com/opinion/consume-cannabis-responsibly>

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## **Metro Vancouver studying possibility of water meters**

### ***Meters are costly but help curb water use***

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 19, 2016 8:10 AM PT Last Updated: Apr 19, 2016 8:13 AM PT

Metro Vancouver is researching the possibility of installing water meters for all homes in the region.

The two-year study will examine the environmental benefits as well as the economic costs.

"Basically water metering is a way to charge people for how much water they use and that does help people reduce how much they consume," says North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto, who is also the chair of Metro Vancouver's utilities committee.

Mussatto estimates it would cost between \$400 to \$1,000 per home to install the meters, and about \$50 a year for reading and billing.

"It would cut down the use for sure, but you'd still have to raise X amount of dollars to pay for the system," he said.

The committee will have to decide if the environmental benefits would be worth the extra cost.

Mussatto says the study is also looking at other alternatives — including hiring additional bylaw officers to enforce water restrictions during dry summer months.

Homes in West Vancouver and White Rock already have water meters, as do all newly-built single and two-family homes in Vancouver.

The region is considering the move to water meters following one of the hottest and driest summers on record.

Stage 3 water restrictions were implemented in Metro Vancouver last summer for the first time since 2003.

This year, the region will be restricting water use [two weeks earlier than usual](#) in order to ensure there is enough water left at the end of summer.

From May 15 to Oct. 15, residents will only be able to water their lawn three times a week.

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## **The evolution of 4/20 and cannabis counterculture in Vancouver**

[Anna Kalfa](#) CKNW Posted: April 19, 2016 01:40 pm | Last Updated: April 19, 2016 01:41 pm

It started as an idea more than 20 years ago, based on a daily 4:20 p.m. ritual that was born by a group of high school students in California in the mid-70s.

It was code for let's meet and smoke dope, and eventually grew into a common catch-phrase amongst Grateful Dead "heads".

Fast forward to 1995, and the HempBC store founded by well-known Canadian cannabis activist, Marc Emery. One of the first of its kind in Canada, the store was located at 307 West Hastings Street across from Victory Square Park.

According to a 2010 Cannabis Culture [article](#), the idea to turn the daily event into an annual gathering came from a couple of Emery's store employees, Danna Rozek and Cindy Lassu .

### **4/20 is born**

On April 20th, 1995 the first ever 4/20 event took place at Victory Square. It was held there in 1998 before moving to the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1997.

Last year was the 20th anniversary of the celebration, and by the end of it everyone knew it was time to move the event to a new and bigger location that isn't in the middle of the downtown core.

### ***Sunset Beach and 4/20***

4/20 2016 sees the event taking place at Vancouver's Sunset Beach in English Bay tomorrow, and despite protests from the Vancouver Park Board, most people seem to think it's a good move.

The 4/20 event takes place tomorrow, April 20th from Noon to dusk, with the giant smoke-out happening at 4:20 pm.

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## **Vancouver School Board warns students 4/20 not an excuse to skip**

Catherine Phillips Globe & Mail April 19, 2016

The Vancouver School Board has a message for its students: School is in session on 4/20. The school board issued a notice ahead of April 20, a day used

to celebrate marijuana use, reminding students that attendance will be taken. The notice also took the opportunity to encourage parents to talk to their kids about the potential risks of marijuana use.

In Vancouver, an annual 4/20 rally draws thousands of participants, often in support of the legalization and decriminalization of the drug.

The notice was issued by the school board's Substance Use Prevention Initiative (SACY), which engages parents and community members on school-based alcohol and drug prevention.

Outlined in the document were the potential harms of engaging in marijuana use and the "lifestyle that goes with it," such as diet, stress with family and school performance. It also addressed best practices for adults who want to speak to youth about drug use.

Although the Vancouver School Board seems to be alone in publishing a document of this kind, school-based drug and alcohol prevention strategies have been presented by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

The Trudeau government's high-profile commitment to the legalization of marijuana has sparked a call for comprehensive rules and regulations surrounding its recreational use, with the enforcement of laws against impaired driving at the forefront of concerns.

Vancouver School Board associate superintendent Nancy Brennan says the notice has been sent to parents and school administrators for the past three to four years in response to growing popularity of Vancouver's 4/20 event.

"Over the years we've seen the event grow and we recognize that it may be tempting or interesting to students," she said. "But we want students to be aware that it's a regular school day and that the event is not condoned by the school district."

According to Brennan, the notice is also intended to encourage parents to have conversations with their children about substance use.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancouver-school-board-warns-students-420-not-an-excuse-to-skip-school/article29676715/>

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## **Marijuana protest planned for the Vancouver Art Gallery despite 4/20 moving to Sunset Beach**

While some 20,000 people spend 4/20 at Sunset Beach, a smaller group is expected to gather for a protest at the VAG.

by [Travis Lupick](#) Georgia Straight on April 19th, 2016 at 12:45 PM

Tomorrow (April 20), some 20,000 people converge on Sunset Beach for Vancouver's annual 4/20 protest and celebration of all things marijuana.

At the same time, a smaller group is expected to gather at the Vancouver Art Gallery, where the larger festival was previously held before it announced last February that it was [moving to the West End](#).

**Robert Moore** is the founder of WorldCannabis.net and the lead organizer of the event planned for the VAG. He told the *Straight* his aim is to offer Vancouver residents a 4/20 event that is a true protest of laws that are unjust.

"I'm not interested in selling cannabis. I'm interested in effecting the public, making a difference, and making a change," Moore said in a telephone interview. "This is no time to relax in the sun. It seems like you are preaching to the choir, down at the beach."

Moore maintained he is not profiting from the event, which will happen on the building's south side. He said the protest will focus on ending prohibition and reforming laws that criminalize marijuana.

"On the 29<sup>th</sup> of this month, [dispensaries will be shutting down](#)," he said. "So we don't want to be preaching to the choir down at the beach. That's not what we need. We need to have the public learn about cannabis."

Moore said he couldn't give an estimate for how many people might attend the protest at the art gallery, but noted 30 vendors have said they plan to show up.

Last year, it's estimated some 20,000 people attended Vancouver's annual 4/20 festival, which was held on the north side of the Art Gallery for nearly two decades. The large crowd prompted long-time organizers such as **Jodie Emery**, **Jeremiah Vandermeer**, and **Dana Larsen** to seek a new location for the event and eventually settle on Sunset Beach. That move was criticized by the NPA-dominated park board but welcomed by Vision Vancouver politicians at city hall.

In a telephone interview, Larsen described people behind the Vancouver Art Gallery protest as something of a fringe group in the city's movement for marijuana reform.

“The cannabis community in Vancouver is big and diverse,” he said. “And so along with the people who have been organizing 4/20 for many years, who have decided to move to Sunset Beach, there is a second group of people who, I think, feed off the confusion coming from us moving it.”

Larsen encouraged cannabis enthusiasts to follow the main event’s long-time organizers to Sunset Beach.

“People can do whatever they want, and cannabis events are fine,” he said. “But I feel they are really trying to attack us, saying that we are selling out by going to Sunset Beach. That kind of bothers me because we are really just trying to move the event to a bigger, better location.”

The official 4/20 event’s move to Sunset Beach has also been approved by the Vancouver Police Department.

VPD Const. **Brian Montague** told the *Straight* the force was aware of a group planning a marijuana-related event for April 20 at the Art Gallery. But he said it appears that protest is not well-organized.

Montague wouldn’t comment on operational plans but confirmed VPD officers would be on-site at both events. He said how an event is policed is generally dependent on participants.

“The police response is based on the actions of those taking part in the event,” Montague explained. “In cases where people are peaceful and the events are lawful, then we don’t have to take any action.”

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## **Financial terms of \$480m Jericho Lands deal unknown**

### ***Taxpayer dollars used in ‘accommodation moneys’ for native band buyers undisclosed***

By Bob Mackin Business in Vancouver April 19, 2016

Three First Nations are buying the province’s 38.4-acre Jericho Lands, but how much of the \$480 million in the deal, announced April 8, is coming from provincial coffers versus the accounts or lenders of the Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Musqueam bands?

According to a 2004 Supreme Court of Canada ruling, governments must consult and accommodate First Nations when selling Crown land. That sometimes means payments or loans to help native bands buy the land.

Squamish Nation chief Ian Campbell would not say how much the accommodation payments are worth on the Jericho deal because of confidentiality.

“Aspects of the deposit and the property transfer tax and other soft costs to carry the land are coming out of accommodation moneys that were negotiated between the three nations and the province,” Campbell told *Business in Vancouver*.

Some of the funds will be used for deposits and to pay for part of the first parcel to be transferred in November. The rest, he said, will be used for the remaining parcel in November 2017.

The B.C. government said it plans to proactively release a redacted version of the contract and two different appraisals, but did not say when. It would also not disclose the value of the accommodation payments.

Citizens' Services Ministry spokeswoman Tasha Schollen told *Business in Vancouver* to file a freedom of information request to get that agreement.

She said in an email that “the province defers to the First Nations should they choose to provide details on the terms of that [economic benefits] agreement.”

Jo-Ann Nahanee, a Squamish band member who has lobbied for chiefs and council financial transparency, said it was “definitely not” a good deal because of the secrecy.

She said members were not given details on financing at a March 23 meeting that she said was for information, not consultation, purposes.

“Why would we go in to purchase [fee-simple] land to pay taxes when, if we just wait for the treaty process, at the end we have reserve land if we win? The argument was if we win and how long will it take.”

Squamish, at Stage 2 of the six-step process, is the furthest of the three First Nations from a treaty. Musqueam's 2005 framework agreement in Stage 3 is the most recent activity among the trio.

“Much of the details of the agreement as they're being finalized continue to be held in confidential agreements, but it's important for us to disclose to our members the strategy, the rationale, the feasibility, some of the risks that are associated with these types of acquisitions,” Campbell said.

Don't expect changes immediately. Jericho Hill Centre, Jericho Hill Gym and Pool and West Point Grey Academy have leases until 2020. Rezoning could take up to three years.

When it comes time to develop, Campbell didn't rule out Aquilini Investment Group's involvement. Aquilini is a partner with the three First Nations in the July 2014 purchase of the BC Liquor Distribution Branch warehouse property and with Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh in the March 2014 Willingdon lands purchase.

In a deal announced in October 2014, the three First Nations became a 50% partner with Canada Lands Co. (CLC) in the 52-acre federal Jericho Lands (which includes the Jericho Garrison), the former RCMP E Division headquarters and a lot near the West Vancouver fisheries lab in a deal worth \$307.2 million.

The three First Nations got \$86 million of the value of the new land holding company and \$68 million in financing from CLC for their share.

<https://www.biv.com/article/2016/4/financial-terms-480m-jericho-lands-deal-unknown/>

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## **Don't expect Vancouver real estate to cool anytime soon: Central**

***The real estate market in Vancouver is going through the roof, and this is expected to...***

By Emma Crawford Hampel Business in Vancouver April 19, 2016, 9:55 a.m.

The real estate market in Vancouver is going through the roof, and this is expected to continue through 2018, according to a Central 1 forecast released April 19.

So far this year, Central 1 said, sales in Metro Vancouver alone have outperformed the credit union's previous forecast, released in late 2015. Yu said sales will likely increase 22% across the region this year, while the median price grows 13% to \$668,000. For detached homes, the median price is forecast to grow 23% to over \$1.1 million.

"The dream of a single-family detached home in Metro Vancouver is going to remain just a dream for most buyers," Yu said.

A lack of land and soaring prices are leading to increased density, and the number of detached homes is dropping.

“Detached homes make up a shrinking share of the housing stock and increasingly are no longer single-family dwellings as many now have rental units, legal or otherwise,” Yu said.

The report said the impact of foreign ownership will stay concentrated in the luxury market, but “does have ripple effects on the rest of the housing market as high-income households move down-market, lifting prices.”

Last week, the [British Columbia Real Estate Association announced](#) a record 12,560 homes were sold across British Columbia in March, shattering the province’s previous record of 11,683 units.

Throughout B.C., both unit sales and home prices are expected to increase over the next couple years, the forecast said. In 2016, resale transactions are set to climb 17% to 109,500 units, while the median price is expected to rise 10% to \$473,000. The number of units sold in 2017 is expected to stay around the same, at about 109,000 homes, but prices are expected to grow 4.7%.

In 2018, the median home price in B.C. is forecast to increase a further 3% to reach \$508,000.

“Red-hot housing demand in Metro Vancouver and an up cycle on Vancouver Island will continue to underpin provincial housing momentum,” said Central 1 senior economist Bryan Yu.

Sales in northern parts of the province will remain slow as a result of low oil and commodity prices hurting local economies.

<https://www.biv.com/article/2016/4/dont-expect-vancouver-real-estate-cool-anytime-soo/>

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## **New Brighton Park salt marsh given the green light**

***\$3M salt marsh on the east side of the park will be completed by Spring 2017***

By Margaret Gallagher, Tina Lovgreen, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 19, 2016 1:38 PM PT Last Updated: Apr 19, 2016 1:38 PM PT ([Audio](#))

The project — which will reverse the work that went into creating an artificial shoreline at the park — is part of the [city's on-going biodiversity strategy](#) to restore fish and wildlife habitat in the city.

"We realize how much people cherish these things in an urban environment and trying to create more of them," said Nick Page, biologist with the Vancouver Park Board.

The park board has partnered with Port Metro Vancouver to restore Burrard Inlet's intertidal wetlands.

"It wouldn't have been a salt marsh historically, but you can imagine it could have been this productive intertidal zone," he said.

In addition to the salt marsh consisting of vegetated marsh areas and mud flats, viewing decks will be installed.

The park board plans to remove the park's tennis courts and re-locate the dog off-leash area to the west side of the park.

The salt mash is expected to be completed by Spring 2017 with \$400,00 of the funding coming from the park board and the rest from the port authority.

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## **Metro Vancouver water restrictions start 2 weeks early this year**

### ***Stage 1 water restrictions to run May 15 to October 15, regardless of weather conditions***

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 19, 2016 10:50 AM PT Last Updated: Apr 19, 2016 10:50 AM PT

Metro Vancouver is bringing in Stage 1 water restrictions two weeks early this year, limiting when residents can water their lawns as of May 15, rather than June 1.

The restrictions will also run two weeks later — to Oct. 15 rather than Sept. 30 — regardless of the weather, according to an [update](#) from the regional district.

As of May 15, residential lawn sprinkling will be allowed on alternating days at these times:

- Even-numbered addresses: Monday, Wednesday and Saturday mornings from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m. PT
- Odd-numbered addresses: Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday mornings from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m. PT

Non-residential lawn sprinkling will be allowed at the following times:

- Even-numbered addresses: Monday and Wednesday mornings from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. PT
- Odd-numbered addresses: Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. PT
- All addresses: Friday mornings from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Other [Stage 1 water restrictions](#) will also take effect. Outdoor car washing and boat washing will only be allowed with hoses that have spring-loaded shut offs.

Last year, the hot dry summer brought the region into "[uncharted territory](#)" when it came to water conservation — with Metro Vancouver banning lawn sprinkling entirely with Stage 3 restrictions by mid-July.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/metro-vancouver-stage-1-water-1.3542977>

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## **City of Vancouver to build marshland in New Brighton Park**

By [Lauren Sundstrom](#) Vancity Buzz 2:11 PM PDT, Tue April 19, 2016

The Vancouver Park Board announced that they will be adding salt marsh into Brighton Park to help restore the fish and wildlife habitat along the shore of the Burrard Inlet.

The city says it approved the plan Monday evening to create two hectares – or five acres – worth of marshland, which will be critical for salmon runs, shorebirds, and water fowl. The plan is part of the city's [Biodiversity Strategy](#), which aims to create healthier ecosystems in and around Vancouver.

“The salt marsh is unique in Metro Vancouver and will provide critical habitat for juvenile fish, shorebirds, waterfowl and migrating birds in one of our most beautiful shoreline parks,” says Vancouver Park Board Chair Sarah Kirby-Yung in a statement.

The Park Board and the Fraser Port Authority have joined forces to create the marshland, which will include viewing platforms, interpretive signs, picnic tables, and enhanced access to the east beach.

The city will fund \$400,000 towards the creation of the wetlands, while the Port will fund the remainder of the \$3 million budget. The target completion date is spring of 2017.

The Biodiversity Strategy aims to restore or enhance 25 hectares of natural areas by 2020.

<http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2016/04/new-brighton-park-marshlands-vancouver/>

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## **The future of quirky Kingsgate Mall being brought to public consultation**

By [Lauren Sundstrom](#) Vancity Buzz 11:45 AM PDT, Tue April 19, 2016

Kingsgate Mall is a Vancouver legend, but its existence might be threatened by – well – the Vancouver School Board. The mall is owned by the VSB, and they're seeking public consultation on its future.

The consultation is part of the VSB's Long Range Facilities Plan. They own a total of four non-school properties, and apparently acquired parts of the current Kingsgate Mall land back in the 1800s before the mall was constructed in 1974.

The quirky little mall at East Broadway and Kingsway is home to shops that can only be described as “odds and ends” – a plant shop, a furniture rental store, a Payless Shoe Source, a BC Liquor Store – and has earned a reputation over the years.

It's like a depressing throwback to the early 2000s. Nothing is displayed well, and hand drawn signs seem to be the standard among shop owners. It's where old people go to pace back and forth for hours and get their morning libations.

In other words, Kingsgate Mall is so *awful* that it's *amazing*. It has developed a fan base among hipster millennials and the anti-development crowd in Vancouver – after all, it has not been made into condos yet – and has spawned [a parody Twitter account](#) and even [an original song](#).

The consultation will come in the form of a “pop-up discussion” at the mall itself from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 1. Should it close? Should it stay? You decide.

Reviews on [Facebook](#) would suggest people are happy with it just as it is.

“what a great place to shop. I found the couch of my dreams at the store next to buy-lo. the hotdog I had at the food court was a thing of beauty,” reads one review.

“I have worked in around Kingsgate Mall for a very long time I LOVE IT THERE, the people are great to talk to; the people that work there are great; the Mall



Manager is a great Lady to work for/with. And best of all I enjoy been Santa there!!!!!!!!!!!!!!” Reads another.

<http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2016/04/kingsgate-mall-public-consultation/>

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## **Robson Square a tremendous opportunity to celebrate Vancouver’s vibrant urbanism**

By [Chris & Melissa Bruntlett](#) Vancity Buzz 10:38 AM PDT, Tue April 19, 2016

When we read [last week](#) that City staff were recommending the permanent opening of the 800-block of Robson Street as a public plaza, we couldn’t help but be excited about the possibility of finally having a year-round, central gathering space in downtown Vancouver.

Having lived for a number of years in Toronto, and also experiencing the great public spaces in neighbouring cities such as [Portland](#) and Seattle, we’ve always felt Robson Square was a missed opportunity in the city’s urban and social fabric.

Each summer since the 2010 Olympics, we – like many – have made a point of visiting [VIVA Vancouver’s Robson Redux](#) – enjoying the potential this square has to offer when opened to people. And each autumn, we are utterly disappointed to see the space given back to motor vehicles, and the vibrancy diminished, as fewer people stop and gather at what is arguably the most central spot in the downtown peninsula.

So when a copy of [the staff report](#) to Council landed on our desk last week, we were very pleased to see support from City staff to make the pedestrian plaza a permanent one.

### ***“An introspective view of the city”***

Robson Square was designed by world-renowned Vancouver architect, [Arthur Erickson](#), with the intention of becoming Vancouver’s largest public space, after Stanley Park and the seawall. Erickson saw it as a place to provide “An introspective view of the city”.

However, upon its completion in 1983, it was reconfigured to allow buses, and then eventually private automobile traffic, becoming what we know today: a 90-metre, two-lane block flanked by generous sidewalks.

“The street severed the idea of Arthur’s central public space in half, prioritizing motorized movement through the square over place-making for people,” notes city planning consultant [Brent Toderian](#), Vancouver’s former chief planner.

***“Repurposing under-utilized space just makes sense”***

With Vancouver being such a desirable place to visit and live, and its downtown core enjoying high levels of foot traffic, why is the creation of a plaza on the 800-block and development of a public square so important?

According to the report, “Well located, carefully designed, and thoughtfully programmed public spaces can generate a broad spectrum of urban livability, health, and economic benefits for residents, visitors and businesses.”

For context, we simply need to look at New York City’s amazing transformation of Times Square. When former Transportation Commissioner [Janette Sadik-Khan](#) visited Vancouver last month, she described how – with some paint and lawn chairs – they transformed a space choked both by cars and pedestrians to a welcoming gathering space loved by visitors and residents alike. She also recognized the potential here in our own city, urging those in attendance to be brave and make the changes needed to create a vibrant, connected city.

“Repurposing under-utilized space, including roads, just makes sense,” states Vancouver City Councillor [Andrea Reimer](#), a fervent proponent for accessible public spaces. In truth, Robson Square consistently sees higher foot traffic than people in vehicles, who opt for the nearby arterials, West Georgia and Smith Streets.

In spite of these high volumes of foot traffic that make the corridor a difficult place to stop and relax, plaza-like activities have started popping up more and more. As the report points out, “This activity is significant because it is the actual living expression of a partially realized public gathering node.”

***Five years of testing and collecting data***

The benefits have been no clearer than during the summer openings, when VIVA Vancouver’s Robson Redux – as a means of testing the site’s feasibility – has taken over the space with installations meant to encourage stopping, relaxing, and enjoying the heart of the city.

As a part of the City’s report, they have cited statistics from last year’s event, and the numbers are quite compelling.

Comparing the foot traffic from June to that of July and August (during the Redux), the number of people walking through the square increased by nearly

50%. When those travelling through were surveyed, 98% resoundingly stated that the summertime plaza contributed to a vibrant and fun environment.

Even the [Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association](#) (DVBIA), whose members have been known to be reticent to change, sees the benefits of a central public space. VIVA Vancouver polled businesses in the DVBIA, finding that 77% were in favour or neutral to a permanent plaza at the 800-block of Robson Street.

[Charles Gauthier](#), President and CEO of the DVBIA, cites that many of us have grown accustomed to seeing similar plazas in Europe, recognizing that “Part of these experiences are what create lasting memories.”

Last year, to mark its 25th anniversary, the DVBIA partnered with [SFU Public Square](#) to run the innovative (and now [award-winning](#)) [Reimagine Downtown](#) engagement campaign. Over the course of several months, they invited those who live, work, and play in the city centre to share their own vision for Downtown Vancouver over the next 25 years, and a permanent, central public square was one of the top requests from respondents.

“We hope the plaza will become a place for festivals, numerous events, and a place for regular public gatherings,” suggests Gauthier. “We want to see this place look like it was intended by Erickson, 40 years ago.”

“What the Olympics showed us, and every seasonal closure since,” Toderian reminds us, “Is that there’s a real hunger for that central gathering place idea – and that’s when it’s just a barricaded street with curbs. Just think how well it will work when it’s actually designed as a real, permanent square!”

### ***Finding a solution that meets everyone’s needs***

Of course, opening the square to people on a permanent basis doesn’t come without some valid concerns. Specifically, what happens to the [Route 5 Robson / Downtown](#) bus?

In previous summers, TransLink has re-routed busses to accommodate the temporary installation in late June, returning to its regular route in early September. While the compromise has worked in theory, its inconsistent and unpredictable nature has caused frustration and confusion in transit users, particularly seniors living in the West End.

It is this concern for their patrons that has made TransLink one of the most vocal stakeholders in this decision. As such, while they would prefer the 800-block to remain open to motor vehicles, if the choice is between annual temporary changes or stability, they will lobby for consistency for their customers.

In the report, a suggested re-routing for the #5 bus has been provided by staff, which would have the bus travel from Robson, along Burrard to Pender, before reconnecting to the original route. This would affect direct access into downtown from the West End, in the slightest of ways, but would become a more predictable and permanent solution for transit users.

### ***There is still much work to be done***

Even if the staff report is approved by city council this week, there is still much work to be done to make the completion of Robson Square a reality. To date, no specific design for the plaza has been commissioned, and staff must resolve management issues to address ongoing stewardship and programming of the space.

Regardless, the Province of British Columbia will close the square to vehicle traffic this coming summer in anticipation of scheduled maintenance work. Due to this construction, VIVA will also not be creating an installation this year, but options are being explored for the space in conjunction with the 19th [Pro Walk Pro Bike Pro Place](#) Conference taking place at the nearby Sheraton Wall Centre in September.

If approved, City staff will initiate the public engagement processes with regards to the space, as well as researching possible funding mechanisms for the design, construction, and ongoing stewardship of Robson Square. These findings will be reported back to council at the end of 2016, meaning it will still be some time before Vancouverites will witness Robson Square's untapped potential on a full-time basis. But we're on the right track.

As the report points out, "Robson Square represents a tremendous opportunity to celebrate Vancouver's vibrant urbanism." We wholeheartedly agree.

<http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2016/04/robson-square-tremendous-opportunity/>

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## **The truth about wine in Vancouver's grocery stores**

By [Elin Tayyar](#) Vancity Buzz 9:15 AM PDT, Tue April 19, 2016

Less than a year after the first grocery store was able to offer wine on its shelves, the provincial government is set to [auction six new "Special Wine Store" licences](#) aimed at grocery stores in April. These licences will allow the winning grocery stores to sell 100% BC-produced wine, cider, mead and sake.

To date, the grocery stores selling wines on their shelves have been using a VQA license. There are 21 VQA licences in the province, and the majority have

been bought by one grocer: [Overwaitea Food Group](#) (OFG), owners of Urban Fare, Save-On-Foods, and PriceSmart Foods.

If you've noticed your local VQA stores closing up shop, like the Village VQA Wines Dunbar on 41st Avenue, it's because they've been sold to OFG.

Enter SWS: The six new Special Wine Licences to be auctioned this month are part of 24 total licences that the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB) is releasing from a decades-long dormancy.

While there is a [government-imposed moratorium](#) on new private liquor stores, the LCLB asserts that the 24 new licenses were in existence, but inactive, for decades.

The combined SWS licences and VQA licences will add up to 45 licences. These licences will allow grocers to sell wine throughout the province.

The four OFG stores sold an average of \$195,000 in the month of December. That's 57% higher than the average VQA store! The final bid prices for the new Special Wine Store licences should exceed the minimum bid price of \$125,000 set by the LCLB.

### ***Wine in Vancouver Grocery Stores?***

The Vancouver City Council [decided on December 16, 2015](#) to temporarily hold off on grocery store wine sales until a larger review is conducted. This means Vancouverites will have to be content with government liquor stores, private liquor stores, and a decreasing number of VQA wine stores, at least for the time being.

This liquor access limitation is consistent with the City Council's general approach. In 2014, they restricted brewery and distillery tasting rooms, forcing them to remain below 850 square feet, and to close by 11 p.m. On the other hand, provincial law has no limits on space and allows tasting lounges to stay open until 4 a.m.

Until Vancouver City Council conducts its larger review, any new policy changes that increase access are likely to encounter opposition.

As the LCLB moves closer to auctioning 45 more licences, Vancouver will remain on the outside looking in.

<http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2016/04/wine-grocery-stores-vancouver-licences/>

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[Marijuana rally 'necessary' despite legalization promise, activist says](#) – Canadian Press

[New site, new battles for 4/20 protesters in Vancouver](#) – Metro

[Cannabis day to continue at VAG: group](#) – 24 Hours

[Vancouver bracing for 50,000 people at 4/20 pot protest rally](#) – CTV

[4/20 pot rally setting up at 2 Vancouver locations](#) – CBC

[Thousands expected for 4/20 pot protest in Vancouver](#) – Global News

[Time for Vancouver cops to make 420 arrests](#) – 24 Hours

[Businesses hope for bottom line bump as pot smokers gather for 4/20](#) – News1130

[Clouded memories: The history of Vancouver's 4/20 pot rally](#) – CTV

**City Services:**

[Vancouver council ratifies agreement with outside workers](#) – Vancouver Sun

**Community Services:**

[Vancouver's unused theatres to host amateur performers with city subsidy](#) – Globe & Mail

[Trees cut down in front of Vancouver Art Gallery shocks residents](#) – CBC

[Let's clean up the patchwork of rules governing marijuana](#) – Globe & Mail

[Building the business of sustainable cannabis production in B.C.](#) – CKNW

## **Election:**

[Vancouver looks at campaign spending query](#) – Vancouver Sun

[Mayor backs call for referendum](#) – Metro

## **Housing:**

[Metro Vancouver explores idea of affordable housing on school sites](#) – Vancouver Sun

[Vancouver real estate firm's owner steps aside in wake of investigations](#) – Globe & Mail

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## **Parks & Recreation:**

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[Uber can have 'devastating effect'](#) - Vancouver Sun (letter)

# **Yesterday's Headlines April 19, 2016**

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[Vancouver City Council ratifies new deal covering outside workers](#) – CKNW

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[Vancouver mayor backs plan to give cities power to ban corporate and union donations](#) - News1130

## **Housing:**



[In the continent's hottest housing market, Vancouver will try to create an "affordable home ownership" program – Francesbula.com](#)

## **Sustainability:**

[There's a cheap, proven fix to the world's biggest problem - CNN](#)

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## **Vancouver council ratifies agreement with outside workers**

Brian Morton Published on: April 19, 2016 | Last Updated: April 19, 2016 8:10 PM PDT

Vancouver city council has ratified a new four-year collective agreement covering outside workers represented by CUPE Local 1004.

The agreement, which covers 1,650 employees who perform outside labour and trades work in engineering, parks, and Mountain View Cemetery, covers the period from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2019.

The settlement provides for wage increases totalling seven per cent over the four years of the contract. Union members voted to accept the settlement earlier this month.

Bargaining continues with unions representing the balance of the city's workforce, including inside workers and firefighters.

<http://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/vancouver-council-ratifies-agreement-with-outside-workers>

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## **Metro Vancouver explores idea of affordable housing on school sites**

Kelly Sinoski, Vancouver Sun, April 20, 2016

Metro Vancouver is exploring the idea of co-developing school sites across the region with rental housing and daycare centres, saying it would provide denser communities and more affordable options to low-income families.

The move, which could see social housing units built on a corner of an existing school lot or combined as part of a school being seismically upgraded, is part of

an overall analysis by Metro Vancouver into how it can provide more affordable housing to a growing raft of single- or low-income parents as house prices continue to skyrocket across the region.

Don Littleford, of Metro's housing division, said the idea is just being introduced at this stage but could significantly help low-income families, particularly single parents, by reducing parking, transportation and housing costs, while boosting school enrolments in places like Vancouver.

"I don't need to say it but there seems to be a bit of a housing crisis in our region," Littleford said. "We're as much designing the social system of the future as much as housing. If you had a school or a daycare on a residential site it may take some of the pressure off. It seems to us it's worth exploring at this point."

Metro Vancouver has already begun discussions with North Vancouver and Coquitlam school districts, Littleford said, with plans to canvas others, including Vancouver and Surrey. Any changes, however, would ultimately require approval from the provincial government, which has control over B.C. school sites.

North Vancouver said "the potential of affordable housing and daycare" are part of the school district's guiding principles for long-term land management, but it is not considering such options right now.

But Vancouver school board chairman Mike Lombardi said he would welcome the discussions, especially as the district faces the closure or repurposing of up to 21 schools.

The VSB held open houses a few years ago to consider the idea of allowing housing at the John Oliver secondary and Carlton elementary sites to generate funds to upgrade the schools, he said. Both areas are already zoned for residential, but the school board decided not to pursue the idea after the province said it would confiscate any surplus funds for general capital.

The VSB is now looking at leasing some or all of the school sites as they close. Some 50 interested parties are already on a list, he said, but any potential sharing of school lands must fit with the community.

"We would welcome hearing from Metro. Those are definitely opportunities," Lombardi said. "One of our challenges in Vancouver is [people are coming to Vancouver but fewer and fewer with kids](#). The more we can get townhouses, condos with two or three bedrooms, the more we can bring in families."

Surrey school board chairman Shawn Wilson agreed the idea is worth exploring, saying "it strikes me as a sensible kind of thing to pursue or look at." But he noted the challenge is that such decisions rely on the provincial government. His

district had wanted to build amenities, including a swimming pool, as part of a new school in Grandview Heights, for instance, but didn't have the provincial funding for the school when the city wanted to move ahead with its civic projects.

Littleford maintains something has to be done, whether it be in fast-growing Surrey or in high-priced Vancouver, which is losing families and is at risk of becoming a "resort" city.

He insists the proposal is not a priority right now, but said it would complement Metro's more urgent goals such as developing affordable housing around transit hubs across the region. The regional district is also looking at all redeveloping all of its housing sites, especially those located near schools.

Metro has 3,400 social housing units, but plans to boost that number with redevelopment of some of its current housing facilities. Another option being investigated by Metro is building affordable housing over transit guidelines, similar to what's been done near the New Westminster SkyTrain station.

A recent survey by U.S.-based Demographia found [Vancouver was the third least affordable city in the world](#) for a home, behind Hong Kong and Sydney, Australia.

"These ideas might seem a little bit of a stretch today but it's the same argument as the transit hubs," Littleford said. "We're just thinking there might be opportunities to combine things with schools. If this sort of pricing is here to stay, we have to do something."

<http://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/metro-vancouver-explores-idea-of-affordable-housing-on-school-sites>

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## **Roll up: 4/20 becomes a potpourri for vendors**

## **Marijuana sellers and trade show booths transform the annual event**

Jeff Lee, Vancouver Sun, April 20, 2016

If you are seriously into cannabis, you may find that \$2,250 Korey Cotnam Banger Hanger Dab Rig art piece, or that \$3,000 ME Glassworks black-and-white cow rig at the 4/20 smoke-in at Sunset Beach Wednesday. But if you're wanting something cheaper, there will be lots of \$5 pipes, \$10 pot-handling tools and \$50 vaping pens.

Billed as Canada's oldest and largest civil disobedience movement, the 4/20 protest has developed into the cannabis equivalent of a home-and-garden show. It still is heavy on the greenery, with lots of bud trading hands, but the home decor section is doing just fine, in part because of the expectation the federal Liberals are prepared to legalize marijuana.

Fed by the astronomical growth in "medicinal" marijuana shops that have opened in Vancouver, and supported long before that by a vibrant underground, the retail pot industry has developed all manner of products, from art pieces like the Cotnam and ME Glassworks bongs to more discreet and utilitarian dabbing tools.

And along with that growth in retail services, the 4/20 event has become a commercial enterprise. Virtually every one of the 187 trade show booths, at \$300 a pop, are sold out. The organizers, who say they are a non-profit run by volunteers, are also putting up more than 160 free vending spots on the beach on a first-come, first-serve basis.

A protest movement that 20 years ago drew 200 people to Victory Square now is expected to lure as many as 50,000 for a toke-in. That's 7,000 more than those who turned out Sunday for The Vancouver Sun Run.

The real estate the organizers of 4/20 have commandeered is extensive; despite the city's objection and its no-smoking bylaw, the event will stretch across the Sunset Beach parking lot onto two beaches and the grass field to the north. There will be everything from a giant music stage to T-shirt vendors to pizza by-the-slice tables to pot sellers to those trying to sell high-end bongs.

Dana Larsen, one of the event's organizers, defends the commercialization of a movement seeking to legitimize marijuana.

"There will be a lot of business going on, a lot of cannabis being bought and sold, that is true. But there are lots of expenses to putting this on," he said. "It is still an act of civil disobedience. If you look at history, all the bong shops in Canada are acts of civil disobedience. All the dispensaries are. We do business as civil disobedience. That is how our movement has grown."

Vancouver Coun. Kerry Jang, who has helped steer the city's controversial plan to give business licences to some dispensaries by April 29, sees the 4/20 movement differently.

"4/20 is a protest movement that has morphed into a commercial event that wants to do what it wants to do," he said. "It is less about 'cannabis culture' and more about 'cannabis commercial.'"

Jodie Emery, another of the event's organizers, says selling vendor spots helps pay for the cost of the event. Even though the city won't give the organizers a permit, it insists they pay for a number of things.

The lack of a permit means the city can't force the organizers to pay for policing and fire services. Last year taxpayers shelled out nearly \$100,000 for the 4/20 event at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Although the city asked the organizers to move to private land in False Creek, the protesters settled on Sunset Beach. Neither the city nor the park board would give them a permit.

Larsen said most people will be hunting for pot, not art pieces and status symbols.

"I would very much doubt that any \$2,000 bongos are going to get sold. They might bring them out as a way of drawing people to a booth but nobody is going to be buying bongos at that level.

"That's for people who have way too much money."

<http://vancouversun.com/news/local-news/vancouvers-420-protest-becomes-a-retail-extravaganza>

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## **Vancouver looks at campaign spending query**

### **Councillors may ask province for ballot question on municipal politics**

Matt Robinson Vancouver Sun April 20, 2016

Rules need to be clear in a democracy and campaign finance and election rules should be the clearest.

Vancouver city councillors will soon consider a motion that calls for the issue of municipal campaign spending rules to be put to a referendum.

The motion from Coun. Andrea Reimer, introduced Tuesday, asks B.C. to include on the 2017 provincial election ballot a question asking whether municipalities should create their own campaign spending rules and caps. But the province said no changes are planned for the current campaign finance rules and there are no plans to allow a referendum.

Reimer's motion notes that the city has formally asked the province seven times since 2005 for changes to the Vancouver Charter so it can create its own

campaign finance rules, “including the power to ban donations from corporations and unions, limit contributions from individuals and impose election spending limits.”

When asked why political parties could not simply self-regulate, Reimer said the terms voluntary and democracy don’t work well together.

“Rules need to be clear in a democracy and campaign finance and election rules should be the clearest. They need to be reported, they need to be enforceable and they need to be in the control of the people who vote in elections, and that’s what we’re asking the province to do,” Reimer said in an interview.

The motion notes campaign spending in Vancouver’s 2014 civic election reached nearly \$6 million, and states that Bill 17, the provincial government’s recently passed Local Elections Campaign Financing Amendment Act, “fails to prevent unlimited contributions.” Reimer said she was disappointed in the act, and having exhausted other avenues in the push for stronger limits, felt it was time the question of municipal campaign spending be put to the public.

Peter Fassbender, the minister of community, sport and cultural development, defended Bill 17, calling it a “great success story for democracy in British Columbia.”

He said the province’s amended legislation — which is awaiting royal assent — established a framework for expense limits and added that B.C. intended to implement those limits in time for the 2018 local elections.

“We do not anticipate any further changes to campaign finance rules or a referendum at this time,” Fassbender said.

Mayor Gregor Robertson spoke in favour of spending rules similar to those that exist federally.

“Vancouver city council has been calling for taking the big money out of politics here in our city for years and years,” Robertson said, “This has been a huge priority for us, to ban corporate and union donations, to dramatically reduce the individual donations that are allowed.”

Robertson said there’s still time to make a change before the 2018 municipal election, adding that “it will make a big difference for transparency and accountability and giving the public comfort that there’s no big money involved in the campaign.”

Slipped into Reimer’s motion was mention of an almost \$1-million donation received by the Non-Partisan Association in the lead-up to the 2011 election.

George Affleck, a councillor with the Non-Partisan Association, balked at the mention, noting that Vision Vancouver raised even more cash before the last election than his party had. The NPA has been supportive of campaign finance reform and of transparency between elections as well, he said.

“If the mayor is truly saying that he wants to see transparency, then open your books up at Vision Vancouver and show us how much money you’re raking in right now in between elections. That’s where you really have to look at where the power is and who controls the politicians ... if that’s the worry,” Affleck said. “Vision Vancouver, open up your books. Show us where your money’s coming from. If you want finance reform, that’s where you start.”

The councillor said he needed to have a closer look at Reimer’s motion, which was introduced briefly Tuesday, before he could say whether he’d support it or not.

Francesco Trebbi, a professor at the University of B.C.’s Vancouver School of Economics, said campaign spending caps can both help and hurt political incumbents. While parties in power tend to have the largest war chests (and thus the most donations to lose if a cap is set below the amount they would otherwise be able to raise), they also tend to be better known to an electorate than a political hopeful, so require less money to build name recognition.

B.C.’s Referendum Act sets out that if the provincial government decides public opinion is desirable on a matter of interest or concern, it can order a referendum. If the province declined to put the issue of campaign finance reform to referendum, the city could still consider an initiative petition under the Recall and Initiative Act or a municipal referendum on the issue, Reimer said.

<http://www.theprovince.com/news/vancouver+consider+motion+limit+campaign+spending/11862887/story.html>

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**Uber can have ‘devastating effect’**

**Re: Metro residents seek ride-sharing oversight, April 7**

Vancouver Sun (letter) April 20, 2016

While taking a taxi in Toronto recently, the driver and I discussed the impact of Uber on their regional industry. The driver, a man in his late 60s, commented that he had owned his carrier licence for 18 years and that it was his retirement investment. Five years ago, this carrier licence was valued at over \$325,000. Today, his licence is worth less than \$100,000. He pays over \$10,000 a year for

commercial insurance that covers his vehicle, his passengers, his co-drivers and himself. People running Uber cars pay less than \$2,500 a year in insurance, and most carry insufficient or no coverage for a passenger injured in an accident. Additionally, the taxi driver has to pay \$1,500 a month in other fees before he makes a dime to care for his family or himself.

While I agree taxi rates are high, I was struck by the devastating effect the Uber “business” is having on people who made sacrifices by buying a carrier licence, paying insurance and fees, only to have unregulated, under-insured, and potentially under-qualified drivers come into the market and devastate small owner/operators’ investments and hard work. This Toronto taxi driver now faces the prospect of working into his mid-to-late 70s before he recovers enough of the losses on his carrier licence to be able to retire.

*Andrew Munro, Vancouver*

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#### **4/20 rally ‘more necessary than ever,’ Jodie Emery says**

TAMSYN BURGMANN THE CANADIAN PRESS April 20, 2016

Optimism mixed with thick clouds of pot smoke in downtown Vancouver last year as tens of thousands of people gathered for the annual “4/20” marijuana legalization rally under a massive banner featuring Justin Trudeau’s face on a rolling paper.

But this year, the event’s chief organizer, Jodie Emery, says “inaction” by the newly elected federal Liberals makes the protest “more necessary than ever.”

“Last summer I was joking I’m going to be out of work as an activist because we don’t have debates anymore, there’s no one fighting to keep it illegal,” said Emery, who is the wife of “Prince of Pot” Marc Emery.

“But fast forward to today and the mood is different.”

Trudeau has pledged to legalize pot and struck a task force to hammer out legislation, but Emery said change could be months or years away.

Vancouver, meanwhile, is preparing to shutter over 100 marijuana dispensaries by end of the month as it regulates the sale of pot.

But while Emery worries about progress, other proponents of legalization argue Emery and her allies are sabotaging their cause.



“They’re doing themselves a disservice,” said Dr. Patricia Daly, chief medical officer with Vancouver Coastal Health.

“They are not just protesting in favour of legalization.

“They are actually selling the product in a very unregulated way and it’s exactly those activities that make us advocate for a strong regulatory approach.”

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## **Vancouver real estate firm’s owner steps aside in wake of investigations**

JAMES KELLER and KATHY TOMLINSON Globe & Mail April 20, 2016

A Vancouver-area real estate brokerage firm says its owner has stepped aside from daily operations as the company faces at least two investigations following reports in The Globe and Mail about its business practices.

New Coast Realty is already under a series of restrictions from regulators, including that an approved managing broker take over operations. A new managing broker has been appointed from within New Coast.

The Globe reported earlier this month on [training sessions](#) conducted by New Coast owner Ze Yu Wu. An audio recording of one session last October featured Mr. Wu, speaking in Mandarin, coaching agents on how to earn quick commissions by talking homeowners into selling their homes for less than they want by persuading them the first offer is always the best.

The Real Estate Council of B.C., the industry’s self-regulator, imposed a list of conditions on New Coast, including that Mr. Wu no longer be allowed to conduct such training sessions. Mr. Wu is not a licensed real estate agent or managing broker. The council also ordered the appointment of the new managing broker.

The Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, a trade association that also enforces its own code of conduct, is conducting a separate investigation. “Company owner Ze Yu Wu has voluntarily stepped aside and will have no role in the operations of New Coast Realty until investigations by the council and board conclude,” the company said in its statement. “Operations of the company offices are being overseen by managing brokers approved by the Real Estate Council of British Columbia.”

Alyn Edwards, a media consultant hired by the company, confirmed the council recently approved Edwin Yan as managing broker. According to the real estate council’s website, Mr. Yan has been licensed as a managing broker with New

Coast since at least August, 2015. He was featured in a recent New Coast training manual among the company's management.

The council could not be immediately reached for comment.

New Coast, through its lawyer, has previously denied the allegations detailed in The Globe's coverage, and Tuesday's release repeated those denials. It said Mr. Wu's audio recorded statements were taken "out of context," insisting that Mr. Wu's instructions about accepting the first offer was aimed at bringing down a seller's unrealistic expectations.

The statement also says Mr. Wu told his agents to act ethically and within the rules.

The company's statement also includes responses to specific cases outlined in The Globe's coverage, denying wrongdoing in each instance. It ends with a broad denial that either the company or Mr. Wu has ever acted unethically or illegally. "They [allegations against the company] are unsubstantiated and unsupported by any evidence or specifics," the statement says. "They appear to come from anonymous sources in competition with New Coast."

In an interview with the Chinese-language publication Sing Tao earlier this month, Mr. Wu indicated he will make improvements. According to a translation of the article, Mr. Wu said "there is an urgent need to reflect on and improve the company's business model, and to be more tolerant and make less enemies."

Sing Tao reported that Mr. Wu said New Coast "welcomes the investigation and supervision," and he "admits that they need to reflect on the existing business model, summarize and draw lessons in order to make it better."

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancouver-real-estate-firms-owner-steps-aside-in-wake-of-investigations/article29688203/>

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## **Marijuana rally 'necessary' despite legalization promise, activist says**

TAMSYN BURGMANN Canadian Press April 20, 2016

Optimism mixed with thick clouds of pot smoke in downtown Vancouver last year as tens of thousands of people gathered for the annual "4-20" marijuana legalization rally under a massive banner featuring Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's face on a rolling paper.

But this year, the event's chief organizer, Jodie Emery, says that "inaction" by the newly elected federal Liberals makes the protest "more necessary than ever."

"Last summer, I was joking I'm going to be out of work as an activist because we don't have debates anymore, there's no one fighting to keep it illegal," said Ms. Emery, who is the wife of "Prince of Pot" Marc Emery. "But fast forward to today and the mood is different."

Mr. Trudeau has pledged to legalize pot and struck a task force to hammer out legislation, but Ms. Emery said change could be months or years away.

Vancouver, meanwhile, is preparing to shutter more than 100 marijuana dispensaries by end of month as it regulates the sale of pot.

But while Ms. Emery worries about progress, other proponents of legalization argue Ms. Emery and her allies are sabotaging their cause.

"They're doing themselves a disservice," said Patricia Daly, chief medical officer with Vancouver Coastal Health.

"They are not just protesting in favour of legalization. They are actually selling the product in a very unregulated way and it's exactly those activities that make us advocate for a strong regulatory approach."

Preparation was under way Tuesday on the eve of this year's event, which has been moved to a beach after mostly being held outside Vancouver's art gallery since 1995.

More than 100 people – the youngest age 15 – went to hospital last year complaining of symptoms ranging from upset stomachs to acute anxiety and psychosis, Dr. Daly said.

Sixty-three people were treated, and 75 per cent of them had consumed edible marijuana products, she said, noting pot in food presents the greatest risks.

The city issued a statement saying that the protest is unsanctioned and unlicensed, but it recognizes the public's right to peaceful assembly and lawful protest.

More than \$92,000 was spent by the city last year managing safety and cleanup, including \$52,000 on additional police officers.

Organizers agreed this year to move about two kilometres away to the beach, where vendors will sell exotic strains of pot, paraphernalia and edible marijuana products.

City staff, police, fire and rescue, and the Park Board have worked with organizers on a public safety plan, and volunteers will distribute free “4-20” guidebooks, a new addition featuring a site map, health advice for safe marijuana use and political messages.

Ms. Emery said that the grassroots event remains non-profit, but organizers have raised \$100,000 this year to cover costs of fencing, portable toilets, first-aid booths, security staff, a stage, garbage bins and containers for used joints.

Organizers will also use radios to communicate with police, fire and rescue personnel, as well as the ambulance service, while reminding participants the event is alcohol-free, Ms. Emery said.

Vancouver’s board of education distributed a fact sheet to parents recommending conversations with adolescents about the risks of marijuana. It suggests parents plan alternate activities “that are super fun,” such as taking teenagers bungee jumping.

Ms. Emery said she is frustrated the city has not sanctioned the event and will close public bathrooms around the beach.

“A lot of people will attend to celebrate, because everyone does feel marijuana will be legal,” she said. “But we have to explain it’s not legal yet and we still need to push the government to stop arresting citizens.”

Nearby St. Paul’s Hospital is mobilizing extra emergency room staff, Dr. Daly said. Public health officers will advise vendors not to sell to minors.

“There is no other mass gathering that results in dozens of people showing up at a hospital emergency department,” she said. “The only other event comparable was the Stanley Cup riot.”

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/marijuana-rally-necessary-despite-legalization-promise-activist-says/article29688347/>

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## **Vancouver’s unused theatres to host amateur performers with city subsidy**

ROSEMARY NEWTON Globe & Mail April 20, 2016

Amateur performers will have a chance to take to some of Vancouver’s most prominent stages under a pilot program, approved by the city on Tuesday, aimed at getting better use out of theatres and performance spaces that, in some cases, sit empty for 80 per cent of the year.

Vancouver Civic Theatres, a city department, will grant subsidized rent to community arts organizations and non-profits for such spaces as the Orpheum Annex and the Queen Elizabeth Theatre Plaza.

Groups ranging from the Vancouver International Film Festival and Ballet BC to yoga collectives have been among those deterred by high rental costs, said Sandra Gajic, director of Vancouver Civic Theatres.

“We have the demand by the not-for-profit sector, but the rental rates are a barrier,” Ms. Gajic said.

Priority will be given to grants funding the 200-seat Orpheum Annex, a space with a yearly usage rate of just 20 per cent, she added. The Queen Elizabeth Theatre Plaza is another focus of funding.

With the plaza’s only regular event being the Vancouver Christmas Market, it is left empty for the summer months – a space the Vancouver Farmers Market is looking to fill, dependent on rental cost.

The City of Vancouver already provides \$2.6-million to art groups through its theatre rental grant program, but it is under pressure and overprescribed, Ms. Gajic said.

The one-year pilot project would begin immediately and have a maximum yearly expenditure of \$100,000.

Councillor Heather Deal said the city offers non-profit rates at theatres, but the new grants could bridge the gap for rates that are still too high for artists and non-profits hoping to get their foot in the door.

“There’s a lot of great ideas that need a little bit of help,” she said.

East Vancouver-based 45th Avenue Jazz Band performed last weekend at The Annex Theatre at the non-profit rate of \$350, but director Jaelem Bhate said the group, comprising college students, still needed to raise funds at pubs and private gigs to support the rental and associated costs.

“It’s a trade-off that to rent the space needed, it takes more work behind the scenes,” he said.

When the band first formed in 2013, costs to perform were a barrier. Sponsorship was non-existent and the group performed at churches, birthday parties and for free on the University of British Columbia campus.

“There was a year and a half of not very glamorous performances,” Mr. Bhate said. “No one will take a chance on you.”

Performing at a space like The Annex is a chance to bolster the band's reputation, he said, noting that rental grants would be beneficial, but additional costs include marketing and staff.

Lights Up! Musical Theatre School is a performance company for youth in the Lower Mainland. The organization is for-profit, but it says renting large theatre spaces for non-profit rates by partnering with charities to raise funds means young performers have the chance to grace larger stages. Partner Lisa Oppenheim agreed that access to high-profile stages can mean a lot to community groups and rental is the main cost for productions.

"For the kids, it's huge. For a lot of them, it's the first time they've gotten up on a real stage. It's a huge boost to their self-confidence," Ms. Oppenheim said. "It's something that can be quite challenging for smaller groups – it's an opportunity that can be hard to provide."

The grants shouldn't affect independent theatres, said Heather Redfern, executive director of The Cultch, a community organization that provides performance space rent-free for artist residencies and community activities at two theatres in Vancouver.

"Each artist or company should have access to the space that is most suitable and will best support their endeavour," she said.

But she added that marketing, technical personnel, front-of-house staff and production costs exceed rent concerns.

"Rent is only one barrier a community group faces to being in a venue. It is actually the easiest barrier to remove," Ms. Redfern said. "Real progress would be made if we could help arts organizations with these hard costs. Rent is about paying utility bills; these other costs are about paying people."

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancouver-unused-theatres-to-host-amateur-performers-with-city-subsidy/article29687173/>

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## **Let's clean up the patchwork of rules governing marijuana**

MARK ZEKULIN Globe & Mail April 20, 2016

*Mark Zekulin is president of Tweed, which, along with sister company Bedrocan Canada, operate the largest network of legal, regulated cannabis production and distribution in Canada.*

Canada needs a clear and defined set of rules for medical and non-medical cannabis.

As we mark 4/20, the nationwide counterculture day to celebrate the benefits of the whole plant marijuana, advocates on both the medical and recreational fronts still flounder in debate weighing risk versus opportunity of the bud.

Tweed, as the largest legal producer of cannabis in the country, has played its role in this division. We firmly believe that all cannabis production and sale for commercial purposes should be strictly controlled and highly regulated. But this has manifested itself into a far too adversarial relationship with the founding cannabis community, something we must reset if we are to ensure a smart, progressive and open dialogue on cannabis policy.

This division has overshadowed the respect we have for the early advocates for progressive cannabis policy and for this, we apologize.

Tweed has developed accredited medical education programs for doctors and developed safe usage programs for patients, including a program now chaperoned by Shega A'Mula, who is also the founder of Canada's first Women Grow chapter, an organization dedicated to empowering women in the cannabis industry.

Hilary Black, who founded Canada's first compassion club nearly 20 years ago, is also part of the broader Tweed family. Her long-time goal was to push for a legal, regulated, accessible medical cannabis sector that met the needs of patients.

Two co-founders of the Canadian Association of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries and its inaugural president also call Tweed home, as do many other instrumental activists whose passion for patient access trumped all else.

This summer, the federal government will be required to introduce more progressive policies, likely allowing for limited grow-at-home options and easier access to the established system, while potentially facilitating insurance coverage or further income-tested subsidies for those in need of medical cannabis.

Galen G. Weston and his team at Shoppers Drug Mart have recently expressed a desire to own the burgeoning cannabis market, in much the same way they have sought to gain market share in the beer market through their expansive grocery store network in Ontario. Pharmacists, who for years wanted nothing to do with medical cannabis, have also now seen the light and view themselves as the only rightful gatekeepers to medical cannabis.

Health Canada's licensed producers, having invested millions of dollars in state-of-the-art growing and production facilities, sit in disbelief as new illegal storefronts pop up to sell cannabis on Main Street with apparent impunity. Meanwhile, the original compassion-club advocates who bravely fought for cannabis access in Canada see themselves increasingly likely to be shut out of the sector as it moves from an activist culture to a professional, regulated environment.

As we approach 4/20, it's time to end the confusion over the patchwork of legal and illegal systems that govern cannabis.

There may well be a role for all of us – pharmacists, early cannabis activists and companies like Tweed that have invested tens of millions of dollars in cannabis research, clinical trials and production and distribution facilities.

And for some, of course, it's not so much about the politics as it is about, well, celebrating the plant.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/lets-clean-up-the-patchwork-of-rules-governing-marijuana/article29677006/>

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## **Cannabis day to continue at VAG: group**

By [Eric MacKenzie](#) 24 Hours April 20, 2016

Recognizing that Wednesday's 420 protests won't be limited to Sunset Beach, the Vancouver Police Department says it's ready to monitor events celebrating cannabis elsewhere in the city.

An estimated 20,000 people attended last year at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Although organizers are moving to Sunset Beach this year, some marijuana activists have said they'll still set up downtown on Wednesday.

Pro-legalization organization World Cannabis has been posting on its website about its intentions to return to the VAG.

"Contrary to popular belief, it was not a choice to move to the beach, it was a forced suggestion. Had the newly elected prime minister made one single move to actually legalize, (then) perhaps this group of activists would be more likely to go along down to the beach," said a post-dated Monday.

"This is a protest and will remain so."



In an emailed statement, Const. Brian Montague said VPD are “aware of the possibility there will be some people attending alternate venues. Our plans include those locations.

“There are many considerations when it comes to policing an event like this,” Montague added. “Our focus will be public safety.”

Transit Police have also acknowledged “a possibility of some congregating still occurring in the area of the Art Gallery” and is planning increased presence at downtown train stations and along the Burrard and Davie transit corridors.

“During the 2015 420 event, Transit Police responded to numerous reports of unruly behaviour on buses,” said a Saturday release. “Officers will be conducting ‘step-ons’ on buses throughout the day to ensure a high profile presence and discourage this kind of behaviour.”

<http://vancouver.24hrs.ca/2016/04/19/cannabis-day-to-continue-at-vag-group>

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## **Time for Vancouver cops to make 420 arrests**

By [Ada Slivinski](#), 24 Hours Vancouver Wednesday, April 20, 2016 7:30:12 PDT AM

When the reefer revelers are all gathered in one place, police should round them up and fine or arrest them. Though it makes sense that policing pot is not a priority for the Vancouver Police Department, there is one day of the year they should make an exception — 420.

Vancouver Police Chief Adam Palmer, when asked about the drug, told 24 Hours, “Marijuana falls into the scheme of things, but definitely low down in priority.”

This has been the VPD’s line on marijuana for years.

Of course on most days, using police resources to hunt down teenagers with a joint in their parents’ basement doesn’t make sense, but when they are all gathered in a public place, engaging openly in illegal activity, too drugged up to make a getaway or resist arrest, half the work is already done. Arrests should be made and fines doled out.

At least then the “protest” could help compensate taxpayers for costs associated with traffic disruptions, inevitable clean up and emergency room visits. Last year,

64 people — including teenagers — flooded the St. Paul's Hospital ER suffering from nausea, vomiting or heart palpitations after participating in the pot party.

Let's not forget that although Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has promised to legalize the stuff, recreational marijuana is still illegal. Imagine if some other illegal activity went on out in the open this way. If sex workers were to set up prostitution booths on the beach, would we allow it?

The 420 event is not a protest, it's a party, yet somehow, without the explicit permission of the City of Vancouver, it grows more organized and sophisticated every year. Roads are closed, a stage and booths — many of which have been booked and paid for in advance — are set up and marijuana is sold in broad daylight.

This year, the event has outgrown its Vancouver Art Gallery home and moved to Sunset Beach, causing the Park Board to close the Vancouver Aquatic Centre for fear of a hot boxing effect.

Of course, anyone who wants to plan any legal event on city land has to go through mountains of paperwork before they come close to putting tent peg in the ground. In this city, smoking of any kind in public parks can result in a \$250 fine, but the over 20,000 smokers using illegal drugs at an organized event? They get a free pass.

It's a double standard and it's time it stopped.

*Ada Slivinski is a communications consultant based in Vancouver. Contact her at [ada@adaslivinski.com](mailto:ada@adaslivinski.com), on Twitter @adaslivinski and visit her website [adaslivinski.ca](http://adaslivinski.ca)*

<http://vancouver.24hrs.ca/2016/04/19/time-for-vancouver-cops-to-make-420-arrests>

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## **Discount passes changed to welcome refugees**

By [Michael Mui](#), 24 Hours Vancouver April 20, 2016

Changes in the Vancouver Park Board's discount pass policy will allow homeless residents, refugees and trans people easier access to free swimming, skating and discounted lessons.

The Leisure Access Pass is intended for low-income people and generally offers 50% off lessons, fitness centres, in addition to some free services at community centres and facilities.

Changes approved on Monday mean that non-citizen refugees, homeless who don't have government ID, and those whose gender is different from their identification cards, can now be more easily accepted into the discount pass.

Paul Czene, recreation services co-ordinator at the Park Board, said in the past homeless residents would simply be asked to get a piece of government ID, or no discount pass would be offered.

"In the past ... an agency or sponsor would complete the form for a refugee or immigrant's family. They would get sent to the Park Board, processed, sent back to the agency and then the family would go to the community centre to get their pass," Czene said.

The changes mean refugees can now go to partner agencies, such as the Vancouver School Board, the provincial government, settlement services, the health authority and other agencies to have the form filled, then the family can take the completed forms directly to the community centre for immediate processing.

Homeless and trans individuals don't have to bring government ID any more. They could similarly get a referral from a service provider — even a cell phone bill, if that's all the proof of residency they have — and be accepted into the program.

The program remains only available to those who qualify for federal or provincial income or social assistance.

Since January, the access pass program has processed 81 new applicants — the majority of them arriving refugees, Czene said.

The program currently has about 15,800 members.

<http://vancouver.24hrs.ca/2016/04/19/discount-passes-changed-to-welcome-refugees>

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**Time to stop tiptoeing around affordability crisis**

By [Steve Burgess](#) 24 Hours April 20, 2016

The New York Times ran a story last week titled Chinese Scions' Song: My Daddy's Rich and My Lamborghini's Good-Looking, all about super-rich Chinese kids in the faraway city of Vancouver, British Columbia.

There it was in the world's most famous newspaper — a story local media and politicians have been tiptoeing around like a sleeping dragon.

It was like Christmas morning for Vancouver news outlets. No need to raise the issue of Chinese money themselves — all we had to do was reference the Times.

They said it, not us.

The article told of mega-wealthy Chinese kids buying Lambos and other top-of-the-line vehicles. Then it made reference to the red-hot real estate topic. “Many residents say the flood of Chinese capital has caused an affordable housing crisis,” the story read. “Vancouver is the most expensive city in Canada to buy a home, according to a 2016 survey.”

Ah, that unimpeachable source: “Many residents.” Citing “many residents” is a standard dodge that allows a reporter to report anything overheard on the bus. In the U.S., “many residents” say Donald Trump is the man who will deal with Mexican rapists and evil Muslims. In the UK, “many residents” say the British royal family are shape-shifting lizards. Who believes in the Tooth Fairy? Many residents.

The Times told us filthy rich Chinese kids are buying flashy cars and driving like fools. Then the paper told us Vancouver real estate prices are insane. We were to connect the dots and conclude Chinese money is making Vancouver a playground for corrupt elites. But are the two stories really connected?

Local writer Kerry Gold's recent cover story in The Walrus magazine put more factual meat on its contention that Chinese money is driving the market. But in an accompanying editorial, Walrus editor Jonathan Kay said the explanation for Vancouver's high real estate prices “isn't complicated.”

That's a dubious statement — there are other potential factors like the low loonie and old fashioned supply-and-demand. Another recent story suggested price pressures are also coming from Albertans fleeing the cratering oil economy. But I do agree on another point Kay made — the issue of Vancouver affordability must be discussed openly.

It's too important to tip-toe around.

*Steve Burgess is a Vancouver-based writer and author of the memoir Who Killed Mom?*

<http://vancouver.24hrs.ca/2016/04/14/time-to-stop-tiptoeing-around-affordability-crisis>

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## Mayor backs call for referendum

By: [Emily Jackson](#) Metro Published on April 20, 2016

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson's party may have received millions of dollars in donations from developers, unions and corporations in the last local election, but even he wants the power to put an end to the skyrocketing municipal election campaign donations.

Robertson announced Tuesday he will support fellow Vision Vancouver Coun. Andrea Reimer's motion calling on the provincial government to hold a referendum to let voters decide whether to let municipalities set their own campaign finance rules.

As it stands, B.C. local elections have no bans on corporate or union donations and no limits on donations from individuals. The City of Vancouver – where campaign spending hit a [record \\$5.6 million](#) in 2014 – has been trying to get these rules in place for more than a decade, but the province governs elections and has not allowed it to do so.

Reimer wants to see a question on the ballot in the province's 2017 general election asking voters whether they want to let cities set their own rules to end to big money in campaigns. Reimer believes massive donations lead to the perception that [wealthy donors influence politicians](#).

The province passed legislation this month to update election spending rules, but Reimer said the updates make things even worse. She's pushing for a referendum because the city is frustrated and doesn't have many other options.

But the province – the only one in Canada that does not have a ban on corporate and union donations, which are also banned from federal elections – does not have any plans to hold a referendum, according to a statement attributed to Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development Peter Fassbender.

"We do not anticipate any further changes to campaign finance rules or a referendum at this time," Fassbender said Tuesday in response to Vancouver's suggestion.

The recent changes will implement expense limits for the 2018 local elections, a reform that Fassbender called a “great success story for democracy in British Columbia.”

In the last Vancouver election, Vision Vancouver spent \$3.4 million, sending the party nearly \$400,000 into debt, and the Non-Partisan Association spent \$2.4 million. B.C.’s new rules would barely put a dent in spending, as it would [cap spending in Vancouver](#) at approximately \$2.4 million for a full slate of candidates.

<http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2016/04/19/vancouver-calls-for-bc-referendum-on-election-donations.html>

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## **New site, new battles for 4/20 protesters in Vancouver**

**Marijuana advocate Jodie Emery says the fight to legalize weed is heating up, despite poll that shows it’s not a priority for most Canadians.**

**By:** [Matt Kieltyka](#) Metro Published on Wed Apr 20 2016

Pot advocates in Vancouver have renewed fire in their bellies as the annual 4/20 protest moves to a new site Tuesday amid battles with the city and federal government.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s lack of progress on promised legalization and the City of Vancouver’s aggressive regulatory crackdown on marijuana dispensaries (up to 100 businesses could face closure as of next week) means there’s plenty to protest about at Sunset Beach, according to organizer Jodie Emery.

“The Liberal government hasn’t kept its promise of legalization. It has failed Canadians by continuing to arrest people for pot possession. I’m disappointed,” said Emery, who attempted to run for the Liberals in the last federal election.

Coupled with what she calls the city’s new “unfair” and “unnecessary” regulatory regime of dispensaries (currently just 12 of more than 100 dispensaries have successfully navigated the licensing process that dictates where the businesses are allowed to set up shop), Emery says marijuana supporters “need to protest more than ever.”

“It’s similar to what happened when [Barack] Obama got elected in the U.S. Because the new government was seen as liberal and progressive, protesters kind of stopped even though things were getting worse,” said Emery. “We have to be careful about the Liberal government.”

But not all Canadians may be of the same opinion.

A new [Angus Reid Institute poll released Tuesday](#) shows that while 68 per cent of Canadians support some sort of marijuana legalization, more than half (54 per cent) see it as one of the least important issues facing the country.

“That’s the part that sticks out to me,” said Angus Reid Institute executive director Shachi Kurl, who noted Trudeau began his campaign in Vancouver with the promise to legalize pot. “It’s way down on the list of things to do. It’s not the issue for the general public that it was 10, 20 or even five years ago. I think the debate has moved on from not if we should [legalize] but how we should.”

Emery said she wishes the government would get on with it.

The outspoken advocate, who is married to “Prince of Pot” Marc Emery, doesn’t know how big of a crowd this year’s event, at Sunset Beach for the first time, will draw.

Last year’s final protest outside the Vancouver Art Gallery drew 50,000 people but was publicly opposed by the City of Vancouver, which believed it had outgrown the location, caused considerable downtown congestion and should’ve gone through the same permitting process as other large-scale public events.

While the city still considers 4/20 an unsanctioned and unlicensed event, city manager Sadhu Johnston has said the new location at Sunset Beach “will require fewer city resources” and be safer.

The Vancouver park board remains staunchly opposed, according to chair Sarah Kirby-Yung.

It has had to close the park’s aquatics centre during the event and increase staffing of rangers and lifeguards to ensure public safety.

“It’s not an ideal location for it,” she told Metro on Monday. “Certainly, park board commissioners don’t want to see this as an ongoing event.”

Kirby-Yung said she was disappointed the board’s calls for the city to intervene and find another location for the event ultimately fell on deaf ears.

<http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2016/04/20/new-site-for-420-marijuana-protest-in-vancouver-.html>

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**Building the business of sustainable cannabis production in B.C.**

[Anna Kalfa](#) CKNW Posted: April 20, 2016 06:50 am

Mary Jane. Reefer. Ganja. Pot. Weed. Whatever you call it, there's no denying the cannabis industry is emerging as big business here in Canada at a rapid rate. And British Columbia is ahead of the pack. With legalization looking more and more possible, we're on the precipice of a "new Silicon Valley" when it comes to cannabis production.

***A "Green Rush", if you will.***

It's possible that cannabis will be the biggest career and job generator of the next twenty years.

With that in mind, CKNW's Tim Dickert paid a visit to a medical marijuana production facility in Maple Ridge.

[Tantalus Labs](#) is developing the first of its kind purpose-built sun-grown cannabis production facility in North America.

Dan Sutton, Managing Director and Founder, and Alexander Close, Creative Director, met with Tim to talk about what the future holds for the industry in B.C.

**"If you're interested, motivated, and intelligent then there's room for you in the cannabis business."**

According to Sutton, the need for regulatory compliance and quality control means there are lots of jobs to be had.

"So that kind of technical job-building is going to be a really cool function of what's going on here but- you know, whether you're a security provider, a software developer, an agriculturist, you know even a product design enthusiast, there's tons of angles on which to attack the cannabis industry and I guess my message would be to carve out a niche. Find what you're interested in and apply it to cannabis- you're going to see a huge growth market in the next ten years."

***Opportunities abound***

Alexander Close says the opportunity for job growth in the industry is massive.

"People should come to work every day knowing that not only are they building the future of sustainable cannabis production you know in this province, in this nation, in the world, but also they're adding to their quiver in a way that's more self-interested. They are developing skills that no one's developed before- they're developing processes that no one understands today. And in that there will be this great opportunity for technicians and lower-level employees that come and work in this facility. I tell everyone that we hire that 'you could be running this



place in five years' and there will be many places like this in five years that are looking for experience.”

He's not so worried about staff stealing from them. All potential employees must have a criminal record check completed. And there's no real incentive for theft.

“Stealing a handful of weed is really throwing away your future for something you could buy at the dispensary for twenty bucks.”

So while we still don't know how marijuana legalization is going to roll out, what we do know is that there are going to be a lot of farms growing legal marijuana here in British Columbia.

And that means jobs.

And an interesting and exciting time for the province of BC.

<http://www.cknw.com/2016/04/20/building-the-business-of-sustainable-cannabis-production-in-bc/>

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## **Could water meters be in the future for Metro Vancouver?**

[Shelby Thom](#) CKNW Posted: April 19, 2016 08:11 pm | Last Updated: April 19, 2016 09:08 pm

As Metro Vancouver moves to implement stage 1 water restrictions two weeks ahead of schedule on May 15th, it's also launching a two year study looking at the benefits and drawbacks of residential water metering.

North Vancouver Mayor and Utilities Committee Chairman Darrell Mussatto says White Rock, West Vancouver and parts of Richmond and Langley all use water meters, but it's looking at a universal system.

“The benefits of water metering, the biggest is it reduces water consumption. If you have to pay for how much you use people are a little bit more judicious and they try to conserve a little bit of their dollars so they use less water. The negatives are it doesn't always save us a lot of money.”

But he says installing, reading, and billing is expensive.

“So it significantly increases the cost of water to an average person. Now if you didn't use much water and you had a water meter you are going to pay less but certainly single family homes if they are watering their lawn they are going to start to see their bills go up.”

Mussatto says water meters cost between 400-1000 dollars to install on each home and up to 50 bucks annually for reading and billing.

Meanwhile lawn sprinkling restrictions to 3 days a week on designated days will come into effect May 15th.

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## **Vancouver City Council ratifies new deal covering outside workers**

[Terry Schintz](#) CKNW Posted: April 19, 2016 04:03 pm | Last Updated: April 19, 2016 04:51 pm

Vancouver City Council has ratified a new deal with outside workers, members of CUPE local 1004.

It covers 1,650 employees who work in Engineering, Parks, and at Mountain View Cemetery.

They've already voted in favour of the four year deal.

They get wage increases totaling 7% over the life of the contract.

Bargaining continues with unions representing the balance of the City's workforce, including inside workers and firefighters.

<http://www.cknw.com/2016/04/19/vancouver-city-council-ratifies-new-deal-covering-outside-workers/>

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## **Vancouver mayor backs plan to give cities power to ban corporate and union donations**

by [Martin MacMahon](#) Posted Apr 19, 2016 2:54 pm PDT Last Updated Apr 19, 2016 at 2:55 pm PDT

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – It's a move aimed at eventually banning unions and corporations from contributing to municipal elections.

Vancouver's mayor is backing a plan which would let you vote on letting municipalities reform donation rules.

For years, Mayor [Gregor Robertson](#) has been asking the province to change the rules about who can donate to parties during local elections.

“We want to see that big money taken out of politics,” says Robertson. “It’ll make a big difference for transparency and accountability, and giving the public comfort that there’s no big money involved in the campaigns.”

He’s [backing a motion](#) from fellow Vision party member and City Councillor [Andrea Reimer](#), calling on the province to let you vote in a referendum which would transfer the rule-making power to cities and towns.

That referendum would take place as part of next year’s provincial election.

“The only feasible period to do a referendum — it costs a lot to do a standalone referendum, so this is an opportunity for the province to do it at the same time people are already headed to the ballot box,” says Reimer.

As for his party’s acceptance of corporate and union donations in the past, Robertson says his party is just using the rules as they exist.

<http://www.news1130.com/2016/04/19/vancouver-mayor-ban-corporate-union-donations/>

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## **Businesses hope for bottom line bump as pot smokers gather for 4/20**

by [Mike Lloyd](#) Posted Apr 20, 2016 6:52 am PDT Last Updated Apr 20, 2016 at 7:34 am PDT

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – Things were relatively quiet as the sun rose over Vancouver’s iconic Sunset Beach this morning, but it’s going to be a very different scene this afternoon when tens of thousands of pro-pot protesters pack in to the West End for the annual [4/20](#) rally.

This is the first time the rally is being held at this location and local business owners aren’t sure how things will play out. They’re hoping for a calm, respectful crowd and maybe a boost in business.

But Stephen Regan with the [West End Business Improvement Association](#) says it’s not your usual sanctioned and planned event. “We’re cautiously optimistic that it will be a well behaved group that the city, police and the Park Board will manage things well.”

“For 4/20 is an event that falls outside the usual parameters, so there’s a little bit of a concern about making sure everyone is safe and that access into the West End is not hampered,” he adds.

He wonders about the checks and balances when it comes to things like insurance. "We're really not quite sure how it works on 4/20, but we're going to monitor and hope that everyone has a safe experience."

The nearby Vancouver Aquatic Centre is closed today over fears smoke from the event will travel into the building and affect those who may have respiratory issues.

<http://www.news1130.com/2016/04/20/businesses-hope-for-bottomline-bump-as-pot-smokers-gather-for-420/>

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## **Thousands expected for 4/20 pot protest in Vancouver**

By [Amy Judd](#) Global News April 20, 2016 6:57 am

Thousands are expected to show up for the annual 4/20 pot protest in Vancouver today.

This year the Vancouver party is being held at Sunset Beach, with about 25,000 people expected.

The nearby Aquatic Centre is shut down today and the beach cafeteria is also closed.

The Parks Board is bringing in extra staff. Vancouver Police officers will also be on scene.

The event was moved from the Art Gallery this year, but protesters are still gathered outside the old location, saying that's where they will get maximum exposure.

The city has issued a statement saying the protest is unsanctioned and unlicensed, but it recognizes the public's right to peaceful assembly and lawful protest.

More than \$92,000 was spent by the city last year managing safety and cleanup, including \$52,000 on additional police officers.

Last year, about 64 people were treated at the hospital following the event.

Vancouver is preparing to close more than 100 marijuana dispensaries by end of month as it regulates the sale of pot.

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2650462/thousands-expected-for-420-pot-protest-in-vancouver/>

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## **Vancouver bracing for 50,000 people at 4/20 pot protest rally**

CTV Vancouver Published Wednesday, April 20, 2016 7:40AM PDT Last Updated Wednesday, April 20, 2016 7:43AM PDT

As organizers prepare for what could be the biggest 4/20 protest yet in Vancouver, city staff and health workers are bracing for more potential problems.

A massive crowd of up to 50,000 people are expected to attend this year's event at Sunset Beach, which is a much larger space than the Vancouver Art Gallery where 4/20 rallies have been held for decades.

But that crowd estimate and the waterfront location are raising concerns among officials, who are promising additional personnel to ensure everyone in attendance stays safe.

Extra doctors and nurses will be stationed at St. Paul's Hospital on Wednesday, where more than 60 people were admitted for marijuana intoxication in 2015. Many of those were adolescents, with some as young as 15 years old, and the majority had consumed edibles.

"We'd really like to warn people about the risks associated with marijuana consumption, particularly edibles, and we'd like to ask those participating in the event not to sell products to anyone under the age of 19," said Dr. Patricia Daly, chief medical health officer for Vancouver Coastal Health.

Some of the health issues recorded last year included acute anxiety, upset stomachs, and in some cases symptoms of psychosis, which Daly said can happen when young people try pot products for the first time.

As always, firefighters and police will be in attendance at the rally. The park board has announced it will also be hiring additional lifeguards to patrol the beaches, over concerns that weed and water won't mix.

Board chair Sarah Kirby-Yung said that's one reason the group begged city staff to push organizers toward a different venue months ago.

“Unfortunately, the mayor chose not to work with us on our request to find an alternate location,” Kirby-Yung said.

Mayor Gregor Robertson’s office said the rally is an unsanctioned protest, not a permitted event, so there’s little the city can do to force organizers’ hands.

All told, last year’s event cost taxpayers around \$90,000, and that total could balloon even larger this year.

But Jodie Emery of Cannabis Culture, who helps put the annual event together, believes the concerns around 4/20 are overblown. She said organizers have never needed or requested a police presence.

“If the city and park board spend tens of thousands of dollars unnecessarily – because there is no problem, there is no crisis – then that’s something taxpayers should ask the city and park board about,” Emery said.

The people who attend the protest are taxpayers as well, she added.

“As taxpayers we’re all financing the police presence at every city event. Just because I don’t go to Vaisakhi doesn’t mean I’m not paying for it. And taxpayers should ask themselves, how much tax money is being spent on prohibition?”

Roughly 25,000 people were estimated to be gathered at the Vancouver Art Gallery at the height of last year’s protest, but Emery said when all the people coming and going are factored in, about 50,000 attended.

That makes the number of people who were hospitalized a drop in the bucket, she added.

With Justin Trudeau’s Liberals promising to legalize marijuana, some have questioned what 4/20 is still protesting. Emery pointed to the City of Vancouver’s pending crackdown on dispensaries, the vast majority of which have been ordered to close by April 29, as well as the lack of action by the federal government.

“We have the Liberals dragging their feet, continuing to arrest Canadians, and a local government promising to shut down dispensaries. So we have good reason to rally,” she said.

<http://bc.ctvnews.ca/vancouver-bracing-for-50-000-people-at-4-20-pot-protest-rally-1.2866959>

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## **Clouded memories: The history of Vancouver's 4/20 pot rally**

[Darcy Matheson](#), CTV Vancouver Published Tuesday, April 19, 2016 2:55PM PDT Last Updated Tuesday, April 19, 2016 6:52PM PDT

What started as a small "Smoke Out" with friends to protest Canada's marijuana laws more than two decades ago has grown into a celebration of civil disobedience that draws tens of thousands of pot puffers in Vancouver each April 20th.

An estimated 50,000 people are expected to attend Wednesday's 4/20 rally, which for the first time will be held on one of the city's iconic – and non-smoking – beaches.

Although the true origin of the term 4/20 is widely debated, it's more or less accepted that it originated in the 1970s with the band The Grateful Dead, and a group of high school stoners in San Rafael, Calif., that took to smoking a joint after school – around 4:20 p.m. By the 1990s, 4:20 p.m. was generally considered to be the time for the "the toke of the day," with groups of pot smokers around the world taking part, according to a Cannabis Culture article explaining the roots of the cannabis "high holiday."

In Vancouver, a formalized 4/20 event didn't start until 1995. That's when two workers at "Prince of Pot" Marc Emery's store downtown asked for his permission to hold an organized event in nearby Victory Square to publicly denounce the Canadian laws – and enforcement – around marijuana smoking.

That inaugural year, around 200 people enjoyed music and marijuana in the small park in the afternoon -- a tiny but peaceful gathering that lasted just a few hours.

And then it grew, and quickly. In just one year the event doubled to 500 people, with revelers showing up at noon and staying for the entire day. That's when a decision was made to move the event to the Vancouver Art Gallery, the city's traditional site for protests.

By 1997, the event, now in its much larger home base, drew more than 1,000 people. It was also the same year 4/20 started being celebrated simultaneously across North America.

"It was only because of Vancouver and Marc Emery and our grassroots team that people around the world looked to us and said 'that looks amazing. We should do the same.' Now there are hundreds and hundreds of events globally," said Jodie Emery, Marc's wife and owner of Cannabis Culture magazine.

The annual pot rally has grown in leaps and bounds in the past decade, but it has not been without controversy.

By 2011, the rally started allowing vendors like head shops and other pot-based businesses to set up tents to showcase their wares. While marijuana wasn't sold openly on the tables, it was happening behind the scenes.

"Some people would sell marijuana out of their backpack and it was a risk they took. Police would arrest them," said Emery.

Emery says at least some of those arrests were defrayed by what activists refer to as "Hug Power," where people lock arms with each other and around the person being detained to exercise civil disobedience in a non-violent way.

With Colorado and Washington State making history by voting for the legalization of recreational pot in 2012, Vancouver saw a spike of people jumping into the dispensary trade in the city. And some of those operators started selling weed at the rally that year, likely as a result of the relaxation around pot laws in the U.S., says Emery.

"There were a few dispensaries being civilly disobedient. Many of the people operating underground finally felt comfortable coming out and participating," she said.

With an increased public acceptance for the decriminalization of marijuana, the year 2014 marked a sort of gold rush in the Vancouver pot dispensary game. Rally organizers saw a big boom in the number of dispensaries opening, and also more businesses that wanted to set up at the 4/20 protest.

Last year's 20-year milestone for the rally also arguably marked the event's most politicized year. Marc and Jodie Emery had a strong message for all attendants: Use your voting power to oust Stephen Harper to make way for Justin Trudeau, who was promising to regulate and legalize marijuana in Canada.

"There was a lot of excitement to get Harper out, and vote the Liberals in," said Emery.

The 2015 rally also saw a record-number of attendees taken to hospital. A total of 64 people were hospitalized with various symptoms including heart palpitations and nausea. Many had apparently over-indulged in edible marijuana products, according to health officials, who are now calling for organizers to stop selling edibles to people under 25 years old.

Far from its humble roots, last year's event drew an estimated 25,000 people to the art gallery, and caused traffic chaos as revelers spilled onto key commuter



routes during the afternoon rush hour. It became clear that the once-tiny smoke out had outgrown its home.

This year's 4/20 rally is rolling into a new home base: to the city's scenic Sunset Beach, an unusual move given the non-smoking bylaw in the park. Not everyone is happy about the move. The Vancouver Park Board has called on Mayor Gregor Robertson to push the event away from the city shores, citing health and safety concerns.

It's also worried some residents, who don't fancy the idea of pot smokers packing the shores of the West End. With concerns over marijuana smoke leeching into the ventilation system of the Vancouver Aquatic Centre, the city-run pool and community centre will be closed for the day.

This year's 4/20 rally will include a heavy police presence, as well as on-site life guards, provided by the park board in a bid to keep people out of the water. And with unseasonably warm temperatures expected, organizers believe this will be the biggest Smoke Out in history.

Initially intended to voice opposition to Canada's pot prohibition, detractors argue Vancouver's 4/20 events have become more party than protest, with dozens of vendors openly selling pot paraphernalia and edible weed products before the annual "joint toss" and ceremonial smoke out at 4:20 p.m.

But with Vancouver city council threatening to shut down unlicensed medical marijuana dispensaries at the end of the month, and Justin Trudeau's promise to legalize weed still unfulfilled, Emery believes there is still work to do.

"This year we realize we're needed more than ever," said Emery. "Until marijuana is legalized everyone at this rally is still seen as a criminal in the eyes of the government. It is still illegal and people get arrested every day."

<http://bc.ctvnews.ca/clouded-memories-the-history-of-vancouver-s-4-20-pot-rally-1.2865932>

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**4/20 pot rally setting up at 2 Vancouver locations**

***A break-away group is setting up at the Vancouver Art Gallery***

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 20, 2016 7:24 AM PT Last Updated: Apr 20, 2016 7:27 AM PT

Despite plans by organizers of Vancouver's annual 4/20 pot-legalization rally to move the event to Sunset Beach in Vancouver's West End, a break-away group is still setting up this morning outside the old location at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Organizers of the main event [decided to move the rally](#) to the seaside location after 20 years in downtown Vancouver, because a part of the art gallery is closed for construction.

Vancouver police say they plan to monitor both sites, but they have no plans to shut down either event. They blocked traffic on Robson Street outside the art gallery Wednesday morning.

The Vancouver Park Board, which operates the city's beaches, [says the event isn't welcome](#). Beaches are designated non-smoking areas.

Organizers say they haven't applied for a permit because they don't believe they would be given one due to the nature of the event.

Earlier this week Vancouver's chief medical health officer, Dr. Patricia Daly, asked vendors at 4/20 [not to sell edible marijuana products to minors](#) after more than 100 people were admitted to hospital during the event last year.

The [Vancouver School Board has reminded parents and students](#) that April 20 is still a school day.

The worldwide event takes place on the same day every year, and culminates in a mass marijuana light-up at 4:20 p.m. PT.

The recreational use of marijuana and the sale of marijuana for non-medical use is illegal in Canada.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/420-vancouver-1.3544363>

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## **Trees cut down in front of Vancouver Art Gallery shocks residents**

***The city says it will be planting 36 new trees as part of the plaza's new design***

By Maryse Zeidler, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 20, 2016 6:00 AM PT Last Updated: Apr 20, 2016 6:00 AM PT

Some people in Vancouver are speaking out against the city's decision to allow a handful of trees to be cut down in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Seven trees were cut down Monday evening and one more is slated for the chopping block on Wednesday as part the [redevelopment of the Vancouver Art Gallery plaza](#).

The City of Vancouver says the trees had to go because they were either diseased or were at the end their lives, adding they will be replaced by 36 new trees in their stead.

But former tree technician Kika Thorne disagrees.

"Who ascertained their disease? For everyone standing there looking at them, we're looking at very healthy stumps or logs," Thorne said, adding she did note a bit of disease on them. "I think the point is to care for these trees."

Thorne says she also objects to the idea that the old trees can easily be replaced.

"To be honest it's like saying, you know, let's kill off this elder and bring in some kids," she said. "I mean really, it was shocking."

The city says the plaza is a popular spot and the new development should be able to accommodate more people.

It also said the plans for the new plaza were mostly met with approval during public consultations on the new design.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/vancouver-art-gallery-trees-1.3544150>

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**In the continent's hottest housing market, Vancouver will try to create an "affordable home ownership" program**

***Francesbula.com April 19th, 2016***

The good folks at city hall are probably wishing someone had started the idea of an affordable home-ownership program 10 years ago, when prices were way more reasonable.

At any rate, they're going to try now by getting units in new development projects through developer community-amenity contributions and then selling them to people at below-market prices, while retaining a share of the equity.

I'll be counting the seconds until this all unrolls. Very difficult to work out. First, the province has to change legislation. Then, the city has to hold a consultation on how this will work. Who gets first dibs on these units, once people have met the income/residency/job-in-Vancouver requirements? A lottery? Or will some types of employees get bumped up the list?

And then there's working out the financials and legals with the developer and the buyers.

All this and more is what other cities have gone through so it's not impossible. The [city's comprehensive report](#) outlines the efforts in places like Calgary, San Francisco, Boston and more.

[Local housing experts say](#) the program is worth a try, but will likely only be able to serve a small slice of the city's anxious residents. They'll need to make enough money to pay the mortgage on what will be, even with the discount, an expensive condo, but not make enough money to just plunge into the market on their own.

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## **There's a cheap, proven fix to the world's biggest problem**

By [John D. Sutter](#), CNN Updated 11:34 AM ET, Tue April 19, 2016

John D. Sutter is a columnist for CNN Opinion who focuses on [climate change](#) and social justice. Follow him on [Snapchat](#), [Facebook](#) and [email](#). The opinions expressed in this commentary are his.

*Seattle (CNN)* - Yoram Bauman learned about the idea that would change his life, and the course of the world, as a nerdy undergraduate at Reed College.

The economics professor's pitch was so simple he couldn't shake it.

*We should make bad stuff more expensive.*

*And, by doing that, make good stuff cheaper.*

"I remember thinking that it was such an intellectually beautiful idea," he told me.

It is beautiful. And, as it turns out, this old theory, which dates back at least to the 1920s and an economist named [Arthur Pigou](#), is essential to fixing one of the world's biggest problems.

Bauman, who now is a PhD economist and stand-up comedian (more on that later; and, yes, he does jokes on the Laffer curve), is the force behind a proposal on the ballot this fall in Washington state that would turn this old, elegant concept into what could be the country's smartest climate change policy.

It's thought to be the first time a proposal like this has gone before U.S. voters.

[Washington's Initiative-732](#) would make a bad thing -- pollution -- more expensive by putting a tax on each ton of carbon dioxide created by cars, power plants and the like.

More importantly, doing so would throw economic muscle behind clean energy, shorter commutes, cleaner air and smarter cities. It would use the market, not regulations, to choose winners and losers in the clean tech race. It would help Washington state, in the apt words of the initiative's promoters, fulfill its moral responsibility to leave a livable planet for future generations. And it plans to do so without wrecking the economy or growing government.

That's because Bauman's carbon-tax proposal aims to be "revenue neutral," meaning all of the money the state collects from the tax on carbon will be returned to the people and businesses as tax breaks. So this shouldn't be seen as an additional tax. It's a different tax -- a pollution tax.

It helps account for the very real social costs of burning carbon.

The fee is levied on each ton of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent gases that are emitted. So the tax would show up at the gas pump and also on electric bills for businesses and homes. To avoid the tax, businesses and people gradually would shift to cleaner-energy sources that don't pollute.

Because of the accompanying tax breaks, many families would save money.

The concept has broad support from intellectuals on the right and left. Economists, environmentalists, climate scientists -- [even oil execs at Exxon Mobil](#) -- back the theory.

They prefer it to other methods of eliminating carbon emissions, which include passing strict environmental rules for industrial polluters or subsidizing renewable energy. The latter is seen as less economically efficient than a tax. Subsidies ask the government to pick technologies that are most deserving of support. Technologies are always evolving, though, and a carbon tax lets the market decide which climate solutions are best suited for the problem.

The tax may seem like an economic wash -- taxes increase here, tax breaks there -- but it's not. Fossil fuels would get more expensive under the plan. While businesses and people, particularly those in poverty, will see tax breaks, there's

no reason to assume they would spend those savings on high-polluting activities. Using cleaner energy gets cheaper by comparison.

Plus, this isn't just theory. It's been proven to work.

After meeting Bauman in Seattle, I drove three hours north to British Columbia, which implemented a similar carbon tax in 2008. The economy there has grown, clean-tech jobs are booming and pollution is way down.

"The thing about a carbon tax is it's a pure price signal," Christy Clark, British Columbia's premier, told me on that visit.

Nearly everyone who studies climate change agrees governments should put a price on carbon if we're going to meet the terms of the Paris Agreement. That treaty, which more than 100 countries, including the United States, are expected to sign at a U.N. ceremony on Earth Day, [sets the goal of limiting warming to 2 degrees Celsius](#) above pre-industrial levels.

Basically, that means getting off fossil fuels this century.

A price on pollution would help accomplish that.

Yet the Washington initiative faces a steep uphill battle.

Bauman has become a political pariah in the state. Some mainstream environmental groups, including one ironically named Climate Solutions, are opposing the plan. The state has raised questions about the initiative's claim of "revenue neutrality." And some labor unions and business groups are either ignoring or opposing this scary-smart concept.

That's the paradox of the proposal in Washington and carbon taxes more broadly: Why is something so simple, cost-effective and smart seen as a political nonstarter?

"That's the puzzle," Bauman told me. "How do you crack the code?"

No one knows exactly.

But Bauman is trying to figure it out -- by November.

***'I believe in the Laffer curve'***

I met Yoram Bauman and his team at a church in northeast Seattle.

He founded a group called Carbon Washington to try to support I-732.

Already the group had collected the [246,372 signatures needed](#) to get this on the ballot. Now, it was time to figure out how to sell an unpopular tax to the public. They'd gathered about 45 volunteers in a church meeting room. Maybe half of them were wearing plaid.

Bauman warmed up the audience with some jokes.

"We have serious business to attend to, but I do appear before you this morning as the world's first and only stand-up economist," he said. "It's a niche market."

Insert cymbal noise here.

"I'll share with you the first joke I ever told on a comedy stage," he said, "which was that when I told my father I was going to be a stand-up economist he said, 'Yoram, you can't be a stand-up economist.' And I said, 'Why not?' And he said, 'Because there's no demand.' I said, 'Don't worry, dad. I'm a supply side economist. I just stand up and let the jokes trickle down.'

"I believe in the Laffer curve."

I promise the bit lands funnier than it reads.

Bauman, a 42-year-old who is a lankier and less showboat-y version of Steve Jobs, ended up becoming a "stand-up economist" after accidentally making a hit YouTube video as a graduate student. He has a [doctorate from the University of Washington](#), and taught there, too, but he's always believed that smart ideas should spill out of the ivory tower and into real life.

So he's started using comedy to try to help make that happen.

"I always have a PhD in economics to fall back on," he told me.

It didn't always come naturally. When he started calling himself a "stand up" economist, a comedy club owner teased him because he was shaking so much on stage that he had to sit on a stool. He couldn't stand. The younger of two brothers, Bauman grew up as the nerdy sibling, the one who liked debate and math. But his family taught him to fight hard what he believed in -- even if that felt against the grain. His father escaped Germany just before the Holocaust during World War II and went on to become an engineer. Bauman's mother, who suffered from mental illness and committed suicide when he was only 3, was a named plaintiff in a pioneering sex-discrimination lawsuit in San Francisco. She alleged she was discriminated against because she was pregnant.

A day care in that city later was named after her, he said.

This history makes Bauman the kind of person who "takes risks others wouldn't," said Laura Gee, Bauman's wife. That includes telling jokes about economics.

And it certainly includes Initiative 732.

### ***The pitch for an unpopular, necessary tax***

"Our job is so simple!" Kyle Murphy, Carbon Washington's campaign co-director, told the church audience. "We just have to talk to people. We don't have to lie. We don't have to spin it.

"We just have to tell people what it is."

He was prepping the volunteers for their first mission as part of I-732: walking door to door in Seattle and talking with people about this smart but potentially off-putting idea.

I'd wondered aloud whether calling this a "carbon tax" was a smart idea. Maybe it should be called a "carbon fee" -- or a "carbon credit," something without that dreaded t-word?

That would be dishonest, Murphy told me.

"This is a great policy, and we're not going to be afraid of it," he said.

In the back of the room were the group's unapologetic materials: clipboards, maps, brochures calling for "fairer taxes" and "cleaner energy," and a rough door-knocking script.

As the room let out, I asked a couple volunteers if I could follow them around the neighborhood. I lucked out and happened to meet Alex Lenferna, who may be the best possible person to sell this idea to a bunch of randoms. Lenferna has a charming South African accent. His family comes from Mauritius, an island in the Indian Ocean, parts of which is expected to flood as seas rise because of warmer temperatures and melting glaciers. He's studying to get a PhD in the ethics of climate change. And, get this, he used to be a climate skeptic.

Like, an angry, proselytizing, conspiracy-theory-spouting climate skeptic.

"I got to meet friends who are scientists," he said, "and they didn't really seem capable of creating something so elaborate -- and banding together to create this global conspiracy."

Ultimately, the facts won him over.

Mind, blown.



Lenferna's campaign materials for I-732 were loaded up with facts as well. The law, in its second year, would add a \$25 tax for each metric tonne of carbon pollution. (This isn't on the brochure, but that amounts to about 25-cents per gallon of gas at the pump). The proposal also would lower the state sales tax 1 percentage point, saving the average family about \$200 per year. It would fund a "working families tax rebate" for 400,000 low-income families, giving them up to \$1,500 per year, and countering the argument that this pollution tax would have a disproportionate burden on poor people, who tend to spend a greater chunk of their incomes on gasoline and energy bills. The tax, the papers note, also eliminates a tax on manufacturing, "keeping good jobs in Washington."

Carbon Washington expects the tax to reduce carbon pollution about 2% per year.

The tax jumps from \$15 to \$25 per tonne of pollution in the second year and then increases by 3.5% per year, plus inflation, to a maximum of \$100 per tonne in 2016 dollars. The ramp-up is supposed to help accelerate the greening of the economy and the cleaning up of the atmosphere. Remember, scientists say we need to be off fossil fuels entirely this century. But no one thinks it's smart to make that leap immediately. Businesses need time to adapt, and a concrete schedule of tax changes helps them plan and budget accordingly.

Lenferna knows the data.

But as I followed him from door to door on a rare sunny day in Seattle, I noticed he took a simpler approach. He highlighted the moral imperative of doing something about climate change, an argument Pope Francis has been making recently, [with much success](#).

Doing nothing leaves an unthinkable burden -- possibly an unlivable planet -- for generations, the canvasser told me. And people most affected by warming now tend to be those, like Pacific islanders, who burn little of the fuels that cause global warming.

At doorsteps, the 28-year-old kept descriptions of the tax short and sweet.

"The idea is you tax the thing you don't want -- which is pollution -- and you reduce taxes on families," he told a man who answered the door at a house with Christmas lights on it.

The man's response: "I agree with that."

In all, Lenferna knocked on 19 doors and found six people home.

One didn't want to talk to him at all.

But everyone he spoke with said they would support the measure.

### ***British Columbia: Where the sky didn't fall***

I wondered if this sort of understanding and enthusiasm existed in places that already have a carbon tax. Would people turn against it over time? Or would they see some benefits?

I drove across the U.S.-Canada border to British Columbia to find out.

The far-western province's carbon tax went into effect in 2008. It started at \$10 Canadian per tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> and since has ramped up to \$30 Canadian per tonne (US \$23.35).

It's revenue-neutral; so other taxes are reduced to counterbalance it.

On paper, the tax has been resoundingly effective. Carbon emissions in British Columbia [dropped 5% to 15% because of the tax](#). Fuel use, meanwhile, [plunged 16% between 2008 and 2013](#), according to a research synthesis by the Pembina Institute. It went up 3% in the rest of Canada. The economy in British Columbia [slightly outpaced the rest of Canada](#). According to the premier's office, clean energy jobs are up 12.5% in the same time frame.

So the sky not fall.

The economy is booming.

But what does that feel like on the ground?

Even with tax breaks elsewhere, drivers in British Columbia still pay [about 7 cents Canadian per liter more](#) for gas because of the tax. And I had to guess that would feel pretty bad, especially when you know gasoline is cheaper in neighboring Washington. (Gas in the greater Vancouver area is hit with additional taxes, including those to fund public transit. The price in Washington was \$2.50 per gallon; the converted price across the border was about US \$3.25 per gallon.)

So my first stop in Canada was obvious: A gas station in Surrey, British Columbia.

About a mile from the U.S. border.

I was surprised to find people buying gas here at all.

"I'm supportive of anything to do with looking after the climate," Jim Tait, 44, told me as he pumped \$114.89 Canadian into an RV he'd rented for a weekend trip to the mountains. "If you're going to drive these," he said, looking up at the vehicle, "you've gotta pay for 'em."

Marc Boyd, 51, was filling up a plastic gas canister for a lawnmower.

"It should be more!" he said of the tax.

"The less carbon the better for the planet."

Boyd drives a Ford F-150 but told me he's selling it for an electric car in part because of the tax.

He and others told me they only buy gas in Canada, not the United States, in part because they want to support the local economy but also because they support the carbon tax. To them, it makes sense that driving should be more expensive because it pollutes.

I found that incredibly noble.

Not everyone shares those views, of course. I met a flight attendant who lives 25 miles from the airport and can't take the bus because of her overnight shift. And I met a human resources worker, Karen Coulter, who complained about the lack of public transit in rural areas outside Vancouver. She told me she supports action on climate change but this feels unfair.

The less carbon the better for the planet.

Marc Boyd, British Columbia

"There's no bus here, so in order for me to get around I have to take a taxi or I have to drive my car," she told me while filling up a sedan. "And I can't afford a taxi. It's like you can't win."

She does make fewer car trips because of the tax, she said.

These attitudes mirror public opinion polls.

When the provincial government implemented the carbon tax in 2008, it caused a political firestorm, with the political left saying the tax [would be ineffective and hurt the poor](#); and the far right saying it would kill jobs.

Only [40% of the public supported the tax back then](#).

As of late 2012, support was up to 64%.

No one's calling for the tax to be repealed.

The question now is whether to boost it -- and by how much.

British Columbia's premier, Christy Clark, told me the tax will stay put until at least 2018, and it's possible it will go up after that. The province can't go it alone on climate change.

"We all share this air," she said. "These boundaries are immaterial."

Neighboring jurisdictions, including Washington, she said, need to step up.

"If we can get off fossil fuels," she told me, "our children's future will be assured."

### ***The beauty queen with a plan***

Yoram Bauman and the folks at Carbon Washington, of course, would love for that to happen.

But to succeed, they may need a lesson or two from Carole Taylor.

Taylor is a Canadian political powerhouse -- and former newscaster and beauty queen -- who helped push British Columbia's carbon tax through the government system.

"My task was to get people to accept the tax," she told me.

I sat down with her to learn how she did it.

The carbon tax in British Columbia didn't go up for a vote like the one in Washington state will. Instead, according to Taylor, who was the province's finance minister at the time, the policy was negotiated as part of British Columbia's budget and then approved by lawmakers.

The move was controversial. The center-right administration was attacked by business groups and environmentalists, who started an "[Axe the Tax](#)" campaign.

But the premier, Gordon Campbell, decided that cutting carbon emissions -- and greening the economy -- was going to be the signature issue of his administration.

Taylor was determined to get the market to do the heavy lifting.

She decided this was a Nixon-in-China sort of moment.

"The counterintuitive thing is the one that will work," she said.

The simple solution was best.

And the hook ended up being tax cuts.

"I believe, even today, that it was the only model we could have gotten passed," she said.

From her career as a journalist, she knew people would be skeptical of the tax breaks -- and whether the government would actually stay true to its promises on that front. To assuage those fears, and to make sure low-income people weren't hit with higher energy bills, the provincial government cut \$100 checks to all residents in 2008. These [Climate Action Dividends](#) were mocked in the press, but they also made the design of the policy clear: The point was to tax and eliminate carbon pollution -- and give the money back to the public.

The party took an immediate political hit, but it helped them in the long run, Taylor told me. The next election essentially was won on the record of the then-popular carbon tax.

"You have to be willing to be quite strong about it," she said.

Many municipalities, universities and businesses see benefits.

***"People like coming to communities where you can walk and bike places -- communities where you don't spend your entire day in the car. It's a false dichotomy to say it's the economy or the environment, and Vancouver demonstrates that." - Sadhu Johnston, Vancouver city manager***

More than 130 businesses recently sent a letter to the premier asking for a higher tax.

Sadhu Johnston, the city manager of Vancouver, agrees with them. In an office overlooking the city's stunning bay and snowy mountains, he told me modern workers are looking for a place to live that's like this city: energy-efficient, clean and with ample outdoor recreation. Vancouver has the lowest per capita carbon footprint of any city in North America, in part because the province is blessed with ample hydroelectric power. Its population has grown 30% since 1990, he told me, and total greenhouse gas emissions, meanwhile, have dropped 7%.

"People like coming to communities where you can walk and bike places -- communities where you don't spend your entire day in the car," he told me. "It's a false dichotomy to say it's the economy or the environment, and Vancouver demonstrates that."

To keep it up, the carbon tax needs to keep increasing, he said. And he also wants to see carbon revenues go to public transportation and other projects instead of tax breaks.

Taylor, the former finance minister, told me that debate is healthy.

But the most important thing is that the carbon tax exists.

"I was driven by how can you get this in," she told me.

"You can play with the models later."

### ***What would Washington look like?***

In the United States, conventional wisdom says a carbon tax can't pass.

That may be true in Congress, where many Republicans, including Jim Inhofe, chair of the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, continue to deny the reality of climate science, which is well-established and shows [humans are causing dangerous warming](#). ([At least 97% of climate scientists agree on this point](#).)

But it's not true for the public.

A 2014 survey shows [56% of Americans -- a narrow majority -- would support a carbon tax](#) if the revenues were returned back to the public in the form of checks. Support for the tax actually went up -- to 60% -- if the tax collections instead funded renewable energy projects.

So Washington's approach, while imperfect, may be the kind of thing that could work.

And it couldn't come at a better time.

From Donald Trump to Bernie Sanders, this is the year of the outsider in American politics.

And Yoram Bauman is the definition of a political underdog -- a lovably awkward and earnest "stand-up economist" who knows of a big, smart, simple idea that could fix a major problem.

He's good at weathering criticism. Comedy's taught him that.

And he's steadfast in his belief that this is the right policy for the future.

That's especially true since the birth of his daughter, now 20 months old.

"This is the right thing to do, so he's doing it," his wife, Laura Gee, told me. "He's not worried about what other people think ... He's one of a kind ... He's a man in his early 40s who has the enthusiasm and idealism and energy of a person in their early 20s."

The signing of the Paris Agreement on climate change also gives major momentum to this issue. People finally are starting to wake up to the moral urgency of doing something about pollution.

The public would support a carbon tax.

They just have to hear about it first.

The political establishment -- including environmental groups like Climate Solutions -- is standing in the way. They're mired in policy wrinkles that can, as in Canada, be smoothed out later.

This tax is "not enough to drive the transition alone," said [Vlad Gutman](#), Washington director for Climate Solutions, an advocacy group based in the Northwest. "We need more than a price."

The organization, Gutman told me in an interview in his high-rise office in Seattle, supports a price on carbon. But it wants revenue from a carbon tax to go toward clean energy subsidies and investment in public transportation -- instead of going back to people as tax cuts.

Those goals are laudable, and they may be popular with some voters. They're unlikely, however, to get support from businesses and industry.

The state, meanwhile, has raised concerns about I-732's revenue neutrality, with reports saying the proposal would cost the state more than \$900 million over four years. Carbon Washington disputes the math, saying the state doesn't account for taxes on exported power and spot market purchases of electricity -- and overcounts expenditures on low-income tax credits.

"These three issues together essentially fill the \$900 million revenue gap," [Bauman wrote in an op-ed in The Olympian](#). "We've identified other issues as well, but the bottom line is that the analysis is flawed and should be corrected."

Climate economics experts told me it's always difficult to estimate tax revenue. The state's report has no bearing on whether the tax would work or not -- it will. And the discrepancy, they told me, is not a red flag.

"This is an example of what a carbon tax ought to look like," said Shi-Ling Hsu, associate dean for environmental programs at Florida State University's law school and author of "The Case for a Carbon Tax."

"It's a well-designed policy," said Adele Morris, senior fellow and the policy director for the Climate and Energy Economics Project at the Brookings Institution. "It makes a lot of sense for Washington -- and I hope voters give it a chance."

"What to do with the money is an important political question, and using the money wisely can do a lot of additional good," said Gernot Wagner, a researcher at Harvard's School of Engineering and Applied Sciences and co-author of "Climate Shock." "But it's the initial incentive that matters the most."

Carbon Washington's proposal is a brilliant first step.

As in Canada, it can be amended and debated later, experts told me.

It also has opened a much-needed conversation about the cost of carbon pollution.

Carbon pricing systems, including taxes and cap-and-trade measures, which work similarly, have been adopted or planned in [40 countries and more than 20 cities](#), according to the World Bank. China, the favorite scapegoat of U.S. politicians, and the world's biggest annual emitter of greenhouse gases, has pilot carbon markets in seven cities and regions already; and the massive country has [announced a national carbon trading market for 2017](#). There's ample reason to hope China, which invested [\\$102.9 billion in renewable energy in 2015](#), more than any other country, will follow through on this pledge.

Momentum is building, as is the understanding that pricing pollution is not just helpful but is truly essential if we're going to stop warming short of 2 degrees Celsius.

If Washington passes a carbon tax, there's reason to believe other states will follow, and that places like British Columbia will be able to keep raising their tax to phase out pollution entirely.

If that momentum grew into a national carbon tax for the United States the results could be striking. According to a report from the Citizens' Climate Lobby, a group supportive of these types of policies, a carbon fee starting at \$10 per ton and increasing by \$10 per year [would reduce U.S. CO2 pollution to 50% below 1990 levels](#) within 20 years, which is huge.

Improved air quality would prevent 230,000 premature deaths over 20 years.



We have to stop thinking of these taxes as negative.

They are market tools to kickstart a cleaner, healthier and still-thriving economy.

The transition won't be painless. Coal and other dirty fuels will be phased out over time, and there should be government programs to support and retrain those workers.

But it is necessary.

And it's far less scary than demagogues would have you believe.

As I left Bauman at his car in Seattle, I asked him whether he thinks the state will look or feel that different if the tax passes and I come back to visit in 10 or 20 years.

He thought about it for a minute.

Not that much, he said.

"You'd see more of this car," he said, pointing to his vehicle, which is a tiny Honda Fit, "and less of that car," he said, pointing to a much larger silver SUV.

The shift is subtle but real.

<http://www.cnn.com/2016/04/19/opinions/sutter-carbon-tax-washington-british-columbia/>

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**B.C.'s Chief Medical Health Officer says pot smoke not a significant health risk**

[Shane Woodford](#) CKNW Posted: April 20, 2016 09:12 am

There will be a lot of second hand marijuana smoke drifting around Downtown Vancouver, and over at Sunset beach, but is it bad for you?

B.C.'s Chief Medical Health Officer, Dr. Perry Kendall, says pot smoke – like tobacco – presents the same dangers with daily use over the longer term.

But for the short term, if you happen to stroll through a waft of pot smoke today...

“If you are inhaling second hand cannabis smoke, you are also inhaling THC or cannabinoids, whatever is in the smoke. So you could get I guess what you might call a contact high depending on the concentration in the smoke.”

As for very young children, Kendall says:

“My advice would be to find another place to take a walk today.”

At least 30,000 are expected to be at Vancouver's Sunset Beach for the pot protest; some are also expected to gather at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

<http://www.cknw.com/2016/04/20/b-c-s-chief-medical-health-officer-says-temporary-haze-okay-in-light-of-420-event/>

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## **Despite 4/20 move to Sunset Beach, protesters still gathering around Vancouver Art Gallery**

[CKNW News Staff](#) Posted: April 20, 2016 02:23 am | Last Updated: April 20, 2016 10:20 am

Even with the move to Sunset beach, a second site is still going ahead at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Robson street has been shut down between Howe and Hornby with several tents and a stage already set up.

There are also plenty of Vancouver Police around the perimeter of the event who say their mandate is to keep an eye on the situation, not shut it down.

At least one police officer has quietly said his hope is this year's 4/20 protests don't end with as many young people in the Emergency room as last year's event.

Up to 30,000 people will descend on Sunset Beach today for the annual 4/20 marijuana protest.

400 vendor booths will be set up selling pot and other cannabis products along the stretch of seawall and parking lot.

Organizer Jeremiah Vandermeer says every vendor paid \$300 dollars to help cover the costs of the event which will cost organizers around 100-thousand dollars for everything from port-a-potties to a medical and security team.

### ***Protesting what? Could this be the last hurrah for 4/20?***

This morning, Federal Minister Jane Philpott told the United Nations General Assembly in New York City that Canada will introduce legislation next spring to legalize and regulate marijuana.

If that happens before next year's 4/20 event, organizers will be hard pressed to hide behind the "protest" argument when justifying why they don't apply and pay for event licencing.

Even now, the event unfolding at Sunset Beach today looks to be more of a cash cow for retailers in the cannabis industry.

Vancouver Park Board chair Sarah Kirby Yung says the annual 4/20 protest has jumped the shark, and organizers are hiding behind the protest banner to avoid paying the same costs as other events around the city.

“I am actually down at Sunset beach right now and what I am seeing is a full on commercial festival not a protest.”

She says last year the pot protest cost taxpayers almost \$100,000, and now this year there two events

“As a protest this group gets away with a lot more, and I think it is to there benefit to call it a protest when that is not what it is, it is a festival. The city, in my opinion has been working in the same way they do with justified events and has been providing incredible support in terms of operations plans, traffic management, medical, policing, and other resources.”

Kirby Yung also says from a safety perspective with risks to minors, this event is quote “a whole different ball of wax.”

As far as the controversy around the new location goes, Vandermeer says 4/20 has been caught in the middle of a political hot potato between the NPA dominated Park Board, and the Vision-majority city council.

“There is a lot of this, you know , blaming the other party for 4/20 and what’s happening, we are seeing the closing of the pool down there which we think is kind of silly and ridiculous.”

The VPD says it will be patrolling the event but won’t reveal its plan of action.

Spokesperson Constable Brian Montague says policing costs last year totaled 50,000 dollars.

Kirby Young isn’t the only one concerned about kids attending today’s event.

The Vancouver School Board sent a memo out to high schools students earlier this week warning them about cutting class to attend the event.

<http://www.cknw.com/2016/04/20/despite-420-move-to-sunset-beach-protesters-still-gathering-around-the-vancouver-art-gallery/>

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**Canadian support for legalizing pot is growing: poll**

by [John Streit](#) Posted Apr 20, 2016 9:23 am PDT

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – It looks like Canadian support for pot legalization is growing, but not everyone sees it as a national priority. A new poll from Angus Reid finds seven out of 10 people believe marijuana should be legalized.

“While the support is there, there isn’t exactly notwithstanding the folks who may be gathering at Sunset Beach, there isn’t exactly a national outcry to see something done on this issue and done sooner than a lot of the other priorities Canadians are identifying,” explains pollster Shachi Kurl.

The poll also found slightly more than half saying such pot-related criminal records shouldn’t be cleared if marijuana becomes legal. While another 44 per cent say those behind bars for pot possession should be considered for release on a case-by-case basis should if and when pot is legalized.

Kurl adds others believe marijuana should be legalized, but tightly controlled by Ottawa. “For people who oppose it, the drawbacks and risks associated with legalization are much greater realities in their mind than people who support it.”

The poll also found 85 per cent of us believe tax revenues would go up if pot was legalized.

<http://www.news1130.com/2016/04/20/canadian-support-for-legalizing-pot-is-growing-poll/>

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## **Trudeau government to introduce bill to legalize pot**

by [Cormac MacSweeney](#) Posted Apr 20, 2016 8:40 am PDT

NEW YORK, NY (NEWS 1130) – We now know when the Trudeau government will introduce legislation to legalize marijuana. Federal Health Minister Jane Philpott says the long-awaited bill will be introduced in the spring of 2017.

The announcement was made as she gave an impassioned speech about drug policy at the United Nations General Assembly.

Philpott says Canada’s plan on pot “challenges the status quo in many countries,” but says the federal government is convinced it is the best way to protect young people while enhancing public safety. “We will work with law enforcement partners to encourage appropriate and proportionate criminal justice measures. We know it is impossible to arrest our way out of this problem.”

She gave no other details about the legislation but says it will be rooted in scientific evidence while addressing the devastating consequences of drugs and drug-related crimes. “Addressing problematic drug use is a shared challenge. The solutions are also collective involving governments, Indigenous peoples, civil society, youth [and] scientists.”

A spokesperson for the health minister says in the coming weeks the federal government will launch its task force to study every aspect of legalizing, regulating and tightly restricting access to marijuana.

This announcement comes on 4/20, a day in which pot activists and users celebrate cannabis culture.

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## **Local MLA wants something done about loud motorbikes and cars**

by [Mike Lloyd](#) and [Sonia Aslam](#)

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – With this week’s record-breaking hot weather, it is the season for open windows and with that comes noise complaints. A local politician is hoping to make loud noises of his own in the BC legislature when it comes to laws governing barely-muffled motorbikes and cars.

Vancouver-West End MLA [Spencer Chandra Herbert](#) wants someone to take a closer look at testing standards for vehicles specifically when it comes to enforcing noise laws. He has written Transportation Minister Todd Stone and he says the [BC Association of Police Chiefs](#) has too about the explosive staccato of loud bikes or cars bouncing off buildings downtown.

“[I’m] calling for a uniform testing standard so they know that if they are going to crack down on somebody who seems to be breaking the law, that the courts are actually going to back them up on it because there are real questions about how the testing is done. Who does it?”

The [VPD](#) says it does regularly crack down on loud bikes and other vehicles. Under the provincial Motor Vehicle Act anything over 91 decibels for a motorcycle and 85 decibels for a vehicle can get you a ticket for unnecessary noise which can run you \$109 and three penalty points.

“The other option for our officers is, what we call, a Notice of Order. And what they have to do is the registered owner of the vehicle has to get repairs done to make sure it’s in compliance with the Motor Vehicle Act,” explains Constable Brian Montague.

“It’s amazing how a small number of vehicles travelling through the downtown core and the West End can generate a large number of complaints.”

Montague adds officers have access to specialized decibel meters. “To give you an idea, a jackhammer is 130 decibels and some of the motorcycles we see are easily up to 110 or 115 decibels. Obviously, you wouldn’t want someone jackhammering outside your home in the West End or outside your business for lengthy periods of time and you don’t want noisy vehicles travelling by on a regular basis as well.”

He says some riders will insist their bikes are loud so other drivers know they’re there, but Montague doesn’t buy it. “We’ve heard that argument a lot, but there’s no evidence to suggest that’s actually true and the best way to keep yourself safe is to be a good driver. And we ask that not only of the motorcycle operators but of everybody using the road.”

<http://www.news1130.com/2016/04/20/local-mla-wants-something-done-about-loud-motorbikes-and-cars/>

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## Seaside festival feel at Vancouver's relocated 4/20 event

Tara Carman Vancouver Sun April 20, 2016 Published on: April 20, 2016 | Last Updated: April 20, 2016 1:21 PM PDT

Vancouver’s annual 4/20 marijuana protest had the feel of a seaside festival at its new [Sunset Beach](#) location Wednesday.

Hundreds of tents stretched down both the beach and the grassy field on the other side of the seawall path as attendees browsed the merchandise on offer, enjoying the close to 20-degree weather, sunshine and sea breezes, which carried occasional, but not omnipresent, whiffs of [marijuana](#) smoke.

Vancouver police are out in significant numbers, monitoring parking and traffic flow along Beach Drive, with paramedics and Vancouver Fire and Rescue personnel walking the event site.

There are also security personnel wearing bright yellow shirts with “Peacekeeper” on the back.

Their coordinator, a stocky, bearded man who goes by the name Oota E. Love, said he’d been on site since 5 a.m., when the first vendors started setting up, but people didn’t start showing up in significant numbers until about 10 a.m.



Love, who has worked the previous five 4/20 events, said he doesn't expect as many people this year, noting Sunset Beach is a new location that's harder to get to than the previous Vancouver Art Gallery site.

All 12 peacekeepers are professionally trained security guards with experience at events such as music festivals. There are also two Level 3 first aid attendants in the peacekeeping crew.

"We're ready for anything, really," he said. Fellow peacekeeper Jeremy Maeers said he expects issues related to substance consumption and dehydration to make up 90 per cent of the incidents they attend, similar to a music festival.

The 4/20 protest's traditional home, the north plaza of the Vancouver Art Gallery, is fenced off, with black fabric obscuring the view. A sign posted by the City of Vancouver says the area is undergoing pre-construction work.

A pro-marijuana sign that was in the plaza over the weekend had been removed.

Health officials warned of the dangers of second-hand smoke as marijuana protesters took part in the annual 4-20 rally in Vancouver on Wednesday.

B.C.'s medical health officer Dr. Perry Kendall said marijuana presents the same health risks as tobacco with daily use over the longer term.

He said those who happen to stroll through a haze of pot smoke could get something called a "contact high" if they inhale second-hand cannabis smoke.

He said it's not a significant health risk for adults but very young children should be kept clear.

[tacarman@postmedia.com](mailto:tacarman@postmedia.com)

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## **Downtown business association eschews arrogance for relevance**

[Mike Howell](#) / Vancouver Courier April 20, 2016 10:00 AM

So you probably know now that [the story I wrote](#) a couple weeks ago about the city's plan to permanently close the 800-block of Robson Street to traffic was not a work of fiction or some leftover April Fool's Day knee slapper.

You know that because the city released a report confirming its plan to turn the stretch of Robson Street, between Howe and Hornby streets, into a pedestrian

plaza. (It's actually closed today to allow marijuana protesters to participate in a 4-20 event.)

Council will discuss a year-round closure this morning.

I won't go over all the reasons for closing the block but essentially it's about connecting the existing plazas on the south side of the stretch (at the law courts) with the north side of the street (the Vancouver Art Gallery) to have one big super plaza.

So, is everybody happy about this?

As I mentioned in the story, seniors have concerns with the re-routing of the No. 5 Robson/Downtown bus. So does TransLink, which would prefer buses continue on the route but says it will support a year-round closure. This way, it doesn't have to keep rerouting buses every summer; the stretch has been closed between June and September since 2011 and was closed during the 2010 Winter Olympics.

When I wrote the story, I contacted Charles Gauthier, executive director of the Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association. I knew he had told our colleagues at Business in Vancouver in April 2015 that the association could no longer support the summer closures of the street because it was too disruptive for customers and deliveries.

Gauthier wouldn't talk to me, saying he wanted to first read the city's report. He did and then we had a conversation. And, if you've been watching this issue, you know the association now supports the closure of the block.

"I was pleasantly surprised by the support I was hearing from the building owners in the immediate area," Gauthier said. "So based on that, our original concerns sort of fall off the table. We're not certainly going to speak to an issue and be against it, if our building owners are telling us that this is something that is workable."

So what do you think, readers, is this a flip-flop? Did Gauthier and his association drink the city's green Kool-Aid? Or is there something more going on here?

Well, it's not the first time the association has come around on an issue that it panned from the get-go. Examples would be the association's early opposition to the city's push to build separated bike lanes downtown and the plan to demolish the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts.

Eventually, after reviewing the city's data and hearing from businesses and customers, the association gave both proposals the green light. So here's the

thing: The public and council can likely expect more of that green-lighting from the association on progressive city-shaping proposals.

That's because of a "game changer" of a report the association and Simon Fraser University Public Square produced last year. The report, Re-Imagine Downtown Vancouver, was the result of asking 11,000 people what they want downtown to look like by 2040. Hint: It doesn't involve freeways. Instead, we're talking more green space, public art, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly routes, activation of alleyways, new housing options and a unique and vibrant business scene.

"That sets the tone," Gauthier said of the document. "It's a new day, it's a new era and, yes, things are going to change. And the organization's perspective on a variety of different positions is going to be different."

Added Gauthier: "I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing to change your perspective. But I think, again, when we've heard 11,000 people say this is the kind of downtown we want by 2040 and we ignore that, then I think it would be arrogant. We put ourselves at risk of alienating those people and becoming irrelevant."

He said some downtown building owners have already adapted to the change, noting one ardent opponent of the bike lanes is now on board because his tenants requested end-of-trip facilities for bikes.

"The 30-year olds and the 40-year olds have a different perspective of how they want to live. They have different expectations and they don't necessarily have a car. Or they live in the downtown area and do a lot of walking or cycling. So again, it's listening to your customers."

And get this: Not only was Gauthier one of the speakers at a city hall event in February to promote the soon-to-launch public bike share program, he also participated in a recent downtown bike tour with the HUB cycling coalition.

The nerve of him.

<http://www.vancourier.com/opinion/downtown-business-association-eschews-arrogance-for-relevance-1.2235451>

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## **New oil-spill rules could help pipelines**

[Les Leyne](#) / Vancouver Courier April 20, 2016 12:53 PM

There's a paradox in the environmental-management bill that tightens up oil-spill response expectations.

It makes all kinds of welcome improvements in the current regime. But as soon as it takes effect, the B.C. government can check off one of the five conditions it set for approval of heavy-oil pipelines from Alberta to the coast. Politically speaking, anyone who sees the pipelines as threats should be more comfortable with the outdated regime B.C. has in place now. Because it acts as a block to provincial approval of the pipelines all by itself.

When the Environmental Management Amendment Act passes — and most of the house supports it at this point — that block will be gone. To the extent B.C. has any say over the pipelines, the government wants a “world-class” response system for marine and terrestrial spills in place before it will say yes. The marine system is a federal responsibility, but the land-based one is provincial, and it's a long way from world-class.

When the amendments take effect, that will change. “World-class” is a subjective term, but the B.C. government could easily consider the land-based response regime as such. Federal officials are reviewing the marine-based response with an eye to major improvements, as well. B.C. has commissioned studies on what's needed on the marine side and is consulting with the federal government on meeting world-class standards there also.

If spill responses on land and at sea are beefed up, that would leave three of the original five conditions on the table: regulatory approval, acknowledgment of First Nations' rights and a “fair share” of revenue for B.C. for the risk incurred.

The provincial rewrite creates a whole new preparedness response-and-recovery regime and puts requirements on specific industries or businesses before any spill occurs. There are thousands of dangerous-goods spills every year. One of the major ones was cited in debate: the Columbia Fuels spill of gasoline into Goldstream River in 2011. The company has worked with government on restoration, but staff have noted under current law, the responsible party could walk away if it so chose.

There are new obligations for cleanup, and the bill clarifies who is responsible for paying all costs when the government is taking response actions.

The government will have the authority to recover costs, not only from the spiller, but from the owner of the spilled substance, if the owner is a different entity.

The new provisions will help reduce the chances of British Columbians having to pay for the costs of responding to spills. Environment Minister Mary Polak said the current system is a patchwork of contingency planning, and the bill will make for uniform standards. It also allows for offsetting mitigation. If full restoration of a

spill site isn't possible, the bill provides for measures elsewhere to compensate for damage done.

The opposition will support the bill, with reservations. NDP Environment critic George Heyman said the bill allows for creation of preparedness-and-response organizations, but allows for too much industry authority over them.

Having industry fund, plan and lead responses is appropriate, he said, but giving it full control of the response organization is a problem. There is no requirement in the bill that public bodies be represented on such organizations' governing bodies.

Green Party Leader Andrew Weaver said too much is left to regulations yet to be written. And one section of the bill allows the government to void most of the requirements in the law or in the regulations if cabinet approves. He said it is reckless to allow one tanker a week to leave Burnaby with oil from Trans Mountain's existing pipeline, which has operated for 50 years. The company's expansion plan would multiply that traffic several times. Weaver said there should be an immediate moratorium on moving diluted bitumen in coastal waters.

The upgraded spill-response regime could be in place by 2017. It's a slow process and most of the decisions are to be made in Ottawa, but B.C. could be getting somewhere close to yes by then on pipelines, despite the coastal opposition.

<http://www.vancourier.com/opinion/new-oil-spill-rules-could-help-pipelines-1.2235722>

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## **City of Vancouver makes use of postsecondary students to advance sustainability**

by [Charlie Smith](#) Georgia Straight on April 20th, 2016 at 1:48 PM

Simon Fraser University master's student Wes Regan has a high profile in the city's environmental movement. As a founding director of the Vancouver Urban Farming Society, he's been at the forefront of promoting a more sustainable food system. He is also one of the founding partners of Urban Stream Innovation Inc., which composts food scraps at people's homes.

Regan, a former Green party candidate in Vancouver East, has also been the executive director of the Hastings Crossing Business Improvement Association, working on social and economic sustainability. And last month, SFU president Andrew Petter recognized his contributions by awarding him a President's Award for Leadership in Sustainability at a dinner at the Diamond Alumni Centre.

“They wanted to acknowledge that there was not just environmental sustainability but there are also social- and cultural-sustainability issues that I’m concerned about and working on,” Regan told the *Georgia Straight* by phone.

In his graduate work in urban studies, he’s examining how “retail gentrification” can contribute to the loss of independent local businesses and change the character of neighbourhoods. In January, the City of Vancouver hired him to examine how to retain the social and cultural sustainability in certain neighbourhoods.

“I’ve been tasked with overseeing the creation of a community economic-development strategy for mostly the Downtown Eastside but also getting at some of the things I’m concerned about in my thesis,” Regan said. “I’m very happy to be working in the field.”

Regan is one of dozens of postsecondary students in recent years who have been given a chance to work with the city to improve environmental outcomes.

The senior sustainability specialist at the City of Vancouver, Brad Badelt, told the *Straight* by phone that much of this has come as the result of two major initiatives linking students conducting research and mentors: [CityStudio](#) and the [greenest-city scholars program](#). He said there has been tremendous cooperation with city staff, leading to several successful projects coming to fruition.

“The students get a great experience from it,” Badelt said. “But, honestly, it’s stuff that we as staff wouldn’t have time to dedicate 250 hours to. These reports are often really, really helpful for us.”

Launched three years ago, CityStudio is an innovation hub underneath the Cambie Bridge where undergraduate students work in interdisciplinary teams. SFU, UBC, Vancouver Community College, Langara, Emily Carr University of Art + Design, the B.C. Institute of Technology, Vancity, and the Vancouver Foundation are all partners in CityStudio, which has a 10-year vision of transforming City Hall into the equivalent of a teaching hospital.

In 2015 Janet Moore and Duane Elverum discussed at TEDxVancouver how CityStudio emerged as an innovation hub for students.

Badelt said that Keys to the Streets 2015, where brightly decorated pianos were placed around town for anyone to play, emerged out of CityStudio. Another project, the Recreational Sharing Library, enabled neighbours to store underused sports and recreation equipment on East 8th Avenue where other neighbours could play with it together.

The greenest-city scholars program was launched in 2010 in partnership with UBC and it is only open to graduate students. According to Badelt, they are paid

\$5,000 to work 250 hours over the summer on a project. At the end, they produce a report and make a presentation.

“It was really meant to do two things: harness the energy of students to help support our work, but also give students the opportunity to get a glimpse into City Hall and apply themselves to real-world challenges in their own city,” he said.

This year, there are 21 students participating. One success story was a research project into electric vehicles, which helped the city secure funding for public charging stations from B.C. Hydro and the provincial government. The city’s water-metering policy, which council passed in 2012, was informed by a greenest-city scholar’s research two years earlier.

Badelt reported that about 12 former greenest-city scholars are now employed by the city and 19 of the projects informed programs or policies. Three others led to the elimination of a policy or program idea.

UBC’s website features the students’ reports. In one UBC video, PhD candidate Daniel Klein talked about delving into the city’s water data with the assistance of park-board biologist Nick Page.

“I get the impression that they’re really kind of looking forward to what I come up with, which is really motivating and I’ve really enjoyed,” Klein said.

<http://www.straight.com/news/681191/city-vancouver-makes-use-postsecondary-students-advance-sustainability>

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## **Airbnb shows an easy fix for problematic listings, but will it use it in Vancouver?**

If measures taken in New York and San Francisco are any indication, Airbnb could remove problematic listings for Vancouver with a couple clicks of a button

by [Travis Lupick](#) on April 20th, 2016 at 12:43 PM

Last January, Airbnb quietly deleted almost 100 listings from the digital company’s hometown of [San Francisco](#). The month before, it took similar action in [New York](#), removing about 1,500 listings for that city. In both instances, the news was tucked inside a “by the number” report that presents a rosy picture of Airbnb, one where the majority of hosts don’t use the service in ways that might detract from a city’s rental stock.

Airbnb, an online service that connects landlords with short-term tenants, describes the inventory it removed as “unwelcome listings”. The technical filters that Airbnb applied before hitting the delete button targeted hosts who listed more than one entire home (as opposed to a spare room or a couch, which Airbnb maintains the service was designed for).

In a telephone interview, Vision Vancouver city councillor **Geoff Meggs** said he wants to see Airbnb take the same action in Vancouver.

“They could start on that tomorrow, as far as I’m concerned,” he told the *Straight*. “It would be great if they did.”

Meggs added that from a technical standpoint, it appears that would be a simple task for the tech giant to complete.

“It would be very straightforward, I would think,” he said. “I hope that they move forward and do that kind of thing here without waiting for us to prompt them. But it’s encouraging to know it can be done.”

Airbnb Canada did not make a representative available for an interview.

Meggs noted that on April 6, council passed a [motion](#) asking staff to study how the city can best control short-term rentals like those organized on Airbnb. He said that work includes discussions with Airbnb.

According to a website called Inside Airbnb, in December 2015, there were more than 1,200 listings that could be subtracting units from Vancouver’s limited rental stock. Inside Airbnb

The city already has a very good idea how many Airbnb listings in Vancouver are likely [subtracting from rental stock](#). According to a website called [Inside Airbnb](#), in December 2015 there were 1,248 Vancouver listings for entire homes that were “recent and frequently booked”.

**Karen Sawatzky** is an SFU student writing her master’s thesis on Airbnb and rental housing in Vancouver. In a telephone interview, she suggested it is these listings that the company should target here as “unwelcome”.

“It’s just a matter of which filter you pick and click on,” Sawatzky said. “Of course they can do this.”

The report that went to city council on April 6 noted that Vancouver’s rental-vacancy rate stands at less than one percent.



NPA councillor **Melissa De Genova** told the *Straight* that short-term rentals like those listed on Airbnb and other websites such as [VRBO.com](http://VRBO.com) are only one piece of the larger problem of rental affordability in Vancouver.

She suggested that Vision Vancouver's focus on Airbnb could detract from more important conversations about how the city can create more rental stock.

At the same time, De Genova said she supports taking a closer look at the more than 1,200 units in Vancouver that could fall into Airbnb's definition of "unwelcome listings".

"We need to protect our rental stock in Vancouver, especially with the vacancy rate being so low," she added.

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## **Health minister says government will table legislation to legalize marijuana in spring 2017**

by [Travis Lupick](#) Georgia Straight on April 20th, 2016 at 9:16 AM

Canada's health minister has given marijuana advocates a reason to rejoice this April 20, the date of the world's annual celebration of cannabis.

"We will introduce legislation in spring 2017 that ensures we keep marijuana out of the hands of children and profits out of the hands of criminals," **Jane Philpott** said at the United Nations in New York.

The minister revealed the news while delivering a prepared speech at the UN's first major international conference on illegal drugs in 18 years.

"While this plan challenges the status quo in many countries, we are convinced it is the best way to protect our youth while enhancing public safety," Philpott continued. "Canada will continue to modernize our approach to drug policy. Our work will embrace upstream prevention, compassionate treatment, and harm reduction.

"We will work with law enforcement partners to encourage appropriate and proportionate criminal justice measures. We know it is impossible to arrest our way out of this problem. Addressing problematic drug use is a shared challenge. The solutions are also collective, involving governments, indigenous peoples, civil society, youth, scientists, and key UN agencies.

"I acknowledge that other countries and cultures will pursue approaches that differ from Canada's. I believe that if we respect one another's' perspectives and

seek common ground, we can achieve our shared objective: protecting our citizens. Better yet, we can improve their lives.”

Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** was elected last October after promising to legalize recreational marijuana.

On February 24, he appointed Bill Blair, parliamentary secretary to the minister of justice and former Toronto police chief, to head the legalization process.

Since then, advocates for reform have grown increasingly critical of Trudeau for what they’ve described as little action on the marijuana file.

That criticism intensified when on March 1 Trudeau signaled that police should continue to arrest people for marijuana possession. “The laws haven’t changed yet,” [Trudeau said in Vancouver](#) during an interview with News 1130. “Pot is still illegal in this country and will be until we bring in a strong regulatory framework.”

Philpott signalled the government was preparing to take more concrete steps on marijuana legalization during an [interview with CTV News](#) conducted earlier in the week.

“We, very soon, will be announcing a task force that is going to review a number of questions,” Philpott said. “We’ve developed a series of questions that we will be putting to the task force. And stay tuned, there is going to be much more news on that very soon.”

An April 20 media release includes additional details about Philpott's trip to the UN. It suggests the new Liberal government aims to treat illicit-drug abuse as a health issue as opposed to a criminal matter.

"The Government of Canada believes that to be effective, drug policy must be grounded in evidence and fully respect human rights while promoting shared responsibility," reads a statement attributed to the minister. "It requires collaborative action and a strong emphasis on public health that includes upstream prevention, compassionate treatment, harm reduction and support for recovery."

The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem runs from April 19 to 21.

Meanwhile, in Vancouver, some 20,000 people are expected to gather at Sunset Beach today (April 20) for the city's annual 4/20 [cannabis festival and protest](#).

For nearly two decades, the event was held on the north side of the Vancouver Art Gallery. This year, it has [relocated](#) to the north end of the Burrard Street Bridge in order to better accommodate the large crowd.

Despite leaders of Vancouver's marijuana community—including Jodie and Marc Emery, Dana Larsen, and Jeremiah Vandermeer, among others—having embracing the move, a smaller group has said it will hold a [separate 4/20 event](#) on the south side of the Art Gallery. That group, led by WorldCannabis.net founder Robert Moore, has set up tents on Robson Street.

The city, which welcomed the larger event moving to Sunset Beach, has deployed police to both events. In an interview earlier this week, VPD Const. Brian Montague [told the Straight](#) how officers police both events is dependent on the actions of those in attendance.

<http://www.straight.com/news/681216/health-minister-says-government-will-table-legislation-legalize-marijuana-spring-2017>

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### **Legalization may snuff cannabis culture: experts**

By Tamsyn Burgmann The Canadian Press Updated: April 20, 2016 1:32 pm

VANCOUVER – Stoner subculture will likely take a hit with the incoming legalization of marijuana in Canada because as the cause vanishes, so will celebration of the drug, say experts.

The declaration comes as the federal government announced a spring 2017 deadline for introducing new marijuana laws and while thousands of people gathered across Canada for the annual April 20 'Weed Day' protest, also known as 4-20.

Protesting against cannabis prohibition has become a social movement with its own ideology and symbols, but that will likely change with the repeal of criminalization, said Benedikt Fischer, a senior scientist with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

“Once marijuana becomes legalized, normalized, mainstream, the cause disappears,” said Fischer. “I suspect these things will kind of fizzle away.”

Lynne Belle-Isle, co-founder of the Canadian Drug Policy Coalition, agreed that with legalization the appeal of smoking up in rebellion could disappear. She said society could benefit as messaging is developed around using the drug more safely.

“Like alcohol, if you see your parents having a glass of wine with dinner, it’s no big deal. You learn responsible use if that’s what you’re exposed to,” she said.

“Social norms get created when you’re able to do it openly, that doesn’t happen when people have to hide.”

One of Canada’s most prominent pot protest was underway Wednesday at Vancouver’s Sunset Beach, with participants lighting up and eating marijuana edibles for the traditional act of mass civil disobedience.

And just like past years, a festive atmosphere rose from the crowd of revellers who mingled around a farmer’s market-style cluster of vendors, a stage and rows of portable toilets.

Participants buzzed over free guidelines books including a site map, messages about safe marijuana use and political slogans. Organizer Jodie Emery said \$100,000 was raised to fund amenities and security for the all-day cannabis culture bash.

Last year, health officials said that more than 60 people were treated in hospital for complaints of symptoms ranging from upset stomachs to acute anxiety and psychosis, three-quarters of them had consumed edible marijuana products.

Earlier in the day, Health Minister Jane Philpott told a special United Nations session on drugs that the Liberal government is convinced marijuana legalization is the best way to protect youth and enhance public safety.

In an emotional address, she told delegates that Canada must do better when it comes to drug policy. She said Ottawa’s approach will be rooted in science.

Longtime marijuana activist David Malmo-Levine, 44, has attended Vancouver’s pot protest for nearly two decades and said he believes pot culture is essential to achieving legalization.

“If you make it look fun, more people will participate,” he said.

“We’re going to dance down the streets and ... puff on our magic flower. Once everyone is free it will turn into a formal celebration. And until everyone is free, it’s still a protest.”

<http://globalnews.ca/news/2651533/legalization-may-snuff-cannabis-culture-experts/>

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## **Pot dispensaries are sprouting up all over Canada. Here's why.**

By [Patrick Cain](#) Global News Updated: April 20, 2016 1:41 pm

The Canadian Cannabis Clinic on Danforth Ave in Toronto's east end looks clinical — there are no references to marijuana culture at all, anywhere.

There isn't any pot, either — that would break the rules.

The clinic, which screens patients who want to use medical marijuana and connects the ones that get approved to legal producers, does everything by the book.

But, as spokesperson Ronan Levy points out, the four brand-new marijuana dispensaries down the street don't.

"It's absolutely frustrating to be the only legally operating cannabis business on the Danforth," he says.

"As of right now, there are five marijuana-related businesses (nearby) — four dispensaries selling cannabis illegally, and one clinic, which is this location."

Patients who get the green light from the clinic are mailed their marijuana, he explained.

How many dispensaries are there in Canada? Nobody seems to know for sure, not even the Vancouver-based Canadian Association of Medical Cannabis Dispensaries. Spokesperson Jamie Shaw offered a "best guess" at 90 in Vancouver and 60-70 in Toronto. "It's been a little hard to keep up," she explained.

"We've been asking government for regulation for 20 years, but for the last three or four we've been telling them that if they don't do it there will be way too many dispensaries," she says.

On a one-kilometre stretch of the Danforth, there is now a dispensary for every two Greek restaurants, the specialty the street is usually known for.

Illegal but tolerated, for now, the dispensaries have their eye on a chunk of a future legalized marijuana market, says University of Toronto graduate student Jenna Valleriani.

"They're hoping that whatever legalization system unfolds, that it's going to kind of grandfather these kind of pioneering dispensaries," she says.

Valleriani is studying marijuana markets.

All, in theory, serve only people authorized to buy medical marijuana, but some are more rigorous than others, Valleriani says.

“You can see the difference in dispensaries in the city — the ones who operate more on a kind of patient care model, versus other ones that seem to be more recreational.”

“I have seen some with really lax guidelines. You can have prescription bottles from three years ago that are expired, and that would be enough. There are some that have really strict intake guidelines.”

“There have been dispensaries that have opened that are recreational,” Shaw says. “They’re not actually medicinal. The older dispensaries are very strict about only serving people with medical documentation.”

**Update:** “We are extremely strict on our policies.” Adam Blender, director of operations for the Vancouver-based S.W.E.D. Society, which operates one of the Danforth dispensaries, wrote in an e-mail.

“Multiple people are turned down every single day,” he wrote. “Many people come in to our store thinking anyone may purchase medicinal cannabis.”

S.W.E.D. stands for “Smoke Weed Every Day,” he explained. He did not respond to questions about the legality of the company’s operations.

“If and when recreational legalization does take place we know we will be the gold standard for medicinal marijuana dispensaries,” he wrote.

The other three dispensaries did not respond to interview requests.

Illegal or not, the Toronto police don’t see them as much of a priority, unless there are complaints.

“You asked if they are illegal — the answer is yes,” says Toronto police spokesperson Mark Pugash.

“They don’t pretend that they comply with the law.”

But police have better things to do than worry about it.

“We concentrate on trafficking, we concentrate on things like [fentanyl](#) — that’s where the drug squad puts its priorities,” Pugash says.

Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government was elected on a [promise](#) to legalize marijuana. Former Toronto police chief Bill Blair, now a Liberal MP, is [in charge](#) of the file.

**Update:** In a speech at the United Nations Wednesday morning, federal health minister Jane Philpott said the federal government planned to introduce marijuana law reform in the spring of 2017.

"Our government has committed to legalize, strictly regulate and restrict access to marijuana in a careful and orderly way. We will take the time that is necessary to get this right," said a statement released by Blair's office Tuesday. The statement promised " ... a system of strict regulation, with strong sanctions for those who sell outside this system, to ensure we keep marijuana out of the hands of children, and the profits out of the hands of criminals."

What will a legal Canadian recreational marijuana market look like?

One model, appealing to some provincial [governments](#) and [public-sector unions](#), is to use existing liquor store systems. Another, which the exploding number of dispensaries seem to be pointing toward, is a system of free-wheeling private retail stores. [Pharmacies](#) have their eye on the medical side of the marijuana market.

In the meantime, as the options are mulled over behind closed doors in Ottawa, the dispensaries are busy creating bricks-and-mortar operations across the country.

"I think there are 50 dispensaries in Toronto, and a year ago there were six," Levy says. "They're going to encounter these companies, and whatever system they bring in, if it doesn't include a role for the existing dispensaries, they're going to fight it."

Under legalization, do by-the-book medical marijuana clinics have a future? Levy argues that they do. In Colorado, he says, the medical marijuana market tripled in size under legalization, as patients who were more comfortable with a fully legal system felt able to buy pot. They will also need medical advice from a doctor open to prescribing medical marijuana, which not all are.

"There are hundreds of different varieties available in Canada, all different, with different consumption techniques. It's a lot to learn for a doctor who's probably overworked and has a full patient roster."

In the meantime, dispensaries follow an "unspoken set of guidelines," Valleriani says.

“They know what will get them shut down and what won’t, and operate within those guidelines. They’re illegal, but they have policies and practices that are meant to help them survive without legal protection.”

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## **Health officials ask 4/20 vendors not to sell to minors**

[Andrew Weichel](#), Digital reporter/editor, CTV Vancouver Published Wednesday, April 20, 2016 7:40AM PDT Last Updated Wednesday, April 20, 2016 1:46PM PDT

As a massive crowd gathers for what could be the biggest 4/20 protest yet in Vancouver, health workers are hoping to see fewer hospitalizations.

Up to 50,000 people are expected to attend this year’s event at Sunset Beach, which is a much larger space than the Vancouver Art Gallery where 4/20 rallies have been held for decades.

But that crowd estimate and the waterfront location have raised concerns among city staff and health officials, who are staffing extra personnel to ensure everyone in attendance stays safe.

An estimated 25,000 people gathered at the Vancouver Art Gallery at the height of the 4/20 protest in 2015. (CTV)

Extra doctors and nurses will be on hand at St. Paul’s Hospital Wednesday, where more than 60 people were admitted for marijuana intoxication in 2015. Many of those were youths, with some as young as 15 years old, and the majority had consumed edibles.

“We’d really like to warn people about the risks associated with marijuana consumption, particularly edibles, and we’d like to ask those participating in the event not to sell products to anyone under the age of 19,” said Dr. Patricia Daly, chief medical health officer for Vancouver Coastal Health.

Some of the health issues recorded last year included acute anxiety, upset stomachs, and in some cases symptoms of psychosis, which Daly said can happen when young people try pot products for the first time.

As always, police, firefighters and paramedics will have a large presence at the rally. The park board has also hired additional lifeguards to patrol the beaches over concerns that weed and water won’t mix.

Board chair Sarah Kirby-Yung said that’s one reason the group begged city staff to push organizers toward a different venue months ago.



“Unfortunately, the mayor chose not to work with us on our request to find an alternate location,” Kirby-Yung said.

Mayor Gregor Robertson’s office said the rally is an unsanctioned protest, not a permitted event, so there’s little the city could do to force organizers’ hands.

All told, last year’s event cost taxpayers around \$90,000, and that total could balloon even larger this year.

### **‘We have good reason to rally’**

But Jodie Emery of Cannabis Culture, who helps put the annual event together, believes the concerns around 4/20 are overblown. She said organizers have never needed or requested a police presence.

“If the city and park board spend tens of thousands of dollars unnecessarily – because there is no problem, there is no crisis – then that’s something taxpayers should ask the city and park board about,” Emery said.

The people who attend the protest are taxpayers as well, she added.

“As taxpayers we’re all financing the police presence at every city event. Just because I don’t go to Vaisakhi doesn’t mean I’m not paying for it. And taxpayers should ask themselves, how much tax money is being spent on prohibition?”

Roughly 25,000 people were estimated to be gathered at the Vancouver Art Gallery at the height of last year’s protest, but Emery said when all the people coming and going are factored in, about 50,000 attended.

That makes the number of people who were hospitalized a drop in the bucket, she added.

With Justin Trudeau’s Liberals promising to legalize marijuana, some have questioned what 4/20 is still protesting. Emery pointed to the City of Vancouver’s pending crackdown on dispensaries, the vast majority of which have been ordered to close by April 29, as well as the lack of action by the federal government.

“We have the Liberals dragging their feet, continuing to arrest Canadians, and a local government promising to shut down dispensaries. So we have good reason to rally,” she said.

### **Splinter group protesting at historic site**

While the vast majority of 4/20 participants are expected at Sunset Beach, some pot protestors have set up tents and a stage at the historic Vancouver Art Gallery rally site hoping to catch people who missed the news of the relocation.

Ron Woodruff, who helped organize the splinter group, said he expects to thousands of people to show up.

“Lots of people for decades have been trained to come to this site. We expect thousands, and we have thousands of cannabis doobies to pass out. People have been rolling them for days,” Woodruff said.

Woodruff said the event is free for anyone who wants to take part, while many vendors paid hundreds of dollars for a spot at the beach.

“It’s not a dueling protest thing. We’ve been doing this thing for years here. No one consulted us about any kind of a move,” he added. “There’s no hard feelings.”

<http://bc.ctvnews.ca/health-officials-ask-4-20-vendors-not-to-sell-to-minors-1.2866959>

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## **4/20 pot rallies underway in downtown Vancouver**

### ***Two traffic snarls possible as annual event has split into Sunset Beach and Vancouver Art Gallery locations***

By Lisa Johnson, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 20, 2016 12:43 PM PT Last Updated: Apr 20, 2016 12:43 PM PT

The annual [4/20](#) pot rally is getting underway in Vancouver with some teens skipping school to attend despite [admonitions from school officials](#) and health concerns about [underage marijuana usage](#).

This year, the annual event, which attracted tens of thousands to downtown Vancouver last year, has actually split into [two locations](#) — the main event, which has moved to Sunset Beach, and a breakaway protest at the original Vancouver Art Gallery location.

Last year, [4/20 crowds](#) spilled on to the streets around the art gallery causing traffic chaos in the downtown core. [One hundred](#) people ended up in hospital, some as young as 15, mostly due to edible products, according to Vancouver Coastal Health.

## **Edibles for teenagers?**

One controversial aspect of the event is the participation of teenagers, both skipping school and consuming — or, in some cases, overconsuming — pot.

This year, Vancouver Coastal Health's chief medical health officer, Patricia Daly, asked organizers not to sell edible cannabis products to minors — something the organizer of the Sunset Beach rally said [she agrees with](#).

But today at the Art Gallery rally, volunteer Rod Woodruff gave out edibles on stage, handing a THC-laced lollipop to a teenager who told CBC he is 16.

The teen, who we are not identifying, told CBC Reporter Greg Rasmussen that his parents were fine with his participation in the event.

"Sixteen, I think that's old enough," he said.

When asked about the teen's age, Woodruff accused Rasmussen of "attacking" him and going after a "hit piece," and questioned what proof there was of the teen's age, or of the content of the lollipop.

Some pot sellers did have signs up saying they don't sell to minors.

## **Double traffic snarls possible**

In the afternoon, Vancouver motorists can expect possible traffic disturbances in two parts of downtown.

Robson Street between Hornby and Howe, alongside the art gallery, is already closed and organizers of the breakaway event have set up their tents there.

At the Sunset Beach location, the tents are limited to the grass and no roads are currently closed, except for the driveway leading to a parking lot at Sunset Beach.

Crowds are likely to swell through the afternoon, which had required larger road closures at the art gallery location in previous years, but Sunset Beach also offers more room for people to spread out.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/4-20-pot-rally-vancouver-1.3545092>

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## **Rogue pot protestors holding small event at Vancouver Art Gallery**

By [Lauren Sundstrom](#) Vancity Buzz 11:50 AM PDT, Wed April 20, 2016

Vancouver's 4/20 event may have moved to Sunset Beach, but that didn't stop a few rogue protestors from setting up outside of the traditional Vancouver Art Gallery venue.

The south side of the gallery between Howe and Hornby Streets has been closed off to allow vendor booths and a stage to occupy that portion of Robson. Unlike the main event at Sunset Beach that's expected to draw more than 25,000 people over the course of the day, this one is more modest in size.

Robert Moore with WorldCannabis.net tells Vancity Buzz they wanted to be more central than Sunset Beach to spread the word of marijuana legalization.

"We've always believed that being in the public eye is really important and we're more interested in changing public opinion and ending prohibition," he says. "We do, of course, have vendors here, but [prohibition] is our focus."

A small police contingent is on site to ensure the event remains peaceful, and the booths offer everything from jewelry, to pipes, to lollipops laced with THC.

Ultimately, Moore says the Sunset Beach crowd already support ending marijuana prohibition, and he figures setting up in the middle of downtown will help to change the minds of passersby.

"I don't see, until it's legalized, wanting to go to Sunset Beach," he adds.

<http://www.vancitybuzz.com/2016/04/vancouver-art-gallery-pot-protest/>

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## **Vancouver's perverse pipeline politics**

[JOHN ROBSON](#) National Post April 20, 2016 1:35 PM ET

Canada's debate over pipelines and energy policy has become uncomfortably reminiscent of the tale of the Little Red Hen. The hen, you may recall, planted some seeds, cut the wheat and made the bread all by herself when the other animals declined to help. Yet when the time came to eat the bread, there they were, lining up for their share. Everyone wants the fruits of prosperity. But too few people display an understanding that wealth must be created before it can be redistributed. Including Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson.

A few weeks ago Mayor Robertson enthusiastically welcomed the federal Liberals' plan to send billions of dollars to Canadian cities for infrastructure and social housing. The money was more than welcome. But Robertson is less enthused about the proposed \$5.4 billion Kinder Morgan oil pipeline extension from Alberta to the Vancouver suburb of Burnaby. In a letter to the federal government, Vancouver is demanding that the environmental assessment of the project go beyond an analysis of the impact of extracting and shipping the oil within Canada, to include the potential emissions from shipping it abroad, refining and burning it.

However strongly one feels about global warming, the equation is the same: to stop producing fossil fuels we have to stop using them.

The letter is clearly an effort to stack the deck against the pipeline. For starters, if Alberta oil is not shipped to foreign customers, someone else's will. So the net "downstream" impact is vanishingly close to zero. Even the "upstream" impact of extracting the oil should be equated against the emissions produced by getting other exporting nations' oil to their ports and sending it to Canada.

Anti-pipeline zealots may reject this method of calculation, arguing instead that everyone should stop producing oil. But however strongly one feels about global warming, the equation is the same: to stop producing fossil fuels we have to stop using them. Until then, to focus on the drawbacks of transportation while ignoring the ongoing demand for the product is both dishonest and futile. Mayor Robertson wants to enjoy the lavish subsidies from governments that are reliant on prosperity to produce revenue, while condemning the source of that prosperity. He can't have it both ways.

Governments have a vital role to play in creating conditions for private wealth creation, and that role is sometimes expensive. Genuine infrastructure, of the roads-and-sewers variety, must be built and maintained. But profit is not a dirty or wasteful word. For a baker to remain in business, she must find a way to pay her staff, buy flour and eggs and yeast and pans and ovens and fuel, and after selling bread and buns to customers have something left over to live on.

Governments face no such requirement. They can always dip into citizens' pockets for tax money. Indeed they must. But while doing so they need to grasp that profitable private wealth creation is what makes it possible.

Energy is not one among many pleasant items one might choose to incorporate into a sophisticated lifestyle. If there are no loaves, we can eat brioches. But without energy the economy ceases to operate effectively. Trucks can't bring wheat to warehouses or exotic coffee beans to chic downtown cafes. Eggs and butter rot.

If Canadians and their governments mean what they say about the threat of man-made global warming we must stop using so much energy. We must all tighten our belts drastically in that regard and many others. If Mayor Robertson believes in that approach, he must lead by example in Vancouver. The municipal government must stop using nearly so much energy to heat schools, light offices and pave roads. It must find alternative energy sources that don't require subsidies paid for with taxes on profitable firms burning fossil fuels. It's no good saying we want infrastructure money, we want to provide services, we want the economy to operate to maximum effect. But we don't want the pipelines that ship the energy that Canadians use.

If nobody helps the Little Red Hen generate power, nobody gets the food, clothing or shelter it provides. If Mayor Robertson hasn't read the children's story, he should.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/john-robson-vancouvers-perverse-pipeline-politics>

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