

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FLOW OF WATER

Water is a central character in the story of Vancouver. The health and wellbeing of the city and its residents are closely linked to the water that surrounds us.

People gravitate to water; for relaxation, play, replenishment, and restoration. While we need to manage water from an infrastructure perspective, we must also consider the daily human experience. By honouring the flow of water, unearthing historic streams, improving water quality, creating healthy habitats and urban ecosystems, we can reconnect the system for the benefit of everyone.

91% of Vancouver's original streams have been buried. Encouragingly, stream restoration and ecological management efforts have resulted in salmon returning to some of the city's creeks since 2012. This presents a unique and wonderful connection to nature for Vancouverites and demonstrates the improving health of streams.

The City's Green Infrastructure Team is revolutionizing how Vancouver manages its water resources. By keeping water close to its source, slowing water flows, and encouraging infiltration, we can create a city that acts more like a sponge. From vegetated swales to daylighting streams, these interventions improve water quality, increases urban greenery

and reduce the city's reliance on aging pipe infrastructure. This provides many benefits for parks including keeping them greener for longer through the year and providing places for nature play. Delivering cleaner water to receiving bodies, such as False Creek, will improve our beaches and waterways - good news for birds, fish, whales and of course, all of us.

Vancouverites value access to the water; and today 63% of the city's shoreline is protected as public land¹. By prioritizing access to the water, we do not mean to assume that these areas will be managed as typical "parks" but rather, we intend to find opportunities to work together with First Nations rightsholders to further shared values of ecological protection, connecting to the land and learning. Collaboration is key; by seeking public access to waterfront land, we allow different types of physical space to work together to enhance the experiences of all.

Climate change brings with it the need for new ideas and a commitment to respond to sea level rise, reduce use of potable water, and increase green coverage to keep the city cool and protect against extreme weather events. Actions such as increasing development setbacks along the Fraser River, investigating design innovations that allow us to increase recreational access to waterways, implementing thoughtful green infrastructure projects, and managing the urban forest to be sustainable in a changing climate will set us up for success as the climate changes.

¹ Vancouver Waterfront Inventory, 2011.

"There is a profound tie to the water that is expressed through the orientation of the coastal villages to the waterfront."

"This physical and spiritual connection is a key Indigenous design principle."

Indigenous Engagement Summary Report, Northeast False Creek Park Design, June 2018

